

SILENT MOVIE – ACTORS AND ACTRESSES



**COMPILED BY:
Alison V. Hart
2012**

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Alice Brady

Alice Brady (November 2, 1892 – October 28, 1939) was an American actress who began her career in the silent film era and survived the transition into talkies. She worked up until six months before her death from cancer in 1939. Her films include *My Man Godfrey* (1936), in which she played the flighty mother of Carole Lombard's character, and *In Old Chicago* (1938) for which she won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.



Career

Brady was born in New York City as **Mary Rose Brady**, and was interested at an early age in becoming an actress. Her father, William A. Brady, was an important theatrical producer, and her mother was Rose Marie Rene, who died in 1896 when Alice was four. Alice first went on the stage when she was 14 and got her first job on Broadway in 1911 at the age of 18, in a show her father was associated with. She continued to perform there (often in shows her father produced) consistently for the next 22 years. In 1931 she appeared in the premiere of Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Her step-mother was Broadway star Grace George (1879–1961), whom her father married when Alice was a child. Her half-brother was William A. Brady Jr, the son of her father & Grace George.

Brady's father moved into movie production and presentation in 1913, with his World Film Corporation, and Brady soon followed along after him, making her first silent feature appearance in *As Ye Sow* in 1914. She appeared in 53 films in the next 10 years, all while continuing to perform on stage, the film industry at the time being centered in New York.

In 1923, she stopped appearing in films to concentrate on stage acting, and did not appear on the screen again until 1933, when she made the move to Hollywood and M-G-M's *When Ladies Meet* become her first talking picture. From then on she worked frequently until her death, making another 25 films in seven years. Her final film was *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939).



Eugene Pallette, Mischa Auer and Alice Brady
in *My Man Godfrey*

Personal life

Brady was married to actor James Crane from 1919 to 1922, when they divorced. They co-starred in three silent films together *His Bridal Night* (1919), *Sinners* (1920) and *A Dark Lantern* (1920); the couple had one child, Donald.

Death

Alice Brady died from cancer on October 28, 1939, five days before her 47th birthday.

Awards

For her portrayal of Mrs. Molly O'Leary — a fictionalized version of Catherine O'Leary – in 1937's *In Old Chicago*, Brady won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. She had been nominated for the same award the year before as well, for her work in *My Man Godfrey*.

At the Academy Award presentation dinner, Brady's Oscar statuette was stolen by a man who came onstage to accept the award on the absent actress' behalf. It was never recovered, and the impostor was never tracked down. The Academy issued a replacement statue which was later presented to Brady

Alice Terry

Alice Terry (July 29, 1899 – December 22, 1987) was an American film actress who began her career during the silent film era, appearing in thirty-nine films between 1916 and 1933.



Career

Born **Alice Frances Taaffe** in Vincennes, Indiana, she made her film debut in 1916 in *Not My Sister*, opposite Bessie Barriscale and William Desmond Taylor.

That same year, she played several different characters in the 1916 anti-war film *Civilization*, co-directed by Thomas H. Ince and Reginald Barker. One of her most acclaimed performances came as "Marguerite" in 1921's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, starring Rudolph Valentino.

In 1925 her husband co-directed *Ben-Hur*, filming parts of it in Italy. The two decided to move to the French Riviera, where they set up a small studio in Nice and made several films on location in North Africa, Spain, and Italy for MGM and others. In 1933, Terry made her last film appearance in *Baroud*, which she also co-directed with husband Rex Ingram.

Personal life

In 1921 she married director Rex Ingram during production of *The Prisoner of Zenda* (released 1922), which he directed and in which she appeared as Princess Flavia. The couple sneaked away over one weekend, were married in Pasadena, and returned to work promptly the following Monday.

During the making of *The Arab* (1924) in Tunisia, they met a street child named Kada-Abd-el-Kader, who they adopted upon learning that he was an orphan. Allegedly, el-Kader misrepresented his age to make himself seem younger to his adoptive parents, and after he "began associating with fast women and fast cars throughout the San Fernando Valley," Terry and Ingram sent him back to Morocco "to finish school."

Terry was known to have several gay male friends in the film industry, including Ramón Novarro (a former leading man of hers) and Barry Norton. During the 1930s, she accompanied Novarro to speakeasies with predominantly gay clientele, allegedly in part to throw off any suspicion about Novarro's homosexuality.

Terry and Ingram retired together in the 1930s. By all accounts, theirs was a happy marriage, though they often had separate bedrooms during their marriage and occupied separate retirement community bungalows at the end of their marriage. Nonetheless, they remained together until his passing in 1950. After his death, Terry became romantically involved with actor Gerald Fielding, who bore a strong physical resemblance to her late husband. They were lovers until his death, at the age of forty-six, in 1956.

Terry had a sister, Edna, who died in 1984.

Death

Terry died on December 22, 1987 of natural causes, and was interred in the Valhalla Memorial Park Cemetery in North Hollywood, Los Angeles, California. For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Alice Terry has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6628 Hollywood Blvd.

Alice White

Alice White (August 24, 1904, Paterson, New Jersey – February 19, 1983, Los Angeles, California) was an American film actress.



Early life and career

She was born **Alva White** of French and Italian parents. Her mother, a former chorus girl died when Alice was only three years old. She attended Roanoke College in Virginia and then took a secretarial course at Hollywood High School also attended by future actors Joel McCrea and Mary Brian. After leaving school she became a secretary and "script girl" for director Josef Von Sternberg. After clashing with Von Sternberg, White left his employment to work for Charlie Chaplin, who decided before long to place her in front of the camera.



Publicity photo, 1934

Her bubbly and vivacious persona led to comparisons with Clara Bow, but White's career was slow to progress. After playing a succession of flappers and gold diggers, she attracted the attention of the director and producer Mervyn LeRoy who saw potential in her. Her first sound films included *Show Girl* (1928) made in the Vitaphone sound-on-disc system, and *Show Girl in Hollywood* (1930) in the Western Electric sound-on-film process, both released by Warner Brothers and both based on novels by J. P.

McEvoy. In these two films, White appeared as "Dixie Dugan". In October 1929, McAvoy started the comic strip *Dixie Dugan* with the character Dixie having a "helmet" hairstyle and appearance similar to actress Louise Brooks. White also used the services of Hollywood 'beauty sculptor' Sylvia of Hollywood to stay in shape.

Later career

She left films in 1931 to improve her acting abilities, returning in 1933 only to have her career hurt by a scandal that erupted over her involvement with boyfriend actor Jack Warburton and future husband Sy Bartlett. Although she later married Bartlett, her reputation was tarnished and she appeared only in supporting roles after this. By 1937 and 1938, her name was at the bottom of the cast lists. She made her final film appearance in *Flamingo Road* (1949).

White died of complications from a stroke, aged 78, on February 19, 1983.

Award

White has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her contribution to Motion Pictures, at 1501 Vine Street.

Alla Nazimova

Alla Nazimova (Russian and Ukrainian: Алла Назимова; 3 June 1879 – 13 July 1945), was a Russian American film and theatre actress, a screenwriter and film producer. She is perhaps best known as simply **Nazimova**, but also went under the name **Alia Nasimoff**.

Early life

She was born **Miriam Edez Adelaida Leventon** (Russian: Мириам Эдес Аделаида Левентон, Ukrainian: Міріам Едес Аделаїда Левентон), one of three children of Yakov Leventon and Sonya Horowitz. The family was Jewish and lived in Yalta, Crimea (then a part of the Russian Empire; now a part of Ukraine). She grew up in a dysfunctional family and after her parents' separation was shuffled among boarding schools, foster homes, and relatives. A precocious child, she was playing the violin by age seven.

As a teenager she began to pursue an interest in the theatre and took acting lessons at the Academy of Acting in Moscow before joining Constantine Stanislavski's Moscow Art Theatre as "Alla Nazimova," and later just "Nazimova." (Her stage name was a combination of her middle name Adelaida and the surname of Nadezhda Nazimova, the heroine of the Russian novel *Children of the Streets*.)

Career



Nazimova in the 1911 Broadway play *The Marionettes*

Nazimova's theater career blossomed early; and by 1903 she was a major star in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. She toured Europe, including London and Berlin, with her boyfriend Pavel Orlov, a flamboyant actor and producer. In 1905 they moved to New York City and founded a Russian-language theater on the Lower East Side. The venture was unsuccessful; and Orlov returned to Russia while Nazimova stayed in New York.

She was signed up by the American producer Henry Miller and made her Broadway debut in New York City, New York, in 1906 to critical and popular success. She quickly became extremely popular (a

theater was named after her) and remained a major Broadway star for years, often acting in the plays of Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov. Dorothy Parker described her as the finest Hedda Gabler she had ever seen.

Due to her notoriety in a 35-minute 1915 play entitled *War Brides*, Nazimova made her silent film debut in 1916 in the filmed version of the play. A young actor with a bit part in the movie was Richard Barthelmess whose mother taught Nazimova English. This appearance brought her to the attention of Lewis J. Selznick. Over the next few years she made a number of highly successful films that earned her a considerable amount of money. By 1917 her contract was earning her \$13,000 per week.

In 1918, Nazimova felt confident enough in her abilities that she began producing and writing films in which she also starred. In her film adaptations of works by such notable writers as Oscar Wilde and Ibsen she developed her own film making techniques, which were considered daring at the time. Her projects, including *A Doll's House* (1922), based on Ibsen, and *Salomé* (1923), based on Wilde's play, were critical and commercial failures.

By 1925 Nazimova could no longer afford to invest in more films; and financial backers withdrew their support. Left with few options, she gave up on the film industry, returning to perform on Broadway, notably starring as Natalya Petrovna in Rouben Mamoulian's 1930 New York production of Turgenev's *A Month in the Country* and an acclaimed performance as Mrs. Alving in Ibsen's *Ghosts*. In the early 1940s, she appeared in a few more films, playing Robert Taylor's mother in *Escape* (1940) and Tyrone Power's mother in *Blood and Sand* (1941).

Private life

Marriages and children

In 1899 she married Sergei Golovin, a fellow actor. However, the marriage was "in name only"; and the two never legally divorced.

While still in Russia and before coming to America in 1905, Nazimova may have given birth to a child. The father has been speculated to be either her husband Golovin or her lover Orlov.

From 1912 to 1925 Nazimova lived in a "lavender marriage" with Charles Bryant (1879–1948), a New York actor.

Relationships with women

Between the years of 1917 and 1922 Nazimova wielded considerable influence and power in Hollywood. By all accounts she was extremely generous to young actresses in whom she saw talent and became involved with at least some of them romantically. For instance, after meeting a young Patsy Ruth Miller at a Hollywood party, Nazimova assisted in getting Miller's career launched. (Miller got her first break with a small role in *Camille*.) Another noteworthy example was Anna May Wong, whose first film role at age 14 was as an extra in *The Red Lantern*.

Nazimova helped start the careers of both of Rudolph Valentino's wives, Jean Acker and Natacha Rambova. Although she was involved in an affair with Acker, it is debated as to whether her connection with Rambova ever developed into a sexual affair. Nevertheless, there were rumors that Nazimova and Rambova were involved in a lesbian affair (they are discussed at length in *Dark Lover*, Emily Leider's biography of Rudolph Valentino) but those rumors have never been definitely confirmed. She was very

impressed by Rambova's skills as an art director; and Rambova designed the innovative sets for Nazimova's film productions of *Camille* and *Salomé*.

Of those Nazimova is confirmed to have been involved with romantically, the list includes actress Eva Le Gallienne, director Dorothy Arzner, writer Mercedes de Acosta, and Oscar Wilde's niece, Dolly Wilde. Bridget Bate Tichenor, a Magic Realist artist and Surrealist painter, was also rumored to be one of Nazimova's favored lovers in Hollywood during the World War II years of 1940 to 1942. The two had been introduced by the poet and art collector Edward James, and according to Tichenor, their intimate relationship angered Nazimova's longtime companion, Glesca Marshall. It was allegedly Nazimova who coined the phrase "Sewing circles" as code to refer to lesbian or bisexual actresses of her day who concealed their true sexuality.

Nazimova lived with Glesca Marshall from 1929 until her death in 1945.

Life in the United States



Alla Nazimova with Herbert Brenon, August 9, 1916.

Her private lifestyle gave rise to widespread rumors of outlandish and allegedly debauched parties at her mansion on Sunset Boulevard, in West Hollywood, California, known as "The Garden of Alla", built in 1919. This mansion in 1927 became the Garden of Allah apartment-hotel complex. In later years, she continued to live in one of the villas there.

In 1921, Nazimova, a friend of actress Edith Luckett and her husband, Dr. Loyal Davis, was made godmother to future U.S. First Lady Nancy Davis Reagan, Luckett's daughter from a previous marriage. She was also the aunt of American film producer Val Lewton.

Nazimova became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1927.

Death and memorials

She died of a coronary thrombosis, age 66, in the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, California; and her ashes were interred in Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. Her contributions to the film industry have been recognized with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Legacy

Nazimova has been portrayed in film three times. The first two were biographical films about Rudolph Valentino: 1975's *The Legend of Valentino*, in which she was portrayed by Alicia Bond; and 1977's *Valentino*, in which she was portrayed by Leslie Caron. The most recent film portrayal was in *Return to Babylon* of 2004, a film about Hollywood's silent movie era, in which Laura Harring played Nazimova.

The American silent movie "Silent Life" (Vlad Kozlov, Isabella Rossellini et al) based on the life of Rudolph Valentino, where Nazimova has been played by Galina Jovovich, (also known as mother of Milla Jovovich) is expected to be released in 2012.

The character of Nazimova appears also in Dominick Argento's opera *Dream of Valentino* in which she also plays the violin.

Nazimova was also featured in make-up artist Kevyn Aucoin's 2004 book *Face Forward*, in which he made up Isabella Rossellini to resemble her, particularly as posed in a certain photograph.

Anita Page

Anita Evelyn Pomares (August 4, 1910 – September 6, 2008), better known as **Anita Page**, was a Salvadoran-American film actress who reached stardom in the last years of the silent film era. She became a highly popular young star, reportedly at one point receiving the most fan mail of anyone on the MGM lot. When Page died in 2008 at age 98, she was the last surviving "famous" film star of the silent era except for child actresses such as Baby Peggy and Baby Marie. A few silent leading ladies who did not achieve wide fame survive her. She was referred to as "a blond, blue-eyed Latin" and "the girl with the most beautiful face in Hollywood" in the 1920s.



Early life

Page was born in Flushing, Queens to Helen and John Pomares. She had one brother, Marino, who later worked for her as a gym instructor while her mother worked as her secretary and her father as her chauffeur. Of Salvadoran and Spanish ancestry, Page's grandfather was a consul from El Salvador.

Career

Page entered films with the help of friend, actress Betty Bronson. Page's picture was spotted by a man who handled Bronson's fan mail who was also interested in representing actors. With the encouragement of her mother, Page telephoned the man who arranged a meeting for her with a casting director at Paramount Studios. After screen testing for Paramount, Page also tested for MGM. After being offered a contract for both studios, Page decided on MGM. Page's first film for MGM was the 1928 comedy-drama *Telling the World*, opposite William Haines. Her performances in her second MGM film, *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928) opposite Joan Crawford (with whom she appeared in three films), and *The Broadway Melody* (1929) opposite Bessie Love were her greatest successes of the period, and her popularity allowed her to make a smooth transition into talking pictures.

She was the leading lady to Lon Chaney, Buster Keaton, Robert Montgomery, and Clark Gable (among others) and during the early 1930s, she was one of Hollywood's busiest actresses. She was involved briefly with Gable romantically during that time. At the height of her popularity, she was receiving more

fan mail than any other female star, with the exception of Greta Garbo, and received multiple marriage proposals from Benito Mussolini in the mail.

Retirement

When her contract expired in 1933, she surprised Hollywood by announcing her retirement at the age of 23. She made one more movie, *Hitch Hike to Heaven*, in 1936, and then left the screen, virtually disappearing from Hollywood circles for sixty years. In a 2004 interview with author Scott Feinberg, she claimed that her refusal to meet demands for sexual favors by MGM head of production Irving Thalberg, supported by studio chief Louis B. Mayer, is what truly ended her career. She said that Mayer colluded with the other studio bosses to ban her and other uncooperative actresses from finding work.

She married composer Nacio Herb Brown in 1934, but the marriage was annulled a year later because Brown's previous divorce had not been finalized at the time they were married. She married Lieutenant Hershel A. House, a Navy pilot, in 1937 and they moved to Coronado, California and lived there until his death in 1991. They had two daughters, Linda (now Linda Sterne) and Sandra (who predeceased her mother).

Return to spotlight

Page returned to the screen in 1996 after sixty years retirement and appeared in several low budget horror films, several of which appeared to have been uncompleted or not released. Film veteran Margaret O'Brien appeared in two of them. During this period, she moved in with her co-star and occasional director, Randal Malone at his Van Nuys home.

Page relished her status as "last star of the silents" and frequently gave interviews and appeared in documentaries about the era. Although ill health prevented her from making public appearances in her final years, her reputation for answering letters from fans never diminished.

At the time of her death in September 2008, she was among the last to have acted as an adult in silent films (Barbara Kent and Miriam Seegar are among the handful of others) to live into the 21st century. She was also the last living attendee of the very first Academy Awards ceremony in 1929.

Death

Page died on September 6, 2008 at her Los Angeles home, at the age of 98. She is buried in the Holy Cross Cemetery in San Diego.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Anita Page has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6116 Hollywood Boulevard.

Anita Stewart

Anita Stewart (February 7, 1895 – May 4, 1961) was an American actress and film producer of the early silent film era.



Early life and career

Born in Brooklyn, New York as **Anna May Stewart**, she began her acting career in 1911 while still attending Erasmus High School in extra and bit parts for the Vitagraph film studios at their New York City location. Stewart was one of the earliest film actresses to achieve public recognition in the nascent medium of motion pictures and achieved a great deal of acclaim early in her acting career. Among her earlier popular roles were 1911's enormous box office hit adaptation of *A Tale of Two Cities*, directed by William J. Humphrey, and having an all-star cast including Mabel Normand, Dorothy Kelly, Norma Talmadge and John Bunny, as well as roles in 1913's *The Forgotten Latchkey* and *The White Feather*.

In 1917 she married Rudolph Cameron and became the sister-in-law of film director and actor Ralph Ince, who began giving the young actress more prominent roles in films for Vitagraph. Throughout the 1910s and into the early 1920s, Anita Stewart was one of the silent screen's most popular actresses and was often paired in romantic roles with real-life husband, actor Rudolph Cameron. Stewart was also featured opposite such screen legends as Mae Busch, and Barbara La Marr.



ANITA STEWART

Stage and Screen 1920

Stewart left her lucrative Vitagraph Studios career in 1918 to accept a contract with fledgling film mogul Louis B. Mayer by the terms of which she would head her own production company at the Mayer studios in Los Angeles. It was alleged that Stewart was recovering from an illness in a Los Angeles hospital when Mayer convinced her to leave Vitagraph for an undisclosed but exorbitant sum of money. Between 1918 and 1919 Stewart produced seven moderately successful vehicles, starring in all of them. Throughout the 1920s, Stewart continue to be featured in prominent roles in silent films. Following Stewart's divorce from Cameron in 1928, Stewart married George Peabody Converse the following year.

Later years and death

Like many of her silent film contemporaries, Stewart found the transition to sound film extremely difficult. After making just one musical short in 1932, *The Hollywood Handicap*, Stewart retired from the screen.

On May 4, 1961, Stewart died of a heart attack in Beverly Hills, California. For her contribution to motion picture industry as an actress, Anita Stewart was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6724 Hollywood Boulevard.

Anna Held

Helene Anna Held (March 19, 1872 – August 12, 1918) was a Polish-born stage performer, most often associated with impresario Florenz Ziegfeld, her common-law husband.



Early life

Born in Warsaw, Congress Poland, Russian Empire she was the daughter of a Jewish glove maker, Shimmle (aka Maurice) Held, and his French-Jewish wife, Yvonne Pierre. Sources of her year of birth range from 1865 to 1873. In 1881, anti-Semitic pogroms forced the family to flee to Paris, France. When her father's glove making business failed, he found work as a janitor, while her mother operated a kosher restaurant. Held began working in the garment industry, then found work as a singer in Jewish theatres in Paris and, later, after her father's death, London, where her roles included the title role in a production by Jacob Adler of Abraham Goldfaden's *Shulamith*; she was also in Goldfaden's ill-fated Paris troupe, whose cashier stole their money before they ever played publicly.

Acting career



Portrait of Anna Held

Her vivacious and animated personality proved popular, and her career as a stage performer began to gain momentum. She was soon known for her risqué songs, flirtatious nature and willingness to show

her legs on stage. Around this time, she became the wife of a much-older Uruguayan playboy, Maximo Carrera, with whom she had a daughter, Liane (1895–1988), shortly after their 1894 marriage, and who became an actress and producer, sometimes billed as Anna Held, Jr.

Touring through Europe she was appearing in London in 1896 when she met Florenz Ziegfeld. Ziegfeld asked her to return to New York City with him and she agreed. He set about creating a wave of public interest in her, by feeding stories about her to the American press. By the time Held and Ziegfeld arrived in New York, she was already the subject of intense public speculation. When she finally performed, the critics were dismissive of her, but the public liked her.

Broadway success



Held in 1900



Anna Held, in an 1890s publicity photo

From 1905 Held enjoyed several successes on Broadway which apart from bolstering Ziegfeld's fortune, made her a millionaire in her own right. Ziegfeld's talent for creating publicity stunts ensured that Held's name remained well known. Held suggested the format for what would become the famous Ziegfeld Follies in 1907, and helped Ziegfeld establish the most lucrative phase of his career. Held could not perform in the first Follies in 1908 as she had become pregnant by Ziegfeld. She later miscarried or had an abortion. In 1909 he began an affair with the actress Lillian Lorraine. Held remained hopeful that his fascination would pass and he would return to her, but instead he turned his attentions to another actress Billie Burke, whom he would marry in 1914.

Held spent the years of World War I working in vaudeville, and touring France, performing for French soldiers and raising money for the war effort. She came to be regarded as a war heroine for her contributions, and was highly regarded for the courage she displayed in travelling to the frontline to be where she could do the most good. She returned to the United States and starred in the film *Madame le Presidente* (1916).

Shortly afterwards, her health began to fail. She collapsed onstage in 1918 and died after a few months from multiple myeloma at age 45. She is interred at Cemetery of the Gate of Heaven in Hawthorne, New York. Ziegfeld was castigated by the media he had so studiously courted, for his mistreatment of Held and apparent indifference to her illness, and his notable absence from her funeral.

Legacy



The grave of Anna Held in Gate of Heaven Cemetery

The film *The Great Ziegfeld* (1936) tells a sanitized version of the story of the Ziegfeld-Held relationship. Luise Rainer won an Academy Award for her performance as Held. Ziegfeld and Burke were played by William Powell and Myrna Loy. In 1978 Columbia Pictures released a made-for-television film, *Ziegfeld: The Man & His Women*, first telecast on NBC. This was a much more open and perhaps truthfully told movie about Ziegfeld and the women in his life, than the 1936 film. Anna was portrayed by Barbara Parkins.

The American poet Carl Sandburg wrote a memorial poem for Anna Held after Held's death, *An Electric Sign goes Dark*, in the collection *Smoke and Steel*.

In 1976 Anna Held's daughter, Liane Carrera (died 1988), opened a museum of her mother's personal and stage items in San Jacinto, California. A few years after the museum opened, it was looted by robbers and all the displayed material was stolen.

Anna May Wong

Anna May Wong (January 3, 1905 – February 3, 1961) was an American actress, the first Chinese American movie star, and the first Asian American to become an international star. Her long and varied career spanned both silent and sound film, television, stage, and radio.

Born near the Chinatown neighborhood of Los Angeles to second-generation Chinese-American parents, Wong became infatuated with the movies and began acting in films at an early age. During the silent film era, she acted in *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), one of the first movies made in color and Douglas Fairbanks' *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924). Wong became a fashion icon, and by 1924 had achieved international stardom.

Frustrated by the stereotypical supporting roles she reluctantly played in Hollywood, she left for Europe in the late 1920s, where she starred in several notable plays and films, among them *Piccadilly* (1929).

She spent the first half of the 1930s traveling between the United States and Europe for film and stage work. Wong was featured in films of the early sound era, such as *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931) and *Daughter of Shanghai* (1937), and with Marlene Dietrich in Josef von Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* (1932).

In 1935 Wong was dealt the most severe disappointment of her career, when Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer refused to consider her for the leading role in its film version of Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*, choosing instead the German actress Luise Rainer to play the leading role. Wong spent the next year touring China, visiting her family's ancestral village and studying Chinese culture. In the late 1930s, she starred in several B movies for Paramount Pictures, portraying Chinese-Americans in a positive light. She paid less attention to her film career during World War II, when she devoted her time and money to helping the Chinese cause against Japan. Wong returned to the public eye in the 1950s in several television appearances as well as her own series in 1951, *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong*, the first U.S. television show starring an Asian-American. She had been planning to return to film in *Flower Drum Song* when she died in 1961, at the age of 56.

For decades after her death, Wong was remembered principally for the stereotypical "Dragon Lady" and demure "Butterfly" roles that she was often given. Her life and career were re-evaluated in the years around the centennial of her birth, in three major literary works and film retrospectives. Interest in her life story continues and another biography, *Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story*, was published in 2009.



Early life

Anna May Wong was born **Wong Liu Tsong** (meaning "frosted yellow willows") on January 3, 1905, on Flower Street in Los Angeles, one block north of Chinatown, in an integrated community of Chinese, Irish, German, and Japanese residents. She was the second of seven children born to Wong Sam Sing, owner of the Sam Kee Laundry in Los Angeles, and his second wife Lee Gon Toy.

Anna May Wong's parents were second-generation Chinese-Americans; her maternal and paternal grandparents had resided in the U.S. since at least 1855. Her paternal grandfather, A Wong Wong, was a merchant who owned two stores in Michigan Hills, a gold-mining area in Placer County. He had come from Chang On, a village near Taishan, Guangdong Province, China in 1853. Anna May's father spent his youth traveling between the U.S. and China, where he married his first wife and fathered a son in 1890. He returned to the U.S. in the late 1890s, and in 1901, while continuing to support his family in China, he married a second wife, Anna May's mother. Anna May's older sister Lew Ying (Lulu) was born in late 1902, and Anna May was born in 1905, followed by five more children.

In 1910, the family moved to a neighborhood on Figueroa Street where they were the only Chinese on their block, living alongside mostly Mexican and Eastern European families. The two hills separating their new home from Chinatown helped Wong to assimilate into American culture. At first she attended public school with her older sister, but when the girls were the target of racist taunts from other students, their parents moved them to a Presbyterian Chinese school. Classes were taught in English, but Wong attended a Chinese language school afternoons and on Saturdays.

About that same time, U.S. motion picture production began to relocate from the east coast to the Los Angeles area. Movies were shot constantly in and around Wong's neighborhood. She began going to Nickelodeon movie theaters and quickly became obsessed with the "flickers", missing school and using lunch money to attend the cinema. Her father was not happy with her interest in films, feeling that it interfered with her studies, but Wong decided to pursue a career in film regardless. At nine years of age, she begged filmmakers for parts, earning herself the nickname "C.C.C." or "Curious Chinese Child". By the age of 11, Wong had come up with her stage name of Anna May Wong, formed by joining both her English and family names.

Early career



Anna May Wong in the early Technicolor film *The Toll of the Sea* (1922)

Wong was working at Hollywood's Ville de Paris department store when Metro Pictures needed 300 girl extras to appear in Alla Nazimova's film *The Red Lantern* (1919). Without her father's knowledge, a friend of his with movie connections helped Anna May land an unaccredited role as an extra carrying a lantern.

She worked steadily for the next two years as an extra in various movies, including Priscilla Dean and Colleen Moore pictures. While still a student, Wong came down with an illness identified as St. Vitus's Dance which caused her to miss months of school. She was on the verge of emotional collapse when her father took her to a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine. The treatments proved successful, though Wong later claimed this had more to do with her dislike of the methods. Other Chinese thought such as Confucianism and particularly Taoism and the teachings of Laozi had a strong influence on Wong's personal philosophy throughout her life. The family's religious life also included Christian thought, in the form of Presbyterianism, and as an adult she was a Christian Scientist for some time.

Finding it difficult to keep up with both her schoolwork and her passion, she dropped out of Los Angeles High School in 1921 to pursue a full-time acting career. Reflecting on her decision, Wong told *Motion Picture Magazine* in 1931: "I was so young when I began that I knew I still had youth if I failed, so I determined to give myself 10 years to succeed as an actress."

In 1921, Wong received her first screen credit for *Bits of Life*, the first anthology film, in which she played the wife of Lon Chaney's character, Toy Ling, in a segment entitled "Hop". She later recalled it fondly as the only time she played the role of a mother; her appearance earned her a cover photo in the British magazine *Picture Show*.

At the age of 17 she played her first leading role, in the early Metro two-strip Technicolor movie *The Toll of the Sea*. Written by Frances Marion, the story was based loosely on *Madama Butterfly*. *Variety* magazine singled Wong out for praise, noting her "extraordinarily fine" acting. *The New York Times* commented, "Miss Wong stirs in the spectator all the sympathy her part calls for, and she never repels one by an excess of theatrical 'feeling'. She has a difficult role, a role that is botched nine times out of ten, but hers is the tenth performance. Completely unconscious of the camera, with a fine sense of proportion and remarkable pantomimic accuracy ... She should be seen again and often on the screen."

Despite such reviews, Hollywood proved reluctant to create starring roles for Wong; her ethnicity prevented U.S. filmmakers from seeing her as a leading lady. David Schwartz, the chief curator of the Museum of the Moving Image, notes, "She built up a level of stardom in Hollywood, but Hollywood didn't know what to do with her." She spent the next few years in supporting roles providing "exotic atmosphere", for instance playing a concubine in Tod Browning's *Drifting* (1923). Film producers capitalized on Wong's growing fame by using her brief appearances in these supporting roles to promote their films. Still optimistic about a film career, in 1923 Wong said: "Pictures are fine, and I'm getting along all right, but it's not so bad to have the laundry back of you, so you can wait and take good parts and be independent when you're climbing."

Stardom

At the age of 19, Anna May Wong was cast in a supporting role as a Mongol slave in the Douglas Fairbanks picture *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924). Playing a stereotypical "Dragon Lady" role, her brief appearances on-screen caught the attention of audiences and critics alike. The film grossed more than \$2 million and helped introduce Wong to the public.

After this second prominent role, Wong moved out of the family home into her own apartment. Conscious that Americans viewed her as "foreign born" even though she was born and raised in California, Wong began cultivating a flapper image. In March 1924, planning to make films about Chinese myths, she signed a deal creating Anna May Wong Productions; when her business partner was found to be engaging in dishonest practices, Wong brought a lawsuit against him and the company was dissolved.

It soon became evident that Wong's career would continue to be limited by American anti-miscegenation laws, which prevented her from sharing an on-screen kiss with any person of another race, even if the character was Asian, but being portrayed by a white actor. The only leading Asian man in U.S. films in the silent era was Sessue Hayakawa. Unless Asian leading men could be found, Wong could not be a leading lady.

Wong continued to be offered supporting roles in minor films, in which she was often singled out for critical praise. Despite such favorable reviews, she became increasingly disappointed with her casting and began to seek other roads to success. In early 1925 she joined a group of serial stars on a tour of the vaudeville circuits; when the tour proved to be a failure, Wong and the rest of the group returned to Hollywood.

In 1926, Wong put the first rivet into the structure of Grauman's Chinese Theatre when she joined Norma Talmadge for its groundbreaking ceremony, although she was not invited to leave her hand- and foot-prints in cement.

In the same year Wong starred in *The Silk Bouquet*. Re-titled *The Dragon Horse* in 1927, the film was one of the first U.S. films to be produced with Chinese backing, provided by San Francisco's Chinese Six Companies. The story was set in China during the Ming Dynasty, and featured Asian actors playing the Asian roles.

Wong continued to be assigned supporting roles. Hollywood's Asian female characters tended toward two stereotypical poles: the naïve and self-sacrificing "Butterfly" and the sly and deceitful "Dragon Lady". In *Old San Francisco* (1927), directed by Alan Crosland for Warner Brothers, Wong played a "Dragon Lady", a gangster's daughter. In *Mr. Wu* (1927) she played a supporting role as increasing censorship against mixed race onscreen couples cost her the lead. In *The Crimson City*, released the following year, this happened again.

Move to Europe

Tired of being both typecast and being passed over for lead Asian character roles in favor of non-Asian actresses, Wong left Hollywood in 1928 for Europe. Interviewed by Doris Mackie for *Film Weekly* in 1933, Wong complained about her Hollywood roles: "I was so tired of the parts I had to play." She commented: "There seems little for me in Hollywood, because, rather than real Chinese, producers prefer Hungarians, Mexicans, American Indians for Chinese roles."

In Europe, Wong became a sensation, starring in notable films such as *Schmutziges Geld* (aka *Song* and *Show Life*, 1928), and *Großstadtschmetterling* (*City Butterfly*). Of the German critics' response to *Song*, *The New York Times* reported that Wong was "acclaimed not only as an actress of transcendent talent but as a great beauty". The article noted that Germans passed over Wong's American background: "Berlin critics, who were unanimous in praise of both the star and the production, neglect to mention that Anna May is of American birth. They mention only her Chinese origins." In Vienna, she played the title role in the operetta *Tschun Tsch* in fluent German. An Austrian critic wrote, "Fräulein Wong had the audience perfectly in her power and the unobtrusive tragedy of her acting was deeply moving, carrying off the difficult German-speaking part very successfully."

While in Germany, Wong became an inseparable friend of the director Leni Riefenstahl. Her close friendships with several women throughout her life, including Marlene Dietrich and Cecil Cunningham, led to rumors of lesbianism which damaged her public reputation. These rumors, in particular of her supposed relationship with Dietrich, embarrassed Wong's family who in any case had long been opposed to her acting career, at that time not considered to be an entirely respectable profession.

London producer Basil Dean bought the play *A Circle of Chalk* for Wong to appear in with the young Laurence Olivier, her first stage performance in the UK. Criticism of her Californian accent, described by one critic as a "Yankee squeak", led to Wong seeking vocal tutoring at Cambridge University, where she acquired a British accent. Composer Constant Lambert, infatuated with the actress after having seen her in films, attended the play on its opening night and subsequently composed *Eight Poems of Li Po*, dedicated to her.

Wong made her last silent film, *Piccadilly*, in 1929, the first of five English films in which she had a starring role. The film caused a sensation in the UK. Gilda Gray was the top-billed actress, but *Variety* commented that Wong "outshines the star", and that "from the moment Miss Wong dances in the kitchen's rear, she steals 'Piccadilly' from Miss Gray." Though the film presented Wong in her most sensual role in a British film, once again she was not permitted to kiss her Caucasian love interest, and a controversial planned scene involving a kiss was cut before the film was released. Forgotten for decades after its release, *Piccadilly* was later restored by the British Film Institute. *Time* magazine's Richard Corliss calls *Piccadilly* Wong's best film, and *The Guardian* reports that the rediscovery of this film and Wong's performance in it has been responsible for a restoration of the actress' reputation.

While in London, Wong was romantically linked with writer and broadcasting executive Eric Maschwitz, who wrote the lyrics to *These Foolish Things (Remind Me Of You)* as an evocation of his longing for her after they parted. Wong's first talkie was *The Flame of Love* (1930), which she recorded in French, English, and German. Though Wong's performance – particularly her handling of the three languages – was lauded, all three versions of the film received negative reviews.

Return to Hollywood

During the 1930s, American studios were looking for fresh European talent. Ironically, Wong caught their eye and she was offered a contract with Paramount Studios in 1930. Enticed by the promise of lead roles and top billing, she returned to the United States. The prestige and training she had gained during her years in Europe led to a starring role on Broadway in *On the Spot*, a drama that ran for 167 performances and which she would later film as *Dangerous to Know*. When the play's director wanted Wong to use stereotypical Japanese mannerisms, derived from *Madame Butterfly*, in her performance of a Chinese character, Wong refused. She instead used her knowledge of Chinese style and gestures to imbue the character with a greater degree of authenticity. Following her return to Hollywood in 1930, Wong repeatedly turned to the stage and cabaret for a creative outlet.

In November 1930, Anna May's mother was run over and killed by an automobile in front of the Figueroa Street house. The family remained at the house until 1934, when Wong's father returned to his hometown in China with Anna May's younger brothers and sister. Anna May had been paying for the education of her younger siblings, who put their education to work after they relocated to China. Before the family left, Wong's father wrote a brief article for *Xinning*, a magazine for overseas Taishanese, in which he expressed his pride in his famous daughter.

With the promise of appearing in a Josef von Sternberg film, Wong accepted another stereotypical role – the title character of Fu Manchu's vengeful daughter in *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931). This was the last stereotypically "evil Chinese" role Wong played, and also her one starring appearance alongside the only other well-known Asian actor of the era, Sessue Hayakawa. Though she was given the starring role, this status was not reflected in her paycheck: she was paid \$6,000, while Hayakawa received \$10,000 and Warner Oland, who is only in the film for 23 minutes, was paid \$12,000.

Wong began using her newfound celebrity to make political statements: late in 1931, for example, she wrote a harsh criticism of the Mukden Incident and Japan's subsequent invasion of Manchuria. She also became more outspoken in her advocacy for Chinese-American causes and for better film roles. In a 1933 interview for *Film Weekly* entitled "I Protest", Wong criticized the negative stereotyping in *Daughter of the Dragon*, saying, "Why is it that the screen Chinese is always the villain? And so crude a villain – murderous, treacherous, a snake in the grass! We are not like that. How could we be, with a civilization that is so many times older than the West?"



Anna May Wong and Marlene Dietrich in *Shanghai Express* (1932)

Wong appeared alongside Marlene Dietrich as a self-sacrificing courtesan in Sternberg's *Shanghai Express*. Her sexually charged scenes with Dietrich have been noted by many commentators, and fed rumors about the relationship between the two stars. Though contemporary reviews focused on Dietrich's acting and Sternberg's direction, film historians today judge that Wong's performance upstaged that of Dietrich.

The Chinese press had long given Wong's career very mixed reviews, and were less than favorable to her performance in *Shanghai Express*. A Chinese newspaper ran the headline: "Paramount Utilizes Anna May Wong to Produce Picture to Disgrace China", and continued, "Although she is deficient in artistic portrayal, she has done more than enough to disgrace the Chinese race." Critics in China believed that Wong's on-screen sexuality spread negative stereotypes of Chinese women. The most virulent criticism came from the Nationalist government, but China's intellectuals and liberals were not always so opposed to Wong, as demonstrated when Peking University awarded the actress an honorary doctorate in 1932. Contemporary sources reported that this was probably the only time that an actor had been so honored.

In both America and Europe, Wong had been seen as a fashion icon for over a decade. In 1934, the Mayfair Mannequin Society of New York voted her "The World's best-dressed woman", and in 1938 *Look* magazine named her "The World's most beautiful Chinese girl".

Atlantic crossings

After her success in Europe and prominent role in *Shanghai Express*, Wong's Hollywood career returned to its old pattern. Because of the Hays Code's anti-miscegenation rules, she was passed over for the leading female role in *The Son-Daughter* in favor of Helen Hayes. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer deemed her "too Chinese to play a Chinese" in the film, and the Hays Office would not have allowed her to perform romantic scenes since the film's male lead, Ramón Novarro, was not Asian. Wong was scheduled to play the role of a mistress to a corrupt Chinese general in Frank Capra's *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933), but the role went instead to Toshia Mori.



Carl Van Vechten photo portrait of Wong, September 22, 1935

Again disappointed with Hollywood, Wong returned to Britain, where she stayed for nearly three years. In addition to appearing in four films she toured Scotland, Ireland, and outlying British provinces as part of a vaudeville show. She also appeared in the King George Silver Jubilee program in 1935. Her film *Java Head* (1934), though generally considered a minor effort, was the only film in which Wong kissed the lead male character, her white husband in the film. Wong's biographer, Graham Russell Hodges, commented that this may be why the film remained one of Wong's personal favorites. While in London, Wong met Mei Lanfang, one of the most famous stars of the Beijing Opera. She had long been interested in Chinese opera and Mei offered to instruct Wong if she ever visited China.

In the 1930s, the popularity of Pearl Buck's novels, especially *The Good Earth*, as well as growing American sympathy for China in its struggles with Japanese Imperialism, opened up opportunities for more positive Chinese roles in U.S. films. Wong returned to the U.S. in June 1935 with the goal of obtaining the role of O-lan, the lead female character in MGM's film version of *The Good Earth*. Since its publication in 1931, Wong had made known her desire to play O-lan in a film version of the book; and as early as 1933, Los Angeles newspapers were touting Wong as the best choice for the part. Nevertheless, the studio apparently never seriously considered Wong for the role because Paul Muni, an actor of European descent, was to play O-lan's husband, Wang Lung. The Chinese government also advised the studio against casting Wong in the role. The Chinese advisor to MGM commented: "whenever she appears in a movie, the newspapers print her picture with the caption 'Anna May again loses face for China'".

According to Wong, she was instead offered the part of Lotus, a deceitful song girl who helps to destroy the family and seduces the family's oldest son. Wong refused the role, telling MGM head of production Irving Thalberg, "If you let me play O-lan, I will be very glad. But you're asking me – with Chinese blood – to do the only unsympathetic role in the picture featuring an all-American cast portraying Chinese characters." The role Wong hoped for went to Luise Rainer, who won the Best Actress Oscar for her performance. Wong's sister, Mary Liu Heung Wong, appeared in the film in the role of the Little Bride. MGM's refusal to consider Wong for this most high-profile of Chinese characters in U.S. film is remembered today as "one of the most notorious cases of casting discrimination in the 1930s".

Tour of China

After the major disappointment of losing the role in *The Good Earth*, Wong announced plans for a year-long tour of China, to visit her father and his family in Taishan. Wong's father had returned to his hometown in China with her younger brothers and sister in 1934. Aside from Mei Lanfang's offer to teach her, she wanted to learn more about the Chinese theater, and through English translations to better perform some Chinese plays before international audiences. She told the *San Francisco Chronicle* on her departure, "... for a year, I shall study the land of my fathers. Perhaps upon my arrival, I shall feel like an outsider. Perhaps instead, I shall find my past life assuming a dreamlike quality of unreality."

Embarking in January 1936, she chronicled her experiences in a series of articles printed in U.S. newspapers such as the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Examiner*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Photoplay*. In a stopover in Tokyo on the way to Shanghai, local reporters, ever curious about her romantic life, asked if she had marriage plans, to which Wong replied, "No, I am wedded to my art." The following day, however, Japanese newspapers reported that Wong was married to a wealthy Cantonese man named Art.

During her travels in China, Wong continued to be strongly criticized by the Nationalist government and the film community. She had difficulty communicating in many areas of China because she was raised with the Taishan dialect rather than Standard Chinese. She later commented that some of the Chinese dialects sounded "as strange to me as Gaelic. I thus had the strange experience of talking to my own people through an interpreter."

The toll of international celebrity on Wong's personal life manifested itself in bouts of depression and sudden anger, as well as excessive smoking and drinking. Feeling irritable when she disembarked in Hong Kong, Wong was uncharacteristically rude to the awaiting crowd, which then quickly turned hostile. One person shouted: "Down with Huang Liu Tsong – the stooge that disgraces China. Don't let her go ashore." Wong began crying, and a stampede ensued. After she left for a short trip to the Philippines, the situation cooled and Wong joined her family in Hong Kong. With her father and her siblings, Wong visited his family and his first wife at the family's ancestral home near Taishan. Conflicting reports claim that she was either warmly welcomed or met with hostility by the villagers. She spent over 10 days in the family's village, and some time in neighboring villages before continuing her tour of China. After returning to Hollywood, Wong reflected on her year in China and her career in Hollywood: "I am convinced that I could never play in the Chinese Theatre. I have no feeling for it. It's a pretty sad situation to be rejected by Chinese because I'm 'too American' and by American producers because they prefer other races to act Chinese parts." Wong's father returned to Los Angeles in 1938.

Late 1930s

To complete her contract with Paramount Pictures, Wong made a string of B movies in the late 1930s. Often dismissed by critics, the films gave Wong non-stereotypical roles which were publicized in the Chinese-American press for their positive images. These smaller-budgeted films could be bolder than the higher-profile releases, and Wong used this to her advantage to portray successful, professional, Chinese-American characters. Competent and proud of their Chinese heritage, these roles worked against the prevailing U.S. film portrayals of Chinese-Americans. In contrast to the usual official Chinese condemnation of Wong's film roles, the Chinese consul to Los Angeles gave his approval to the final scripts of two of these films, *Daughter of Shanghai* (1937) and *King of Chinatown* (1939).



Carl Van Vechten photo portrait of Wong, in costume for a dramatic adaptation of Puccini's *Turandot* at Westport, August 11, 1937

In *Daughter of Shanghai*, Wong played the Asian-American female lead in a role that was rewritten for her as the heroine of the story, actively setting the plot into motion rather than the more passive character originally planned. The script was so carefully tailored for Wong that at one point it was titled, *Anna May Wong Story*. Of this film, Wong told *Hollywood Magazine*, "I like my part in this picture better than any I've had before ... because this picture gives Chinese a break – we have sympathetic parts for a change! To me that means a great deal." *The New York Times* gave the film a generally positive review, commenting of its B-movie origins, "An unusually competent cast saves the film from the worst consequences of certain inevitable banalities. ... combine with effective sets to reduce the natural odds against any pictures in the *Daughter of Shanghai* tradition." In October 1937, the press carried rumors that Wong had plans to marry her male co-star in this film, childhood friend and Korean-American actor Philip Ahn. Wong replied, "It would be like marrying my brother."

Bosley Crowther was not so kind to *Dangerous to Know* (1938), which he called a "second-rate melodrama, hardly worthy of the talents of its generally capable cast". In *King of Chinatown* Wong played a surgeon who sacrifices a high-paying promotion in order to devote her energies to helping the Chinese fight the Japanese invasion. *The New York Times'* Frank Nugent gave the film a negative review. Though he commented positively on its advocacy of the Chinese in their fight against Japan, he wrote, "... Paramount should have spared us and its cast ... the necessity of being bothered with such folderol".

Paramount also employed Wong as a tutor to other actors, such as Dorothy Lamour in her role as a Eurasian in *Disputed Passage*. Wong performed on radio several times, including a 1939 role as "Peony" in Pearl Buck's *The Patriot* on Orson Welles' *The Campbell Playhouse*. Wong's cabaret act, which included songs in Cantonese, French, English, German, Danish, Swedish, and other languages, took her from the U.S. to Europe and Australia through the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1938, having auctioned off her movie costumes and donated the money to Chinese aid, the Chinese Benevolent Association of California honored Wong for her work in support of Chinese refugees. The proceeds from the preface that she wrote in 1942 to a cookbook titled *New Chinese Recipes*, one of the first Chinese cookbooks, were also dedicated to United China Relief. Between 1939 and 1942, she made few films, instead engaging in events and appearances in support of the Chinese struggle against Japan.

Later years

Wong starred in *Lady from Chungking* (1942) and *Bombs over Burma* (1943), both anti-Japanese propaganda made by the poverty row studio Producers Releasing Corporation. She donated her salary for both films to United China Relief. *The Lady from Chungking* differed from the usual Hollywood war film in that the Chinese were portrayed as heroes rather than as victims rescued by Americans. Even after American characters are captured by the Japanese, the primary goal of the heroes is not to free the Americans, but to prevent the Japanese from entering the city of Chongqing (Chungking). Also, in an interesting twist, the Chinese characters are portrayed by Chinese-American actors, while the Japanese villains – normally played by Chinese-American actors – are acted by European-Americans. The film ends with Wong making a speech for the birth of a "new China". *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety* both gave Wong's performance in *The Lady from Chungking* positive reviews, but commented negatively on the film's plot.

Later in life, Wong invested in real estate and owned a number of properties in Hollywood. She converted her home on San Vicente Boulevard in Santa Monica into four apartments which she called "Moongate Apartments". She served as the apartment house manager from the late 1940s until 1956, when she moved in with her brother Richard on 21st Place in Santa Monica.

In 1949, Wong's father died in Los Angeles at the age of 91. After a six-year absence, Wong returned to film the same year with a small role in a B movie called *Impact*. From August 27 to November 21, 1951, Wong starred in a detective series that was written specifically for her, the DuMont Television Network series *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong*, in which she played the title role which used her birth name. Wong's character was a dealer in Chinese art whose career involved her in detective work and international intrigue. The ten half-hour episodes aired during prime time, from 9:00 to 9:30 p.m. Although there were plans for a second season, DuMont canceled the show in 1952. No copies of the show or its scripts are known to exist. After the completion of the series, Wong's health began to deteriorate. In late 1953 she suffered an internal hemorrhage, which her brother attributed to the onset of menopause, her continued heavy drinking, and financial worries.

In 1956, Wong hosted one of the first U.S. documentaries on China narrated entirely by a Chinese-American. Broadcast on the ABC travel series *Bold Journey*, the program consisted of film footage from her 1936 trip to China. Wong also did guest spots on television series such as *Adventures in Paradise*, *The Barbara Stanwyck Show*, and *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*.

For her contribution to the film industry, Anna May Wong received a star at 1708 Vine Street on the inauguration of the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960. She is also depicted larger-than-life as one of the four supporting pillars of the "Gateway to Hollywood" sculpture located on the southeast corner of Hollywood Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, with the actresses Dolores del Río (Hispanic American), Dorothy Dandridge (African American) and Mae West.

In 1960, Wong returned to film in *Portrait in Black*, starring Lana Turner. She still found herself stereotyped, with one press release explaining her long absence from films with a supposed proverb, which was claimed to have been passed down to Wong by her father: "Don't be photographed too much or you'll lose your soul", a quote that would be inserted into many of her obituaries.

She was scheduled to play the role of Madame Liang in the film production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song*, but was unable to take the role due to failing health. On February 3, 1961, at the age of 56, Wong died of a heart attack at home in Santa Monica, two days after her final screen performance on the television show *Danger Man*. Her cremated remains were interred in her

mother's grave at Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles, frequently reported to be only marked by her mother's name on the tombstone. In 2008, a fan campaign started to raise funds to create and purchase a headstone for Wong.

Romances

In the early 1920s Wong had an affair with director Tod Browning. It was a romance largely unknown of at the time and highlighted by the fact that it was an interracial relationship and that Wong was underage.

Legacy



Carl Van Vechten's photo portrait, April 25, 1939

Wong's image and career have left a lasting legacy. Through her films, public appearances, and prominent magazine features, she helped to "humanize" Asian-Americans to white audiences during a period of overt racism and discrimination. Asian-Americans, especially the Chinese, had been viewed as perpetually foreign in U.S. society, but Wong's films and public image established her firmly as an Asian-American citizen at a time when laws specifically discriminated against Asian immigration and citizenship. Wong's hybrid image dispelled contemporary notions that the East and West were inherently different.

Among Wong's films, only *Shanghai Express* retained critical attention in the U.S. in the decades after her death. In Europe, and especially England, her films appeared occasionally at festivals. Wong remained popular with the gay community who often claimed her as one of their own, and for whom her marginalization by the mainstream became a symbol. Although the Chinese Nationalist criticism of her portrayals of the "Dragon Lady" and "Butterfly" stereotypes lingered, Wong herself was forgotten in China. Nevertheless, the importance of Wong's legacy within the Asian-American film community can be seen in the Anna May Wong Award of Excellence which is given out yearly at the Asian-American Arts Awards; the annual award given out by the Asian Fashion Designers was also named after Wong in 1973.

For decades following her death, Wong's image remained as a symbol in literature, as well as in film. In the 1971 poem "The Death of Anna May Wong", Jessica Hagedorn saw Wong's career as one of "tragic glamour", and portrayed the actress as a "fragile maternal presence, an Asian-American woman who managed to 'birth,' however ambivalently, Asian-American screen women in the jazz age". Wong's character in *Shanghai Express* was the subject of John Yau's 1989 poem "No One Ever Tried to Kiss Anna May Wong", which interprets the actress' career as a series of tragic romances. In David Cronenberg's 1993 film version of David Henry Hwang's 1986 play, *M. Butterfly*, Wong's image was used briefly as a symbol of a "tragic diva". Her life was the subject of *China Doll, The Imagined Life of an American Actress*, an award-winning fictional play written by Elizabeth Wong in 1995.

As the centennial of Wong's birth approached, a re-examination of her life and career took shape; three major works on the actress appeared, and comprehensive retrospectives of her films were held at both the Museum of Modern Art and the American Museum of the Moving Image in New York City. Anthony Chan's 2003 biography, *Perpetually Cool: The Many Lives of Anna May Wong (1905–1961)*, was the first major work on Wong, and was written, Chan says, "from a uniquely Asian-American perspective and sensibility". In 2004, Philip Leibfried and Chei Mi Lane's exhaustive examination of Wong's career, *Anna May Wong: A Complete Guide to Her Film, Stage, Radio and Television Work* was published, as well as a second full-length biography, *Anna May Wong: From Laundryman's Daughter to Hollywood Legend* by Graham Russell Hodges. Though Anna May Wong's life, career, and legacy reflect many complex issues which remain decades after her death, Anthony Chan points out that her place in Asian-American cinematic history, as its first female star, is permanent.

Anna Q. Nilsson

Anna Quirentia Nilsson (March 30, 1888 – February 11, 1974) was a Swedish born American actress who achieved success in American silent movies.



Anna Q. Nilsson by E.O. Hoppé (1921)



Background

Anna Q. Nilsson was born in Ystad, Skåne County, Sweden in 1888. Her middle name, "Quirentia " is derived from her date of birth, March 30 Saint Quirinius' Day. When she was 8 years old her father got a job at the local sugar factory in Hasslarp, a small community outside Helsingborg in Sweden where she spent most of her school years. She did very well in school, graduating with highest marks. Due to her good grades she was hired as sales clerk in Halmstad on the Swedish west coast, unusual for a young woman from a worker's family at the time. But she had set her mind on going to America.

Career

In 1905, she emigrated to the United States through Ellis Island. In the new country, the Swedish teenager started working as a nursemaid and learned English quickly. Soon she started working as a model. Already in 1907, she was named "Most beautiful woman in America". Penrhyn Stanlaws (1877–1957), one of the most successful and sought after cover artists of his day, picked Anna Q. Nilsson to become one of his models.

Nilsson's modeling led her to getting a role in the 1911 film *Molly Pitcher*. Films of special note for Anna were *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1917), *Soldiers of Fortune* (1919), *The Toll Gate* and *The Luck of the Irish* (both 1920), and *The Lotus Eater* (1921).

She stayed at the Kalem studio for several years, ranked behind their top star Alice Joyce. In the twenties she freelanced successfully for Paramount, First National and many other studios and reached a peak of popularity just before the advent of talkies, despite a serious horse-riding accident which kept

her from filming for almost two years. In 1923, she portrayed "Cherry Malotte" in the second movie based upon Rex Beach's *The Spoilers*, a role that would be played in later versions by Betty Compson (1930), Marlene Dietrich (1942), and Anne Baxter (1955).

In 1921 she returned to Sweden to record *Värmlänningarna*, her only Swedish movie. In 1926 she was named Hollywood's most popular woman. She welcomed royalty when the Swedish Crown Prince Gustav Adolf (later King Gustaf VI Adolf) and his wife Louise Mountbatten visited Hollywood. In 1928 she struck a record of fan mail, 30 000 letters a month, and that year Joseph Kennedy brought her to his newly formed film company Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO). The following year as she was horse riding, she fell off the horse, was thrown against a stone wall and breaking her hip. After a year of hard training she was on her feet again.

“Talkies”

In 1928, Anna Nilsson made her last film of the silent era, *Blockade*. With the introduction of sound films, Nilsson's career went into a sharp decline, although she continued to play small, often un-credited parts in films into the 1950s. Between 1930 and 1950, she participated in 39 sound films, in smaller roles. She played the role of the Swedish immigrant grandmother of Loretta Young in *The Farmers Daughter* (1947). Her best known performance in a sound film is arguably her turn as "herself", referred to as one of Swanson's "waxworks" in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), where she has one small line. That she'd be remembered for her one role in *Sunset Boulevard* is in irony to the hundreds of silent films she appeared in.

Personal life

Anna was married to actor Guy Coombs (1916-16) and to Norwegian-American shoe merchant John Marshall Gunnerson (1923–25). Nilsson has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6150 Hollywood Boulevard for her contribution to motion pictures. She was the first Swedish-born actress to receive such an honor. She died in Sun City, California, on February 11, 1974, of heart failure.

Barbara Kent

Barbara Kent (December 16, 1907 – October 13, 2011) was a Canadian-born U.S.-based silent film actress. Following the death of Miriam Seegar, she was the last North American actor still alive to have achieved substantial fame during the silent film era as an adult.

Career

Born as **Barbara Cloutman** in Gadsby, Alberta, to Jullion Curtis and Lily Louise (née Kent) Cloutman, she won the 21-year-old *Miss Hollywood Pageant* in 1925, the same year she graduated from Hollywood High School.

She began her Hollywood career in 1925, aged 17, in a small role for Universal Studios, which signed her to a contract that year. A brunette who stood less than five feet tall, Kent became popular as a comedienne opposite such stars as Reginald Denny. She made a strong impression as the heroine pitted against Greta Garbo's femme fatale in *Flesh and the Devil* in 1926 after Universal had loaned Kent to MGM to make the film. She attracted attention in the 1927 film *No Man's Law* by appearing to swim nude. She wore a flesh-colored moleskin bathing suit in scenes that were considered very daring at the time. The popularity of this film led to her selection as one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars for 1927. She made a smooth transition into talking pictures opposite Harold Lloyd in the comedy *Welcome Danger* (1929). Kent was also featured with Lloyd in his iconic *Feet First*. Over the next few years, she remained popular and received critical praise for her role in the 1933 film version of *Oliver Twist*.

Kent married talent agent Harry Edington in Yuma, Arizona on her 25th birthday, December 16, 1932. During a one-year hiatus, Edington groomed Kent for what he intended to be a high-profile career, however by the time she returned to films, her popularity had waned and she was unable to establish herself again. She made her last appearance on screen with Columbia's *Under Age* in 1941.

Later years and death

Following the death of her husband in 1949, Kent retreated from public life. She married Jack Monroe, an engineer, in 1954. They lived in Sun Valley, Idaho, later settling in Palm Desert, California. She repeatedly refused to discuss her film career or grant interviews. Monroe died in 1998.

Kent died in Palm Desert on October 13, 2011 at the age of 103.



Barbara La Marr

Barbara La Marr (July 28, 1896 – January 30, 1926) was an American stage and film actress, cabaret artist and screenwriter.

La Marr was known as "The Girl Who Is Too Beautiful", after a Hearst newspaper feature writer, Adela Rogers St. Johns, saw a judge sending her home during the police beat in Los Angeles because she was too beautiful and young to be on her own.



Barbara La Marr, circa 1920

Early life

Born in 1896 as **Reatha Dale Watson** to William Wallace and Rosana "Rose" Watson in Yakima, Washington. Her father was an editor for a newspaper, and her mother had a son, Henry, born in 1878, and a daughter, Violet, born in February 1881, from a previous marriage. The couple wed some time during 1884, and they had William Watson, Jr., born in June 1886 in Washington. He would later, in the 1920s, become a vaudeville comedian under the stage name of "Billy Devore". The Watsons lived in various locations during La Marr's formative years. By 1900, she was living with her parents in Portland, Oregon, with her brother William, her half-sister Violet Ross, and Violet's husband Arvel Ross. As a child, La Marr also performed in a few stage productions in Tacoma, Washington.

By 1910, La Marr was living in Fresno, California, with her parents. Some time after 1911, the family moved to Los Angeles. In January 1913, La Marr's half-sister, now going by the name of Violet Ake, took her then 16-year-old sister on a three-day automobile excursion with a man named C.C. Boxley. They drove up to Santa Barbara, but after a few days La Marr felt that they were not going to let her return home. Ake and Boxley finally let La Marr return to Los Angeles after they realized that there were warrants issued for their arrests accusing them of kidnapping. This episode was published in several newspapers, and La Marr even testified against her sister, but the case was eventually dropped.

La Marr's name appeared frequently in newspaper headlines during the next few years. In November 1914, she came back from Arizona and announced that she was the newly-widowed wife of a rancher

named Jack Lytell, and that they were supposedly married in Mexico. As legend goes, Lytell became enamored of La Marr as he saw her one day riding in an automobile while he was out on horseback. He rode up to her car and swept her on his horse and rode off with her. They were married the next day. She also stated that she loathed the name Reatha and preferred to be called by the childhood nickname "Beth".

Career



La Marr in *The Three Musketeers* (1921)

After marrying and moving with her second husband to New York City, La Marr found employment writing screenplays and her association with filmmakers led to her returning to Los Angeles and making her film debut in 1920. Over the next few years she acted frequently in films, and was widely publicized as "The Most Beautiful Girl In The World". With this, she rapidly shot to stardom.

La Marr made the successful leap from writer to actress in Douglas Fairbanks' *The Nut* (1921), appeared in over 30 films, wrote seven successful screenplays for United Artists and Fox studios, and danced in musical comedies on Broadway. She is also said to have filmed dancing shorts in New York City, Chicago, and in Los Angeles, with such diverse partners as Rudolph Valentino and Clifton Webb.

Among La Marr's films are *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *Trifling Women*, both 1922 releases directed by Rex Ingram.

Personal life



La Marr with Ramón Novarro in *Trifling Women* (1922)

La Marr married for the first time at the age of 17, and was ultimately married five times. At the time of her death she was married to actor Jack Dougherty. Some years after her death, it was revealed that she had mothered a son by a man whose name has never been released. The child, Marvin Carville La Marr, was adopted after her death by the actress ZaSu Pitts and her husband, film executive Tom Gallery. The

child was renamed Don Gallery and grew up to become an actor and a sometime boyfriend of Elizabeth Taylor; he now lives in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Her former dance partner, Robert Hobday (stage name Robert Carville), was named as her alleged lover by her third husband Phil Ainsworth in his divorce suit. Hobday's sister, Virginia, had been La Marr's manager and friend, who later went on to marry Jules Roth, manager of the Hollywood Memorial Cemetery, and La Marr's former lover.

Later years and death

Although her film career flourished, she also embraced the fast-paced Hollywood nightlife, remarking in an interview that she slept no more than two hours a night.

On January 30, 1926, La Marr died of tuberculosis and nephritis in Altadena, California at the age of 29. She was interred in a crypt at Hollywood Cathedral Mausoleum, in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, La Marr has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1621 Vine Street.

Bebe Daniels

Bebe Daniels (January 14, 1901 – March 16, 1971) was an American actress, singer, dancer, writer and producer. She began her career in Hollywood during the silent movie era as a child actress, became a star in musicals like *42nd Street*, and later gained further fame on radio and television in Britain. In a long career, Bebe Daniels made over 230 films.



Bebe Daniels in 1925

Early life and career

Daniels was born **Phyllis Virginia Daniels** (Bebe was a childhood nickname) in Dallas, Texas. Her father was a theater manager and her mother a stage actress. The family moved to Los Angeles, California in her childhood and she began her acting career at the age of four in the first version of *The Squaw Man*. That same year she also went on tour in a stage production of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. The following year she participated in productions by Morosoo and David Belasco.

By the age of seven Daniels had her first starring role in film as the young heroine in *A Common Enemy*. At the age of nine she starred as Dorothy Gale in the 1910 short film *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. At the age of fourteen she starred opposite film comedian Harold Lloyd in a series of *Lonesome Luke* two-reel comedies starting with the 1915 film *Giving Them Fits*. The two eventually developed a publicized romantic relationship and were known in Hollywood as "The Boy" and "The Girl."

In 1919, she decided to move to greater dramatic roles and accepted a contract offering from Cecil B. DeMille, who gave her secondary roles in such films as *Male and Female* (1919), *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920), and *The Affairs of Anatol* (1921).

Later life and career



This 1921 *Vanity Fair* caricature by Ralph Barton shows the famous people who, he imagined, left work each day in Hollywood.

In the 1920s, Daniels was under contract with Paramount Pictures. She became an adult star by 1922 and by 1924 was playing opposite Rudolph Valentino in *Monsieur Beaucaire*. Following this she was cast in a number of light popular films, namely *Miss Bluebeard*, *The Manicure Girl*, and *Wild Wild Susan*. Paramount dropped her contract with the advent of talking pictures. Daniels was hired by Radio Pictures (later known as RKO) to star in one of their biggest productions of the year. She also starred in the 1929 talkie *Rio Rita*. It proved to be one of the most successful films of that year, and Bebe Daniels found herself a star and RCA Victor hired her to record several records for their catalog. As many stars of her day, she used the therapeutic services of Sylvia of Hollywood to stay in shape for her performances.

Radio Pictures starred her in a number of musicals including *Dixiana* (1930) and *Love Comes Along* (1930). Towards the end of 1930, Bebe Daniels appeared in the musical comedy *Reaching for the Moon*. However, by this time musicals had gone out of fashion so that most of the musical numbers from the film had to be removed before it could be released. Daniels had become associated with musicals and so Radio Pictures did not renew her contract. Warner Brothers realized what a box office draw she was and offered her a contract which she accepted. During her years at Warner Brothers she starred in such

pictures as *My Past* (1931), *Honor of the Family* (1931) and the extremely successful 1931 pre-code version of *The Maltese Falcon*, which opened to rave reviews. In 1932, she appeared in *Silver Dollar* (1932) and the successful Busby Berkeley choreographed musical comedy *42nd Street* (1933) in which she sang once again. That same year she played opposite John Barrymore in *Counsellor-At-Law*. Her last film for the Warner Brothers was *Registered Nurse* (1934).



Publicity photo of Bebe Daniels from "Stars of the Photoplay"

She retired from Hollywood in 1935. With her husband, film actor Ben Lyon, whom she married in 1930, she moved to London. A few years later, Daniels starred in the London production of *Panama Hattie* in the title role originated by Ethel Merman. The Lyons' then did radio shows for the BBC. Most notably, they starred in the series *Hi Gang*, continuing for decades and enjoying considerable popularity during World War II. Daniels wrote most of the dialogue for the *Hi Gang* radio show. The couple remained through the days of the The Blitz.

Following the war, Daniels was awarded the Medal of Freedom by Harry S. Truman for war service. In 1945 she returned to Hollywood for a short time to work as a film producer for Hal Roach and Eagle Lion. She returned to the UK in 1948 and lived there for the remainder of her life. Daniels, her husband, her son Richard and her daughter Barbara all starred in the radio sitcom *Life With The Lyons* (1951 to 1961), which later made the transition to television.

Death

On March 16, 1971, Daniels died of a cerebral hemorrhage in London at the age of 70. Her remains were cremated at London's Golders Green Crematorium and the ashes brought home where she was interred in the Chapel columbarium at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Hollywood, California.

Bessie Love

Bessie Love (September 10, 1898 – April 26, 1986) was an American motion picture actress who achieved prominence mainly in the silent films and early talkies. With a small frame and delicate features, she played innocent young girls, flappers, and wholesome leading ladies. Her role in *The Broadway Melody* (1929) earned her a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actress. In addition to her acting career, she wrote the screenplay for the 1919 film *A Yankee Princess*.



c. 1916

Early life

Love was born **Juanita Horton** in Midland, Texas. She attended school in Midland until she was in the eighth grade, when her chiropractor father moved his family to Hollywood. Bessie graduated from Los Angeles High School and then received from her parents (as a graduation present) of a trip around the United States. After six months of traveling, she finally returned home to Los Angeles.

Career



Bessie Love and Douglas Fairbanks in *The Good Bad Man* (1916), here listed under the title, *Coyote o' The Rio Grande*

The Silent Era

To help with the family's financial situation, Love's mother sent her to Biograph Studios, where she met pioneering film director D.W. Griffith. Griffith, who introduced Bessie Love to films, also gave the actress her screen moniker. He gave her small roles in his films *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and in *Intolerance* (1916). She also appeared opposite William S. Hart in *The Aryan* and with Douglas Fairbanks in *The Good Bad Man*, *Reggie Mixes In*, and *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish* (all 1916).

In 1922 Love was selected one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars. In 1923, she starred in *Human Wreckage* with Dorothy Davenport and produced by Thomas Ince.

As her roles got larger, so did her popularity. She performed the Charleston in the film *The King on Main Street* in 1925. Also that same year she starred in *The Lost World*, a science fiction adventure based on the novel of the same name by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Three years later she starred in *The Matinee Idol*, a romantic comedy directed by a young Frank Capra.

The Sound Era



Star on Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6777 Hollywood Blvd.

Love was able to successfully transition to talkies, and in 1929 she was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress for *The Broadway Melody*. She also appeared in several other early musicals including *The Hollywood Revue of 1929* (1929), *Chasing Rainbows* (1930), *Good News* (1930), and *They Learned About Women* (1930).

However, by 1932 her American film career was in decline. She moved to England in 1935 and did stage work and occasional films there. As war came in Europe she returned to the US for a while, worked for the Red Cross, and entertained the troops. After the war she moved back to Britain where she kept her main residence, and continued to play small film roles for film companies in both the US and Britain. She appeared in films like *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954) with Humphrey Bogart, and as an American tourist in *The Greengage Summer* (1961) starring Kenneth More. She also played a small role as an American tourist in the James Bond thriller *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* (1969). She played a small but pivotal role as a switchboard operator in 1971's *Sunday Bloody Sunday*.

Her career came to a quick halt soon after that however, and she moved permanently to the United Kingdom, becoming a British citizen. She made a comeback in the 1980s with roles in *Ragtime* (1981), Warren Beatty's *Reds* (1981), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1981) and (her final film) *The Hunger* (1983).

starring Catherine Deneuve, David Bowie, and Susan Sarandon. During her lifetime, Love featured in 131 films and TV episodes.

Personal life

In 1977 she published an autobiography, *From Hollywood with Love*. She was at this time living comfortably in a flat overlooking London's Clapham Common and had recently appeared in a television account of the abdication of King Edward VIII.

She recorded that during World War II in Britain when she found acting work hard to come by she had been the "continuity girl" on the film drama *San Demetrio London*, an account of a ship badly damaged in the Atlantic but whose crew managed to bring her to port. She also says she had regular diet in the post-war era of stage roles as an American Tourist and similar roles, and was "Aunt Pittypat" in a large-scale musical version of *Gone With the Wind*.

Love was married once, from 1929 to 1935, to film producer William Hawks (the brother of film director Howard Hawks), and she had a daughter from that marriage. Love died in London, England from natural causes on April 26, 1986.

She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6777 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, California.

Betty Bronson

Betty Bronson (November 17, 1906 – October 19, 1971) was an American television and film actress who began her career during the silent film era. She was a famous actress in silent and sound films.



Film career

She was born **Elizabeth Ada Bronson** in Trenton, New Jersey to Frank and Nellie Smith Bronson. She began her film career began at age of sixteen with a bit part in the film *Anna Ascends*. At seventeen, after she had pleaded with every friend she had at Paramount Pictures, she finally got an interview with J. M. Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*. Barrie personally chose her to play the lead in a film of his work *Peter Pan* which would be released in 1924. This film role had been sought by both Gloria Swanson and Mary Pickford, but Bronson won the role through her natural lightness and grace, probably refined through training with the Ballet Russes. Though she was with them for only a short time, perhaps a couple of weeks, it proved helpful in enhancing her portrayal of Peter Pan, especially in the flight sequences.

She starred with Mary Brian (Wendy Darling) and Esther Ralston (Mrs. Darling), and the three of them became very close friends for the rest of their lives.

Bronson became an instant success in the year following the release of *Peter Pan*. She had a major role in the 1925 silent film adaptation of *Ben-Hur*. In 1926, she starred in another Barrie story *A Kiss for Cinderella*, an artfully-made film that failed at the box office. She had moderate success for the rest of her career. She made a very successful transition into sound films. Her first sound film was in *The Singing Fool* (1928) with Al Jolson, and she also starred in the follow-up film *Sonny Boy* (1929) with Davey Lee. She was the leading lady opposite Jack Benny in the romantic drama *The Medicine Man* (1930).

Bronson continued film roles until 1933 when she married Ludwig Lauerhass, with whom she had one child, Ludwig Lauerhass, Jr. She did not appear in films again until *Yodelin' Kid from Pine Ridge* (1937), starring Gene Autry. She resumed acting in the 1960s appearing in episode television roles and feature films. Her last film role was an un-credited part in the television biopic *Evel Knievel* (1971).

Bronson, the Media and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

Bronson was always rather reclusive with the press, but she did get some attention after being seen with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. He had his first childish crush on her, and as he remembered in his autobiography *The Salad Days*, he stated:

"Another important picture had just started. It was *Peter Pan*, directed by a clever caricature of a wildly temperamental movie director, Herbert Brenon. After exhaustive tests, Betty Bronson, a pretty and gifted girl in her middle teens, was given this famous role... I fell for Betty! It was my first intensely juvenile, deep-sighs-and-bad-sonnets love. It was not fully requited. She only flirted with me. My rival was a fellow in his twenties, a newspaperman who was to become one of New York's most respected theater critics, Richard Watts, Jr. ...In any event, I was so smitten with Betty, I could think of little else, except when I could call on her, even though her overprotective mother was always just in the next room."

In any case, it is known that Bronson kept all of his letters, bad sonnets and all, and she spoke of him fondly until her dying day.

Death

On October 19, 1971, Bronson died after a protracted illness in Pasadena, California and was interred in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale.

Betty Compson

Betty Compson (March 19, 1897 – April 18, 1974) was an American actress. Born **Eleanor Luicime Compson** in Beaver, Utah, she had an extensive film career. Her father died when she was young, and she was forced to drop out of school and earn a living for herself and her mother. She obtained employment as a violinist in a Salt Lake City, Utah, theater.

Silent films

Compson made 25 films in 1916 alone, although most of them are shorts. She completed *The Miracle Man* (1919) for George Loane Tucker. Compson's rise as a star in motion pictures began with her portrayal of *Rose* in this production.



From Photoplay Magazine 1920

In 1920, she began to head her own company. She worked at the Hollywood Brunton studio and acquired three stories for films. Compson returned from New York City where she obtained financial backing for her motion picture productions.

Her first movie as producer was *Prisoners of Love* (1921). She played the role of *Blanche Davis*, a girl born to wealth and cursed by her inheritance of physical beauty. Compson selected Art Rosson to direct the feature. The story was chosen from a work by Catherine Henry.

Compson worked for the Christie Company as a newcomer in films, followed by Famous Players-Lasky. After completing *The Woman With Four Faces* (1923) she signed with a London, England motion picture company. There she starred in a series of four films directed by Graham Cutts, a well-known English filmmaker. The first of these was a movie version of an English play called *Woman to Woman* (1924), the screenplay for which was co-written by Cutts and Alfred Hitchcock.

In 1928, she appeared in *Court-Martial* as Belle Starr, and in *The Barker*, a silent movie which contained some talking scenes. Compson was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress for her performance in *The Barker*. Mainly due to this success, she became one of the busiest actors in the new talking cinema. Unlike a number of other female stars of silent film, it was felt that her voice recorded exceptionally well. Although she was not a singer, she appeared in a number of early musicals, in which her singing voice was dubbed.

Later career

One of her most revered films remains *The Docks of New York* (1928), noted for its dark visual ambiance and superb performances. In 1930, she made a version of *The Spoilers* in which she played the role later portrayed by similar-looking Marlene Dietrich in the 1942 remake, while Gary Cooper played the part subsequently acted in the later film by John Wayne, perhaps the only time that Cooper and Wayne played precisely the same role. One major film in which she did not appear was *Gone With the Wind*; although she shot a Technicolor screen test for the role of Belle Watling, she was not cast in the role. Unfortunately, most of her later films were low-budget, even exploitation, efforts, though her acting was always competent.

Compson's last film was *Here Comes Trouble* (1948). She retired following that film and helped her husband run a business called "Ashtrays Unlimited".

Private life



Lobby card from *The Docks of New York*

Compson wed three times and produced no children. From 1924 to 1930 she was married to film director James Cruze. Later she married and divorced agent-producer Irving Weinberg. Her third husband was Silvius Jack Gall. He died in 1962.

Betty Compson died in 1974, of a heart attack, at her home in Glendale, California. She was 77. She was interred in San Fernando Mission Cemetery in San Fernando, California. She left no surviving relatives.

Billie Burke

Mary William Ethelbert Appleton "Billie" Burke (August 7, 1884 – May 14, 1970) was an American actress. She is primarily known to modern audiences as Glinda the Good Witch of the North in the musical film *The Wizard of Oz*. She was nominated for an Academy Award for her performance as Emily Kilbourne in *Merrily We Live*. Burke was also the wife of Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., of Ziegfeld Follies fame, from 1914 until his death.



Billie Burke in *Topper Returns* (1941)

Early life

Known as **Billie Burke**, she toured the United States and Europe with her father, a singer. Her family ultimately settled in London where she was fortunate to see plays in London's West End. In 1903, she began acting on stage, making her debut in London in *The School Girl*. She eventually returned to America to become the toast of Broadway as a musical comedy star.

Career

Burke went on to play leads on Broadway in *Mrs. Dot*, *Suzanne*, *The Runaway*, *The "Mind-the-Paint" Girl*, and *The Land of Promise* from 1910 to 1913, along with a supporting role in the revival of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Amazons*. There she caught the eye of producer Florenz Ziegfeld, marrying him in 1914. In 1916, they had one daughter, Patricia Ziegfeld Stephenson (1916–2008). Burke was quickly signed for the movies, making her film debut in the title role of *Peggy* (1916). She continued to appear on the stage, and sometimes she starred on the screen. She loved the stage more than movie-business, not only because it was her first love, but also because it allowed her to have speaking parts (impossible in silent movies). But when the family's savings were wiped out in the Crash of 1929, she had no choice but to return to the screen.



Billie Burke in 1909

In 1932, Burke made her Hollywood comeback, starring as Margaret Fairfield in *A Bill of Divorcement*, directed by George Cukor. (Burke played Katharine Hepburn's mother in the film, which was Hepburn's debut). Despite the death of Florenz Ziegfeld during the film's production, Burke resumed filming shortly after his funeral.

In 1933, Burke was cast as Mrs. Millicent Jordan, a scatterbrained high-society woman hosting a dinner party in the comedy *Dinner at Eight*, directed by George Cukor, co-starring with Lionel Barrymore, Marie Dressler, John Barrymore, Jean Harlow and Wallace Beery. The movie was a great success, and revived Burke's career. She subsequently starred in many comedies and musicals, typecast as a ditzzy, fluffy and feather-brained upper-class matron with her high-pitched voice.

In 1936, MGM filmed a sanitized biopic of Florenz Ziegfeld (*The Great Ziegfeld*), a film that won Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Actress (Luise Rainer as Ziegfeld's common-law wife, Anna Held). William Powell played Flo Ziegfeld and Myrna Loy played Burke.

In 1937 she appeared in the first of the *Topper* films, about a man haunted by two socialite ghosts (played by Cary Grant and Constance Bennett), in which she played the tremulous and daffy Clara Topper. Her performance as Emily Kilbourne in *Merrily We Live* (1938) resulted in her only Oscar nomination. In 1938 she was chosen to play Glinda, "the Good Witch of the North", in the Oscar-winning seminal 1939 musical film *The Wizard of Oz*, directed by Victor Fleming, with Judy Garland. Burke had worked on a Garland film, *Everybody Sing*, in which she played Judy's histrionically hysterical actress-mother. Another successful film series followed with *Father of the Bride* (1950) and *Father's Little Dividend* (1951), both directed by Vincente Minnelli and starring Spencer Tracy, Joan Bennett, and Elizabeth Taylor.

Burke wrote two autobiographies, both with Cameron Van Shippe, *With a Feather on My Nose* (Appleton 1949) and *With Powder on My Nose* (Coward McCann, 1959).

Radio and television

On CBS Radio, *The Billie Burke Show* was heard on Saturday mornings from April 3, 1943 until September 21, 1946. Sponsored by Listerine, this situation comedy was initially titled *Fashions in Rations* during its first year. Portraying herself as a featherbrained Good Samaritan who lived "in the little white house on Sunnyview Lane," she always offered a helping hand to those in her neighborhood. She worked often in early television, appearing in the short-lived sitcom *Doc Corkle* (1952). She was a guest star on several TV and radio series, including *Duffy's Tavern*.

Burke tried to make a comeback on the New York stage. She starred in two short-lived productions: *This Rock* and *Mrs. January and Mr. Ex*. Although Burke got good reviews, the plays did not. She appeared in several plays in California as well, although her mind became clouded, and she had trouble remembering lines. In the late 1950s, her failing memory led to her retirement from show business, although her explanation for that was, "Acting just wasn't any fun anymore."

Her last screen appearance was in *Sergeant Rutledge*, a Western directed by John Ford in 1960.

Death



Memorial statue at Billie Burke's grave in Kensico Cemetery

Billie Burke died in Los Angeles of natural causes, aged 85, in 1970 and was interred at Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, Westchester County, New York, survived by her daughter, Patricia, and four grandchildren.

Legacy

For many years, Burke's framed photo was displayed above the exit staircase at New York's Ziegfeld Theatre, but it vanished after renovations. However, an opening night program, bearing a picture of Burke, from her 1912 triumph *The Mind The Paint Girl* (Sir Arthur Wing Pinero) is still displayed in the lobby of the Lyceum Theatre in New York City. A park in the New York City suburb of Hastings on Hudson, New York, is named the Burke Estate.

Billie Dove

Billie Dove (May 14, 1903 – December 31, 1997) was an American actress.



Billie Dove, early 1920s

Early life and career

She was born as **Bertha Bohny** in New York City to Charles and Bertha Bohny who were Swiss immigrants. As a teen, she worked as a model to help support her family and was hired at the age of 15 by Florenz Ziegfeld to appear in his Ziegfeld Follies Revue. She legally changed her name to **Lillian Bohny** in the early 1920s, and migrated to Hollywood, where she began appearing in silent films. She soon became one of the most popular actresses of the 1920s, appearing in Douglas Fairbanks' smash hit Technicolor film *The Black Pirate* (1926), as Rodeo West in *The Painted Angel* (1929), and was dubbed *The American Beauty* (1927), the title of one of her films.

She married the director of her seventh film, Irvin Willat, in 1923. The two divorced in 1929. Dove had a huge legion of male fans, one of her most persistent being Howard Hughes. She shared a three-year romance with Hughes and was engaged to marry him, but she ended the relationship without ever giving cause. Hughes cast her as a comedian in his film *Cock of the Air* (1932). She also appeared in his movie *The Age for Love* (1931).

Other

She was also a pilot, poet, and painter.

Early retirement

Following her last film, *Blondie of the Follies* (1932), Dove retired from the screen to be with her family, although she was at the time still popular. She next married oil executive Robert Kenaston in 1933, a marriage that lasted for 37 years until Kenaston's death in 1973. They had two children — one son and one adopted daughter. She later had a brief third marriage to architect John Miller, which ended in divorce.

Last years/death

Aside from a brief cameo in *Diamond Head* (1962), Dove never returned to the movies. She spent her retirement years in Rancho Mirage before moving into the Motion Picture & Television Country House and Hospital in Woodland Hills, California where she died of pneumonia in 1997, aged 94.

She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame located at 6351 Hollywood Blvd.

Blanche Sweet

Sarah Blanche Sweet (June 18, 1896 – September 6, 1986) was an American silent film actress who began her career in the earliest days of the Hollywood motion picture film industry.



Blanche Sweet, c. 1915

Early life

Born in Chicago, Illinois into a family of stock theater and vaudeville performers, Blanche Sweet entered the entertainment industry at an early age. At age 4 she toured in a play called *The Battle of the Strong* whose star was stage luminary Maurice Barrymore. A decade later Sweet would act with Barrymore's son Lionel in a Griffith directed film. In 1909, she started work at Biograph Studios under contract to director D. W. Griffith. By 1910 she had become a rival to Mary Pickford, who had also started for Griffith the year before.

Rise to stardom

Sweet is renowned for her energetic, independent roles, at variance with the 'ideal' Griffith type of vulnerable, often fragile, femininity. After many starring roles, her first real landmark film was the 1911 Griffith thriller *The Lonedale Operator*. In 1913 she starred in Griffith's first feature-length movie, *Judith of Bethulia*. In 1914 Sweet was initially cast by Griffith in the part of Elsie Stoneman in his epic *The Birth of a Nation* but the role was eventually given to rival actress Lillian Gish, who was Sweet's senior by three years. That same year Sweet parted ways with Griffith and joined Paramount (then Famous Players-Lasky) for the much higher pay that studio was able to afford.

Throughout the 1910s, Sweet continued her career appearing in a number of highly prominent roles in films and remained a publicly popular leading lady. She often starred in vehicles by Cecil B. DeMille and Marshall Neilan, and she was recognized by leading film critics of the time to be one of the foremost actresses of the entire silent era. It was during her time working with Neilan that the two began a publicized affair, which brought on his divorce from former actress Gertrude Bambrick. Sweet and Neilan married in 1922. The union ended in 1929 with Sweet charging that Neilan was a persistent adulterer.

During the early 1920s Sweet's career continued to prosper, and she starred in the first film version of *Anna Christie* in 1923. The film is also notable as being the first Eugene O'Neill play to be made into a motion picture. In successive years, she starred in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Sporting Venus*, both directed by Neilan. Sweet soon began a new career phase as one of the newly formed MGM studio's biggest stars.

Talkies

As the "Roaring Twenties" wound down, Sweet's career faltered with the advent of talkies. Sweet made just three talking pictures, including her critically lauded performance in 1930's *Show Girl in Hollywood*, before retiring from the screen that same year and marrying stage actor Raymond Hackett in 1935. The marriage lasted until Hackett's death in 1958.

Sweet spent the remainder of her performing career in radio and in secondary Broadway stage roles. Eventually, her career in both of these fields petered out, and she began working in a Los Angeles department store. In the late 1960s, her acting legacy was resurrected when film scholars invited her to Europe to receive recognition for her work. File:Blanche Sweet September 1984.jpg

On September 24, 1984, a tribute to Blanche Sweet was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Miss Sweet introduced her 1925 film, *The Sporting Venus*.

She died in New York City of a stroke, aged 90.

Robert Harron

Robert "Bobby" Harron (April 12, 1893 – September 5, 1920) was an American motion picture actor of the early silent film era. Although he acted in scores of films, he is possibly best remembered for his roles in the D.W. Griffith directed films *Intolerance* and *The Birth of a Nation*. He was also the older brother of film actor John Harron and actress Mary Harron.



Early life

Born **Robert Emmett Harron** in New York City, New York, U.S., he was second oldest child of nine siblings in a poor, working-class Irish Catholic family. He attended the Christian Brothers school in Greenwich Village and beginning at the age of thirteen found work as a messenger boy for American Biograph Studios to help support his family. Within a year of working for Biograph, Robert Harron and Christian Brothers friend and classmate James Smith were noticed by newly hired director D.W. Griffith who put both young boys under contract and the pair began appearing in bit parts for the studio. His first film was the now lost 1907 Biograph short *Bobby's Kodak*. Harron quickly became a favorite of Griffith and Griffith began to give the 14-year-old increasingly larger film roles.

The teenaged Robert Harron was often cast by Griffith in the role of the "sensitive" and "naïve" boy, who was overwhelmingly sympathetic and appealing to American film-goers in the very early years of American motion pictures and not far removed from Harron's real-life persona; Harron was often described as a quiet and soft-spoken youth. It was these traits that helped garner much public interest in the young actor, especially amongst young female fans. In 1912 alone, Robert Harron appeared in nearly forty films at Biograph.

Harron is probably best recalled for his roles in the three epic Griffith films: 1914's *Judith of Bethulia*, opposite Blanche Sweet, Mae Marsh, Henry B. Walthall and Dorothy and Lillian Gish, 1915's controversial all-star cast *The Birth of a Nation*, and 1916's colossal multi-scenario *Intolerance* opposite such popular stars of the era Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Miriam Cooper, Wallace Reid, Harold

Lockwood, Carol Dempster and Mildred Harris. One of Harron's most popular roles of the era came in 1919 when he starred opposite Lillian Gish in the Griffith directed romantic film *True Heart Susie*.

Robert Harron's film career continued to flourish throughout the 1910s and he was occasionally paired with leading actresses Mae Marsh and Lillian Gish with romantic plots, often in roles that cemented his "sensitive boy" image. Harron had, in fact, a burgeoning off-screen romantic relationship with Dorothy Gish.

Death

By 1920 however, film director D. W. Griffith's interest in the young actor had reportedly waned and when Griffith hired film actor Richard Barthelmess to star in his 1920 film *Way Down East*, Harron was inconsolable. On September 5, 1920, while in New York City to attend the film premiere of *Way Down East*, Harron fatally shot himself in the left lung in his hotel room with a revolver that he had placed in a jacket.

Supposedly the weapon was purchased during the afternoon from a street beggar as Harron did not believe in just handing out money unless something was bought. That was done because he wanted people to feel as if they actually earned the funds given. The prevailing theory about the shooting is that as Harron changed jackets for the evening's event, the gun fell out of the pocket and discharged when it struck the floor.

Although the death was officially ruled accidental, many historians believe that Harron committed suicide. However, many of those closest to the actor vehemently refuted that Harron, a devout Catholic, would ever have considered suicide. While on his deathbed, Harron reportedly confided to his boyhood priest that his gunshot wound was the result of an accident.

Nevertheless, in preparation for a 1993 film festival scheduled in honor Harron's birth centennial at MOMA, Joseph P. Fanning (the organizer and main lecturer) researched and obtained copies of the death certificate/medical records. These documents showed that, despite the publicized news reports, the angle of the wound and the width of the powder burns associated could not be the result of a mere accident. Thus, even with the lack of any witnesses, the evidence clearly indicated that Harron's death was the result of suicide. The main reason was determined to be the result of disappointment because Griffith, a substitute father, had passed Mr. Harron over for the male starring role in *Way Down East*.

Robert Harron was 27 years old at the time of his death and had never married. His film career spanned nearly 15 years, and Harron had appeared in 220 films.

Harron was interred at Calvary Cemetery in Woodside, Queens, New York City.

Brigitte Helm

Brigitte Helm (17 March 1906 – 11 June 1996) was a German actress, best remembered for her dual role as Maria and her double, the Maschinenmensch, in Fritz Lang's 1927 silent film *Metropolis*.



Career

Born **Brigitte Eva Gisela Schittenhelm** in Berlin, Helm's first role was that of Maria in *Metropolis* which she began work on while only 18 years old. After *Metropolis*, Helm made over thirty other films, including talking pictures, before retiring in 1936. Her other appearances include *The Love of Jeanne Ney* (1927), *Alraune* (1928), *L'Argent* (1928), *Gloria* (1931), *The Blue Danube* (1932), *L'Atlantide* (1932), and *Gold* (1934).

Though having a 10-year contract with UFA expiring in 1935, Helm incurred the wrath of Nazi Germany for "race defilement" in marrying her second husband Dr. Hugo von Kuenheim, an industrialist of Jewish background. Helm was also involved in several traffic accidents, and was briefly imprisoned. According to Otto Dietrich's book *The Hitler I Knew*, Adolf Hitler himself saw that manslaughter charges against her from an automobile accident were dropped.

In 1935, she moved to Switzerland where she later had four children with Hugo. After her retirement from films, she refused to grant any interviews concerning her film career. Helm was considered for the title role in *Bride of Frankenstein* before Elsa Lanchester was given the role.

Buck Jones

Buck Jones (December 12, 1891 – November 30, 1942) was an American motion picture star of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, best known for his work starring in many popular western movies. In his early film appearances, he was billed as **Charles Jones**.



Jones in 1926

Early life, military service

Charles Frederick Gebhart was born on the outskirts of Vincennes, Indiana on December 12, 1891. (Some sources erroneously indicate December 4, 1889, but Jones's marriage license and his military records confirm the 1891 date.) In 1907, Jones joined the US Army at age sixteen, after his mother signed a release form authorizing his enlistment. He was initially assigned to Troop G, 6th Cavalry Regiment. He served in combat and was wounded in the Philippine islands during the Moro Rebellion, deploying there in October 1907, returning to the U.S. in December 1909. He was honorably discharged that same year, at Fort McDowell, California.

Jones had an affection for racecars and the racing industry, and became close friends with early racecar driver Harry Stillman. Due to his association with Stillman, he began working for the Marmon Motor Company, where he test drove many of their vehicles. However, by 1910 he had re-enlisted in the US Army. In 1913 he requested a transfer to the Aeronautical Division, U.S. Signal Corps. He requested this due to his desire to become a pilot, however only officers were allowed pilot training. He received his second honorable discharge from the Army in October 1913.

Cowboy, stuntman, beginning of film career



Jones on the poster for the western *Arizona Bound* (1941).

Following his military service, he began working as a cowboy on the 101 Ranch near Bliss, Oklahoma. While attending equestrian shows he met Odille "Dell" Osborne, who rode horses professionally. The two became involved, and married in 1915. Both had very little money, so the producers of a Wild West Show they were working on at the time offered to allow them to marry in an actual show performance, in public, which they accepted.

While in Los Angeles, and with his wife pregnant, Jones decided to leave the cowboy life behind and get a job in the film industry. He was hired by Universal Pictures for \$5 per day as a bit player and stuntman. He later worked for Canyon Pictures, then Fox Film Corporation, eventually earning \$40 per week as a stuntman. With Fox his salary increased to \$150 per week, and company executive William Fox decided to use him as a backup to Tom Mix. This led to his first starring role, *The Last Straw*, released in 1920.

Stardom

In 1925 Jones made three films with the then very young Carole Lombard. Jones had more than 160 film credits to his name, and by the 1920s, Jones joined Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, and Ken Maynard as the top cowboy actors of the day. By 1928 he started his own company, but his independently produced film "The Big Hop" (a non-Western) failed. He then organized a touring Wild West show, with himself as a featured attraction, but this expensive venture also failed due to the faltering economy of late 1929.

With the new talking pictures replacing silent films as a national pastime, outdoor Westerns fell out of favor briefly. The major studios weren't interested in hiring Buck Jones. He signed with the then-humble Columbia Pictures, starring in Westerns for \$300 a week, a fraction of his top salary in the silent-film days. His voice, a rugged baritone, recorded well and the films were very successful, re-establishing him as a major movie name. During the 1930s he starred in Western features and serials for Columbia and Universal Pictures.

His star waned in the late 1930s when singing cowboys became the rage and Jones, then in his late forties, was uncomfortably cast in conventional leading-man roles. He rejoined Columbia in the fall of 1940, starring in the serial *White Eagle* (an expansion of his 1932 feature of the same name). The new serial was a hit, and Jones was again re-established. His final series of Western features, co-produced by Jones and his friend Scott R. Dunlap of Monogram Pictures, featured "The Rough Riders" trio: Buck Jones, Tim McCoy, and Raymond Hatton.

Merchandising

Buck Jones lent his name and likeness to various product endorsements, including Post Grape-Nuts Flakes (his radio sponsor), and Daisy Outdoor Products. Jones was also a consultant for Daisy, which issued a Daisy "Buck Jones" model pump action air rifle. Incorporating a compass and a "sundial" into the stock, it was one of Daisy's top-end air rifles, and sold well for several years. This led to some confusion with the release of the well-known holiday film *A Christmas Story*, based on author Jean Shepherd's erroneous recollection that the Daisy "Red Ryder" model air gun had a compass and sundial in the stock (it never did at any time during its production, save the two specially made examples for the film).

Death

Buck Jones was one of the 492 victims of the 1942 Cocoanut Grove fire in Boston, Massachusetts, dying two days after the November 28 blaze. For years, legend held that Jones's fatal injuries were the result of his going back into the burning building to save victims, but it is now known that he was trapped in the fire.

Family

Buck Jones's daughter, Maxine Jones (b. 1918) married Noah Beery, Jr. in 1940.

References in popular media

On his album *When I Was a Kid*, Bill Cosby has a routine called "Buck Jones," in which he talks about seeing Buck Jones movies as a kid. He says that Buck Jones had a horse named Silver, like the Lone Ranger, and that he would chew gum to signal that he was getting angry. Cosby mentions a specific movie in which a saloon tough picks a fight by pouring "redeye" liquor over Jones.

Buster Keaton

Joseph Frank "Buster" Keaton (October 4, 1895 – February 1, 1966) was an American comic actor, filmmaker, producer and writer. He was best known for his silent films, in which his trademark was physical comedy with a consistently stoic, deadpan expression, earning him the nickname "The Great Stone Face".



Keaton was recognized as the seventh-greatest director of all time by *Entertainment Weekly*. In 1999, the American Film Institute ranked Keaton the 21st-greatest male star of all time. Critic Roger Ebert wrote of Keaton's "extraordinary period from 1920 to 1929, he worked without interruption on a series of films that make him, arguably, the greatest actor-director in the history of the movies."

Orson Welles stated that Keaton's *The General* is "the greatest comedy ever made, the greatest Civil War film ever made, and perhaps the greatest film ever made."

A 2002 worldwide poll by *Sight & Sound* ranked Keaton's *The General* as the 15th best film of all time. Three other Keaton films received votes in the magazine's survey: *Our Hospitality*, *Sherlock, Jr.*, and *The Navigator*.

Early life in vaudeville

Keaton was born **Joseph Frank Keaton** into a vaudeville family. He was named "Joseph" to continue a tradition on his father's side—he was sixth in a line bearing the name Joseph Keaton—and "Frank" for his maternal grandfather, who disapproved of the parents' union. Later, Keaton changed his middle name to "Francis". His father was Joseph Hallie "Joe" Keaton, a native of Vigo County, Indiana. Joe Keaton owned a traveling show with Harry Houdini, the *Mohawk Indian Medicine Company*, which performed on stage and sold patent medicine on the side. Buster Keaton was born in Piqua, Kansas, the small town where his mother, Myra Edith Cutler, happened to go into labor.

According to a frequently-repeated story, which may be apocryphal, Keaton acquired the nickname "Buster" at about eighteen months of age. Keaton told interviewer Fletcher Markle that Harry Houdini happened to be present one day when the young Keaton took a tumble down a long flight of stairs

without injury. After the infant sat up and shook off his experience, Houdini remarked, "That was a real buster!" According to Keaton, in those days, the word "buster" was used to refer to a spill or a fall that had the potential to produce injury. After this, it was Keaton's father who began to use the nickname to refer to the youngster. Keaton retold the anecdote over the years, including during a 1964 interview with the CBC's *Telescope*.

At the age of three, Keaton began performing with his parents in *The Three Keatons*. He first appeared on stage in 1899 in Wilmington, Delaware. The act was mainly a comedy sketch. Myra played the saxophone to one side, while Joe and Buster performed on center stage. The young Keaton would goad his father by disobeying him, and the elder Keaton would respond by throwing him against the scenery, into the orchestra pit, or even into the audience. A suitcase handle was sewn into Keaton's clothing to aid with the constant tossing. The act evolved as Keaton learned to take trick falls safely; he was rarely injured or bruised on stage. This knockabout style of comedy led to accusations of child abuse, and occasionally, arrest. However, Buster Keaton was always able to show the authorities that he had no bruises or broken bones. He was eventually billed as "The Little Boy Who Can't Be Damaged," with the overall act being advertised as "'The Roughest Act That Was Ever in the History of the Stage.'" Decades later, Keaton said that he was never hurt by his father and that the falls and physical comedy were a matter of proper technical execution. In 1914, Keaton told the *Detroit News*:

The secret is in landing limp and breaking the fall with a foot or a hand. It's a knack. I started so young that landing right is second nature with me. Several times I'd have been killed if I hadn't been able to land like a cat. Imitators of our act don't last long, because they can't stand the treatment.

Keaton claimed he was having so much fun that he would sometimes begin laughing as his father threw him across the stage. Noticing that this drew fewer laughs from the audience, he adopted his famous deadpan expression whenever he was working.

The act ran up against laws banning child performers in vaudeville. It is said that, when one official saw Keaton in full costume and makeup and asked a stagehand how old he was, the stagehand then pointed to the boy's mother, saying, "I don't know, ask his wife!" According to one biographer, Keaton was made to go to school while performing in New York, but only attended for part of one day. Despite tangles with the law and a disastrous tour of music halls in the United Kingdom, Keaton was a rising star in the theater. Keaton stated that he learned to read and write late, and was taught by his mother. By the time he was 21, his father's alcoholism threatened the reputation of the family act, so Keaton and his mother, Myra, left for New York, where Buster Keaton's career swiftly moved from vaudeville to film.

Although he did not see active combat, he served in World War I, during which time he suffered an ear infection that permanently impaired his hearing.

Silent film era

In February 1917, Keaton met Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle at the Talmadge Studios in New York City, where Arbuckle was under contract to Joseph M. Schenck. Joe Keaton disapproved of films, and Buster also had reservations about the medium. During his first meeting with Arbuckle, he asked to borrow one of the cameras to get a feel for how it worked. He took the camera back to his hotel room, dismantled and reassembled it. With this rough understanding of the mechanics of the moving pictures, he returned the next day, camera in hand, asking for work. He was hired as a co-star and gag man, making his first appearance in *The Butcher Boy*. Keaton later claimed that he was soon Arbuckle's second director and his entire gag department. Keaton and Arbuckle became close friends.

In 1920, *The Saphead* was released, in which Keaton had his first starring role in a full-length feature. It was based on a successful play, *The New Henrietta*, which had already been filmed once under the title "The Lamb" with Douglas Fairbanks playing the lead. It is said to have been Fairbanks that recommended Keaton to take up the role for the remake five years later.

After Keaton's successful work with Arbuckle, Schenck gave him his own production unit, Buster Keaton Comedies. He made a series of two-reel comedies, including *One Week* (1920), *The Playhouse* (1921), *Cops* (1922), and *The Electric House* (1922). Keaton then moved to full-length features, his first starring role in a full-length being *The Saphead*.

Keaton's writers included Clyde Bruckman and Jean Havez, but the most ingenious gags were generally conceived by Keaton himself. Comedy director Leo McCarey, recalling the freewheeling days of making slapstick comedies, said, "All of us tried to steal each other's gagmen. But we had no luck with Keaton, because he thought up his best gags himself and we couldn't steal *him!*" The more adventurous ideas called for dangerous stunts, performed by Keaton at great physical risk. During the railroad water-tank scene in *Sherlock Jr.*, Keaton broke his neck when a torrent of water fell on him from a water tower, but he did not realize it until years afterward. A scene from *Steamboat Bill Jr.* required Keaton to run into the shot and stand still on a particular spot. Then, the facade of a two-story building toppled forward on top of Keaton. Keaton's character emerged unscathed, thanks to a single open window which passed directly over him. The stunt required precision, because the prop house weighed two tons, and the window only offered a few inches of space around Keaton's body. The sequence became one of the iconic images of Keaton's career.

The film critic David Thomson later described Keaton's style of comedy: "Buster plainly is a man inclined towards a belief in nothing but mathematics and absurdity ... like a number that has always been searching for the right equation. Look at his face — as beautiful but as inhuman as a butterfly — and you see that utter failure to identify sentiment." Gilberto Perez describes "Keaton's genius as an actor to keep a face so nearly deadpan and yet render it, by subtle inflections, so vividly expressive of inner life. His large deep eyes are the most eloquent feature; with merely a stare he can convey a wide range of emotions, from longing to mistrust, from puzzlement to sorrow."

Aside from *Steamboat Bill Jr.* (1928), Keaton's most enduring feature-length films include *Our Hospitality* (1923), *The Navigator* (1924), *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), *Seven Chances* (1925), *The Cameraman* (1928), and *The General* (1927). *The General*, set during the American Civil War, combined physical comedy with Keaton's love of trains, including an epic locomotive chase. Employing picturesque locations, the film's storyline reenacted an actual wartime incident. Though it would come to be regarded as Keaton's proudest achievement, the film received mixed reviews at the time. It was too dramatic for some filmgoers expecting a lightweight comedy, and reviewers questioned Keaton's judgment in making a comedic film about the Civil War, even while noting it had a "few laughs". The fact that the heroes of the story were from the Confederate side may have also contributed to the film's unpopularity.

It was an expensive misfire, and Keaton was never entrusted with total control over his films again. His distributor, United Artists, insisted on a production manager who monitored expenses and interfered with certain story elements. Keaton endured this treatment for two more feature films, and then exchanged his independent setup for employment at Hollywood's biggest studio, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). Keaton's loss of independence as a filmmaker coincided with the coming of sound films (although he was interested in making the transition) and mounting personal problems, and his career in the early sound era was hurt as a result.

Sound era and television

Keaton signed with MGM in 1928, a business decision that he would later call the worst of his life. He realized too late that the studio system MGM represented would severely limit his creative input. For instance, the studio refused his request to make his early project, *Spite Marriage*, as a sound film and after the studio converted, he was obliged to adhere to dialogue-laden scripts. However, MGM did allow Keaton to direct his last originally developed/written silent film *The Cameraman*, 1928, which was his first project under contract with MGM.

Keaton was forced to use a stunt double during some of the more dangerous scenes, as MGM wanted badly to protect its investment. He also stopped directing, but continued to perform and made some of his most financially successful films for the studio. MGM tried teaming the laconic Keaton with the rambunctious Jimmy Durante in a series of films, *The Passionate Plumber*, *Speak Easily*, and *What! No Beer?* The latter would be Keaton's last starring feature. The films proved popular. (Thirty years later, both Keaton and Durante had cameo parts in *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World*.)

In the first Keaton pictures with sound, he and his fellow actors would shoot each scene three times: one in English, one in Spanish, and one in either French or German. The actors would phonetically memorize the foreign-language scripts a few lines at time and shoot immediately after. This is discussed in the TCM documentary *Buster Keaton: So Funny it Hurt*, with Keaton complaining about having to shoot lousy films not just once, but three times. His stage name in Spanish markets was **Pamplinas** ("Nonsense"), and his nickname was *Cara de palo* ("Wooden face").

Keaton was so depleted during the production of 1933's *What! No Beer?* that MGM fired him after the filming was complete, despite the film being a resounding hit. In 1934, Keaton accepted an offer to make an independent film in Paris, *Le Roi des Champs-Élysées*. During this period, he made one other film in Europe, *The Invader* (released in America as *An Old Spanish Custom* in 1936).

Educational Pictures

Upon Keaton's return to Hollywood, he made a screen comeback in a series of 16 two-reel comedies for Educational Pictures. Most of these are simple visual comedies, with many of the gags supplied by Keaton himself. The high point in the Educational series is *Grand Slam Opera*, featuring Buster in his own screenplay as an amateur-hour contestant. When the series lapsed in 1937, Keaton returned to MGM as a gag writer, including the Marx Brothers films *At the Circus* (1939) and *Go West* (1940), and providing material for Red Skelton. He also helped and advised Lucille Ball in her comedic work in films and television.

Columbia Pictures

In 1939, Columbia Pictures hired Keaton to star in ten two-reel comedies, running for two years. The director was usually Jules White, whose emphasis on slapstick made most of these films resemble White's Three Stooges comedies. Keaton's personal favorite was the series' debut entry, *Pest from the West*, a shorter, tighter remake of Keaton's little-viewed 1935 feature *The Invader*; it was directed not by White but by Del Lord, a veteran director for Mack Sennett. Moviegoers and exhibitors welcomed Keaton's Columbia comedies, proving that the comedian had not lost his appeal. However, taken as a whole, Keaton's Columbia shorts rank as the worst comedies he made, an assessment he concurred with in his autobiography. The final entry was *She's Oil Mine*, and Keaton swore he would never again "make another crummy two-reeler." These Columbia films are his final starring series for any film studio.

1940s and feature films

Keaton's personal life had stabilized with his 1940 marriage, and now he was taking life a little easier, abandoning Columbia for the less strenuous field of feature films. Throughout the 1940s, Keaton played character roles in both "A" and "B" features. Critics rediscovered Keaton in 1949 and producers occasionally hired him for bigger "prestige" pictures. He had cameos in such films as *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956).

Keaton also had a small bit part as Jimmy, appearing near the end of the film *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963). Jimmy assisted Spencer Tracy's character, Captain C. G. Culpepper, in storing his police car in a shoreline garage. Keaton was given more screen time in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966). The appearance is all the more touching since it was Keaton's last public appearance.

Keaton also appeared in a comedy routine about two inept stage musicians in Charlie Chaplin's *Limelight* (1952), recalling the vaudeville of *The Playhouse*. With the exception of *Seeing Stars*, a minor publicity film produced in 1922, *Limelight* was the only time in which the two would ever appear together on film.

In 1949, comedian Ed Wynn invited Keaton to appear on his CBS Television comedy-variety show, *The Ed Wynn Show*, which was televised live on the West Coast. Kinescopes were made for distribution of the programs to other parts of the country since there was no transcontinental coaxial cable until September 1951.

1950s and television



Keaton pretending to have his foot stuck in the railroad tracks of a train ride at Knott's Berry Farm in 1956

In 1950, Keaton had a successful television series, *The Buster Keaton Show*, which was broadcast live on a local Los Angeles station. An attempt to recreate the first series on film as *Life with Buster Keaton* (1951), which allowed the program to be broadcast nationwide, was less well-received. A theatrical feature film, *The Misadventures of Buster Keaton*, was fashioned from the series. Keaton said he canceled the filmed series himself because he was unable to create enough fresh material to produce a new show each week. Keaton also appeared on Ed Wynn's variety show. At the age of 55, he successfully recreated one of the stunts of his youth, in which he propped one foot onto a table, then swung the second foot up next to it, and held the awkward position in midair for a moment before crashing to the stage floor. *I've Got a Secret* host Garry Moore recalled, "I asked (Keaton) how he did all

those falls, and he said, 'I'll show you'. He opened his jacket and he was all bruised. So that's how he did it—it *hurt*—but you had to care enough not to care."

Unlike his contemporary Harold Lloyd, who kept his films from being televised (and therefore became lesser known to today's audiences), Keaton's periodic television appearances helped to revive interest in his silent films in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1954, Keaton played his first television dramatic role in "The Awakening", an episode of the syndicated anthology series *Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Presents*. About this time, he also appeared on NBC's *The Martha Raye Show*.



Keaton as a time traveler in *The Twilight Zone* episode, "Once Upon a Time", November 1961.

On April 3, 1957, Keaton was surprised by Ralph Edwards for the weekly NBC program *This Is Your Life*. The half hour program, which also promoted the release of the biographical film *The Buster Keaton Story* with Donald O'Connor, summarized Keaton's life and career up to that point.

In December 1958, Keaton was a guest star as a hospital janitor who provides gifts to sick children in a special Christmas episode of *The Donna Reed Show* on ABC. The program was titled "A Very Merry Christmas". He returned to the program in 1965 in the episode "Now You See It, Now You Don't". The 1958 episode has been included in the DVD release of Donna Reed's television programs.

In August 1960, Keaton accepted the role of mute King Sextimus the Silent in the national touring company of *Once Upon A Mattress*, a successful Broadway musical. Eleanor Keaton was cast in the chorus, and during rehearsals, she fielded questions directed at her husband, creating difficulties in communication. After a few days, Keaton warmed up to the rest of the cast with his "utterly delicious sense of humor", according to Fritzi Burr, who played opposite him as his wife Queen Aggravaine. When the tour landed in Los Angeles, Keaton invited the entire cast and crew to a spaghetti party at his Woodland Hills home, and entertained them by singing vaudeville songs.

In 1960, Keaton returned to MGM for the final time, playing a lion tamer in a 1960 adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Much of the film was shot on location on the Sacramento River, which doubled for the Mississippi River setting of Twain's original book.

In 1961, he starred in *The Twilight Zone* episode "Once Upon a Time", which included both silent and sound sequences. Keaton played time traveler Mulligan, who traveled from 1890 to 1960, then back, by means of a special helmet.

Keaton also found steady work as an actor in TV commercials, including a popular series of silent ads for Simon Pure Beer in which he revisited some of the gags from his silent film days. In 1963, Keaton

appeared in the episode "Think Mink" of ABC's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* sitcom, starring Fess Parker.

In 1964, Keaton appeared with Joan Blondell and Joe E. Brown in the final episode of ABC's circus drama, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, starring Jack Palance. That same year, he appeared on Lucille Ball's CBS television show, *The Lucy Show*, in an episode ("A Day in the Park") filmed in color but initially televised in black and white; this featured him sitting on a park bench, reading a newspaper, which he gradually unfolded into a huge, single sheet. Harvey Korman played a policeman in the scene.



Keaton with fellow comedian Joe E. Brown in a 1962 episode of *Route 66*.

At the age of 70, Keaton suggested that, for his appearance in the 1965 film *Sergeant Deadhead*, he run past the end of a fire hose into a six-foot-high flip and crash. When director Norman Taurog balked, expressing concerns for Keaton's health, Keaton said, "I won't hurt myself, Norm, I've done it for years!" Keaton also starred in three other films for American International Pictures (*Beach Blanket Bingo*, *Pajama Party*, and *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini*).

In 1965, Keaton starred in a short film called *The Railrodder* for the National Film Board of Canada. Wearing his traditional porkpie hat, he travelled from one end of Canada to the other on a motorized handcar, performing gags similar to those in films he made 50 years before. The film is also notable for being Keaton's last silent screen performance. *The Railrodder* was made in tandem with a behind-the-scenes documentary about Keaton's life and times, called *Buster Keaton Rides Again*, also made for the National Film Board. He played the central role in Samuel Beckett's *Film* (1965), directed by Alan Schneider. Also in 1965, he traveled to Italy to play a role in *Due Marines e un Generale*, co-starring alongside with the famous Italian comedian duo of Franco Franchi and Ciccio Ingrassia.

Keaton's last film appearance was in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966) which was filmed in Spain in late 1965. He amazed the cast and crew by doing many of his own stunts, although Thames Television said his increasingly ill health did force the use of a stunt double for some scenes.

Marriages

In 1921, Keaton married Natalie Talmadge, sister-in-law of his boss, Joseph Schenck, and sister of actresses Norma Talmadge and Constance Talmadge. She co-starred with Keaton in *Our Hospitality*. During the first three years of the marriage, the couple had two sons, James (1922–2007) and Robert (1924–2009), but after the birth of Robert, the relationship began to suffer.

According to Keaton's autobiography, Natalie turned him out of their bedroom and sent detectives to follow him to see whom he was dating behind her back. Her extravagance was another factor in the breakdown of the marriage. During the 1920s, according to his autobiography, he dated actress Kathleen Key. When he ended the affair, Key flew into a rage and tore up his dressing room.

After attempts at reconciliation, Natalie divorced Keaton in 1932, taking his entire fortune and refusing to allow any contact between Keaton and his sons, whose last name she had changed to Talmadge. Keaton was reunited with them about a decade later when his older son turned 18. The failure of his marriage, along with the loss of his independence as a filmmaker, led Keaton into a period of alcoholism.

During the height of his popularity, Keaton spent \$300,000 to build a 10,000-square-foot (930 m²) home in Beverly Hills, which was later owned by James Mason and Cary Grant. Keaton's "Italian Villa" can be seen in Keaton's film *Parlor, Bedroom and Bath*. Keaton later said, "I took a lot of pratfalls to build that dump." Mason found numerous cans of rare Keaton films in the house in the 1950s; the films were quickly transferred by Raymond Rohauer to safety film before the original cellulose nitrate prints further deteriorated. Among the discovered films is Keaton's classic *The Boat*.

Keaton was at one point briefly institutionalized; however, according to the TCM documentary *So Funny it Hurt*, Keaton escaped a straitjacket with tricks learned during his vaudeville days. In 1933, he married his nurse, Mae Scriven, during an alcoholic binge about which he afterwards claimed to remember nothing (Keaton himself later called that period an "alcoholic blackout"). Scriven herself would later claim that she didn't know Keaton's real first name until after the marriage. When they divorced in 1936, it was again at great financial cost to Keaton.

In 1940, Keaton married Eleanor Norris (1918–1998), who was 23 years his junior. She has been credited with saving his life by stopping his heavy drinking, and helped to salvage his career. The marriage lasted until his death. Between 1947 and 1954, they appeared regularly in the *Cirque Medrano* in Paris as a double act. She came to know his routines so well that she often participated in them on TV revivals.

Death

Keaton died of lung cancer on February 1, 1966, in Woodland Hills, California. Despite being diagnosed with the terminal illness in January 1966, he was never told that he was terminally ill, and thought that he had bronchitis. Confined to a hospital during his final days for treatment, Keaton was restless and paced the room endlessly. In a British television documentary on his career, his widow Eleanor told producers of Thames Television that Keaton was up out of bed and moving around, and even played cards with friends who came to visit at their house the day before he died. Eleanor Keaton died in 1998, from emphysema and lung cancer, aged 80.



Buster Keaton, Movie Star

Influence and legacy

Keaton has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame: 6619 Hollywood Boulevard (for motion pictures); and 6321 Hollywood Boulevard (for television).

A 1957 film biography, *The Buster Keaton Story*, starred Donald O'Connor as Keaton. The screenplay, by Sidney Sheldon (who also directed the film), was vaguely based on his life, but contained many factual errors and merged his three wives into one character. Most of the story centered on his drinking problem, in the producer's attempt to imitate the success of *I'll Cry Tomorrow*, a sudsy biography about another alcoholic celebrity (Lillian Roth). The 1987 documentary, *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*, which won two Emmy Awards and was directed by Kevin Brownlow and David Gill, is considered a much more accurate telling of Keaton's story.

In 1994, caricaturist Al Hirschfeld penned a series of silent film stars for the United States Post Office, including Rudolph Valentino and Keaton. Hirschfeld said that modern film stars were more difficult to depict, that silent film comedians such as Laurel and Hardy and Keaton "looked like their caricatures".

Keaton's physical comedy is cited by Jackie Chan in his autobiography documentary *Jackie Chan: My Story* as being the primary source of inspiration for his own brand of self-deprecating physical comedy.

Paul Merton often stated on his show *Silent Clowns* how influential and hilarious Buster Keaton was to fellow comedians.

Comedian Richard Lewis stated that Keaton was his prime inspiration, and spoke of having a close friendship with Keaton's widow Eleanor. Lewis was particularly moved by the fact that Eleanor said Lewis' eyes looked like Keaton's.

Pork pie hats



Keaton seated, in costume, wearing his signature pork pie hat, circa 1939.

Keaton designed and modified his own pork pie hats during his career. In 1964, he told an interviewer that in making "this particular pork pie", he "started with a good Stetson and cut it down", stiffening the brim with sugar water. The hats were often destroyed during Keaton's wild film antics; some were given away as gifts and some were snatched by souvenir hunters. Keaton said he was lucky if he used only six hats in making a film. Keaton estimated that he and his wife Eleanor made thousands of the hats during

his career. Keaton observed that during his silent period, such a hat cost him around two dollars; at the time of his interview, he said, they cost almost \$13.

Keaton in music

In 1987 Italian singer-songwriters Claudio Lolli and Francesco Guccini wrote a song, *Keaton*, about his work in Italy on the film *Due Marines e un Generale*

Carmel Myers

Carmel Myers (April 4, 1899 – November 9, 1980) was an American actress who worked chiefly in silent movies.

Myers was born in San Francisco, the daughter of an Australian rabbi and Austrian Jewish mother. Her father became well-connected with California's emerging film industry, and introduced her to film pioneer D. W. Griffith, who gave Carmel a small part in *Intolerance* (1916). Myers also got her brother Zion Myers into Hollywood as a writer/director.



From Photoplay Magazine 1920



From this beginning, Myers left for New York, where she acted mainly on stage for the next two years. She was signed by Universal, where she emerged as a popular actress in vamp roles. Her most popular film from this period is probably the romantic comedy *All Night*, opposite Rudolph Valentino. By 1924 she was working for MGM, making such films as *Broadway After Dark*, which also starred Adolphe Menjou, Norma Shearer and Anna Q. Nilsson.

In 1925, she appeared in arguably her most famous role, that of the Egyptian vamp Iras in *Ben-Hur*, who tries to seduce both Messala (Francis X. Bushman) and Ben-Hur himself (Ramón Novarro). This film was a boost to Myers' career, and she appeared in major roles throughout the 1920s, including *Tell It to the Marines* in 1926 with Lon Chaney, Sr., William Haines and Eleanor Boardman. Myers appeared in *Four Walls* and *Dream of Love*, both with Joan Crawford in 1928; and in *The Show of Shows* (1929), a showcase of popular contemporary film actors.

Myers had a successful sound career, mostly in supporting roles due to her age. Amongst her popular sound films are *Svengali* (1931) and *The Mad Genius* (1931), both with John Barrymore and Marian Marsh, and a small role in 1944's *The Conspirators*, which featured Paul Henreid, Peter Lorre, and Sydney Greenstreet.

Myers surfaced in the entertainment world again briefly in 1951, with a short-lived DuMont Television Network show called *The Carmel Myers Show*, which followed the interview format. After its cancellation, Myers focused on a career in real estate and her own perfume distribution company.

Myers died in 1980 at the age of 81 and was buried near her parents at Home of Peace Cemetery in East Los Angeles.

Carole Lombard

Carole Lombard (October 6, 1908 – January 16, 1942) was an American actress. She was particularly noted for her comedic roles in the screwball comedies of the 1930s. She is listed as one of the American Film Institute's greatest stars of all time and was the highest-paid star in Hollywood in the late 1930s, earning around US \$500,000 per year (more than five times the salary of the US President). Lombard's career was cut short when she died at the age of 33 in a plane crash.



Queen of the 1930s screwball comedies, she personified the anxiety of a nervous age. Graham Greene praised the "heartbreaking and nostalgic melodies" of her faster-than-thought delivery. "Platinum blonde, with a heart-shaped face, delicate, impish features and a figure made to be swathed in silver lamé, she wriggled expressively through such classics of hysteria as *Twentieth Century* and *My Man Godfrey*."

Ancestry and early life

Lombard was born **Jane Alice Peters** in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her parents were Frederick C. Peters (1875–1935) and Elizabeth Knight (1877 – January 16, 1942). Her paternal grandfather, John Claus Peters, was the son of German immigrants, Claus Peters and Caroline Catherine Eberlin. On her mother's side, she was a descendant of Thomas Hastings who came from the East Anglia region of England to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1634. Lombard was the youngest of three children, having two older brothers, Fred C. Peters Jr. and Stuart Peters. She spent her early childhood in a sprawling, two-story house at 704 Rockhill Street in Fort Wayne, near the St. Mary's River. Her father had been injured during a work related accident and was left with constant headaches which caused him to burst out in paroxysms of anger which disturbed the family. Lombard's parents divorced and her mother took the three children to Los Angeles in 1914, where Lombard attended Virgil Jr. High School and then Fairfax High School. She was elected "May Queen" in 1924. She quit school to pursue acting full-time, but graduated from Fairfax in 1927. Lombard was a second generation Bahá'í who formally enrolled in 1938.

Career



In the classic screwball comedy *My Man Godfrey* (1936).

Lombard made her film debut at the age of twelve after she was seen playing baseball in the street by director Allan Dwan; he cast her as a tomboy in *A Perfect Crime* (1921). In the 1920s, she worked in several low-budget productions credited as 'Jane Peters', and then later as 'Carol Lombard'. Her friend Miriam Cooper helped Lombard land small roles in her husband Raoul Walsh's films. In 1925, she was signed as a contract player with Fox Film Corporation (which merged with Daryl Zanuck's Twentieth Century Productions in 1935). She also worked for Pathé Pictures and appeared as one of Mack Sennett's Bathing Beauties in 1928. She quickly became a well-known actress and made a smooth transition to sound films, starting with *High Voltage* (1929). In 1930, she won a contract with Paramount Pictures after having been dropped from both Twentieth Century and Pathé.

Lombard achieved a few minor successes in the early 1930s in 1930's *Safety in Numbers* with Charles "Buddy" Rogers and 1932's *No Man of Her Own* with Clark Gable, but she was continually cast in second-rate films. It was not until 1934 that her career began to take off. That year, director Howard Hawks encountered Lombard at a party and became enamored with her saucy personality, thinking her just right for his latest project. He hired her for *Twentieth Century*, alongside stage legend John Barrymore. Lombard was at first intimidated by Barrymore, but the two quickly developed a good working rapport. The film bolstered Lombard's reputation immensely and brought her a level of fame that her previously lackluster career had denied her.



In *Vigil in the Night* (1940).

Also in 1934, she starred in *Bolero* with George Raft and it was for this film that she turned down the role of Ellie Andrews in *It Happened One Night*. In 1935 she starred in Mitchell Leisen's *Hands Across the Table* which helped to establish her reputation as a top comedy actress. 1936 proved to be a big year

for Lombard with her casting in the screwball comedy *My Man Godfrey* alongside ex-husband William Powell. Her performance earned Lombard an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress. It was followed by *Nothing Sacred* in 1937, casting her opposite Fredric March and under the direction of William A. Wellman. It was Lombard's only film in Technicolor and was regarded a critical and commercial smash. *Nothing Sacred* put Lombard at the top of the Hollywood tier and established her as one of the highest paid actresses in the business.

In 1938, Lombard suffered a flop with *Fools for Scandal* and moved on to dramatic films for the next few years. In 1939, Lombard took roles opposite James Stewart in producer David O. Selznick's *Made for Each Other* (1939) and Cary Grant in *In Name Only* (1939). She also starred in the dramatic *Vigil in the Night* in 1940.

Audiences did not respond as well to Lombard in dramatic roles and she made a return to comedy, teaming with director Alfred Hitchcock in *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (1941). The film gave Lombard's career a much needed boost and she followed her success with what proved to be her last film, and one of her most successful, *To Be or Not to Be* (1942).

Personal life



as Hazel Flagg in one of her personal favorites, *Nothing Sacred* (1937)

In October 1930, Lombard met William Powell. They had worked together in the films *Man of the World* and *Ladies' Man*. Unlike many of Lombard's other suitors at the time, Powell was urbane and sophisticated. He also appreciated her blunt personality and bawdy sense of humor. They married on June 26, 1931. Lombard commented to fan magazines that she did not believe their sixteen-year age difference would present a problem, but friends felt they were ill-suited, as Lombard had an extroverted personality while Powell was more reserved. They divorced in 1933, but remained good friends and worked together without acrimony, notably in *My Man Godfrey*.

In 1934, following her divorce from Powell, Lombard moved into a house on Hollywood Boulevard. She lived with a friend from the days of Mack Sennett, Madalynne Fields, who became Lombard's personal secretary and whom Lombard called "Fieldsie." Lombard became known as one of Hollywood's great hostesses for her outrageous parties with unconventional themes. During this time she carried on relationships with actors Gary Cooper and George Raft, as well as the screenwriter Robert Riskin.

Also during 1934, Lombard met and began a serious affair with crooner Russ Columbo. Columbo reportedly proposed marriage, but was killed in a freak shooting accident at the age of 26. To reporters, Lombard said Columbo was the love of her life.

Lombard's most famous relationship came in 1936 when she became involved with actor Clark Gable. They had worked together previously in 1932's *No Man of Her Own*, but at the time Lombard was still happily married to Powell and knew Gable to have the reputation of a roving eye. They were indifferent to each other on the set and did not keep in touch.

It was not until 1936, when Gable came to the Mayfair Ball that Lombard had planned, that their romance began to take off. Gable, however, was married at the time to oil heiress Ria Langham, and the affair was kept quiet. The situation proved a major factor in Gable accepting the role of Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*, as MGM head Louis B. Mayer sweetened the deal for a reluctant Clark Gable by giving him enough money to settle a divorce agreement with Langham and marry Lombard. Gable divorced Langham on March 7, 1939 and proposed to Lombard in a telephone booth at the Brown Derby.

On March 29, 1939, during a break in production on *Gone with the Wind*, Gable and Lombard drove out to Kingman, Arizona and were married in a quiet ceremony with only Gable's press agent, Otto Winkler, in attendance. They bought a ranch previously owned by director Raoul Walsh in Encino, California and lived a happy, unpretentious life, calling each other "Ma" and "Pa" and raising chickens and horses. They also attempted to have children but were not successful.

Off-screen, Lombard was much loved for her down-to-earth personality and well known for an earthy sense of humor and use of blue language. Friends of Lombard's included Alfred Hitchcock, Marion Davies, William Haines, Jean Harlow, Fred MacMurray, Cary Grant, Jack Benny, Jorge Negrete, William Powell, and Lucille Ball.

Death

When the US entered World War II at the end of 1941, Lombard traveled to her home state of Indiana for a war bond rally with her mother, Bess Peters, and Clark Gable's press agent, Otto Winkler. After raising over \$2 million in defense bonds, Lombard addressed her fans, saying: "Before I say goodbye to you all, come on and join me in a big cheer! V for Victory!" On January 16, 1942, Lombard, her mother, and Winkler boarded a Transcontinental and Western Air DC-3 airplane to return to California. After refueling in Las Vegas, TWA Flight 3 took off and 23 minutes later, crashed into "Double Up Peak" near the 8,300 ft (2,500 m) level of Mount Potosi, 32 statute miles (51 km) southwest of Las Vegas. All 22 aboard, including 15 army servicemen, were killed instantly.

On January 18, 1942, Jack Benny did not perform his usual program, both out of respect for Lombard and grief at her death. Instead, he devoted his program to an all-music format.

Shortly after her death at the age of 33, Gable (who was inconsolable and devastated by her loss) joined the United States Army Air Forces. After officers training, Gable headed a six-man motion picture unit attached to a B-17 bomb group in England to film aerial gunners in combat, flying five missions himself. Gable attended the launch of the Liberty ship *SS Carole Lombard*, named in her honor, on January 15, 1944.

Lombard's final film, *To Be or Not to Be* (1942), directed by Ernst Lubitsch and co-starring Jack Benny, a satire about Nazism and World War II, was in post-production at the time of her death. The film's

producers decided to cut part of the film in which Lombard's character asks, "What can happen on a plane?" as they felt it was in poor taste, given the circumstances of her death.

At the time of her death, Lombard had been scheduled to star in the film *They All Kissed the Bride*; when production started, her role was given to Joan Crawford. Crawford donated all of her pay for this film to the Red Cross.

Lombard is interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. The name on her crypt marker is "Carole Lombard Gable". Although Gable remarried, he was interred next to her when he died in 1960. Bess Peters was also interred beside her daughter.

Awards and honors



In 1999, the American Film Institute ranked Lombard 23rd on its list of the 50 greatest American female screen legends. She received one Academy Award for Best Actress nomination, for *My Man Godfrey*. She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, at 6930 Hollywood Blvd.

Lombard's Fort Wayne childhood home has been designated a historic landmark. The city named the nearby bridge over the St Mary's River the "Carole Lombard Memorial Bridge."

Charles “Buddy” Rogers

Charles Edward “Buddy” Rogers (August 13, 1904 – April 21, 1999) was an American actor and jazz musician.



in the film *Wings* (1927)

Life and career

Early years



Rogers with *The Twin Stars* radio program, 1937.

Rogers was born to Maude and Bert Henry Rogers in Olathe, Kansas. He studied at the University of Kansas where he became an active member of Phi Kappa Psi. In the mid-1920s he began acting professionally in Hollywood films. A talented trombonist skilled on several other musical instruments, Rogers performed with his own jazz band in motion pictures and on radio. During World War II, he served in the United States Navy as a flight training instructor.

Career

Nicknamed "Buddy", his most remembered performance in film was opposite Clara Bow in the 1927 Academy Award winning *Wings*, the first film ever honored as "Best Picture."

Respected by his peers for his work in film and for his humanitarianism, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences honored Rogers in 1986 with The Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Charles "Buddy" Rogers has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6135 Hollywood Blvd.

A longtime resident and benefactor of California's Coachella Valley, Rogers was honored by having named after him a children's symphony orchestra that he and second wife, Beverley Ricondo, a real estate agent he married in 1981, helped found. A street in Cathedral City, California is named after him as well.

Personal life



At the 1988 Academy Awards

In 1937, Rogers became the third husband of silent film legend Mary Pickford, a woman twelve years his senior. The couple adopted two children—Roxanne (born 1944, adopted in 1944) and Ronald Charles (born 1937, adopted in 1943)—and remained married for 42 years until Pickford's death in 1979.

Death

Rogers died in Rancho Mirage, California in 1999 at the age of 94 of natural causes, and was interred at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Cathedral City near Palm Springs, California.

Charles Farrell

Charles Farrell (August 9, 1901 – May 6, 1990) was an American film actor of the 1920s silent era and into the 1930s, and later a television actor. Farrell is probably best recalled for his onscreen romances with actress Janet Gaynor in more than a dozen films, including *Seventh Heaven*, *Street Angel*, and *Lucky Star*.



Promotional photograph, circa 1927

Biography

Career

Born in Walpole, Massachusetts, He began his career in Hollywood as a bit player for Paramount Pictures. Farrell did extra work for films ranging from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with Lon Chaney, Sr., Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*, and *The Cheat* with Pola Negri.

Farrell continued to work throughout the next few years in relatively minor roles without much success until he was signed by Fox Studios and was paired with fellow newcomer Janet Gaynor in the romantic drama *Seventh Heaven*. The film was a public and critical success and Farrell and Gaynor would go on to star opposite one another in more than a dozen films throughout the late 1920s and into the talkie era of the early 1930s. Unlike many of his silent screen peers, Farrell had little difficulty with "voice troubles" and remained a publicly popular actor throughout the sound era.

Early 1950s

During the early 1950s, after his career in motion pictures began to slow, Farrell began appearing on the television series *My Little Margie*, which aired on CBS and NBC between 1952 and 1955. He played the role of the widower Vern Albright, the father of a young woman, Margie Albright with a knack for getting into trouble, portrayed by Gale Storm. In 1956, Farrell hosted his own television program, *The Charles Farrell Show*.

In the 1960s he also appeared on various British TV series such as *Danger Man*.

Personal life & retirement

Farrell married former actress Virginia Valli on February 14, 1931, and the couple was married until Valli's death from a stroke on September 24, 1968.

After retiring from his acting career, Farrell became a resident of the desert city of Palm Springs, California. He opened the popular Palm Springs Racquet Club in the city with fellow actor Ralph Bellamy.

A major factor in the prosperity of Palm Springs in the 1950s, Farrell was elected mayor of the community in 1953, a position that he held for seven years. Farrell died from a heart attack in 1990. He was interred at the Welwood Murray Cemetery there.

In the fall of 2009, silent film historian Sarah Baker's dual biography, *Lucky Stars: Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell*, was published by Bear Manor Media.

Awards

For his contribution to both motion pictures and television, Charles Farrell was awarded two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Hollywood at the following locations: 7021 Hollywood Blvd. (motion pictures), and 1617 Vine Street (television).

Charles Ray

Charles Ray (March 15, 1891 in Jacksonville, Illinois – November 23, 1943 in Los Angeles, California) was a silent film star. Extremely popular in a series of films casting him in juvenile roles, primarily rural young men, Ray's career faded as he lost his youthful looks- he also had a reputation of being demanding and having an outsized ego. In 1926, he played the lead in *Paris* opposite a young Joan Crawford.

However, an attempt to switch careers and play sophisticated men-of-the-world was not a success. An elaborate and expensive self-produced version of *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1923), a film now considered a lost film, was also not a success. Ray finished his career in small parts, dying from an infected tooth at the age of 52.



Charley Chase

Charley Chase (October 20, 1893 – June 20, 1940) was an American comedian, actor, screenwriter and film director, best known for his work in Hal Roach short film comedies. He was the older brother of comedian/director James Parrott.



Life and career

Born **Charles Joseph Parrott** in Baltimore, Maryland, Chase began performing in vaudeville as a teenager and started his career in films by working at the Christie Film Company in 1912. He then moved to Keystone Studios, where he began appearing in bit parts in the Mack Sennett films, including those of Charlie Chaplin. By 1915 he was playing juvenile leads in the Keystones, and directing some of the films as Charles Parrott. His Keystone credentials were good enough to get him steady work as a comedy director with other companies; he directed many of Chaplin imitator Billy West's comedies, which featured a young Oliver Hardy as villain.

He worked at L-KO Kompany during its final months of existence. Then in 1920, Chase began working as a film director for Hal Roach Studios. Among his notable early works for Roach was supervising the first entries in the *Our Gang* series, as well as directing several films starring Lloyd Hamilton; like many other silent comedians, Chase is reported to have regarded Hamilton's work as a major influence on that of his own. Chase became director-general of the Hal Roach studio in late 1921, supervising the production of all the Roach series except the Harold Lloyd comedies. Following Lloyd's departure from the studio in 1923, Chase moved back in front of the camera with his own series of shorts, adopting the screen name Charley Chase.

Chase was a master of the comedy of embarrassment, and he played either hapless young businessmen or befuddled husbands in dozens of situation comedies. His screen persona was that of a pleasant young man with a dapper mustache and ordinary street clothes; this set him apart from the clownish make-ups and crazy costumes used by his contemporaries. His earliest Roach shorts cast him as a hard-luck fellow named "Jimmie Jump" in one-reel (10-minute) comedies.

The first Chase series was successful and expanded to two reels (20 minutes); this would become the standard length for Chase comedies, apart from a few three-reel “featurettes” later. Direction of the Chase series was taken over by Leo McCarey, who in collaboration with Chase formed the comic style of the series—an emphasis on characterization and farce instead of knockabout slapstick. Some of Chase's starring shorts of the 1920s, particularly *Mighty Like a Moose*, *Crazy Like a Fox*, *Fluttering Hearts*, and *Limousine Love*, are among the finest in silent comedy. Chase remained the guiding hand behind the films, assisting anonymously with the directing, writing, and editing.

Chase moved with ease into sound films in 1929, and became one of the most popular film comedians of the period. He continued to be very prolific in the talkie era, often putting his fine singing voice on display and including his humorous, self-penned songs in his comedy shorts. The two-reeler *The Pip from Pittsburgh*, released in 1931 and co-starring Thelma Todd, is one of the most celebrated Charley Chase comedies of the sound era. Throughout the decade, the *Charley Chase* shorts continued to stand alongside Laurel and Hardy and Our Gang as the core output of the Roach studio. Chase was featured in the Laurel and Hardy feature *Sons of the Desert*; Laurel and Hardy made cameo appearances as hitchhikers in Chase's *On the Wrong Trek*.

On the Wrong Trek was supposed to be the final Charley Chase short subject; by 1936 producer Hal Roach was now concentrating on making ambitious feature films. Chase played a character role in the Patsy Kelly feature *Kelly the Second*, and starred in a feature-length comedy called *Bank Night*, lampooning the popular Bank Night phenomenon of the 1930s. Chase's feature was plagued with a host of production problems and legalities, and the film was drastically edited down to two reels and finally released as one last Charley Chase short, *Neighborhood House*. Chase was then dismissed from the Roach studio.

Later years

In 1937, Chase began working at Columbia Pictures, where he spent the rest of his career starring in his own series of two-reel comedies, as well as producing and directing other Columbia comedies, including those of The Three Stooges and Andy Clyde. He directed the Stooges' classic *Violent Is the Word for Curly*; although he is often credited with writing the film's song "Swinging the Alphabet", the tune actually originates with 19th century songwriter Septimus Winner. Recent research asserts that the Chase family's maid introduced the song to Charley and taught it to his daughters. Chase's own shorts at Columbia favored broader sight gags and more slapstick than his earlier, subtler work, although he does sing in two of the Columbia's, *The Grand Hooter* and *The Big Squirt* (both 1937). Many of Chase's Columbia short subjects were strong enough to be remade in the 1940s with other comedians; Chase's *The Heckler* (1940) was remade with Shemp Howard as *Mr. Noisy* (1946).

Chase suffered from alcoholism for most of his professional career, and his tumultuous lifestyle began to take a serious toll on his health. His hair had turned prematurely gray, and he dyed it jet-black for his Columbia comedies.

His younger brother, comedy writer-director James Parrott, had personal problems resulting from a drug treatment, and died in 1939. Chase was devastated. He had refused to give his brother money to support his drug habit, and friends knew he felt responsible for Parrott's death. He coped with the loss by throwing himself into his work and by drinking more heavily than ever, despite doctors' warnings. The stress ultimately caught up with him; only months after his brother's death, Charley Chase died of a heart attack in Hollywood, California in 1940 and was interred in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. Chase was 46.

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Charley Chase has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6630 Hollywood Boulevard.

Renewed interest

Since the 1990s, there has been a revival of interest in the films of Charley Chase, due in large part to the increased availability of his comedies. An extensive website researching his life and work, *The World of Charley Chase*, was created in 1996, and a biography, *Smile When the Raindrops Fall*, was published in 1998.

Chase's sound comedies for Hal Roach were briefly televised in the late 1990s on the short-lived American cable network the Odyssey Channel. Retrospectives of Chase's work organized by *The Silent Clowns Film Series* were held in 1999, 2001, 2006, and 2008 in New York City.

A marathon of selected Charley Chase shorts from the silent era was broadcast in 2005 on the American cable television network Turner Classic Movies. In late 2006, Turner Classic Movies began to air Charley Chase's sound-era comedies. In January 2011, several of his sound shorts were featured during Turner Classic Movies' tribute to Hal Roach Studios.

In 2007, *Mighty Like a Moose* (1926) was selected for inclusion in the Library of Congress's National Film Registry, solidifying its reputation as one of the most celebrated comedies of the silent era and cementing Chase's status as a pioneer of early film comedy.

Kino International released two Charley Chase DVD volumes in 2004 and 2005 for their Slapstick Symposium series. The films came from archives and collectors around the world. In July 2009, VCI Entertainment released *Becoming Charley Chase*, a DVD boxed set of Charley Chase's early silent films.

Columbia Pictures has prepared digital restorations of its 20 Charley Chase shorts, in the same manner as its Buster Keaton DVD restorations. To date, the Chase DVDs are awaiting release; Chase's fans have signed an online petition assuring Columbia of their interest.

Charlie Chaplin

Sir Charles Spencer "Charlie" Chaplin, KBE (16 April 1889 – 25 December 1977) was an English comic actor, film director and composer best known for his work during the silent film era. He became the most famous film star in the world before the end of World War I. Chaplin used mime, slapstick and other visual comedy routines, and continued well into the era of the talkies, though his films decreased in frequency from the end of the 1920s. His most famous role was that of The Tramp, which he first played in the Keystone comedy *Kid Auto Races at Venice* in 1914. From the April 1914 one-reeler *Twenty Minutes of Love* onwards he was writing and directing most of his films, by 1916 he was also producing them, and from 1918 he was even composing the music for them. With Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and D. W. Griffith, he co-founded United Artists in 1919.



Chaplin as The Tramp

Chaplin was one of the most creative and influential personalities of the silent-film era. He was influenced by his predecessor, the French silent film comedian Max Linder, to whom he dedicated one of his films. His working life in entertainment spanned over 75 years, from the Victorian stage and the music hall in the United Kingdom as a child performer, until close to his death at the age of 88. His high-profile public and private life encompassed both adulation and controversy. Chaplin's identification with the left ultimately forced him to resettle in Europe during the McCarthy era in the early 1950s.

In 1999, the American Film Institute ranked Chaplin the 10th greatest male screen legend of all time. In 2008, Martin Sieff, in a review of the book *Chaplin: A Life*, wrote: "Chaplin was not just 'big', he was gigantic. In 1915, he burst onto a war-torn world bringing it the gift of comedy, laughter and relief while it was tearing itself apart through World War I. Over the next 25 years, through the Great Depression and the rise of Adolf Hitler, he stayed on the job. ... It is doubtful any individual has ever given more entertainment, pleasure and relief to so many human beings when they needed it the most". George Bernard Shaw called Chaplin "the only genius to come out of the movie industry".

Biography

Early life in London (1889–1909)

Charles Spencer Chaplin was born on 16 April 1889, supposedly in East Street, Walworth, London, England. (In 2011, a letter, written to him in the 1970s, came to light, claiming that he had been born in a Gypsy caravan at Black Patch Park in Smethwick, Staffordshire.) His parents were entertainers in the music hall tradition; his father, Charles Spencer Chaplin Sr., was a vocalist and an actor while his mother, Hannah Chaplin, was a singer and an actress who went by the stage name Lilly Harley. They separated before Charlie was three. He learned singing from his parents. The 1891 census shows that his mother lived with Charlie and his older half-brother Sydney on Barlow Street, Walworth.

As a child, Chaplin also lived with his mother in various addresses in and around Kennington Road in Lambeth, including 3 Pownall Terrace, Chester Street and 39 Methley Street. His paternal grandmother's mother was from the Smith family of Romanichals, a fact of which he was extremely proud, though he described it in his autobiography as "the skeleton in our family cupboard". Charles Chaplin Sr. was an alcoholic and had little contact with his son, though Chaplin and his half-brother briefly lived with him and his mistress, Louise, at 287 Kennington Road. The half-brothers lived there while their mentally ill mother lived at Cane Hill Asylum at Coulsdon. Chaplin's father's mistress sent the boy to Archbishop Temple's Boys School. His father died of cirrhosis when Charlie was twelve in 1901. As of the 1901 Census, Chaplin resided at 94 Ferndale Road, Lambeth, as part of a troupe of young male dancers, The Eight Lancashire Lads, managed by William Jackson.

A larynx condition ended the singing career of Hannah Chaplin. After her re-admission to the Cane Hill Asylum, her son was left in the workhouse at Lambeth in south London, moving several weeks later to the Central London District School for paupers in Hanwell.

In 1903 Chaplin secured the role of Billy the pageboy in *Sherlock Holmes*, written by William Gillette and starring English actor H. A. Saintsbury. Saintsbury took Chaplin under his wing and taught him to marshal his talents. In 1905 Gillette came to England with Marie Doro to debut his new play, *Clarice*, but the play did not go well. When Gillette staged his one-act curtain-raiser, *The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes* as a joke on the British press, Chaplin was brought in from the provinces to play Billy. When *Sherlock Holmes* was substituted for *Clarice*, Chaplin remained as Billy until the production ended on 2 December. During the run, Gillette coached Chaplin in his restrained acting style. Acting in *Sherlock Holmes* entitled Chaplin to an West End actor's pass for the funeral of Britain's most respected Shakespearean actor, Sir Henry Irving, which he attended, sitting next to the actor Lewis Waller. It was during this engagement that the teenage Chaplin fell hopelessly in love with Doro, but his love went unrequited and Doro returned to America with Gillette when the production closed.

They met again in Hollywood eleven years later. She had forgotten his name but, when introduced to her, Chaplin told her of being silently in love with her and how she had broken his young heart. Over dinner, he laid it on thick about his unrequited love. Nothing came of it until two years later, when they were both in New York and she invited him to dinner and a drive. Instead, Chaplin noted, they simply "dined quietly in Marie's apartment alone." However, as Kenneth Lynn pointed out, "Chaplin would not have been Chaplin if he had simply dined quietly with Marie."

First years in the United States (1910–1913)



Chaplin circa 1910

Chaplin first toured the United States with the Fred Karno troupe from 1910 to 1912. After five months in England, he returned to the U.S. for a second tour, arriving with the Karno Troupe on 2 October 1912. In the Karno Company was Arthur Stanley Jefferson, who later became known as Stan Laurel. Chaplin and Laurel shared a room in a boarding house. Laurel returned to England but Chaplin remained in the United States. In late 1913, Chaplin's act with the Karno Troupe was seen by Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand, Minta Durfee, and "Fatty" Arbuckle. Sennett hired him for his studio, the Keystone Film Company as a replacement for Ford Sterling. Chaplin had considerable difficulty adjusting to the demands of film acting and his performance suffered for it. After Chaplin's first film appearance, *Making a Living* was filmed, Sennett felt he had made a costly mistake. Most historians agree it was Normand who persuaded him to give Chaplin another chance.

Sennett did not warm to Chaplin right away, and Chaplin believed Sennett intended to fire him following a disagreement with Normand. However, Chaplin's pictures were soon a success, and he became one of the biggest stars at Keystone.

Chaplin was given over to Normand, who directed and wrote a handful of his earliest films. Chaplin did not enjoy being directed by a woman, and they often disagreed. Eventually, the two worked out their differences and remained friends long after Chaplin left Keystone.

The Tramp (1914–1915)



Chaplin (Right) in his film debut *Making a Living* (1914)

The Tramp debuted during the silent film era in the Keystone comedy *Kid Auto Races at Venice* (released on 7 February 1914). However, Chaplin had devised the tramp costume for a film produced a

few days earlier but released later (9 February 1914), *Mabel's Strange Predicament*. Mack Sennett had requested that Chaplin "get into a comedy make-up". As Chaplin recalled in his autobiography:

I had no idea what makeup to put on. I did not like my get-up as the press reporter. However on the way to the wardrobe I thought I would dress in baggy pants, big shoes, a cane and a derby hat. I wanted everything to be a contradiction: the pants baggy, the coat tight, the hat small and the shoes large. I was undecided whether to look old or young, but remembering Sennett had expected me to be a much older man, I added a small moustache, which I reasoned, would add age without hiding my expression. I had no idea of the character. But the moment I was dressed, the clothes and the makeup made me feel the person he was. I began to know him, and by the time I walked on stage he was fully born.

"The Tramp" is a vagrant with the refined manners, clothes, and dignity of a gentleman. Arbuckle contributed his father-in-law's bowler hat ('derby') and his own pants (of generous proportions). Chester Conklin provided the little cutaway tailcoat, and Ford Sterling the size-14 shoes, which were so big, Chaplin had to wear each on the wrong foot to keep them on. He devised the moustache from a bit of crepe hair belonging to Mack Swain. The only thing Chaplin himself owned was the whangee cane.



Kid Auto Races at Venice (1914): Chaplin's second film and the debut of his "tramp" costume

Chaplin, with his Little Tramp character, quickly became the most popular star in Sennett's company of players. He immediately gained enormous popularity among cinema audiences. "The Tramp", Chaplin's principal character, was known as "Charlot" in the French-speaking world, Italy, Spain, Andorra, Portugal, Greece, Romania and Turkey, "Carlitos" in Brazil and Argentina, and "Der Vagabund" in Germany.

Chaplin continued to play the Tramp through dozens of short films and, later, feature-length productions (in only a handful of other productions did he play characters other than the Tramp). He portrayed a Keystone Kop in *A Thief Catcher* filmed 5–26 Jan 1914.

The Tramp was closely identified with the silent era, and was considered an international character; when the sound era began in the late 1920s, Chaplin refused to make a talkie featuring the character. The 1931 production *City Lights* featured no dialogue. Chaplin officially retired the character in the film *Modern Times* (released 5 February 1936), which appropriately ended with the Tramp walking down an endless highway toward the horizon. The film was only a partial talkie and is often called the last silent film. The Tramp remains silent until near the end of the film when, for the first time, his voice is finally heard, albeit only as part of a French/Italian-derived gibberish song.

Chaplin's early Keystones use the standard Mack Sennett formula of extreme physical comedy and exaggerated gestures. Chaplin's pantomime was subtler, more suitable to romantic and domestic farces than to the usual Keystone chases and mob scenes. The visual gags were pure Keystone, however; the tramp character would aggressively assault his enemies with kicks and bricks. Moviegoers loved this cheerfully earthy new comedian, even though critics warned that his antics bordered on vulgarity.

Chaplin was soon entrusted with directing and editing his own films. He made 34 shorts for Sennett during his first year in pictures, as well as the landmark comedy feature *Tillie's Punctured Romance*.

The Tramp was featured in the first film trailer to be exhibited in a U.S. cinema, a slide promotion developed by Nils Granlund, advertising manager for the Marcus Loew theatre chain, and shown at the Loew's Seventh Avenue Theatre in Harlem in 1914. In 1915, Chaplin signed a much more favorable contract with Essanay Studios, and further developed his cinematic skills, adding new levels of depth and pathos to the Keystone-style slapstick. Most of the Essanay films were more ambitious, running twice as long as the average Keystone comedy. Chaplin also developed his own stock company, including ingénue Edna Purviance and comic villains Leo White and Bud Jamison.

Chaplin's popularity continued to soar in the early years following the start of WW1. He started to become noticed by stars of the legitimate theatre. Minnie Maddern Fiske, one of the legends of the stage endorsed Chaplin's artistry in an article in Harper's Weekly (6 May 1915). At the start of her article Mrs. Fiske spoke, "...To the writer Charles Chaplin appears as a great comic artist, possessing inspirational powers and a technique as unfaltering as Rejane's. If it be treason to Art to say this, then let those exalted persons who allow culture to be defined only upon their own terms make the most of it..." In the following years Chaplin would make many friends from the world of the Broadway stage.

Chaplin was emerging as the supreme exponent of silent films, an emigrant himself from London. Chaplin's Tramp enacted the difficulties and humiliations of the immigrant underdog, the constant struggle at the bottom of the American heap and yet he triumphed over adversity without ever rising to the top, and thereby stayed in touch with his audience. Chaplin's films were also deliciously subversive. The bumbling officials enabled the immigrants to laugh at those they feared.

Pioneering film artist and global celebrity (1916–1918)



A clip from the Charlie Chaplin silent film, *The Bond* (1918).

In 1916, the Mutual Film Corporation paid Chaplin \$670,000 to produce a dozen two-reel comedies. He was given near complete artistic control, and produced twelve films over an eighteen-month period that rank among the most influential comedy films in all cinema. Of his Mutual comedies, the best known include: *Easy Street*, *One A.M.*, *The Pawnshop*, and *The Adventurer*. Edna Purviance remained the leading lady, and Chaplin added Eric Campbell, Henry Bergman, and Albert Austin to his stock company; Campbell, a Gilbert and Sullivan veteran, provided superb villainy, and second bananas Bergman and Austin would remain with Chaplin for decades. Chaplin regarded the Mutual period as the happiest of his career, although he also had concerns that the films during that time were becoming formulaic owing to the stringent production schedule his contract required. Upon the U.S. entering World War I, Chaplin became a spokesman for Liberty Bonds with his close friend Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford.

Most of the Chaplin films in circulation date from his Keystone, Essanay, and Mutual periods. After Chaplin assumed control of his productions in 1918 (and kept exhibitors and audiences waiting for them), entrepreneurs serviced the demand for Chaplin by bringing back his older comedies. The films were re-cut, re-titled, and re-issued again and again, first for theatres, then for the home-film market, and in recent years, for home video. Even Essanay was guilty of this practice, fashioning "new" Chaplin comedies from old film clips and out-takes. The twelve Mutual comedies were revamped as sound films in 1933, when producer Amadee J. Van Beuren added new orchestral scores and sound effects.

At the conclusion of the Mutual contract in 1917, Chaplin signed a contract with First National to produce eight two-reel films. First National financed and distributed these pictures (1918–23) but otherwise gave him complete creative control over production. Chaplin now had his own studio, and he could work at a more relaxed pace that allowed him to focus on quality. Although First National expected Chaplin to deliver short comedies like the celebrated Mutuals, Chaplin ambitiously expanded most of his personal projects into longer, feature-length films, including *Shoulder Arms* (1918), *The Pilgrim* (1923) and the feature-length classic *The Kid* (1921).

United Artists (1919–1939)



Charlie Chaplin Studios, 1922

In 1919, Chaplin co-founded the United Artists film distribution company with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and D. W. Griffith, all of whom were seeking to escape the growing power consolidation of film distributors and financiers in the developing Hollywood studio system. This move, along with complete control of his film production through his studio, assured Chaplin's independence as a filmmaker. He served on the board of UA until the early 1950s.

All Chaplin's United Artists pictures were of feature length, beginning with the atypical drama in which Chaplin had only a brief cameo role, *A Woman of Paris* (1923). This was followed by the classic comedies *The Gold Rush* (1925) and *The Circus* (1928).

After the arrival of sound films, Chaplin continued to focus on silent films with a synchronized recorded score, which included sound effects and music with melodies based in popular songs or composed by him; *The Circus* (1928), *City Lights* (1931), and *Modern Times* (1936) were essentially silent films. *City Lights* has been praised for its mixture of comedy and sentimentality. Critic James Agee, for example, wrote in *Life* magazine in 1949 that the final scene in *City Lights* was the "greatest single piece of acting ever committed to celluloid".



Chaplin and Jackie Coogan in *The Kid* (1921)

While *Modern Times* (1936) is a non-talkie, it does contain talk—usually coming from inanimate objects such as a radio or a TV monitor. This was done to help 1930s audiences, who were out of the habit of watching silent films, adjust to not hearing dialogue. *Modern Times* was the first film where Chaplin's voice is heard (in the nonsense song at the end, which Chaplin both performed and wrote the nonsense lyrics to). However, for most viewers it is still considered a silent film.

Although "talkies" became the dominant mode of film making soon after they were introduced in 1927, Chaplin resisted making such a film all through the 1930s. He considered cinema essentially a pantomimic art. He said: "Action is more generally understood than words. Like Chinese symbolism, it will mean different things according to its scenic connotation. Listen to a description of some unfamiliar object—an African warthog, for example; then look at a picture of the animal and see how surprised you are".

It is a tribute to Chaplin's versatility that he also has one film credit for choreography for the 1952 film *Limelight*, and another as a singer for the title music of *The Circus* (1928). The best known of several songs he composed are "Smile", composed for the film *Modern Times* (1936) and given lyrics to help promote a 1950s revival of the film, famously covered by Nat King Cole. "This Is My Song" from Chaplin's last film, *A Countess from Hong Kong*, was a number one hit in several different languages in the late 1960s (most notably the version by Petula Clark and discovery of an unreleased version in the 1990s recorded in 1967 by Judith Durham of The Seekers), and Chaplin's theme from *Limelight* was a hit in the 1950s under the title "Eternally." Chaplin's score to *Limelight* won an Academy Award in 1972; a delay in the film premiering in Los Angeles made it eligible decades after it was filmed. Chaplin also wrote scores for his earlier silent films when they were re-released in the sound era, notably *The Kid* for its 1971 re-release.

***The Great Dictator* (1940)**



Charlie Chaplin in the film *The Great Dictator*

Chaplin's first talking picture, *The Great Dictator* (1940), was an act of defiance against Nazism. It was filmed and released in the United States one year before the U.S. entry into World War II. Chaplin played the role of "Adenoid Hynkel", Dictator of Tomainia, modeled on German dictator Adolf Hitler, who was only four days his junior and sported a similar moustache. The film also showcased comedian Jack Oakie as "Benzino Napaloni", dictator of Bacteria, a jab at Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

Paulette Goddard filmed with Chaplin again, depicting a woman in the ghetto. The film was seen as an act of courage in the political environment of the time, both for its ridicule of Nazism, for the portrayal of overt Jewish characters, and the depiction of their persecution. In addition to Hynkel, Chaplin also played a look-alike Jewish barber persecuted by the regime. The barber physically resembled the Tramp character.

At the conclusion, the two characters Chaplin portrayed swapped positions through a complex plot, and he dropped out of his comic character to address the audience directly in a speech denouncing dictatorship, greed, hate, and intolerance, in favor of liberty and human brotherhood.

The film was nominated for Academy awards for Best Picture (producer), Best Original Screenplay (writer) and Best Actor.

McCarthy era

Although Chaplin had his major successes in the United States and was a resident from 1914 to 1953, he always maintained a neutral nationalistic stance. During the era of McCarthyism, Chaplin was accused of "un-American activities" as a suspected communist and J. Edgar Hoover, who had instructed the FBI to keep extensive secret files on him, tried to end his United States residency. FBI pressure on Chaplin grew after his 1942 campaign for a second European front in the war and reached a critical level in the late 1940s, when Congressional figures threatened to call him as a witness in hearings. This was never done, probably from fear of Chaplin's ability to lampoon the investigators.

In 1952, Chaplin left the US for what was intended as a brief trip home to the United Kingdom for the London premiere of *Limelight*. Hoover learned of the trip and negotiated with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to revoke Chaplin's re-entry permit, exiling Chaplin so he could not return for his alleged political leanings. Chaplin decided not to re-enter the United States, writing: "Since the end of the last world war, I have been the object of lies and propaganda by powerful reactionary groups who, by their influence and by the aid of America's yellow press, have created an unhealthy atmosphere in which liberal-minded individuals can be singled out and persecuted. Under these conditions I find it virtually impossible to continue my motion-picture work, and I have therefore given up my residence in the United States."

That Chaplin was unprepared to remain abroad, or that the revocation of his right to re-enter the United States by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was a surprise to him, may be apocryphal: An anecdote in some contradiction is recorded during a broad interview with Richard Avedon, celebrated New York portraitist.

Avedon is credited with the last portrait of the entertainer to be taken before his departure to Europe and therefore the last photograph of him as a singularly "American icon." According to Avedon, Chaplin telephoned him at his studio in New York while on a layover before the final leg of his travel to England. The photographer considered the impromptu self-introduction a prank and angrily answered his caller with the riposte, "If you're Charlie Chaplin, I'm Franklin Roosevelt!" To mollify Avedon, Chaplin assured the photographer of his authenticity and added the comment, "If you want to take my

picture, you'd better do it now. They are coming after me and I won't be back. I leave ... (imminently).” Avedon interrupted his production commitments to take Chaplin's portrait the next day, and never saw him again.

Chaplin then made his home in Vevey, Switzerland. He briefly and triumphantly returned to the United States in April 1972, with his wife, to receive an Honorary Oscar, and also to discuss how his films would be re-released and marketed.

Final works (1957–1976)



Charlie Chaplin Statue in Vevey, Switzerland

Chaplin's final two films were made in London: *A King in New York* (1957) in which he starred, wrote, directed and produced; and *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967), which he directed, produced, and wrote. The latter film stars Sophia Loren and Marlon Brando, and Chaplin made his final on-screen appearance in a brief cameo role as a seasick steward. He also composed the music for both films with the theme song from *A Countess From Hong Kong*, "This is My Song", reaching number one in the UK as sung by Petula Clark. Chaplin also compiled a film *The Chaplin Revue* from three First National films *A Dog's Life* (1918), *Shoulder Arms* (1918) and *The Pilgrim* (1923) for which he composed the music and recorded an introductory narration. As well as directing these final films, Chaplin also wrote *My Autobiography*, between 1959 and 1963, which was published in 1964.

In his pictorial autobiography *My Life In Pictures*, published in 1974, Chaplin indicated that he had written a screenplay for his daughter, Victoria; entitled *The Freak*, the film would have cast her as an angel. According to Chaplin, a script was completed and pre-production rehearsals had begun on the film (the book includes a photograph of Victoria in costume), but were halted when Victoria married. "I mean to make it some day," Chaplin wrote. However, his health declined steadily in the 1970s which hampered all hopes of the film ever being produced.

From 1969 until 1976, Chaplin wrote original music compositions and scores for his silent pictures and re-released them. He composed the scores of all his First National shorts: *The Idle Class* in 1971 (paired with *The Kid* for re-release in 1972), *A Day's Pleasure* in 1973, *Pay Day* in 1972, *Sunnyside* in 1974, and of his feature length films firstly *The Circus* in 1969 and *The Kid* in 1971. Chaplin worked with music associate Eric James whilst composing all his scores.

He received a knighthood on 4 March 1975, at the age of 85. Chaplin's last completed work was the score for his 1923 film *A Woman of Paris*, which was completed in 1976, by which time Chaplin was extremely frail, even finding communication difficult.

Death (1977)



Chaplin's grave in Switzerland

Chaplin's robust health began to slowly fail in the late 1960s, after the completion of his final film *A Countess from Hong Kong*, and more rapidly after he received his Academy Award in 1972. By 1977, he had difficulty communicating, and was using a wheelchair. Chaplin died in his sleep in Vevey, Switzerland on Christmas Day 1977.

Chaplin was interred in Corsier-Sur-Vevey Cemetery, Switzerland. On 1 March 1978, his corpse was stolen by a small group of Swiss mechanics in an attempt to extort money from his family. The plot failed; the robbers were captured, and the corpse was recovered eleven weeks later near Lake Geneva. His body was reburied under 6 feet (1.8 m) of concrete to prevent further attempts.

Filmmaking techniques

Chaplin never spoke more than cursorily about his filmmaking methods, claiming such a thing would be tantamount to a magician spoiling his own illusion. In fact, until he began making spoken dialogue films with *The Great Dictator* in 1940, Chaplin never shot from a completed script. The method he developed, once his Essanay contract gave him the freedom to write for and direct himself, was to start from a vague premise—for example "Charlie enters a health spa" or "Charlie works in a pawn shop." Chaplin then had sets constructed and worked with his stock company to improvise gags and "business" around them, almost always working the ideas out on film. As ideas were accepted and discarded, a narrative structure would emerge, frequently requiring Chaplin to reshoot an already-completed scene that might have otherwise contradicted the story. Chaplin's unique filmmaking techniques became known only after his death, when his rare surviving outtakes and cut sequences were carefully examined in the 1983 British documentary *Unknown Chaplin*.

This is one reason why Chaplin took so much longer to complete his films than his rivals did. In addition, Chaplin was an incredibly exacting director, showing his actors exactly how he wanted them to perform and shooting scores of takes until he had the shot he wanted. Animator Chuck Jones, who lived near Charlie Chaplin's Lone Star studio as a boy, remembered his father saying he watched Chaplin shoot a scene more than a hundred times until he was satisfied with it. This combination of story improvisation and relentless perfectionism—which resulted in days of effort and thousands of feet of film being wasted, all at enormous expense—often proved very taxing for Chaplin, who in frustration would often lash out at his actors and crew, keep them waiting idly for hours or, in extreme cases, shutting down production altogether.

Comparison with other silent comics

Since the 1960s, Chaplin's films have been compared to those of Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd (the other two great silent film comedians of the time), especially among the loyal fans of each comic.

The three had different styles: Chaplin had a strong affinity for sentimentality and pathos (which was popular in the 1920s), Lloyd was renowned for his everyman persona and 1920s optimism, and Keaton adhered to onscreen stoicism with a cynical tone more suited to modern audiences.

Commercially, Chaplin made some of the highest-grossing films in the silent era; *The Gold Rush* is the fifth with \$4.25 million and *The Circus* is the seventh with \$3.8 million. However, Chaplin's films combined made about \$10.5 million while Harold Lloyd's grossed \$15.7 million. Lloyd was far more prolific, releasing twelve feature films in the 1920s while Chaplin released just three. Buster Keaton's films were not nearly as commercially successful as Chaplin's or Lloyd's even at the height of his popularity, and only received belated critical acclaim in the late 1950s and 1960s.

There is evidence that Chaplin and Keaton, who both got their start in vaudeville, thought highly of one another: Keaton stated in his autobiography that Chaplin was the greatest comedian that ever lived, and the greatest comedy director, whereas Chaplin welcomed Keaton to United Artists in 1925, advised him against his disastrous move to MGM in 1928, and for his last American film, *Limelight*, wrote a part specifically for Keaton as his first on-screen comedy partner since 1915.

Composer and songwriter

Chaplin wrote or co-wrote the scores and songs for many of his films. "Smile", which he composed for his film, *Modern Times*, hit number 2 on the UK charts when sung by Nat King Cole in the 1950s. It was also Michael Jackson's favorite song. "This Is My Song", written and composed by Chaplin for his film, *A Countess from Hong Kong*, hit number 1 on the UK charts when sung by Petula Clark in the 1960s. In 1973, Chaplin won the Oscar for Best Film Score for his film, *Limelight*. Chaplin was not the only member of his family with musical talent; his nephew, Spencer Dryden was the drummer for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted band, Jefferson Airplane.

Politics



Chaplin with American socialist Max Eastman in Hollywood 1919

Chaplin's political sympathies always lay with the left. His silent films made prior to the Great Depression typically did not contain overt political themes or messages, apart from the Tramp's plight in poverty and his run-ins with the law, but his 1930s films were more openly political. *Modern Times* depicts workers and poor people in dismal conditions. The final dramatic speech in *The Great Dictator*, which was critical of following patriotic nationalism without question, and his vocal public support for

the opening of a second European front in 1942 to assist the Soviet Union in World War II were controversial.



Chaplin with Mahatma Gandhi in Canning Town, London, 1931.

Chaplin declined to support the war effort as he had done for World War I which led to public anger, although his two sons saw service in the Army in Europe. For most of World War II he was fighting serious criminal and civil charges related to his involvement with actress Joan Barry (see below). After the war, his 1947 black comedy, *Monsieur Verdoux* showed a critical view of capitalism. Chaplin's final American film, *Limelight*, was less political and more autobiographical in nature. His following European-made film, *A King in New York* (1957), satirized the political persecution and paranoia that had forced him to leave the U.S. five years earlier.

On religion, Chaplin wrote in his autobiography, "In Philadelphia, I inadvertently came upon an edition of Robert Ingersoll's *Essays and Lectures*. This was an exciting discovery; his atheism confirmed my own belief that the horrific cruelty of the Old Testament was degrading to the human spirit."

Other controversies

During World War I, Chaplin was criticized in the British press for not joining the Army. He had in fact presented himself for service, but was denied for being too small at 5'5" and underweight. Chaplin raised substantial funds for the war effort during war bond drives not only with public speaking at rallies but also by making, at his own expense, *The Bond*, a comedic propaganda film used in 1918. The lingering controversy may have prevented Chaplin from receiving a knighthood in the 1930s. A 1916 propaganda short film *Zepped* with Chaplin was discovered in 2009.

For Chaplin's entire career, some level of controversy existed over claims of Jewish ancestry. Nazi propaganda in the 1930s and 40s prominently portrayed him as Jewish (named Karl Tonstein) relying on articles published in the U.S. press before, and FBI investigations of Chaplin in the late 1940s also focused on Chaplin's ethnic origins. There is no documentary evidence of Jewish ancestry for Chaplin himself. For his entire public life, he fiercely refused to challenge or refute claims that he was Jewish, saying that to do so would always "play directly into the hands of anti-Semites." Although baptized in the Church of England, Chaplin was thought to be an agnostic for most of his life.

Chaplin's lifelong attraction to younger women remains another enduring source of interest to some. His biographers have attributed this to a teenage infatuation with Hetty Kelly, whom he met in Britain while performing in the music hall, and which possibly defined his feminine ideal. Chaplin clearly relished the role of discovering and closely guiding young female stars; with the exception of Mildred Harris, all of his marriages and most of his major relationships began in this manner.

Personal life and family

Chaplin's mother died in 1928 in Glendale, California, seven years after she was brought to the U.S. by her sons. Unknown to Charlie and Sydney until years later, they had a half-brother through their mother. The boy, Wheeler Dryden (1892–1957), was raised abroad by his father but later connected with the rest of the family and went to work for Chaplin at his Hollywood studio. In 1928, Chaplin built the Montecito Inn in Montecito near Santa Barbara as an escape from showbiz with his closest friends.

The South African duo Locnville, Andrew and Brian Chaplin, are related to Chaplin (their grandfather was Chaplin's first cousin).

Relationships

Hetty Kelly was Chaplin's first love, a dancer with whom he fell in love when she was fifteen and almost married when he was nineteen, in 1908. It is said Chaplin fell madly in love with her and asked her to marry him. When she refused, Chaplin suggested it would be best if they did not see each other again; he was reportedly crushed when she agreed. Years later, her memory would remain an obsession with Chaplin. He was devastated in 1921 when he learned that she had died of influenza during the 1918 flu pandemic.

Edna Purviance was Chaplin's first major leading lady after Mabel Normand. Purviance and Chaplin were involved in a close romantic relationship during the production of his Essanay and Mutual films in 1916–1917. The romance seems to have ended by 1918, and Chaplin's marriage to Mildred Harris in late 1918 ended any possibility of reconciliation. Purviance would continue as leading lady in Chaplin's films until 1923, and would remain on Chaplin's payroll until her death in 1958. She and Chaplin spoke warmly of one another for the rest of their lives.



Chaplin with Edna Purviance in *The Immigrant* (1917)

Mildred Harris: On 23 October 1918, Chaplin, age 29, married the popular child actress, Harris, who was 16 at the time. They had one son, Norman Spencer "The Little Mouse" Chaplin, born on 7 July 1919, who died three days later and is interred under the name *The Little Mouse* at Inglewood Park Cemetery, Inglewood California. Chaplin separated from Harris by late 1919, moving back into the Los Angeles Athletic Club. The couple divorced in November 1920, with Harris getting some of their community property and a \$100,000 settlement. Chaplin admitted that he "was not in love, now that was married wanted to be and wanted the marriage to be a success." During the divorce, Chaplin claimed Harris had an affair with noted actress of the time Alla Nazimova, rumored to be fond of seducing young actresses.



Mildred Harris, c. 1918–1920

Pola Negri: Chaplin was involved in a very public relationship and engagement with the Polish actress, Negri, in 1922–23, after she arrived in Hollywood to star in films. The stormy on-off engagement was halted after about nine months, but in many ways it foreshadowed the modern stereotypes of Hollywood star relationships. Chaplin's public involvement with Negri was unique in his public life. By comparison he strove to keep his other romances during this period very discreet and private (usually without success). Many biographers have concluded the affair with Negri was largely for publicity purposes.

Marion Davies: In 1924, during the time he was involved with the underage Lita Grey, Chaplin was rumored to have had a fling with actress Davies, companion of William Randolph Hearst. Davies and Chaplin were both present on Hearst's yacht the weekend preceding the mysterious death of Thomas Harper Ince. Charlie allegedly tried to persuade her to leave Hearst and remain with him, but she refused and stayed by Hearst's side until his death in 1951. Chaplin made a rare cameo appearance in Davies' 1928 film *Show People*, and by some accounts supposedly continued an affair with her until 1931.

Lita Grey: Chaplin first met Grey during the filming of *The Kid*. Three years later, at age 35, he became involved with the then 16-year-old Grey during preparations for *The Gold Rush* in which she was to star as the female lead. They married on 26 November 1924, after she became pregnant (a development that resulted in her being removed from the cast of the film). They had two sons, the actors Charles Chaplin, Jr. (1925–1968) and Sydney Chaplin (1926–2009). The marriage was a disaster, with the couple hopelessly mismatched. The couple divorced on 22 August 1927. Their extraordinarily bitter divorce had Chaplin paying Grey a then-record-breaking \$825,000 settlement, on top of almost one million dollars in legal costs. The stress of the sensational divorce, compounded by a federal tax dispute, allegedly turned his hair white. The Chaplin biographer Joyce Milton asserted in *Tramp: The Life of Charlie Chaplin* that the Grey-Chaplin marriage was the inspiration for Vladimir Nabokov's 1950s novel *Lolita*.

Merna Kennedy: Lita Grey's friend, Kennedy was a dancer who Chaplin hired as the lead actress in *The Circus* (1928). It is rumored that the two had an affair during shooting. Grey used the rumored infidelity in her divorce proceedings.

Georgia Hale was Lita Grey's replacement on *The Gold Rush*. In the documentary series, *Unknown Chaplin*, (directed and written by film historians Kevin Brownlow and David Gill), Hale, in a 1980s interview states that she had idolized Chaplin since childhood and that the then-19-year-old actress and Chaplin began an affair that continued for several years, which she details in her memoir, *Charlie Chaplin: Intimate Close-Ups*. During production of Chaplin's film *City Lights* in 1929–30,

Hale, who by then was Chaplin's closest companion, was called in to replace Virginia Cherrill as the flower girl. Seven minutes of test footage survives from this recasting, and is included on the 2003 DVD release of the film, but economics forced Chaplin to rehire Cherrill. In discussing the situation in *Unknown Chaplin*, Hale states that her relationship with Chaplin was as strong as ever during filming. Their romance apparently ended sometime after Chaplin's return from his world tour in 1933.

Louise Brooks was a chorine in the *Ziegfeld Follies* when she met Chaplin. He had gone to New York for the opening there of *The Gold Rush*. For two months in the summer of 1925, the two cavorted together at the Ritz, and with film financier A.C. Blumenthal and Brooks' fellow Ziegfeld girl Peggy Fears in Blumenthal's penthouse suite at the Ambassador Hotel. Brooks was with Chaplin when he spent four hours watching a musician torture a violin in a Lower East Side restaurant, an act he would recreate in *Limelight*.

May Reeves was originally hired to be Chaplin's secretary on his 1931–1932 extended trip to Europe, dealing mostly with reading his personal correspondence. She worked only one morning, and then was introduced to Chaplin, who was instantly infatuated with her. May became his constant companion and lover on the trip, much to the disgust of Chaplin's brother, Syd. After Reeves also became involved with Syd, Chaplin ended the relationship and she left his entourage. Reeves chronicled her short time with Chaplin in her book, "The Intimate Charlie Chaplin".

Paulette Goddard: Chaplin and actress Goddard were involved in a romantic and professional relationship between 1932 and 1940, with Goddard living with Chaplin in his Beverly Hills home for most of this time. Chaplin gave her starring roles in *Modern Times* and *The Great Dictator*. Refusal to clarify their marital status is often claimed to have eliminated Goddard from final consideration for the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*. After the relationship ended in 1940, Chaplin and Goddard made public statements that they had been secretly married in 1936; but these claims were likely a mutual effort to prevent any lasting damage to Goddard's career. In any case, their relationship ended amicably in 1942, with Goddard being granted a settlement. Goddard went on to a major career in films at Paramount in the 1940s, working several times with Cecil B. DeMille. Like Chaplin, she lived her later life in Switzerland, dying in 1990.



Chaplin and Paulette Goddard in *The Great Dictator* (1940)

Joan Barry (1920–1996): In 1942, Chaplin had a brief affair with Barry, whom he was considering for a starring role in a proposed film, but the relationship ended when she began harassing him and displaying signs of severe mental illness (not unlike his mother). Chaplin's brief involvement with Barry proved to be a nightmare for him. After having a child, she filed a paternity suit against him in 1943. Although blood tests proved Chaplin was not the father of Barry's child, Barry's attorney, Joseph Scott, convinced the court that the tests were inadmissible as evidence, and Chaplin was

ordered to support the child. The injustice of the ruling later led to a change in California law to allow blood tests as evidence. Federal prosecutors also brought Mann Act charges against Chaplin related to Barry in 1944, of which he was acquitted. Chaplin's public image in America was gravely damaged by these sensational trials. Barry was institutionalized in 1953 after she was found walking the streets barefoot, carrying a pair of baby sandals and a child's ring, and murmuring: "This is magic". Chaplin's second wife, Lita Grey, later asserted that Chaplin had paid corrupt government officials to tamper with the blood test results. She further stated that "there is no doubt that she was his child."

Oona O'Neill: During Chaplin's legal trouble over the Barry affair, he met O'Neill, daughter of Eugene O'Neill, and married her on 16 June 1943. He was fifty-four; she had just turned eighteen. The marriage produced eight children; their last child, Christopher, was born when Chaplin was 73 years old. Oona survived Chaplin by fourteen years, and died from pancreatic cancer in 1991.

Children

Child	Birth	Death	Chaplin's age at time of birth	Mother	Grandchildren
Norman Spencer Chaplin	7 July 1919	10 1919	July 30	Mildred Harris	
Charles Spencer Chaplin, Jr.	5 May 1925	20 1968	March 36	Lita Grey	Susan Maree Chaplin (b 1959)
Sydney Earle Chaplin	31 March 1926	3 2009	March 36		Stephan Chaplin (b 19xx)
Carol Ann Barry Chaplin (Disputed)	2 October 1943		54	Joan Barry	Unknown
Geraldine Leigh Chaplin	31 July 1944		55		Shane Saura Chaplin (b 1974) Oona Castilla Chaplin (b 1986) Kathleen Chaplin (b. 1975)
Michael John Chaplin	7 March 1946		56		Dolores Chaplin (b. 1979) Carmen Chaplin (b 19xx) George Chaplin (b 19xx)
Josephine Hannah Chaplin	28 March 1949		59	Oona O'Neill	Julien Ronet (b. 1980)
Victoria Chaplin	19 May 1951		62		Aurélia Thiérrée (b. 1971) James Thiérrée (b. 1974)
Eugene Anthony Chaplin	23 August 1953		64		Kiera Chaplin (b. 1982)
Jane Cecil Chaplin	23 May 1957		68		Orson Salkind (b. 1986) Osceola Salkind (b. 1994)
Annette Emily Chaplin	3 December 1959		70		
Christopher James Chaplin	6 July 1962		73		

Awards and recognition



Statue of Chaplin in Leicester Square, London

Chaplin was knighted in 1975 at the age of 85 as a Knight Commander of the British Empire (KBE) by Queen Elizabeth II. The honor had been first proposed in 1931. Knighthood was suggested again in 1956, but was vetoed after a Foreign Office report raised concerns over Chaplin's purported "communist" views and his moral behavior in marrying two 16-year-old girls; it was felt that honoring him would damage both the reputation of the British honors system and relations with the United States.

Among other recognitions, Chaplin was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1970; that he had not been among those originally honored in 1961 caused some controversy. Chaplin's Swiss mansion is to be opened as a museum tracing his life from the music halls in London to Hollywood fame.

A statue of Charlie Chaplin was made by John Doubleday, to stand in Leicester Square in London. It was unveiled by Sir Ralph Richardson in 1981. A bronze statue of him is at Waterville, County Kerry.

Academy Awards

Chaplin received three Academy Awards in his lifetime: one for Best Original Score, and two Honorary Awards. However, during his active years as a filmmaker, Chaplin expressed disdain for the Academy Awards; his son Charles Jr. wrote that Chaplin invoked the ire of the Academy in the 1930s by jokingly using his 1929 Oscar as a doorstep. This may help explain why *City Lights* and *Modern Times*, considered by several polls to be two of the greatest of all motion pictures, were not nominated for a single Academy Award.

The 1st Academy Awards ceremony: When the first Oscars were awarded on 16 May 1929, the voting audit procedures that now exists had not yet been put into place, and the categories were still very fluid. Chaplin's *The Circus* was set to be heavily recognized, as Chaplin had originally been

nominated for Best Production, Best Director in a Comedy Picture, Best Actor and Best Writing (Original Story). However, the Academy decided to withdraw his name from all the competitive categories and instead give him a Special Award "for versatility and genius in acting, writing, directing and producing *The Circus*". The only other film to receive a Special Award that year was *The Jazz Singer*.

The 13th Academy Awards ceremony: In 1941, *The Great Dictator* was nominated for five awards, including two for Chaplin: Best Writing and Best Actor. Chaplin lost out on both counts. For writing, he lost to Preston Sturges for *The Great McGinty*, and for acting to James Stewart for *The Philadelphia Story*.

The 20th Academy Awards ceremony: In 1948, Chaplin's screenplay for *Monsieur Verdoux* was nominated, but the award went instead to Sidney Sheldon for *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer*.

The 44th Academy Awards ceremony: Chaplin's second Oscar was awarded forty-three years after his first, in 1972. Chaplin came out of exile to accept the Honorary Award for "the incalculable effect he has had in making motion pictures the art form of this century". Stepping onto the stage of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Chaplin received the longest standing ovation in Academy Award history, lasting a full twelve minutes.

The 45th Academy Awards ceremony: In 1973, Chaplin's film *Limelight* was honored with an Oscar for Best Original Score. Though the film had originally been released in 1952, due to Chaplin's political difficulties at the time, the film did not play for one week in Los Angeles, and thus did not meet the criterion for nomination until it was re-released in 1972.

Chaplin's American business partner, who helped promote and release his films in the U.S., was Mo Rothman (1919- 2011). Rothman is also credited with urging Chaplin to end his self-imposed exile and visit the U.S. to appear and be honored both by the Lincoln Center Film Society in New York and then at Hollywood's Academy Awards in 1972.

Legacy



Bronze statue at Waterville, County Kerry

Chaplin's "tramp" character is possibly the most imitated on all levels of entertainment. Chaplin once entered a "Chaplin look-alike" competition and did not make the final round. The influence of his 'Tramp' character could be seen on other artists and media providers. Beginning early on there were many tributes, and parodies made. E. C. Segar's 1916 comic strip "Charlie Chaplin's Comedy Capers" is

an early example. Segar's 'Chaplin' comics would later be collected in 1917 into five books, precursors of the later comic book format. Two different animated cartoon series also starred 'Charlie' a tramp character, the first a series of nine shorts from 1916 by Movca Film Service. And later ten films by the Pat Sullivan Studio from 1918–1919, which would later use the 'Charlie/Charley' gestures to create Felix the Cat, the character made one later appearance in one of Felix's 1923 cartoons "Felix in Hollywood".

From 1917 to 1918, silent film actor Billy West made more than 20 films as a comedian precisely imitating Chaplin's tramp character, makeup and costume.

The third of composer Karl Amadeus Hartmann's 1929–30 composition *Wachsfigurenkabinett: Fünf kleine Opern* (*Waxworks: Five Little Operas*) is entitled 'Chaplin-Ford-Trot', and features the character of Charlie Chaplin (in a speaking rather than operatic role).

Shree 420 and Awaara main characters are heavily influenced by *The Tramp*.

Kamal Haasan molded his character "Chaplin Chellappa" on Chaplin in the Tamil film Punnaagai Mannan

In 1985, Chaplin was honored with his image on a postage stamp of the United Kingdom, and in 1994 he appeared on a United States postage stamp designed by caricaturist Al Hirschfeld.

John Woo directed a parody film of Chaplin's "The Kid" called Hua ji shi dai (1981), also known as "Laughing Times."

A minor planet, 3623 Chaplin, discovered by Soviet astronomer Lyudmila Karachkina in 1981, is named after Chaplin.

In 1992, a film was made about Chaplin's life entitled *Chaplin*, directed by Oscar-winner Richard Attenborough, and starring Robert Downey, Jr., in an Oscar-nominated performance, and Geraldine Chaplin playing the part of Charlie Chaplin's mother, her own grandmother.

In 2001, British comedian Eddie Izzard played Chaplin in Peter Bogdanovich's film, *The Cat's Meow*, which speculated about the still-unsolved death of producer Thomas H. Ince during a yachting party thrown by William Randolph Hearst, of which Chaplin was a guest.

On 15 April 2011, a day before his 122nd birthday anniversary, Google celebrated this with a special Google Doodle video on its global and other country-wide homepages.

Filmography and current rights issues

Chaplin wrote, directed, and starred in dozens of feature films and short subjects. Highlights include *The Immigrant* (1917), *The Gold Rush* (1925), *City Lights* (1931), *Modern Times* (1936), and *The Great Dictator* (1940), all of which have been selected for inclusion in the National Film Registry. Three of these films made the AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies and AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies (10th Anniversary Edition) lists: *The Gold Rush*, *City Lights*, and *Modern Times*.

A listing of the dozens of Chaplin films and alternate versions can be found in the Ted Okuda-David Masko book *Charlie Chaplin at Keystone and Essanay: Dawn of the Tramp*. Thanks to The Chaplin Keystone Project, efforts to produce definitive versions of Chaplin's pre-1918 short films have come to a successful end: after ten years of research and clinical international cooperation work, 34 Keystone films have been fully restored and published in October 2010 on a 4-DVD box set. All twelve Mutual films

were restored in 1975 by archivist David Shepard and Blackhawk Films, and new restorations with even more footage were released on DVD in 2006.

Today, nearly all of Chaplin's output is owned by Roy Export S.A.S. in Paris, which enforces the library's copyrights and decides how and when this material can be released. French company MK2 acts as worldwide distribution agent for the Export company. In the U.S. as of 2010, distribution is handled under license by Janus Films, with home video releases from Criterion Collection, affiliated with Janus.

Claire Windsor

Claire Windsor (April 14, 1892 – October 24, 1972) was a notable American film actress of the silent screen era.



Claire Windsor, 1926

Early life

Windsor was born **Clara Viola Cronk** (nicknamed "Ola") in 1892 to George Edwin and Rosella R. Fearing Cronk in Marvin, Phillips County, Kansas of Scandinavian heritage. Her parents later moved to Cawker City, Kansas when she was a small child. She attended Washburn College in Topeka, Kansas from 1906 to 1907 (15). An early marriage to a man named David Willis Bowes, took place on May 13, 1914 in Denver, Colorado, resulted in the birth of a son, David William Bowes, born on September 9, 1916, and the couple soon went their separate ways. Bowes officially filed for divorce on September 14, 1920.(13)(14) Claire moved to Seattle, Washington with her parents where she entered and won a beauty contest. On the advice of a friend, Claire moved to California in hopes of making a career as an actress in the new medium of motion pictures. Initially receiving only bit parts, she was soon spotted by Lois Weber, a highly regarded and influential director and producer of silent films for Paramount Pictures. Weber immediately signed Windsor to a contract. Windsor costarred with Louis Calhern in Weber's *The Blot* (1921).

Career climb

Claire Windsor's film debut was in the 1920 release *To Please One Woman* which was only a modest success. To promote the nascent starlet, Paramount Pictures often paired Windsor with the newly divorced legendary actor Charlie Chaplin in publicity photographs, leading the tabloid press to give mention to the young actress in print. The publicity paid off; in 1922 the newly formed Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers (WAMPAS) began their annual WAMPAS Baby Stars awards and named Claire Windsor, along with Bessie Love, Lila Lee, Mary Philbin and Colleen Moore,

as the year's most promising starlets. That same year Claire signed a contract with Goldwyn Pictures Corporation. She would appear in *Broken Chains* with fellow WAMPAS Baby Star Colleen Moore.

In 1923, the former Ola Cronk officially began using the more matinee-friendly *Claire Windsor* as a moniker. Throughout the 1920s, Windsor established herself as highly regarded leading lady in film. As her career progressed, she was often typecast as the "upscale society girl", often playing the part of a princess, or money socialite. Critics lauded her elegant fashion sense, and Windsor became a noted trend-setter of 1920s fashion.

In 1924, Windsor was one of the top stars at the newly formed Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio. Later, at Tiffany Pictures, *Souls for Sables* (1925), co-starring Eugene O'Brien, was a box-office hit for Windsor.

Personal life and "talkies"

Windsor was frequently romantically linked to her leading male co-stars. She had a well-publicized affair with actor Charles "Buddy" Rogers, and in 1925 married matinee idol Bert Lytell. The couple divorced in 1927, however. Windsor never remarried, but a few notable love affairs with men caused minor scandals in the press, including once being sued by the young wife of a Boston broker in an "Alienation of Affection" lawsuit, in which the broker's wife contended that Windsor had "stolen her husband".

By the late 1920s, Claire Windsor (like so many of her acting peers) found it difficult to move into *talkies*. She made several talkies throughout the 1930s but could never recapture the success of her earlier years as a silent screen actress. She had a brief stint on a road tour with Al Jolson in the production of *The Wonder Bar* and would occasionally take stage parts. In her later years, Windsor devoted herself to painting.

On April 12, 1943, Windsor officially changed her name to Claire Windsor, and her son took the name of William Willis Windsor.⁽¹²⁾

Claire Windsor died of a heart attack in 1972 at the age of 80 in Los Angeles, California. She was laid to rest at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park cemetery in Glendale, California.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Claire Windsor was given a star on the legendary Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7021 Hollywood Blvd., in Hollywood, California, U.S..

Clara Bow

Clara Gordon Bow (July 29, 1905 – September 27, 1965) was an American actress who rose to stardom in the silent film era of the 1920s. It was her appearance as a spunky shop-girl in the film *It* that brought her global fame and the nickname "The It Girl." Bow came to personify the roaring twenties and is described as its leading sex symbol. She appeared in 46 silent films and 11 talkies, including hits such as *Mantrap* (1926), *It* (1927) and *Wings* (1927). She was named first box-office draw in 1928 and 1929 and second box-office draw in 1927 and 1930. Her presence in a motion picture was said to have ensured investors, by odds of almost 2-to-1, a "safe return". In January 1929, at the apex of her stardom, she received more than 45,000 fan letters. After marrying actor Rex Bell in 1931, Bow ended her career in 1933 with the film with *Hoop-La*, becoming a rancher in Nevada.



in *Rough House Rosie* (1927)

Early life



Clara Bow at three with a Teddy bear.



Sarah Bow 1895

Clara Bow was born in 1905 in a slum tenement in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, New York, where she was also raised. Bow was the third child; the first two, also daughters, born in 1903 and 1904, died in infancy. Her mother, Sarah Bow (1880–1923), was told by a doctor not to become pregnant again for fear the next baby might die as well. Despite the her doctor's warning, Sarah Bow became pregnant with Clara in the fall of 1904. In addition to the risky pregnancy, a heat wave besieged New York in July 1905 and temperatures peaked around 100 °F; the infant mortality rate rose to 80%. "I don't suppose two

people ever looked death in the face more clearly than my mother and I the morning I was born. We were both given up, but somehow we struggled back to life".

At sixteen, Sarah fell from a second-story window and suffered a severe head injury. She was later diagnosed with "psychosis due to epilepsy", a condition apart from the seizures that is known to cause disordered thinking, delusional ideation, paranoia, and aggressive behavior.

From her earliest years, Bow learned how to care for her mother during the seizures as well as how to deal with the psychotic and hostile episodes. She said her mother could be "mean" to her, but "didn't mean to ... she couldn't help it". Still, Bow felt deprived of her childhood; "As a kid I took care of my mother, she didn't take care of me". Sarah worsened gradually, and when she realized her daughter was set for a movie career, Bow's mother told her she "would be much better off dead". One night in February 1922, Bow awoke to a butcher knife held against her throat by her mother. Bow was able to fend off the attack and locked her mother up. In the morning, Sarah had no recollection of the episode and was later committed to a charity hospital.

Bow said that her father, Robert (1874–1959), "had a quick, keen mind ... all the natural qualifications to make something of himself, but didn't". Robert seldom managed to hold on to a job and the family income varied drastically as a result. Between 1905 and 1923, the family lived at 14 different addresses. Robert was often absent, leaving his family without means to survive. "I do not think my mother ever loved my father. He knew it. And it made him very unhappy, for he worshiped her, always".

It was snowing. My mother and I were cold and hungry. We had been cold and hungry for days. We lay in each others arms and cried and tried to keep warm. It grew worse and worse. So that night my mother – but I can't tell you about it. Only when I remember it, it seems to me I can't live

Sarah Bow died on January 5, 1923. When relatives gathered for the funeral, Bow accused them of not being supportive in the past. Reportedly, her anger led her to attempt jumping into her mother's open grave.

As Bow grew up she felt shy among other girls, who teased her for her worn-out clothes and "carrot-top" hair. From first grade, Bow preferred the company of boys her age, stating, "I could lick any boy my size. My right arm was quite famous. My right arm was developed from pitching so much ... Once I hopped a ride on behind a big fire engine. I got a lot of credit from the gang for that". Bow's athletic ability led her to becoming a track champion in high-school. Of her proposed arm strength, Louella Parsons noted, "... curiously enough, she has muscles on her arms that stand out like whip-cord".

Motion pictures

In the early 1920s, roughly 50 million Americans--half the population at that time--attended the movies every week. Bow discovered that as she grew into womanhood, her stature as a "boy" in her old gang would be "impossible". As well, she didn't have any girlfriends, school was a "heartache" and home "miserable". On the silver screen, however, she found consolation; "For the first time in my life I knew there was beauty in the world. For the first time I saw distant lands, serene, lovely homes, romance, nobility, glamour". And further; "I always had a queer feeling about actors and actresses on the screen ... I knew I would have done it differently. I couldn't analyze it, but I could always feel it". "I'd go home and be a one girl circus, taking the parts of everyone I'd seen, living them before the glass." At sixteen Bow "knew" she wanted to be a motion pictures actress, even if she was a "square, awkward, funny-faced kid".

The New York starlet (1921-1923)

The *Fame and Fortune* contest



Contest form 1921



Portrait (1921)

Against her mother's wishes but with her father's support, Bow competed in Brewster publications' magazine's annual nationwide acting contest, *Fame and Fortune* in 1921. In previous years, several of the contest's winners had found work in movies after winning. In the contest's final screen test Bow was up against an already scene-experienced woman who did "a beautiful piece of acting". A set member later stated that when Bow did the scene she actually became her character and "lived it". In the January issues 1922 of *Motion Picture Classics* the contest jury, Howard Chandler Christy, Neysa Mcmein, and Harrison Fisher, concluded:

She is very young, only 16. But she is full of confidence, determination and ambition. She is endowed with a mentality far beyond her years. She has a genuine spark of **divine fire**. The five different screen tests she had, showed this very plainly, her emotional range of expression provoking a fine enthusiasm from every contest judge who saw the tests. She screens perfectly. Her personal appearance is almost enough to carry her to success without the aid of the brains she indubitably possesses.

Beyond the Rainbow (1922)

Bow won an evening gown and a silver trophy and the publisher committed to help her "gain a role in films". But nothing happened. Bow's father told her to "haunt" Brewster's office (located in Brooklyn) until they came up with something. "To get rid of me, or maybe they really meant to (give me) all the time and were just busy", Bow was introduced to director Christy Cabanne who cast her in *Beyond the Rainbow*, produced late 1921 in New York City and released February 19, 1922. Bow did five scenes, impressed Cabanne with true theatrical tears, but was eventually cut from the print. Bow wasn't told, but found out when she saw the movie at a theater in Brooklyn. "I was sick to my stomach", she recalled and thought her mother was right about the movie business. Bow, who dropped out of school after she was notified about winning the contest, possibly in October 1921, got an ordinary office job. However, movie ads and newspaper editorial comments from 1922–1923 suggest that Bow was not cut from *Beyond the Rainbow*. Her name is on the cast list among the other stars, usually tagged "Brewster magazine beauty contest winner" and sometimes even with a picture.

Down to the Sea in Ships (1923)



Tomboy Bow undercover in *Down to the Sea in Ships* (1922).



Bow 'stealing' her first picture. Newspaper ad. from summer of 1923

Encouraged by her father, Bow started to run around studio agencies asking for parts. "But there was always something. I was too young, or too little, or too fat. Usually I was too fat." Eventually director Elmer Clifton needed a tomboy for his movie *Down to the Sea in Ships*, saw Bow in *Motion Picture Classic* magazine and sent for her. In an attempt to overcome her youthful looks, Bow put her hair up and arrived in a dress she 'sneaked' from her mother. Clifton said she was too old, but broke into laughter as the stammering Bow made him believe she was the girl in the magazine. Clifton decided to bring Bow with him and offered her \$50 a week, but added he couldn't say whether or not she would "fit the part".

Down to the Sea in Ships was shot on location in New Bedford, Massachusetts, produced by Independent 'The Whaling Film Corporation', and documented the life, love and work in the whale-hunter community. The production relied on a few less known actors and local talents. It premiered at 'Olympia', New Bedford, on September 25, and went on general distribution on March 4, 1923.

Bow was billed 10th, but shined through and critics sang her praise:

- "Miss Bow will undoubtedly gain fame as a screen comedienne".
- "She scored a tremendous hit in *Down to the Sea in Ships*..(and)..has reached the front rank of motion picture principal players".
- "With her beauty, her brains, her personality and her genuine acting ability it should not be many moons before she enjoys stardom in the fullest sense of the word. You must see '*Down to the Sea in Ships*'".
- "In movie parlance, she 'stole' the picture ... "



Bow was chosen the foremost "baby" by the WAMPAS

WAMPAS Baby Star (1924)

Bow found herself walking time after time by a Broadway movie theater, staring at her name in shimmering electric light above the entrance. "I can never tell you what happiness I felt, life had been so terrible hard and it seemed to me that now all my troubles were to be in the past". By mid December 1923, primarily due to her merits in *Down to the Sea in Ships*, Bow was chosen the most successful of the 1924 WAMPAS Baby Stars.

Grit (1924)

Three months before *Down to the Sea in Ships* was released, Bow danced half nude, on a table, uncredited in *Enemies of Women* (1923). In spring she got a part in *The Daring Years* (1923), where she befriended actress Mary Carr, who taught her how to use make-up.

In the summer, she got a "tomboy" part in *Grit*, a story, which dealt with juvenile crime and was written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Bow met her first boyfriend, cameraman Arthur Jacobson, and she got to know director Frank Tuttle, with whom she worked in five later productions. Tuttle remembered:

Her emotions were close to the surface. She could cry on demand, opening the floodgate of tears almost as soon as I asked her to weep. She was dynamite, full of nervous energy and vitality and pitifully eager to please everyone".



Cartooned: Bow as "Orchid McGonigle" in *Grit*, having a hard time keeping her boy-friend "Kid Hart" (Glenn Hunter) on track.

Grit was released on January 7, 1924.

Variety reviewed, "... Clara Bow lingers in the eye, long after the picture has gone."

While shooting *Grit* at Pyramid Studios, in Astoria, New York, Bow was approached by Jack Bachman of independent Hollywood studio Preferred Pictures. He wanted to contract her for a three months trial, fare paid and \$50 a week. "It can't do any harm", he tried. "Why can't I stay in New York and make movies?", Bow asked her father, but he told her not to worry.

On July 21, 1923 she befriended Louella Parsons, who interviewed her for *The New York Morning Telegraph*. In 1931 when Bow came under tabloid scrutiny, Parsons defended her and stuck to her first opinion on Bow:

She is as refreshingly unaffected as if she had never faced a means to pretend. She hasn't any secrets from the world, she trusts everyone ... she is almost too good to be true ... (I) only wish some reformer who believes the screen contaminates all who associate with it could meet this child. Still on second thought it might not be safe: Clara uses a dangerous pair of eyes.

The interview also revealed that Bow already was cast in *Maytime* and in great favor of Chinese cuisine.

Hollywood (1923-1933)



Frame from rediscovered (May 2010, New Zealand) copy of *Maytime*. Bow comforting Ethel Shannon

Preferred Pictures (1923-1925)

July 22, 1923, Bow left New York, her father and her boyfriend behind. As chaperon for the journey and stay in Hollywood, the studio appointed writer/agent Maxine Alton, who Bow later branded a liar. In late July Bow entered studio chief B. P. Schulberg's office wearing a simple high-school uniform in which she "had won several gold medals on the cinder track". She was tested and a press-release from early August says Bow had become a member of Preferred Picture's "permanent stock". She and Alton rented an apartment at The Hillview near Hollywood Boulevard. Preferred Pictures was run by Schulberg who started as a publicity manager at Famous Players-Lasky, but in the aftermath of the power struggle around the formation of United Artists ended up on the losing side and lost his job. In 1919, at age 27, he founded 'Preferred'.

1923

Maytime

Bow's first Hollywood picture was an adaptation of the popular operetta *Maytime*, in which she essayed "Alice Tremain". Before *Maytime* was finished, Schulberg announced that Bow was given the lead in the studio's biggest seasonal assessment, *Poisoned Paradise*, but first she was lent to First National Pictures to co-star in the adaptation of Gertrude Atherton's 1923 bestseller *Black Oxen*, shot in October, and to co-star with Colleen Moore in *Painted People*, shot in November.

Black Oxen



Bow as "Janet", the "horrid" flapper in *Black Oxen* (1923), holding *Flaming Youth* to her chest; with Kate Lester and Tom Ricketts

Director Frank Lloyd was casting for the part of high society flapper Janet Oglethorpe, and more than fifty women, most with previous screen experience, auditioned. Bow reminisced; "He had not found exactly what he wanted and finally somebody suggested me to him. When I came into his office a big smile came over his face and he looked just tickled to death". Lloyd told the press; "Bow is the personification of the ideal aristocratic flapper, mischievous, pretty, aggressive, quick-tempered and deeply sentimental". It was released on January 4, 1924.

New York Times: "The flapper, impersonated by a young actress, Clara Bow, had five speaking titles, and every one of them was so entirely in accord with the character and the mood of the scene that it drew a laugh from what, in film circles, is termed a "hard-boiled" audience"

Los Angeles Times: "Clara Bow, the prize vulgarian of the lot...was amusing and spirited...but didn't belong in the picture".

Variety: "...the horrid little flapper is adorably played...".

Painted People controversy

Colleen Moore made her flapper debut in a successful adaptation of the daring novel *Flaming Youth*, released November 12, 1923, six weeks before *Black Oxen*. Both films were produced by First National Pictures, and while *Black Oxen* was still being edited and *Flaming Youth* not yet released, Bow was requested to co-star Moore as her kid sister in *Painted People* (AKA *The Swamp Angel*).

Moore essayed the baseball-playing tomboy and Bow, according to Moore, said "I don't like my part, I wanna play yours". Moore, a well-established star earning \$1200 a week — Bow got \$200 — took

offense and blocked the director from doing a close-up on Bow. Moore was married to a studio executive and Bow's protests fell short. "I'll get that bitch", she told her boyfriend Jacobson, who had arrived from New York. Bow had sinus problems and decided to have them attended to immediately. A bandaged Bow left the studio with no options but to recast her part.



Robert and Clara Bow (1931) ...



... pastiched by Frank Morgan & Jean Harlow in Bow's ex-fiancée Victor Fleming's screwball comedy Bombshell (1933)

1924

The Perfect Flapper

During 1924 Bow's "horrid" flapper raced against Moore's "whimsical". In May Moore renewed her efforts in *The Perfect Flapper*, produced by her husband, but despite good reviews she suddenly withdrew. "No more flappers ... they have served their purpose ... people are tired of soda-pop love affairs", she told the *Los Angeles Times*, that commented a month earlier, "Clara Bow is the one outstanding type. She has almost immediately been elected for all the recent flapper parts" In November 1933, Bow described the Hollywood years as a French Revolution picture, where "women are hollering and waving pitchforks twice as violently as any of the guys ... the only ladies in sight are the ones getting their heads cut off".

"If that's what my baby wants, that's what my baby does"

By New Year 1924, Bow defied the possessive Maxine Alton and brought her father to Hollywood. Bow remembered their reunion; "I didn't care a rap, for (Maxine Alton), or B. P. Schulberg, or my motion picture career, or Clara Bow, I just threw myself into his arms and kissed and kissed him, and we both cried like a couple of fool kids. Oh, it was wonderful". Bow felt Alton had misused her trust; "She wanted to keep a hold on me so she made me think I wasn't getting over and that nothing but her clever management kept me going". Bow and her father moved in at 1714 North Kingsley Drive in Beverly Hills, together with Jacobson, whom by then, also worked for Preferred. When Schulberg learned of this arrangement, he fired Jacobson for potentially getting "his big star" into a scandal. When Bow found out, "She tore up her contract and threw it in his face and told him he couldn't run her private life". Jacobson concluded, " was the sweetest girl in the world, but you didn't cross her and you didn't do her wrong". On September 7, 1924, *The Los Angeles Times*, in a significant article "A dangerous little devil is Clara, impish, appealing, but oh, how she can act!", her father is titled "business manager" and Jacobson referred to as her brother.

Bow appeared in eight releases in 1924.

In *Poisoned Paradise*, released on February 29, 1924, Bow got her first lead. "... the clever little newcomer whose work wins fresh recommendations with every new picture in which she

appears". In a scene, described as "original", Bow adds "devices", to "the modern flapper"; she fights a villain, using her fists, and significantly, does not "shrink back in fear".

In *Daughters of Pleasure*, also released on February 29, 1924, Bow and Marie Prevost, "flapped unhampered as flappers De luxe ... I wish somebody could star Clara Bow. I'm sure her 'infinite variety' would keep her from wearying us no matter how many scenes she was in".

Wine



Bow's first single lead: *Wine* (1924)

As an out-loan to Universal-Jewel, Bow top-starred, for the first time, in the prohibition, bootleg drama/comedy *Wine*, released on August 20, 1924. The picture exposes the widespread liquor traffic in the upper-classes, and Bow portrays an innocent girl who develops into a wild "redhot mama".

"If not taken as information, it is cracking good entertainment", Carl Sandburg reviewed September 29.

"Don't miss *Wine*. It's a thoroughly refreshing draught ... there are only about five actresses who give me a real thrill on the screen — and Clara is nearly five of them".

Alma Whitaker of *The Los Angeles Times* observed on September 7, 1924:

She radiates sex appeal tempered with an impish sense of humor ... She hennas her blond hair so that it will photograph dark in the pictures ... Her social decorum is of that natural, good-natured, pleasantly informal kind ... She can act on or off the screen — takes a joyous delight in accepting a challenge to vamp any selected male — the more unpromising specimen the better. When the hapless victim is scared into speechlessness she gurgles with naughty delight and tries another.

Bow remembered: "All this time I was "running wild", I guess, in the sense of trying to have a good time ... maybe this was a good thing, because I suppose a lot of that excitement, that joy of life, got onto the screen".

1925

1925 Bow appeared in fourteen productions: six for her contract owner, Preferred Pictures, and eight as an "out-loan".

"Clara Bow ... shows alarming symptoms of becoming the sensation of the year ... ", Motion Picture Classic Magazine wrote in June, and featured her on the cover.

"I'm almost never satisfied with myself or my work or anything...by the time I'm ready to be a great star I'll have been on the screen such a long time that everybody will be tired of seeing me...(Tears filled her big round eyes and threatened to fall)".

"I worked in two and even three pictures at once. I played all sorts of parts in all sorts of pictures ... It was very hard at the time and I used to be worn out and cry myself to sleep from sheer fatigue after eighteen hours a day on different sets, but now (late 1927) I am glad of it"

Preferred Pictures rented Bow to producers "for sums ranging from \$1500 to \$2000 a week". The studio like any other independent studio or theater at that time, was under attack from "The Big Three", MPAA, who had formed a trust to block out Independents and enforce the monopolistic studio system. On October 21, 1925, Schulberg filed Preferred Pictures for bankruptcy, with debts at \$820,774 and assets \$1,420. Three days later, it was announced that Schulberg would join with Adolph Zukor and became associate producer of Paramount Pictures, bringing his organization, including Bow.



The Plastic Age (1925)

Adolph Zukor, Paramount Picture CEO in his memoirs: "All the skill of directors and all the booming of press-agent drums will not make a star. Only the audiences can do it. We study audience reactions with great care". Adela Rogers St. Johns had a different take, in 1950 she wrote: "If ever a star was made by public demand, it was Clara Bow". And Louise Brooks from 1980: "(Bow) became a star without nobody's help ...".

The Plastic Age

The Plastic Age was Bow's final effort for Preferred Pictures and her biggest hit so far. Bow starred as the good-bad college-girl, Cynthia Day against Donald Keith. It was shot on location, at Pomona College, in the summer of 1925, and released on December 15, but due to block booking, not shown in New York until July 21, 1926.

Photoplay was displeased: "The college atmosphere is implausible and Clara Bow is not our idea of a college girl".

Theater owners however, were happy: "The picture is the biggest sensation we ever had in our theater ... It is 100 per cent at the box-office".

Some critics felt Bow conquered new territory: "(Bow) presents a whimsical touch to her work that adds greater laurels to her fast ascending star of screen popularity".

Time singled out Bow: "Only the amusing and facile acting of Clara Bow rescues the picture from the limbo of the impossible".

Bow began to date her co-star Gilbert Roland, who became her first fiancée. In June 1925, Bow was credited for being the first to wear hand-painted legs in public and was reported to have many followers at the Californian beaches.

Paramount Pictures (1925-1931)

The free-wheeling actress

"Rehearsals sap my pep", Bow explained in November, 1929 and from the beginning of her career she relied on immediate direction: "Tell me what I have to do and I'll do it". Bow was keen on poetry and music but according to Rogers St. Johns, her attention-span didn't allow her to appreciate novels. Bow's focal point was the scene and her creativity made directors call in extra cameras to cover her spontaneous actions, rather than holding her down.



Bow as "Kittens" in *Dancing Mothers* (1926), moments from realizing that her mother is her rival. Conway Tearle as "Jerry" caught in between.

Years after Bow left Hollywood, director Victor Fleming compared Bow to a Stradivarius violin: "Touch her and she responded with genius".

Director William Wellman was less poetic: "Movie stardom isn't acting ability — it's personality and temperament ... I once directed Clara Bow ("*Wings*"). She was mad and crazy but WHAT a personality!".

In 1981 Budd Schulberg described Bow as "a easy winner of the dumbbell award" who "couldn't act" and compared her to a puppy who his father B.P. Schulberg, "trained to become Lassie".

1926

In 1926 Bow appeared in eight releases: five for Paramount, and three as an "out-loan", shot in 1925.

Dancing Mothers

In late 1925, Bow returns to New York to co-star in the Ibsenesque drama *Dancing Mothers*, as the good/bad "flapperish" upper-class daughter "Kittens". Alice Joyce starred as her "dancing mother" with Conway Tearle as "bad-boy" Naughton. The picture was released on March 1, 1926.

"Clara Bow known as the screen's perfect flapper, does her stuff as the child, and does it well".

"... her remarkable performance in *Dancing Mothers* ...".

Louise Brooks remembered: "She was absolutely sensational in the United States ... in *Dancing Mothers* ... she just swept the country ... I know I saw her ... and I thought ... wonderful".

On April 12, 1926, Bow signs her first contract with Paramount: "...to retain your services as an actress for the period of six months from June 6th, 1926 to December 6th, 1926, at a salary of \$750.00 per week...".

Mantrap

In Victor Fleming's comedy-triangle *Mantrap* Bow, as Alverna the manicurist, cures lonely hearts Joe Easter (Ernest Torrence), of the great northern, as well as pill-popping New York divorcee attorney runaway Ralph Prescott (Percy Marmont). Bow commented: "(Alverna)...was bad in the book, but – darn it! – of course, they couldn't make her that way in the picture. So I played her as a flirt".

The film was released on July 24, 1926.

Variety: "Clara Bow just walks away with the picture from the moment she walks into camera range".

Photoplay: "When she is on the screen nothing else matters. When she is off, the same is true".

Carl Sandburg: "The smartest and swiftest work as yet seen from Miss Clara Bow".

The Reel Journal: "Clara Bow is taking the place of Gloria Swanson...(and)...filling a long need for a popular taste movie actress".

On August 16, 1926, Bow's agreement with Paramount was renewed into a five year deal: "Her salary will start at \$1700 a week and advance yearly to \$4000 a week for the last year".

Notably Bow added that she intended to leave the motion picture business at the expiration of the contract, i.e. 1931.



It (1927)

1927

In 1927 Bow appeared in six Paramount releases: *It*, *Children of Divorce*, *Rough House Rosie*, *Wings*, *Hula* and *Get Your Man*.

In the Cinderella story *It*, the poor shop-girl Betty Lou Spence (Bow) conquers the heart of her employer Cyrus Waltham (Antonio Moreno). The personal quality *It*, provides the magic to make it happen. The film gave Bow her nickname "The It Girl." It was first shown in New York on February 5, 1927.

New York Times: "(Bow)...is vivacious and, as Betty Lou, saucy, which perhaps is one of the ingredients of 'It'".

The Film Daily: "Clara Bow gets a real chance and carries it off with honors...(and)...she is really the whole show".

Carl Sandburg: "'It' is smart, funny and real. It makes a full-sized star of Clara Bow".

Variety: "You can't get away from this Clara Bow girl. She certainly has that certain 'It'...and she just runs away with the film".

Dorothy Parker: "It, hell: She had Those".

Wings



Wings (1927)

In 1927, Bow starred in *Wings*, a war picture rewritten to accommodate her, as she was Paramount's biggest star, but wasn't happy about her part. "(Wings is)..a man's picture and I'm just the whipped cream on top of the pie", she commented. The film went on to win the first Academy Award for Best Picture at the first annual AMPAS award ceremony on May 16, 1929. Douglas Fairbanks presented Bow

with the statuette, not yet known as the "Oscar".. On January 24, 2012, Paramount will release a "Meticulously restored" copy of *Wings* in DVD as well as Blue-Ray format.

I'm a big freak, because I'm myself!

A famous scenario writer, who had done a number of pictures with Bow said:

"Clara is the total nonconformist. What she wants she gets, if she can. What she desires to do she does. She has a big heart, a remarkable brain, and the most utter contempt for the world in general. Time doesn't exist for her, except that she thinks it will stop tomorrow. She has real courage, because she lives boldly. Who are we, after all, to say she is wrong?"

Bow's bohemian lifestyle and "dreadful" manners were considered reminders of the Hollywood Elite's uneasy position in high society.

Bow fumed: "They yell at me to be dignified. But what are the dignified people like? The people who are held up as examples of me? They are snobs. Frightful snobs ... I'm a curiosity in Hollywood. I'm a big freak, because I'm myself!"

MGM executive Paul Bern said Bow was "the greatest emotional actress on the screen", "sentimental, simple, childish and sweet", and considered her "hard-boiled attitude" a "defense mechanism".

1929

Talkies

With "talkies" *The Wild Party*, *Dangerous Curves*, and *The Saturday Night Kid*, Bow kept her position as the top box-office draw and queen of Hollywood.

The quality of Bow's voice, her Brooklyn accent, was not an issue to Bow, her fans or Paramount. However, Bow, like Charlie Chaplin, Louise Brooks and most other silent film-stars didn't embrace the novelty: "I hate talkies", she said, "they're stiff and limiting. You lose a lot of your cuteness, because there's no chance for action, and action is the most important thing to me". The inventor of the motion picture camera, Thomas Edison himself, was so annoyed by the stiffness of the early "talkies" that he refused to see them and returned to his favorite "silents" with Bow and Mary Pickford. A visibly nervous Bow had to do a number of retakes in *The Wild Party* because her eyes kept wandering up to the microphone overhead. "I can't buck progress", Bow resigned, "I have to do the best I can".

In October 1929 Bow describes her nerves as "all shot", that she has reached "the breaking point" and Photoplay reports of "rows of bottles of sedatives" by her bed.



Argentinean Magazine (1934)

1930

According to census 1930, Bow lives at Bedford Drive 512, together with her secretary and hair-dresser, Daisy DeBoe, in a house valued \$25,000 with neighbors titled "Horse-keeper", "Physician", "Builder". Bow states she is 23 years old, i.e. born 1906, contradicting Census of 1910 and 1920.

"Now they're having me sing. I sort of half-sing, half-talk, with hips-and-eye stuff. You know what I mean — like Maurice Chevalier. I used to sing at home and people would say, 'Pipe down! You're terrible!' But the studio thinks my voice is great".

With *Paramount on Parade*, "True to the Navy", "Love Among the Millionaires" and "Her Wedding Night", she was second at the box-office to her chum, Joan Crawford in 1930.

1931-1933



Clara Bow in Hoop-La (1933)

With *No Limit* and *Kick In*, Bow held the position as fifth at box-office in 1931. But the pressures of fame, public scandals, overwork and a damaging court trial with her secretary, Daisy DeBoe, took their toll on Bow's fragile emotional health. As she slipped closer to a major breakdown, her manager B.P. Schulberg began referring to her as "Crisis-a-day-Clara". In April Bow was brought to a sanatorium, and at her request, Paramount released her from her final undertaking: *City Streets*.

B.P. Schulberg tried to replace Bow with his girlfriend Sylvia Sidney, but Paramount lost its position as the biggest studio to MGM and B.P. Schulberg got fired. David Selznick explained:

"(when)..Bow was at her height in pictures we could make a story with her in it and gross a million and a half, where another actress would gross half a million in the same picture and with the same cast."

Bow left Hollywood for Rex Bells ranch in Nevada, her "desert paradise", in June and got married to him in then small town Las Vegas in December. In an interview of December 17 Bow detailed her way back to health: Sleep, exercise and food, and the day after she returned to her Hollywood home ready for work.

Soon every studio in Hollywood (except for Paramount) and even overseas. wanted her services.

Mary Pickford stated that Bow "was a very great actress" and wanted her to play her sister in *Secrets*..

Howard Hughes offered her a three-picture deal.

MGM wanted Bow to star in *Red Headed Woman* and Bow agreed to the script, but eventually rejected the offer since Thalberg required her to sign a long-term contract.

On April 28, 1932, Bow signed a two-picture deal with Fox Film Corporation; *Call Her Savage* (1932) and *Hoop-La* (1933). Both successful, *Variety* favored the latter:

"A more mature performance...she looks and photographs extremely well".

Bow commented on her revealing costume in *Hoop-La*: "Rex accused me of enjoying showing myself off. Then I got a little sore. He knew darn well I was doing it because we could use a little money these days. Who can't?". Bow concluded her career:

"My life in Hollywood contained plenty of uproar. I'm sorry for a lot of it but not awfully sorry. I never did anything to hurt anyone else. I made a place for myself on the screen and you can't do that by being Mrs. Alcott's idea of a Little Women".

Later life

Bow and cowboy actor Rex Bell, later a Lieutenant governor of Nevada, had two sons, Tony Beldam (born 1934, changed name to Rex Anthony Bell, Jr., died July 2011) and George Beldam, Jr. (born 1938). Bow retired from acting in 1933. In September 1937, she and Bell opened The 'It' Cafe on Vine Street near Hollywood Blvd. in Los Angeles. It was closed shortly thereafter. Her last public exposure, albeit fleeting, was a guest appearance on the radio show *Truth or Consequences* in March 1948; Bow provided the voice of "Mrs. Hush".

Health issues

In 1944, while Bell was running for the U.S. House of Representatives, Bow tried to commit suicide.

A note was found in which Bow stated she preferred death to a public life.

In 1949 she checked into The Institute of Living to be treated for her chronic insomnia and diffuse abdominal pains. Shock treatment was tried and numerous psychological tests performed. Bow's IQ was measured "bright normal" (pp. 111–119), while others claimed she was unable to reason, had poor judgment and displayed inappropriate or even bizarre behavior. Her pains were considered delusional and she was diagnosed with schizophrenia, despite experiencing neither sound nor vision hallucinations or psychosis. The illness debut, or "onset", as well as her insomnia, the analysts tied to the "butcher knife episode" back in 1922, but Bow rejected psychological explanations and left the Institute.

In the permanent exhibition, "Myths, Minds and Medicine", the Institute addresses malpractice issues of the past, including lobotomy, which peaked in 1949, and "crude electroconvulsive therapy".

Later years

Bow spent her last years in Culver City, Los Angeles under the constant care of a nurse, living off an estate worth about \$500,000 at the time of her death. She died of a heart attack on September 27, 1965 at the age of 60. An autopsy revealed that she suffered from atherosclerosis, a disease of the heart that can begin in early adolescence. Bow's heart showed scarring from an earlier undetected heart attack. She was interred at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. Her pallbearers were Harry Richman, Richard Arlen, Jack Oakie, Maxie Rosenbloom, Jack Dempsey, and Buddy Rogers.

Legacy

In 1999 film historian Leonard Maltin said that "You think of Greta Garbo, Lillian Gish, all these great names, great actresses, Clara Bow was more popular in terms of Box-office dollars, in terms of consistently bringing audiences into the theaters, she was right on top." In 1999 the American Film Institute left Bow outside its "100 years 100 star"-list and film historian Kevin Brownlow doesn't even mention her name in his book on silent films, "The Parades gone By.." (1968). Louise Brooks, who rated an entire chapter in the book was less impressed: "You brush off Clara Bow", she wrote to Brownlow, "for some old nothing like Brooks, Clara made three pictures that will never be surpassed: Dancing Mothers, Mantrap and It".

Honors

For her contributions to the motion picture industry, Bow was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 1994, she was honored with an image on a United States postage stamp designed by caricaturist Al Hirschfeld.

Urban myths

The book *Hollywood Babylon* spread the contemporary legend that Bow's friendship with members of the 1927 University of Southern California football team included group sex with the entire team. In the 1980s Morley Drury commented that his team was "too damn innocent" to be anything else.

During her lifetime, Bow was the subject of wild rumors regarding her sex life; most of them were untrue. A tabloid called *The Coast Reporter* published lurid allegations about her in 1931, accusing her of exhibitionism, incest, lesbianism, bestiality, drug addiction, alcoholism, and having contracted venereal disease. The publisher of the tabloid then tried to blackmail Bow, offering to cease printing the stories for \$25,000, which led to his arrest by federal agents and, later, an eight-year prison sentence.

In popular culture



Clara Bow's crypt at Forest Lawn Glendale

Max Fleischer's cartoon character Betty Boop was modeled after Bow and entertainer Helen Kane (the "boop-boop-a-doop-girl").

Bow's mass of tangled red hair was one of her most famous features. When fans of the new star found out she put henna in her hair, sales of the dye tripled.

An autographed picture of Bow is offered as a consolation prize of a beauty contest in the 1931 George Gershwin musical *Of Thee I Sing*.

Clara Kimball Young

Clara Kimball Young (September 6, 1890 – October 15, 1960) was an American film actress, who was highly regarded and publicly popular in the early silent film era.



Early life

Clarisa Kimball was born in Chicago; her parents Edward M. Kimball and Pauline Maddern were travelling stock actors. She made her stage debut at the age of three, and throughout her early childhood travelled with her parents and acted with their theater company. She attended St. Francis Xavier's Academy in Chicago and then was afterwards hired into a stock company and resumed her stage career, travelling extensively through the United States and playing various small town theaters.

Early in her career she met and married a fellow stock company and known Broadway actor named James Young. Young's previous wife had been the songwriter/lyricist Rida Johnson Young. After sending a photograph to Vitagraph Studios, Clara Kimball Young, as she was then known, and her husband were both offered yearly contracts in 1912.

Career

In the new medium of motion pictures, and without much screen competition, Clara Kimball Young's star at Vitagraph rose quickly. Young was predominantly cast in one and two reel roles as the virtuous heroine. By 1913 she had become one of the most popular leading ladies at Vitagraph and placed at number seventeen in a public popularity poll. Unfortunately, many of Young's films from her early period with Vitagraph are now lost.

In 1914 Vitagraph released the drama *My Official Wife* which starred Young as a Russian revolutionary and was directed by her husband James Young and co-starred the popular leading man Earle Williams. The film, which is now lost, was an enormous success and launched Clara Kimball Young and Earle Williams into first place in the popularity polls and Young was immediately signed to a contract with legendary pioneering Hollywood mogul Lewis J. Selznick.

After a string of successful roles, Young was firmly established as one of the chief attractions of World Film Corporation and her husband James was now a much sought after director. By 1915 Young's popularity was rivaling that of other early luminary actresses of the era: Mary Pickford, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Pearl White, Edna Purviance, and Mabel Normand.

Young became involved in a much publicized affair with Selznick, culminating in a 1916 divorce suit brought about by James Young, charging Clara with alienation of affection. James Young finally obtained a final decree on April 8, 1919 on grounds of desertion.

Selznick quickly formed the Clara Kimball Young Film Corporation, installing himself as president, and formed Selznick Productions to distribute her films and those of some other independent producers. After only four films with Selznick however, the personal and business relationship began to sour and Kimball Young struggled to extricate herself from all business arrangements with Selznick, accusing him of defrauding her of her profits through a series of dummy corporations and by electing himself president of her company while not permitting her any input in her business affairs.



in one her later films, *The Rogue's Tavern* (1936)

In 1917 Kimball Young became involved in an affair with Harry Garson, with whom she then teamed up with in a business venture. Garson had little experience in the motion picture business, and as a result Kimball Young's career began to sputter. Although she remained a popular actress into the early 1920s, Kimball Young suffered at the inexperience and alleged mismanagement and apathy of Garson.

Kimball Young also began suffering a series of press attacks for her business dealings and personal relationship with Garson. By 1925, her stardom began to fade and she made her last silent film *Lying Wives*. Kimball Young spent the remainder of the 1920s performing in vaudeville, and in 1928 quietly married Dr. Arthur Fauman.

The advent of sound briefly revived her career, and she appeared in several featured talkie roles for RKO Radio Pictures and Tiffany Studios with only modest success, appearing only in bit parts including a Three Stooges short, and extra roles in mostly lower budget pictures and having a stint on radio. One of her bigger roles is in the murder mystery *The Rogues Tavern* (1936) where she plays a sweet but fussy motherly woman who is hiding a very big secret.

She quietly retired from her acting career in 1941. Clara Kimball Young died of a stroke at the Motion Picture House on October 15, 1960 in Woodland Hills, California and was interred at the Grand View Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Clara Kimball Young was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6513 Hollywood Blvd., in Hollywood, California, USA.

Clive Brook

Clifford Clive Hardman Brook (1 June 1887 – 17 November 1974) was an English actor.



Career

Brook was born and died in London. Brook was 5 ft 11 in (1.80 m) tall and had brown hair with grey eyes. He was the son of an opera singer, a published writer and a violinist. He was educated at Dulwich College and served as an officer in the Artists' Rifles in the First World War. He first appeared on stage in 1918 and also in films from 1919. He worked first in British films then in Hollywood.

One of his best remembered appearances was playing opposite Marlene Dietrich in *Shanghai Express* (1932). He played Sherlock Holmes three times: *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes* (in that order), and as part of a portmanteau film, *Paramount on Parade* (1930).

In 1943, he adapted the comedy *On Approval* by Frederick Lonsdale and wrote, produced, directed and starred in the film with Beatrice Lillie, Googie Withers, and Roland Culver. The costumes were by Cecil Beaton.

In 1949 he presented the radio series *The Secrets of Scotland Yard*. In 1956 he appeared on stage in *One Bright Day* at the Apollo Theatre in London.

Family

Brook married Mildred Evelyn, and their daughter, Faith Brook is an actor as was their late son, Lyndon Brook.

Colleen Moore

Colleen Moore (August 19, 1899 – January 25, 1988) was an American film actress, and one of the most fashionable stars of the silent film era.



Colleen Moore in 1920

Early life

Born Kathleen Morrison on August 19, 1899 (some sources state 1902) in Port Huron, Michigan, Miss Moore was the eldest child of Charles R. and Agnes Morrison. The family remained in Port Huron during the early years of Moore's life, at first living with her grandmother Mary Kelly (often spelled Kelley) and then with at least one of Moore's aunts.

By 1905 the family had moved to Hillsdale, Michigan where they remained for over two years. They had relocated to Atlanta, Georgia by 1908. They are listed at three different addresses during their stay in Atlanta (From the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library city directories): 301 Capitol Avenue –1908; 41 Linden Avenue – 1909; 240 N. Jackson Street – 1910. They then lived briefly—probably less than a year—in Warren, Pennsylvania, and by 1911 they had settled down in Tampa, Florida.

Two great passions of young Moore's were dolls and movies; each would play a great role in her later life. She and her brother began their own stock company, reputedly performing on a stage created from a piano packing crate. She admired the faces she saw on the silver screen and on magazine covers. She had resolved at a young age that she would be not only an actress, but a star. Her aunts, who doted on her, indulged her other great passion and often bought her miniature furniture on their many trips, with which she furnished the first of a succession of doll houses.

The family summered in Chicago, where Moore enjoyed baseball and the company of her Aunt Lib (Elizabeth, who changed her name to "Liberty", Lib for short) and Lib's husband Walter Howey. Howey was the managing editor of the *Chicago Examiner* and an important newspaper editor in the publishing empire of William Randolph Hearst, and was the inspiration for Walter Burns, the fictional Chicago newspaper editor in the play and the film *The Front Page*.

Career

Early years

At the time, Chicago was the center of the motion picture industry in America. Essanay Studios was within walking distance of the Northwestern L, which ran right past the Howey residence (they occupied at least two residences between 1910 and 1916: 4161 Sheridan and 4942 Sheridan). In interviews later in her silent film career, Moore claimed she had appeared in the background of several Essanay films, usually as a face in a crowd. One story has it she had gotten into the Essanay studios and waited in line to be an extra with Helen Ferguson: in an interview with Kevin Brownlow many years later Ferguson told a story that substantially confirmed many details of the claim, though it is not certain if she was referring to Moore's stints as a background extra (if she really was one) or to her film test there prior to her departure for Hollywood in November 1917.

Film Producer D.W. Griffith was in debt to Howey, who had helped him to get both *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* through the Chicago censorship board.

"I was being sent to Hollywood – not because anybody out there thought I was any good, but simply to pay off a favor".



Portrait of Colleen Moore by Los Angeles photographer Evans, photographed in 1918 in the early stages of her career

The contract to Griffith's Triangle-Fine Arts was conditional on passing a film test to ensure that her heterochromia (she had one brown eye, one blue eye) would not be a distraction in close-up shots. Her eyes passed the test, so she left for Hollywood with her grandmother and her mother as chaperones. Moore made her first credited film appearance in 1917 in *The Bad Boy* for Triangle Fine Arts, and for the next few years appeared in small, supporting roles gradually attracting the attention of the public.

The Bad Boy was released on February 18, and featured Robert Harron, Richard Cummings, Josephine Crowell, and Mildred Harris (who would later become Charles Chaplin's first wife). Two months later it was followed by *An Old Fashioned Young Man*, again with Robert Harron. Moore's third film was *Hands Up!* filmed in part in the vicinity of the Seven Oaks (a popular location for productions that required dramatic vistas). This was her first true western. The film's scenario was written by Wilfred Lucas from a story by Al Jennings, the famous outlaw who had been freed from jail by presidential pardon by Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. Monte Blue was in the cast and noticed Moore could not mount her horse, though horseback riding was required for the part (during casting for the part she neglected to mention she did not know how to ride.) Blue gave her a quick lesson essentially consisting of how to

mount the horse and how to hold on for dear life. He also suggested she go out and get lessons. In a climactic scene she was locked in a closet and was able to scream her head off for the camera.

On May 3, 1917, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* said: "Colleen Moore contributes some remarkable bits of acting. She is very sweet as she goes trustingly to her bandit hero, and, O, so pitiful, when finally realizing the character of the man, she goes into an hysteria of terror, and, shrieking 'Daddy, Daddy, Daddy!' beats futilely on a bolted door, a panic stricken little human animal, who had not known before that there was aught but kindness in the world." About the time her first six-month contract was extended an additional six months, she requested and received a five weeks release to do a film for Universal's Bluebird division, released under the name *The Savage*. This was her fourth film, and she was only needed for two weeks. Upon her return to the Fine Arts lot, she spent several weeks trying to get her pay for the three weeks she had been available for work for Triangle (finally getting her pay in December of that year).

Soon after, the Triangle Company went bust, and while her contract was honored, she found herself scrambling to find her next job. With a reel of her performance in *Hands Up!* under her arm. Colin Campbell arranged for her to get a contract for her with Selig Polyscope. She was very likely at work on *A Hoosier Romance* before *The Savage* was released in November. After *A Hoosier Romance*, she went to work on *Little Orphant Annie*. Both films were based upon poems by James Whitcomb Riley, and both proved to be very popular. It was her first real taste of popularity.



1921 portrait of actress Colleen Moore

Little Orphant Annie was released in December. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* wrote of Moore, "She was a lovely and unspoiled child the last time I saw her. Let's hope commendation hasn't turned her head." Despite her good notices, her luck took a turn for the worse when Selig Polyscope went bust. Once again Moore found herself unemployed, but she had begun to make a name for herself by 1919. She had a series of films lined up: She went to Flagstaff, Arizona for location work on *The Wilderness Trail*, another western, this time with Tom Mix. Her mother went along as chaperon. Moore wrote that while she had a crush on Mix, he only had eyes for her mother. *The Wilderness Trail* was a Fox Film Corporation production, and while it had started production earlier, it would not be released until after *The Busher*, which was released on May 18. *The Busher* was an H. Ince Productions-Famous Players-Lasky production; it was a baseball film wherein the hero was played by Jack (later John) Gilbert. *The Wilderness Trail* followed on July 6, another Fox film. A few weeks later *The Man in the Moonlight*, a Universal Film Manufacturing Company film was released on July 28. *The Egg Crate Wallop* was a Famous Players-Lasky production released by Paramount Pictures on September 28.

Success in Hollywood



Moore's portrait in *Cosmopolitan* magazine



Promotional portrait of Moore from the height of her fame, circa 1927, showing the famous Dutchboy bobbed haircut that she made famous.

The next stage of her career was with the Christie Film Company, a move she made when she decided she needed comic training. This was in 1920, and it was a good move because it allowed her to work on her comic timing, and because the arrangement she had made with Al Christie allowed her to go out and look for other work while with the comic troupe. While with Christie, she made *Her Bridal Night-Mare*, *A Roman Scandal*, and *So Long Letty*. At the same time as she was working on these films, she worked on *The Devil's Claim* with Sessue Hayakawa, in which she played a Persian woman, *When Dawn Came*, and *His Nibs* with Chic Sales. All the while, Marshall Neilan had been attempting to get Moore released from her contract so she could work for him. He was successful and made *Dinty* with Moore, releasing near the end of 1920, followed by *When Dawn Came*.

For all his efforts to win Moore away from Christie, it seems Neilan farmed her out most of the time. He loaned her out to King Vidor for *The Sky Pilot*, released in May 1921, yet another Western. After working on *The Sky Pilot* on location in the snows of Truckee, she was off to Catalina Island for work on *The Lotus Eater* with John Barrymore. While it is popularly believed the work on this film was done in Florida, it was in fact shot on location on Catalina Island. From there she was off to New York for more location work, then back to California where Neilan put her to work in *Slippy McGee*. Work on *Slippy McGee* took her to Mississippi.

In October 1921, *His Nibs* was released, her only film to be released that year besides *The Sky Pilot*. In *His Nibs*, Moore actually appeared in a film within the film; the framing film was a comedy vehicle for Chic Sales. The film it framed was a spoof on films of the time. 1922 proved to be an eventful year for Moore as she was named a WAMPAS Baby Star during a "frolic" at the Ambassador Hotel which became an annual event, in recognition of her growing popularity. In early 1922, *Come On Over* was released, made from a Rupert Hughes story and directed by Alfred E. Green. Hughes directed Moore himself in *The Wallflower*, released that same year. In addition, Neilan introduced her to John McCormick (1893–1961), a publicity man who had had his eye on Moore ever since he had first seen her photograph. He had prodded Marshall into an introduction. The two hit it off, and before long they were engaged. By the end of that year three more of her films were released: *Forsaking All Others*, *The Ninety and Nine*, and *Broken Chains*.

Look Your Best and *The Nth Commandment* were released in early 1923, followed by two Cosmopolitan Productions, *The Nth Commandment* and *Through the Dark*. By this time she had publicly confirmed her engagement to McCormick, a fact that she had been coy about to the press previously. Before mid-year, she had signed a contract with First National Pictures, and her first two films were slated to be *The Huntress* and *Flaming Youth*. *Slippy McGee* came out in June, followed by *Broken Hearts of Broadway*.

Moore and John McCormick married while *Flaming Youth* was still in production, and just before the release of *The Savage*. When it was finally released in 1923, *Flaming Youth*, in which she starred opposite actor Milton Sills was a hit. The controversial story put Moore in focus as a flapper but after Clara Bow took the stage in *Black Oxen* in December, she gradually lost her momentum. In spring 1924 she made a good, but unsuccessful effort to top Bow in *The Perfect Flapper*, and soon after she dismissed the whole flapper vogue; "No more flappers...people are tired of soda-pop love affairs". Decades later Moore stated Bow was her "chief rival".

Through the Dark, originally shot under the name *Daughter of Mother McGinn* was released during the height of the *Flaming Youth* furor in January 1924. Three weeks later, *Painted People* was released. After that, she was to star in *Counterfeit*." The film went through a number of title changes before being released as *Flirting with Love* in August. In October, First National purchased the rights to *Sally* for Moore's next film. It would be a challenge, as *Sally* was a musical comedy. In December, First National purchased the rights to *Desert Flower*, and in so doing had mapped out Moore's schedule for 1925: *Sally*, would be filmed first, followed by *The Desert Flower*.

By the late 1920s, she had accomplished dramatic roles in films such as *So Big*, where Moore aged through a stretch of decades and was also well received in light comedies such as *Irene*.

An overseas tour was planned to coincide with the releases of *So Big* in Europe, and Moore saw the tour as her first real opportunity to spend time with her husband John. Both she and John were dedicated to their careers, and the hectic schedules they had kept them from spending any quality time together. Moore wanted a family; it was one of her goals.



Colleen Moore portrait in costume not representing any specific film. She often posed in costumes for various magazines.

Plans for the trip were put in jeopardy when she injured her neck while filming *The Desert Flower*. Her injury forced the production to shut down while Moore spent six weeks in a body cast in bed. Once out of the cast she completed the film and left for Europe on a triumphal tour. When she returned, she negotiated a new contract with First National. Her films had been great hits, and so her terms were very generous. Her first film upon her return to the States was *We Moderns*, set in England with location work done in London during the tour. It was a comedy, essentially a retelling of *Flaming Youth* from an English perspective. This was followed by *Irene* (another musical in the style of the very popular *Sally*) and *Ella Cinders*, a straight comedy that featured a cameo appearance by comedian Harry Langdon.

It Must Be Love was a romantic comedy with dramatic undertones, and it was followed by *Twinkletoes*, a dramatic film that featured Moore as a young dancer in London's Limehouse district during the previous century. *Orchids and Ermine* was released in 1927, filmed in part in New York, a thinly veiled Cinderella story.

In 1927 Moore split from her studio after her husband suddenly quit. It is rumored that John was about to be fired for his drinking, and that she left as a means of leveraging her husband back into a position at First National. It worked, and John found himself as Colleen's sole producer.

Moore's popularity allowed her productions to become very large and lavish. *Lilac Time* was one of the bigger productions of the era, a World War One drama. A million dollar film, it made back every penny spent within months. Prior to the release of *Lilac Time*, Warner Bros. had taken control of First National, and were less than interested in maintaining the terms of her contract until the numbers started to roll in for *Lilac Time*. The film was such a hit that Moore managed to retain generous terms in her next contract and her husband John as her producer.

Colleen Moore Dollhouse

In 1928, inspired by her father and with help from her former set designer, Horace Jackson, Moore constructed an 8-foot-tall (2.4 m) miniature "fairy castle" which toured the United States. The interior of The Colleen Moore Dollhouse, designed by Harold Grieve, features miniature bear skin rugs and detailed furniture and art. Moore's dollhouse has been a featured exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, Illinois since the early 1950s, where, according to the museum it is seen by 1.5 million people each year. Moore continued working on it, and contributing artifacts to it, until her death.

This dollhouse was the eighth dollhouse Moore owned. The first dollhouse, she wrote in her autobiography *Silent Star* (1968), evolved from a cabinet that held her collection of miniature furniture. It was supposedly built from a cigar box. Kitty Lorgnette wrote in the Saturday, August 13, 1938 edition of *The Evening News* (Tampa) that the first dollhouse was purchased by Oraleze O'Brien (Mrs. Frank J. Knight) in 1916 when Moore (then Kathleen) left Tampa. Oraleze was too big for dollhouses, however, and she sold it again after her cat had kittens in it, and from there she lost track of it. The third house was possibly given to the daughter of Moore's good friend, author Adela Rogers St. Johns. The fourth survives and remains on display in the living room of a relative.

Sound films



Colleen Moore in her dressing room at home during her sound film career, showing her more modern look without bangs in about 1934.

With the advent of talking pictures in 1929, Moore took a hiatus from acting. After divorcing McCormack in 1930, Moore was briefly married (1932-34) to a prominent New York-based stockbroker, Albert Parker Scott, one of her four husbands. She and Scott lived at that time in a lavish home in Bel Air, where they hosted parties for and were supporters of the U.S. Olympic team, especially the yachting team, during the 1932 Summer Olympics held in Los Angeles.



Publicity portrait of Colleen Moore with her more modern bobbed haircut from about the year 1934.

In 1934, Moore, by then divorced, returned to work in Hollywood. She appeared in three films, none of which were successful, and Moore retired. Her last film was a version of *The Scarlet Letter* in 1934. She later married the widower Homer Hargrave and raised his children (she never had children of her own) from a previous marriage, with whom she maintained a life-long close relationship. Throughout her life she also maintained close friendships with other colleagues from the silent film era, such as King Vidor and Mary Pickford.

Later life and career

In the 1960s, she formed a television production company with King Vidor with whom she had worked in the 1920s. She also published two books in the late 1960s, her autobiography *Silent Star: Colleen Moore Talks About Her Hollywood* (1968) and *How Women Can Make Money in the Stock Market* (1969). She also figures prominently alongside of King Vidor in Sidney D. Kirkpatrick's book, *A Cast of Killers*, which recounts Vidor's attempt to make a film of and solve the murder of William Desmond Taylor. In that book, she is recalled as having been a successful real estate broker in Chicago after her film career.

Many of Colleen Moore's films deteriorated but not due to her own neglect. She actually sent them to be preserved at the Museum of Modern Art. Some time later, Warner Brothers asked for their nitrate materials to be returned to them. Moore's First National films were also sent mistakenly since Warner was once a part of First National. Upon their arrival, the custodian, not seeing the films on the manifest, put them to one side and never went back to them. Many years later, Moore inquired about her collection and MoMA traced back to find out that her films had been languishing unprotected. When the films were examined, it was revealed that they had decomposed past the point of preservation. Heartbroken, she tried in vain to retrieve any prints she could from several sources without much success.

At the height of her fame, Moore was earning \$12,500 per week. She was an astute investor, and through her investments remained wealthy for the rest of her life. In her later years she would frequently attend film festivals, and was a popular interview subject always willing to discuss her Hollywood career. She was a participant in the 1980 documentary film series *Hollywood*, providing her recollections of Hollywood's silent film era.



Colleen Moore in 1980 as seen in Kevin Brownlow's BBC series *Hollywood*

Death

Moore died from cancer in Paso Robles, California, aged 88. Her contribution to the motion picture industry has been recognized with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1551 Vine Street.

Quote

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote of her: "I was the spark that lit up *Flaming Youth*, Colleen Moore was the torch. What little things we are to have caused all that trouble."

Conrad Nagel

Conrad Nagel (March 16, 1897 – February 24, 1970) was an American screen actor and matinee idol of the silent film era and beyond. He was also a well-known television actor and radio performer.



Biography

Born in Keokuk, Iowa, into an upper-middle-class family, he was the son of a musician father, Frank, and a mother, Frances (née Murphy), who was a locally praised singer. Nagel's mother died early in his life, and he always attributed his artistic inclination to growing up in a family environment that encouraged self-expression. His father, Frank, became dean of the music conservatory at Highland Park College and when Nagel was three, the family moved to Des Moines.

After graduating from Highland Park College at Des Moines, Iowa, Nagel left for California to pursue a career in the relatively new medium of motion pictures where he garnered instant attention from the Hollywood studio executives. With his 6-foot-tall (1.8 m) frame, blue eyes, and wavy blond hair; the young, Midwestern Nagel was seen by studio executives as a potentially wholesome matinee idol whose unpretentious all-American charm would surely appeal to the nation's nascent film-goers.

Nagel was immediately cast in film roles that cemented his *unspoiled lover* image. His first film was the 1918 retelling of the Louisa May Alcott classic, *Little Women*, which quickly captured the public's attention and set Nagel on a path to silent film stardom. His breakout role came in the 1920 film, *The Fighting Chance*, opposite Swedish starlet Anna Q. Nilsson.

On May 11, 1927, Nagel was among 35 other film industry insiders to found the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS); a professional honorary organization dedicated to the advancement of the arts and sciences of motion pictures. Fellow actors involved in the founding included: Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Richard Barthelmess, Jack Holt, Milton Sills, and Harold Lloyd. He served as president of the organization from 1932 to 1933. He was also a founding member of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG).

In 1927, Nagel starred alongside Lon Chaney, Sr., Marceline Day, Henry B. Walthall and Polly Moran in the now lost Tod Browning directed horror classic, *London After Midnight*. The film is quite possibly the most famous and talked about lost film ever.

Unlike so many silent films stars of the *Roaring Twenties*, Conrad Nagel had little difficulty transitioning to *talkies* and spent the next several decades being very well received in high profile films

as a character actor. He was also frequently heard on radio and made many notable appearances on television. From 1937 to 1947 he hosted and directed the radio program *Silver Theater*. Later on, from 1949 to 1952 he hosted the popular TV game show, *Celebrity Time*.

In 1940, Nagel was given an Honorary Academy Award for his work with the Motion Picture Relief Fund. He was the host of the 3rd Academy Awards ceremony held on November 5, 1930, the 5th Academy Awards on November 18, 1932, and a co-host with Bob Hope at the 25th Academy Awards ceremony on March 19, 1953. The 21-year gap between his appearances in 1932 and 1953 is a record for an Oscar ceremonies host.

Nagel married and divorced three times. His first wife, Ruth Helms, gave birth to a daughter, Ruth Margaret, in 1920. His second wife was actress Lynn Merrick. His third wife was Michael Coulson Smith, who gave birth to a son Michael in the late 1950s.

In 1970, Nagel died in New York City, aged 72, and was cremated at Garden State Crematory in North Bergen, New Jersey. Nagel's remains are interred at the Lutheran Cemetery in Warsaw, Illinois.

For his contributions to film, radio, and television, Conrad Nagel was given three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1719 Vine Street (Motion Pictures), 1752 Vine Street (Radio), and 1752 Vine Street (Television).

Conrad Veidt

Conrad Veidt (22 January 1893 – 3 April 1943) was a German actor best remembered for his roles in films such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), *The Man Who Laughs* (1928), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940) and *Casablanca* (1942). After a successful career in German silent film, where he was one of the best paid stars of Ufa, he left Germany in 1933 with his new Jewish wife and settled in the United Kingdom, where he participated in a number of films before continuing to the United States around 1941.



Veidt in *The Spy in Black* (1939)

Early life and work

He was born **Hans Walter Conrad Weidt** in a working-class district of Berlin, Germany, the son of Amalie Marie (Gohtz) and Phillip Heinrich Veidt. (Some biographies wrongly state that he was born in Potsdam, probably on the basis of an early claim on his part.) His family was Protestant.

In 1914, Veidt met actress Lucie Mannheim, with whom he began a relationship. Later in the year Veidt was drafted into the German Army during World War I. In 1915, Veidt was sent to the Eastern Front as a noncommissioned officer and took part in the Battle of Warsaw. He contracted jaundice and pneumonia, and had to be evacuated to a hospital on the Baltic Sea. While recuperating, he received a letter from Mannheim informing him that she had found work at a theater in Libau. Intrigued, Veidt applied for the theater as well. As his condition had not improved, the army allowed him to join the theater so that he could entertain the troops. While performing at the theater his relationship with Mannheim ended. In late 1916, he was reexamined by the Army and deemed unfit for service and given a full discharge in January 1917. Veidt then returned to Berlin to pursue his acting career.

From 1916 until his death, he appeared in well over 100 films. He appeared in two of the best-known films of the silent era: as a murderous somnambulist in director Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) with Werner Krauss and Lil Dagover and as a disfigured circus performer in *The Man Who Laughs* (1928). According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Conrad Veidt starred in this semi-silent film based on Victor Hugo's novel in which the son of a lord is punished for his father's disrespect to the king by having his face carved into a permanent grin." Veidt also starred in other classic silent horror films

such a *The Hands of Orlac* in 1929 (again directed by Robert Weine), *The Student of Prague* in 1926 and *Waxworks* in 1924 where he played Ivan the Terrible.

Veidt also appeared in Magnus Hirschfeld's pioneering gay rights film *Anders als die Andern* (*Different from the Others*, 1919), in which he played what is probably the first gay character written especially for the cinema, and in *Das Land ohne Frauen* (1929), Germany's first talking picture.

He moved to Hollywood and made a few films in the twenties but the advent of talking pictures and his broken English made him return to Germany.

Life in England

Veidt fervently opposed the Nazi regime, motivating him to emigrate from Germany in 1933 a week after marrying Illona Prager, a Jewish woman. He settled in the United Kingdom, perfected his English and became a British citizen in 1938.

He continued making films in Britain, notably three with director Michael Powell: *The Spy in Black* (1939), *Contraband* (1940) and *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940).

Later career

In the 1940s he moved back to Hollywood, California, and starred in a few films, such as *Nazi Agent* (1942), in which he had a dual role as a Nazi and as the Nazi's twin brother, but his best remembered role was as Major Heinrich Strasser in *Casablanca* (1942). He found himself invariably playing the very characters he detested.

He died suddenly of a heart attack in 1943 while playing golf in Los Angeles. In 1998, his ashes were interred at the Golders Green Crematorium in London.

Personal life

It has been reported, though not verified, that Veidt identified himself as Jewish on Nazi questionnaires as an act of protest. This may be the source of inaccurate claims that he either converted to Judaism or was Jewish by birth. Conrad Veidt married three times, his first marriage to Augusta Holl, a famous cabaret entertainer known as "Gussy", took place on June 18, 1918 and ended in divorce the following autumn. Gussy later married German actor Emil Jannings. Veidt married a woman from an aristocratic German family, Felicitas Radke, in 1923. Their daughter, Vera Viola Maria, called Viola, was born August 10, 1925. His last marriage came in 1933, to Ilona Prager, called Lily, and lasted until his death.

He loaned his considerable fortune to the British Government and donated large amounts of his film salaries to help with the British war effort.

Popular culture

Comic book artist Bob Kane, writer Bill Finger and artist Jerry Robinson used stills of Veidt in *The Man Who Laughs* as inspiration for the iconic super villain The Joker. The creators have long disputed who actually came up with the character.

Veidt sang the title song *Where the Lighthouse Shines Across the Bay* (in some territories) of the 1933 film *F.P.1*. It flopped at the time, but became a hit in the United Kingdom in 1980 after disc

jockey Terry Wogan played it as a request on his breakfast show. Afterwards he was inundated with repeat requests.

He is mentioned in Thomas Pynchon's 2009 novel *Inherent Vice* (pg. 115).

On their 1979 album *Dantzig Twist*, the cult French post-punk band Marquis de Sade wrote a track called "Conrad Veidt". The chorus goes with the line "Conrad Veidt is dancing" in French.

Constance Talmadge

Constance Talmadge (April 19, 1898 – November 23, 1973) was a silent movie star born in Brooklyn, New York, USA, and was the sister of fellow actresses Norma Talmadge and Natalie Talmadge.



Early life

Although her actual birth year has been in dispute, Talmadge was born on April 19, 1898 in Brooklyn, New York according to the 1900, 1910, and 1920 Censuses. Talmadge was born into a poor family. Her father, Fred, was an alcoholic, and left them when she was still very young. Her mother, Peg, made a living by doing laundry. When a friend recommended that Peg use Norma as a model for title slides in *flickers*, which were shown in early nickelodeons, Peg decided to try it. This led all three sisters into an acting career.

Career

She began making films in 1914, in a Vitagraph comedy short, *In Bridal Attire* (1914). Her first major role was as The Mountain Girl and Marguerite de Valois in D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916).

Griffith re-edited *Intolerance* repeatedly after its initial release, and even shot new scenes long after it was in distribution. Grace Kingsley found Talmadge in her dressing room at the Fine Arts Studio, in Los Angeles, in the midst of making up for some new shots.

"Did you really drive those galloping brutes of horses?" asked Kingsley.

"Indeed I did," said Talmadge. "Two women sat behind me at the Auditorium the other night. They said, 'Of course she never really drove those horses herself. Somebody doubled for her.' Know what I did? I turned around and told them, 'I wish I could show you my knees, all black and blue even yet from being cracked up against the dashboard of that chariot!'"

So popular was Talmadge's portrayal of the tomboyish *Mountain Girl*, Griffith released in 1919 the Babylonian sequence from *Intolerance* as a new, separate film called *The Fall of Babylon*. He re-filmed her death scene to allow for a happy ending.

Her friend Anita Loos, who wrote many screenplays for her, appreciated her "humor and her irresponsible way of life". Over the course of her career, Talmadge appeared in more than 80 films, often in comedies like *A Pair of Silk Stockings* (1918), *Happiness à la Mode* (1919), *Romance and Arabella* (1919), *Wedding Bells* (1921) and *The Primitive Lover* (1922).

Talmadge, along with her sisters, was heavily billed during her early career. According to her 1923 *Blue Book of the Screen* biography, she was "5'5" tall, 120 lbs, with blonde hair and brown eyes, was an outdoor girl who loved activities."

When Talmadge was asked by a writer for *Green Book Magazine* what sort of stories she wanted to do in 1920, she said: "Although no less than sixty manuscripts are submitted to me every week, it is exceedingly difficult to get exactly the kind of comedy I especially want. I want comedies of manners, comedies that are funny because they delight one's sense of what is ridiculously human in the way of little everyday commonplace foibles and frailties – subtle comedies, not comedies of the slap stick variety."

"I enjoy making people laugh. Secondly, because this type of work comes easiest and most naturally to me, I am not a highly emotional type. My sister could cry real tears over two sofa cushions stuffed into a long dress and white lace cap, to look like a dead baby, and she would do it so convincingly that 900 persons out front would weep with her. That is real art, but my kind of talent would lead me to bounce that padded baby up and down on my knee with absurd grimaces that would make the same 900 roar with laughter.

"You see, in my way, I take my work quite as seriously as my sister does hers – I would be just as in earnest about making the baby seem ridiculous as she would about making it seem real. I am not fitted to be a vamp type. There is nothing alluring, or exotic, or erotic, or neurotic about me. I could not pull the vamp stuff to save my life, but if I am assigned a vamp role in a comedy, and I had such a part in my fourth First National picture, *In Search of a Sinner*. I play it with all the seriousness and earnestness and sincerity with which a real vamp would play it, except that I, of course, over-emphasize all the characteristics of the vampire. I try to handle a comedy role much the same way that a cartoonist handles his pencils. If he is drawing the picture of the late Theodore Roosevelt, with a few strokes he emphasizes Teddy's eye-glasses and teeth, leaving his ears and nostrils and the lines of his face barely suggestive. One must leave a great deal to the imagination on the screen, because in the span of one short hour we sometimes have to develop a character from girlhood to womanhood through three marriages and two divorces, and perhaps travel half way round the world besides; so, like the cartoonist, I try to emphasize the salient characteristics, which, of course, in my particular work, bring out the humorous side of the person I am portraying."

With the advent of talkies in 1929, Talmadge left Hollywood. Her sister Norma did make a handful of appearances in talking films, but for the most part the three sisters retired all together, investing in real estate and other business ventures. Only a few of her films survive today.

Personal life

Like her sister Norma, Talmadge succumbed to substance abuse and alcoholism later in life. She also had many failed affairs and relationships.

She was married four times, but her early relationships rarely lasted more than a total of three years;

Her first marriage, to John Pialoglou, occurred in 1920 at a double wedding with Dorothy Gish and James Rennie. She divorced Pialoglou two years later.

She married Alastair McIntosh in February 1926, divorcing in 1927.

She married Townsend Netcher in May 1929, divorcing in 1931.

She married Walter Michael Giblon in 1939. This marriage lasted until his death on May 1, 1964.

Talmadge's mother fostered the belief she might one day return to films. "Success and fame cast a spell that can never been quite shaken off," her mother pointed out in her autobiography. "A woman, because of her love, may say, and in the fervor of the moment believe, that she is ready to give up her chosen work. But there is sure to come a time when keen longing and strong regret for her lost career dominate over the more placid contentment of love and marriage. Then unhappiness and friction ensue."

Along with her sister Norma, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks, Talmadge inaugurated the tradition of placing her footprints in cement outside Grauman's Chinese Theater. She left a trail of five footprints in her slab.

Her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is at 6300 Hollywood Blvd.

Corinne Griffith

Corinne Mae Griffith (November 21, 1894 – July 13, 1979) was an American actress. Dubbed "The Orchid Lady of the Screen", she was one of the most popular film actresses of the 1920s and widely considered the most beautiful actress of the silent screen. Shortly after the advent of sound film, Griffith retired from acting and became a successful author.



Early life and career

Griffith was born in Texarkana, Texas to John Lewis Griffin and Ambolina (Ambolyn) Ghio. She attended Sacred Heart Convent school in New Orleans and worked as a dancer before she began her acting career.

Griffith began her screen career at the Vitagraph Studios in 1916. She later moved to First National, where she became one of their most popular stars. In 1928, she had the starring role in *The Garden of Eden*. The next year, in 1929, Griffith received an Academy Award nomination for her role in *The Divine Lady*.

Griffith's first sound film, *Lilies of the Field*, was released in 1930. Griffith's voice did not record well (*The New York Times* stated that she "talked through her nose"), and the film was a box office flop. After appearing in one more motion picture, the British film *Lily Christine* in 1932, she retired from acting. She returned to the screen in 1962 in the low-budget melodrama *Paradise Alley*, which received scant release.

Later career

Griffith was one of the few film stars to move successfully into new careers once her stardom had ended. She was an accomplished writer who published eleven books including two best sellers, *My Life with The Redskins* and the memoir *Papa's Delicate Condition*, which was made into a 1963 film starring Jackie Gleason about the Ghio and Griffin family. Her actual family names were used in the film.

Her ventures into real estate were particularly successful (at one point she owned four different major office buildings in Los Angeles, each of them named after her).

Personal life

Griffith was married four times. She married actor and frequent co-star Webster Campbell from 1920 to 1923, producer Walter Morosco from 1924 to 1934, and the owner of the Washington Redskins football team George Preston Marshall from 1936 to 1958. During her marriage to Marshall, she composed the lyrics to the Redskins fight song "Hail to the Redskins" which became one of the most famous football anthems.

In 1966, within a few days, she married and divorced her fourth husband, Broadway actor Danny Scholl (*Call Me Mister*). Scholl was 45, more than 25 years Griffith's junior. In court she testified that she was not Corinne Griffith. She claimed that she was the actresses' younger (by twenty years) sister who had taken her place upon the famous sister's death. Contradicting testimony by actresses Betty Blythe and Claire Windsor, who had both known her since the 1920s, did not shake her story. In 1974, Adele Whitely Fletcher, editor of *Photoplay*, said Griffith was still claiming that she was her own younger sister.

Griffith was a member of the Christian Science religion.

Death

On July 13, 1979, Griffith died of heart failure in Santa Monica, California, aged 84. At the time of her death, her personal estate was worth over \$150,000,000.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Corrine Griffith has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1560 Vine Street.

Dolores del Río

Dolores del Río (August 3, 1905 – April 11, 1983) was a Mexican film actress. She was a star of Hollywood films during the silent era and in the Golden Age of Hollywood. Later in life, she became an important actress in Mexican films. She was generally thought to be one of the most beautiful actresses of her era, and was the first Latin American movie star to have international appeal.

In the silent film era, del Río was considered a counterpart to Rudolph Valentino. She was frequently called the "Princess of México".



Dolores del Río in 1935

Early life

Born **María de los Dolores Asúnsolo y López Negrete** in Durango, Mexico, del Río was the second cousin of actor Ramón Novarro and a cousin to actress Andrea Palma. She was born into a wealthy family of Spanish ancestry. Her parents were Jesus Leonardo Asúnsolo Jacques, director of the Bank of Durango, and Antonia Lopez-Negrete. They were members of the *Porfiriato* (members of the ruling class from 1876–1911 when Porfirio Díaz was president) in Mexico. The family lost all its assets during the Mexican Revolution, and settled in Mexico City. A desire to restore her comfortable lifestyle inspired del Río to follow a career as an actress.

She studied at the Liceo Franco Mexicano in Mexico City. She had a passion for dancing and admired the great Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova. Performing as a dancer for gatherings of rich Mexicans, she met Jaime Martinez del Rio, a scion of one of Mexico's most important families. They fell in love although he was 18 years older. In 1921, at the age of 16, she married him. The couple spent three years in Europe. In 1924, they returned to del Río's ranch in Durango. The couple moved to Mexico City. Dolores del Río was discovered by movie producer Edwin Carewe. Struck by Dolores' beauty, Carewe gave the couple work in Hollywood, she as an actress and he as a screenwriter.

Career in Hollywood

Silent cinema



Dolores Del Río (no date).

Using her married surname, del Río made her film debut in *Joanna*, directed by Carewe in 1925 and released that year. Hollywood first noticed her appeal as a sex siren. Del Río struggled against the "Mexicali Rose" image initially pitched to her by Hollywood executives. Despite her brief appearance, Carewe arranged for much publicity for the actress. In her second film *High Steppers*, del Río took the second female credit after Mary Astor. These films were not blockbusters, but helped increase del Río's popularity. Carewe's intention was to transform her into a star on the order of Rudolph Valentino.



Dolores del Río in the movie magazine *Photoplay* (1927)

In 1926 the artist Theodore Lukits painted her portrait. Titled *A Souvenir of Seville*, it depicted the actress in the dress worn for her presentation to the Spanish Court. Also featured was her pet monkey.

The large painting was displayed in the Carthay Circle Theatre for the premier of *The Loves of Carmen* (1927). It was reproduced in magazine and newspaper articles in the United States and Mexico.

In late 1926, director Raoul Walsh called del Río to give her a role in *What Price Glory*. With the character of Charmaine, del Río achieved her desired success. Later, she was selected as one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars in 1926 (along with fellow newcomers Joan Crawford, Fay Wray, Janet Gaynor, and Mary Astor). She came to be admired as one of the most beautiful women on screen.

After she gained fame, Carewe produced *Resurrection* (1927), which was a box office hit. In 1927, Raoul Walsh called del Río for a second version of *Carmen*. The first was with Theda Bara in 1917. Walsh thought del Río to be the best interpreter of all the "Hollywood's Carmen" for his authentically Latin American version, *The Loves of Carmen* (1927). With Walsh she also filmed *The Red Dance*.

In 1928, she replaced the actress Renée Adorée in the MGM film *The Trail of '98*, directed by Clarence Brown. Her career flourished until the end of the silent era. She had successful films such as *Ramona* (1928, for which she recorded the famous song "Ramona" with RCA Victor), and *Evangeline* (1929).

While del Río's career was flourishing, her marriage declined. Her husband moved to Germany, where he committed suicide from depression in 1929.

With the arrival of the talkies, del Río left her working relationship with Carewe. He seemed to take revenge by filming a new version of *Resurrection* with the alleged Dolores rival, Lupe Vélez. With the support of United Artists, del Río left Carewe and debuted in the talkies with *The Bad One* in 1930.

In the Thirties



Dolores del Río in *I Live for Love* (1935)

In 1930, she married Cedric Gibbons, one of MGM's leading art directors and production designers, whom she met at a party organized by William Randolph Hearst and Marion Davies at Hearst Castle. Her presence in Hollywood of the thirties is not just limited to the world of cinema, also the *high society circles*. The Gibbons-Del Río house in Hollywood was a frequent meeting place from personalities like Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Errol Flynn, Lili Damita, Clark Gable and many more.

With the advent of talkies, she was relegated to exotic and unimportant roles. The Hollywood executives sought "do not talk too much at her movies", because of her Spanish accent. She scored successes with *Bird of Paradise* (1932), directed by King Vidor. The film was produced by David O. Selznick that request the script to King Vidor and say: "I want Del Rio in a love story in the South Seas. I don't care the script, but in the end, Del Rio should be thrown into a volcano". The film scandalized audiences when she took a naked swim with Joel McCrea. This film was made before the Hays Code was enacted

so nudity could be shown. Next she filmed *Flying Down to Rio* (the film that first paired Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers) (1933); *Madame Du Barry* (1934) and *Wonder Bar* (1934).



Dolores del Río in *Madame Du Barry* trailer in 1934

Later, del Río starred in the Busby Berkeley comedies *In Caliente* (1935) and *I Live for Love* (1935), but she refused to participate in the film *Viva Villa!* (Fay Wray took her place). Dolores described the film as an "Anti-Mexican movie".

In 1934, Dolores del Río was one of the victims of the "open season" of the "reds" in Hollywood. With James Cagney, Ramón Novarro and Lupe Vélez, she was accused of promoting communism in California. Twenty years later this would have consequences on her career.

In the late thirties, del Río's career declined. With the support of Warner Bros. she made a series of police films (such as *Lancer Spy* in 1937 and *International Settlement* in 1938). But del Río's career in the later 1930s unfortunately suffered from too many exotic, two-dimensional roles designed with Hollywood's clichéd ideas of ethnic minorities in mind. She was marked as "box office poison" by exhibitors, along with actresses such as Katharine Hepburn, Mae West, Marlene Dietrich and Joan Crawford.

In 1940, del Río met Orson Welles, who at that time was new to Hollywood. Feeling a mutual attraction, the couple began a romance. Welles fell madly in love with her. Reportedly, the affair was the cause of her divorce from Gibbons in 1941. Dolores del Río was with Welles for two years, during which he was at the peak of his career. She was at his side during the filming of *Citizen Kane*, and during the attacks of Randolph Hearst against him. Welles initially directed del Río in the Mexican film *Santa*, but the project was cancelled. The film directed by Norman Foster was realized later by the Mexican actress Esther Fernández.

She also accompanied Welles in vaudeville shows across the United States. She collaborated with Welles in the film *Journey into Fear* in 1942. After Welles broke from RKO, del Río sympathized with him, though her character (a sexy leopard-woman) in the film, was reduced.

Career in Mexico

Since the late thirties, Dolores del Río was sought on several occasions by Mexican film directors. She was friends with noted Mexican artists, such as Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and maintained ties with Mexican society and cinema. After breaking off her relationship with Orson Welles, del Río decided to try her luck in Mexico, disappointed by the "American star system". Mexican director Emilio Fernández asked her to star in *Flor silvestre* (1942) and the miracle happened: at 37, Dolores del Río became the most famous movie star in her country, filming in the Spanish language for the first time. The production group del Río-Fernández, together with the cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa and the actor Pedro Armendáriz had international fame. One of her most successful films was *Maria Candelaria*

(1943, winner at the Cannes Film Festival). The movie was written by Emilio as a present for her birthday. Other celebrated movies of the group were *Las Abandonadas* (1944, censored in México by six months), *Bugambilia* (1945), *The Fugitive* (1947, directed by John Ford), and *La Malquerida* (1949).



Maria Candelaria movie poster (1943)

Over her collaborations with Fernández, del Río was given the opportunity to work with the best film directors in Mexico. Roberto Gavaldon was the one who inherited from Fernández the privilege of creating stories for the flaunting of Del Río. Under the Gavaldón direction, Dolores filmed the movies *La Otra* (1946), *La Casa Chica* (1949), *Deseada* (1950) and *El Niño y la Niebla*, (1953, which competes in the Cannes Film Festival). In 1951, Dolores starred *Doña Perfecta*, in which she was acclaimed for her great dramatic representation.

Dolores worked in Argentina in 1947, in a film version of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The Cinema of Spain called her twice for the movies *Señora Ama* (1954, directed by Dolores's cousin Julio Bracho) and in *La Dama del Alba* in 1966. Her mother's death in 1961 forced to cancel the Spanish movie *Muerte en el otoño*, directed by Juan Antonio Bardem.

In 1959, the director Ismael Rodríguez achieved the impossible: bring Dolores del Río and María Félix together in one film *La Cucaracha*. The newspapers speculated a strong rivalry between the two actresses. María Félix said: " With Dolores I don't have any rivalry. On the contrary. We were friends and we always treated each other with great respect".

In 1959, she married theatrical American businessman Lewis "Lou" Riley (a former member of the Hollywood Canteen), whom she met in Acapulco ten years before. The house of Dolores in México, called "La Escondida" in Coyoacán, was very popular with Mexican and foreign celebrities. She won the Silver Ariel (Mexican Academy Award) as best actress four times.

In 1954, del Río was slated to appear in the 20th Century Fox film *Broken Lance*. The U.S. government denied her permission to work in the USA, accusing her of being a sympathizer of international communism. Because del Río did not get permission, the film was made by Katy Jurado. Dolores del Río became one of the victims of McCarthyism. Her situation with the U.S. was fixed in 1956 when the actress was able to return to the United States to perform in the theatrical production of *Anastasia* with Lili Darvas.

Later years

In 1960 Dolores del Río finally returned to Hollywood. She starred with Elvis Presley in *Flaming Star* directed by Don Siegel. Del Río alternated between films in Mexico and the USA, with both television and theater.

In 1964, she appeared in *Cheyenne Autumn* directed by John Ford, with a cast that included Richard Widmark, Carroll Baker, James Stewart, Gilbert Roland and Ricardo Montalbán. In 1967, she performed for the first time in Italy, with Sophia Loren and Omar Sharif in the film *More than a Miracle*, produced by Carlo Ponti.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Dolores del Río starred in theater classics like *Anastasia* (1956), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1958) and *The Lady of the Camellias* (1968, directed by Jose Quintero), with great success in Mexico, Latin America and Europe. She also participated in some American TV series, acting with figures like Buster Keaton, Cesar Romero, Bill Cosby and others. In England she starred in a BBC TV program along with Ben Lyon. Dolores del Río's last movie was *The Children of Sanchez* with Anthony Quinn and Katy Jurado.

From the fifties to the seventies, del Río collaborated in some international film festivals like Cannes Film Festival (1957), Berlin Film Festival (1962) and San Sebastián Film Festival (1976).

During the sixties and seventies, Dolores del Río became involved in actor union activities in her native country and was the founder of the group known as "Rosa Mexicano". In 1974, she was the founder of the *Estancia Infantil* of the *Asociacion Nacional de Actores* in Mexico. In 1966, she was founder of the "*Sociedad Protectora del Tesoro Artístico de México*" (*Society for the Protection of the artistic treasures of Mexico*), co-founded with the philanthropist Felipe García Beraza and responsible for protecting buildings, paintings and other works of art and culture in México. In 1972, she helped found the Festival Cervantino in Guanajuato.

In 1981, del Río was an honoree in the San Francisco Film Critics Circle.

Personal life

In 1921 Dolores del Río married Mexican socialite Jaime Martínez del Río, but the marriage came to end in 1928. Her former husband committed suicide in Berlin a year later.

She was a devout Roman Catholic.

From 1930 to 1940 Dolores was married to MGM's Art Designer Cedric Gibbons. Her relationship of four years with Orson Welles came to an end in 1943, and he married Rita Hayworth shortly afterwards. Rebecca Welles, the daughter of Welles and Hayworth, met Dolores in 1954 and said: "My father considered her the great love of his life", "She was a living legend in the history of my family". Welles once remarked that he was incredibly impressed by her lingerie, which had been made by nuns in France.

In the late 30's, Dolores was also involved with Errol Flynn and the German writer Erich Maria Remarque, who compared her beauty with Greta Garbo. Other rumors tried to involve her with Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, with whom Dolores maintained a close friendship. In the 40's, she was involved with the Mexican movie producer Archibaldo Burns and with the Dominican *playboy* Porfirio Rubirosa. In 1949, Dolores met Lewis A. Riley in Acapulco. Riley, a theatre producer, was member of

the Hollywood Canteen in the 1940s. After ten years together, the couple married in Mexico City in 1959.

Death and memorials

On April 11, 1983, Dolores del Río died from liver disease at the age of 77, in Newport Beach, California. She was cremated and her ashes were interred in the Panteón de Dolores cemetery in Mexico City, Mexico. In 2005, on the centenary of her birth, her remains were moved to the *Rotonda de las Personas Ilustres* in Mexico City. She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, at 1630 Vine Street, in recognition of her contributions to the motion picture industry.

Legacy

She was considered one of the prototypes of the classic woman style of the 1930s: "I think", said Larry Carr (author of *More fabulous faces*), "that Dolores del Río's appearance at the beginning of the 30's influenced Joan Crawford. In 1930, when Crawford emerged as beauty personified in the entire world, but especially in Hollywood, the women imitated her style of dress and make-up. Gone was the style of heavy pancake and little heart shaped mouths. In its place the angular face, the sculptured look came into vogue. They produced a new type of beauty, of which Dolores del Río was the precursor. She left her 1920s look, loosened her hairdo, enlarged the shape of her lips and altered her eyebrows to underline her exquisite bone structure. She converted hers into one of the truly Great Faces".



Tomb of Dolores del Río in Mexico City

Marlene Dietrich considered del Río "The most beautiful woman in Hollywood" For many people "She has better legs than Dietrich and better cheekbones than Garbo". Some rumors said that her diet consisted of orchid petals and that she slept 16 hours in the day.

Despite the passage of years, Dolores del Río continued until the end to present an image of an educated lady, elegant and sophisticated, that despite her age still remained pleasant and desirable in the eyes of the public. In 1978, Kevin Thomas of *Los Angeles Times* mentions her as "One of the reigning beauties of the century". She was interpreted by the actress Lucy Cohu in the TV. film *RKO 281* in 1999. Dolores

del Río has a statue at Hollywood-La Brea Boulevard in Los Angeles, designed by Catherine Hardwicke built to honor of multi-ethnic leading ladies of the cinema together with Mae West, Dorothy Dandridge and Anna May Wong.

In 1982, Dolores and María Félix were parodied in the Carlos Fuentes's script *Orquídeas à la luz de la luna. Comedia Mexicana* that was presented in Spain and at Harvard university. Since 1983, the Mexican Society of Film Critics has been giving the *Diosa de Plata* award "Dolores del Río" for the best dramatic female performance. From September 2009 to January 2010, Dolores del Río was honored in the Soumaya Museum in Mexico City, with one of the most complete photography compilations of her career.

Dorothy Gish

Dorothy Elizabeth Gish (March 11, 1898 – June 4, 1968) was an American actress, and the younger sister of actress Lillian Gish.



Early life

Gish was born in Dayton, Ohio. She had an older sister, Lillian. The Gish sisters' mother, Mary Robinson McConnell "Gish", supported the family after her husband, James Leigh Gish, abandoned the family. When they were old enough, Dorothy and Lillian were brought into their mother's act, and they also modeled. In 1912, their childhood friend, actress Mary Pickford, introduced them to director D.W. Griffith, and the sisters began acting at the Biograph Studios. Dorothy and Lillian Gish both debuted in Griffith's *An Unseen Enemy*. Dorothy would go on to star in over 100 short films and features, many of them with Lillian.

Linda Arvidson, Griffith's wife recalled in her autobiography, *When The Movies Were Young*:

Lillian and Dorothy just melted right into the studio atmosphere without causing a ripple. For quite a long time they merely did extra work in and out of pictures. Especially Dorothy, as Mr. Griffith paid her no attention whatsoever and she kept on crying and trailed along. She also continued to play in many one and two reel Biograph films, learning the difficult technique of silent film acting, and preparing for opportunity when it came. Dorothy was still a person of insignificance, but she was a good sport about it; a likable kid, a bit too perky to interest the big director, so her talents blushed unnoticed by Mr. Griffith. In 'The Unseen Enemy' the sisters made their first joint appearance. Lillian regarded Dorothy with all the superior airs and graces of her rank. At a rehearsal of 'The Wife', of Belasco and DeMille fame, in which picture I played the lead, and Dorothy the ingénue, Lillian was one day an interested spectator. She was watching intently, for Dorothy had had so few opportunities, and now was doing so well, Lillian was unable to contain her surprise, and as she left the scene she said: 'Why, Dorothy is good; she's almost as good as I am.' Many more than myself thought Dorothy was better.

Career

In *Hearts of the World* (1918), a film about World War I and the devastation of France, Dorothy found her first foothold, striking a personal hit in a comedy role that captured the essence of her sense of humor. As the “little disturber”, a street singer, her performance was the comic highlight of the film, and her characterization in this role catapulted her into a career as a star of comedy films.

Griffith did not use Dorothy in any of his earliest epics, but while he spent months working on *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*, Dorothy was featured in many feature-length films made under the banner of Triangle and Mutual releases. They were directed by young Griffith protégés such as Donald Crisp, James Kirkwood, and Christy Cabanne. Elmer Clifton directed a series of seven Paramount-Artcraft comedies with Dorothy that were so successful and popular that the tremendous revenue they raked in helped to pay the cost of Griffith’s expensive epics. These films were wildly popular with the public and the critics. She specialized in pantomime and light comedy, while her sister appeared in tragic roles. Dorothy became famous in this long series of Griffith-supervised films for the Triangle-Fine Arts and Paramount companies from 1918 through 1920, comedies that put her in the front ranks of film comediennes. Almost all of these films are now considered to be lost films.

"And So I Am a Comedienne", an article published in *Ladies Home Journal* in July 1925, gave Dorothy a chance to recall her public persona: “And so I am a comedienne, though I, too, once wanted to do heroic and tragic things. Today my objection to playing comedy is that it is so often misunderstood by the audiences, both in the theater and in the picture houses. It is so often thought to be a lesser art and something which comes to one naturally, a haphazard talent like the amateur clowning of some cut-up who is so often thought to be ‘the life of the party’. In the eyes of so many persons comedy is not only the absence of studied effect and acting, but it is not considered an art.”

When the film industry converted to talking pictures, Dorothy made one, *Wolves* (1930), but then chose to take a respite from film work and return to the American stage where she had spent her childhood. George Cukor directed her in *Young Love*, and the light comedy found success with New York audiences as well as those on the road. A London production followed with equal success.

In 1939, both Dorothy and Lillian Gish found the role of a lifetime. “Dorothy and I went to see the New York production of *Life With Father*, starring Howard Lindsay and Dorothy Stickney,” Lillian wrote in her autobiography. “After the performance I said: ‘This is the play we’ve been waiting for to take through America.’” Lillian predicted the popular play would be a perfect showcase for all the people who had seen the hundreds of films featuring Mary Pickford, Dorothy, and herself. She was introduced to Lindsay backstage, and immediately surprised the producers with her enthusiastic desire to head the first company to go on the road, with Dorothy taking the same part for the second road company, and the movie rights for Mary Pickford. Pickford did not make the film version, but the Gish sisters took the two road companies on extensive tours.

Television in the 1950s offered many actors the opportunity to appear in plays broadcast live. Dorothy ventured into the new medium, appearing on NBC’s *Lux Video Theatre* on the night of November 24, 1955, in a production of *Miss Susie Slagle’s*. The play had been a film in 1945 with her sister, Lillian, made for Paramount Pictures Corporation.

“The truth is, that she did not know what she really wanted to do,” wrote her sister, Lillian, in her autobiography. “She had always had trouble making decisions and assuming responsibilities, In some ways she had never grown up. She was such a witty and enchanting child that we enjoyed indulging her.

First Mother and I spoiled her and later Reba, her friend, and her husband Jim. Reba called Dorothy 'Baby' and so did Jim. With the best intentions in the world, we all helped to keep her a child."

From 1930 until her death, she only appeared in five more movies. *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay* (1944) was a hit for Paramount. *The Magnificent Yankee* (1946) presented Dorothy at the Royale Theater. Lillian noted in her pictorial book, *Dorothy and Lillian Gish*, John Chapman's review of the film: "*Miss Gish and Mr. Calhern give the finest performances I have ever seen them in. She is a delight and a darling.*"

Director Otto Preminger cast Dorothy in his 1946 film, *Centennial Summer*, and she was said to have been amused that she and some of the other stars were allowed to sing Jerome Kern's music. Mae Marsh appeared in the film in one of her many bit parts. *The Whistle at Eaton Falls* (1951) was a documentary style film produced by Louis de Rochemont. Dorothy played the widow of a mill owner.

She also made several appearances in anthology television series in the early 1950s. Her final film appearance was in another Otto Preminger film, *The Cardinal* (1963), in which she portrayed the mother of the title character.

Personal life



Dorothy (right) with her sister Lillian.

She was married to James Rennie (actor) (1890–1965), a Canadian-born actor who was her co-star in *Remodeling Her Husband* (filmed in 1920, it was directed by Dorothy's older sister, Lillian, in her only directorial outing). They were married in 1920 in a double ceremony with actress Constance Talmadge and businessman John Piagoglou. They divorced in 1935; Dorothy never remarried.

Death

She died in 1968 from bronchial pneumonia at the age of 70 at a clinic in Rapallo, Italy where she had been a patient for two years, with sister Lillian at her side. Dorothy Gish was entombed in Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in New York City in the columbarium in the undercroft of the church. Her sister Lillian was later interred beside her.

For her contribution as an actress in motion pictures, Dorothy Gish was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6385 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, California.

Dorothy Mackaill

Dorothy Mackaill (March 4, 1903 — August 12, 1990) was an English-born American actress, most notably of the silent film era and into the early 1930s.



c. 1929

Early life

Born in Kingston upon Hull, Mackaill lived with her father after her parents separated when she was eleven. She attended Thoresby Primary School and was living on Newstead Street nearby at the time. As a teenager, Mackaill ran away to London to pursue a stage career as an actress. After temporarily relocating to Paris, she met a Broadway stage choreographer who persuaded her to move to New York City where she became involved in the *Ziegfeld Follies* and befriended future motion picture actresses Marion Davies and Nita Naldi.

Career rise

By 1920, Mackaill had begun making the transition from "Follies Girl" to film actress. That same year she appeared in her first film, the Wilfred Noy-directed mystery, *The Face at the Window*. Mackaill also appeared in several comedies of 1920 opposite actor Johnny Hines. In 1921 she appeared opposite Anna May Wong, Noah Beery, and Lon Chaney in the Marshall Neilan-directed drama *Bits of Life*. In the following years, Mackaill would appear opposite such popular actors as Richard Barthelmess, Rod La Rocque, Colleen Moore, John Barrymore, George O'Brien, Bebe Daniels, Milton Sills and Anna Q. Nilsson.

In 1924, Mackaill rose to leading lady status in the drama *The Man Who Came Back*, opposite rugged matinee idol George O'Brien. Her role of the nightclub chanteuse Marcelle catapulted Mackaill into a genuine Hollywood star and her career continued to flourish throughout the remainder of the 1920s. In early 1924 she starred in the western film, *The Mine with the Iron Door*, shot on location outside of Tucson, Arizona. That same year she was awarded the WAMPAS Baby Stars award by the Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers in the United States, which honored thirteen young women each year who they believed to be on the threshold of movie stardom. Other notable recipients of the award that year were Clara Bow, Julianne Johnston and Lucille Ricksen.

Later career

She made a smooth transition to sound with the part-talkie *The Barker* in 1928 and had continued success in talkies for the next couple of years. Mackaill's film contract at First National Pictures was not renewed upon its expiration in 1931 and Mackaill became a free agent actress. Her most memorable role of this era was the 1932 Columbia Pictures release *Love Affair* with a young Humphrey Bogart as her leading man. She made several films for MGM, Paramount and Columbia before retiring in 1937 for many years from the industry to care for her aging mother.

Dorothy Mackaill occasionally came out of retirement to appear in roles for television, notably in several episodes of the 1960s and 1970s series *Hawaii Five-O*, which was filmed on location where Mackaill had lived for several decades.

Personal life

In 1926, Mackaill married the successful film director Lothar Mendes, but the union only lasted for two years before ending in divorce. She would marry two more times: from 1931 to 1934 to Neil Miller, and from 1934 to 1938 to Harold Patterson, both of which marriages also ended in divorce. She produced no children in either of the marriages.

Death

Mackaill died of kidney failure in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1990, aged 87. She was cremated and her ashes were scattered at sea off of Waikiki Beach.

Dorothy Sebastian

Dorothy Sebastian (April 26, 1903 – April 8, 1957) was an American film and stage actress.



Early life and career

Sebastian was born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. In her youth she hoped to be a dancer and later a film actress. Her family frowned on both ambitions, however, so she fled to New York at the age of 15. Upon her arrival in New York City, Sebastian's southern drawl was thick enough to "cut with a knife". She followed around theatrical agents before returning at night to a \$12-a-month room, after being consistently rejected.

Her first contact in Hollywood was Robert Kane, who gave her a film test at United Studios. She performed in *George White's Scandals* with Joan Crawford and Anita Page for a popular series of MGM romantic dramas including *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928) and *Our Blushing Brides* (1930). Sebastian also appeared in 1929's *Spite Marriage*, wherein she was cast opposite her then-lover Buster Keaton.

Personal life

Sebastian went into semi-retirement in the mid-1930s after marrying Hopalong Cassidy star William Boyd. They wed in Las Vegas, Nevada following a romance which began on a set at Pathe Pictures. After their divorce in 1935, Sebastian attempted a comeback, appearing in much smaller parts than years before. In 1947, Sebastian married Miami Beach businessman Harold Shapiro to whom she remained married until her death.

Court appearances

In November 1938, Sebastian was found guilty of drunk driving in a Beverly Hills, California Justice Court. She blamed her crash on a reaction of garlic with three or four glasses of wine she consumed four or five hours earlier. She was dining at the home of Buster Keaton. She told the court she believed

police assumed from this she had been drinking even more recently. She was given a 30-day suspended jail sentence and paid a fine of \$75.

Sebastian was denied an award of \$10,000 from a San Diego court in 1940. She appeared at a Red Cross benefit in San Francisco in 1937, and failed to pay her hotel bill. She contended the promoter should have met the expense. An employee of the Plaza Hotel took out the suit, charging "defrauding an innkeeper". The State Supreme Court of California reversed the decision, which awarded her the money on grounds of malicious prosecution.

Death

Sebastian died of cancer in 1957 at the Motion Picture & Television Country House and Hospital in Woodland Hills, California. She is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City, California.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Dorothy Sebastian has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6655 Hollywood Blvd.

Douglas Fairbanks

Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. (May 23, 1883 – December 12, 1939) was an American actor, screenwriter, director and producer. He was best known for his swashbuckling roles in silent films such as *The Thief of Bagdad*, *Robin Hood*, and *The Mark of Zorro*.



An astute businessman, Fairbanks was a founding member of United Artists. Fairbanks was also a founding member of The Motion Picture Academy and hosted the first Oscars Ceremony in 1929. With his marriage to Mary Pickford in 1920, the couple became Hollywood royalty and Fairbanks was referred to as "The King of Hollywood", a nickname later passed on to actor Clark Gable. His career rapidly declined with the advent of the "talkies".

Early life

The future screen actor was born **Douglas Elton Thomas Ullman** (spelled "Ulman" by Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. in his memoirs) in Denver, CO, the son of H. Charles Ullman (born September 15, 1833) and Ella Adelaide Marsh (born 1847). He had a half-brother, John Fairbanks, Jr. (born 1873), and a full brother, Robert Payne Ullman (March 13, 1882 – February 22, 1948).

The father of Douglas Fairbanks, Hezekiah Charles Douglas Ullman (1833–1915), was born in Berrysburg, Pa. but raised in Williamsport. He was the fourth child in a relatively well-to-do Jewish family of six sons and four daughters. Charles' parents, Lazarus Ullman and Lydia Abrahams, had immigrated to the U.S. in 1830 from Baden, Germany. When he was 17, Charles started a small publishing business in Philadelphia. Two years later he left for New York to study law. He was admitted to the Pennsylvania bar in 1856 and began building a substantial practice. At the onset of the Civil War, Charles joined the Union forces. He engaged in several battles, was wounded, and later became a captain of the 5th Pennsylvania Reserves. Charles left the service in 1864 and returned to his law practice. Subsequently he founded the U.S. Law Association, a forerunner of the American Bar Association.

Charles met Ella Adelaide Marsh (1847–1915) after she married his friend and client John Fairbanks, a wealthy New Orleans sugar mill and plantation owner. The Fairbankses had a son, John, and shortly thereafter John Senior died of tuberculosis. Ella, born into a wealthy southern Catholic family, was overprotected and knew little of her husband's business. Consequently, she was swindled out of her

fortune by her husband's partners. Even the efforts of Charles Ullman, acting on her behalf, failed to regain any of the family fortune for her. Distraught and lonely, she met and married a courtly Georgian, Edward Wilcox, who turned out to be an alcoholic. After they had a son, Norris, she divorced Wilcox, and Charles acted as her lawyer in the suit. The pretty southern belle soon became romantically involved with Charles and agreed to move to Denver with him to pursue mining investments. They arrived in Denver in 1881 with her son, John. (Norris was left in Georgia with relatives and was never sent for by his mother.) They were married and had a child, Robert, in 1882, and then a second son, Douglas, a year later. Charles purchased several mining interests in the Rocky Mountains and he re-established his law practice. Charles Ullman abandoned the family when Douglas was five years old, however, and he and his older brother Robert were brought up by their mother, who gave them the family name Fairbanks, after her first husband.

Early career

Douglas Fairbanks began acting on the Denver stage at an early age, doing amateur theatre. He was in summer stock at the Elitch Gardens Theatre, becoming a sensation in his teens. He attended Denver East High School, and was once expelled for dressing up the campus statues on St. Patrick's Day. He left during his senior year. He said he attended Colorado School of Mines for a term but no record of attendance has been found. An article on the matter recounts a professor once saying Fairbanks was asked to leave because of a prank not long after he began. It is also claimed he attended Harvard University. Fairbanks moved to New York in the early 1900s to pursue an acting career, joining the acting troupe of British actor Frederick Warde who had discovered Fairbanks performing in Denver. He worked in a hardware store and as a clerk in a Wall Street office before his Broadway debut in 1902.

On July 11, 1907 in Watch Hill, Rhode Island, he married Anna Beth Sully, the daughter of wealthy industrialist, Daniel J. Sully. They had one son, Douglas Elton Fairbanks, who later became known as actor "Douglas Fairbanks Jr.". The family moved to Hollywood, California in 1915.

Hollywood



D.W. Griffith, Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin (seated) and Douglas Fairbanks at the signing of the contract establishing United Artists motion picture studio in 1919. Lawyers Albert Banzhaf (left) and Dennis F. O'Brien (right) stand in the background.

Fairbanks signed a contract with Triangle Pictures in 1915 and began working under the supervision of D.W. Griffith. His first film was titled *The Lamb*, and in the film, he debuted his remarkable athletic abilities that would gain wide attention among theatre audiences.

His athleticism was not appreciated by Griffith, however, and he was brought to the attention of Anita Loos and John Emerson, who wrote and directed many of his early romantic comedies. In 1916, Fairbanks established his own company, the Douglas Fairbanks Film Corporation, and would soon get a job at Paramount. By 1918, Fairbanks was Hollywood's most popular actor; within eighteen months of his arrival, Fairbanks' popularity and business acumen raised him up to be the third highest paid.



Fairbanks speaking in front of a crowd at a 1918 war bond drive in New York City

Fairbanks met actress Mary Pickford at a party in 1916 and they began an affair. In 1917, the couple joined Fairbanks' friend Charlie Chaplin selling war bonds by train across the U.S. Pickford and Chaplin were then the two highest paid film stars in Hollywood. To curtail these stars' astronomical salaries, the large studios attempted to monopolize distributors and exhibitors.

Sully was granted a divorce from Fairbanks in late 1918, the judgment being finalized in early 1919.

To avoid being controlled by the studios and to protect their independence, Fairbanks, Pickford, Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith formed United Artists in 1919, which created their own distributorships and gave them complete artistic control over their films and the profits generated. The company was kept solvent in the years immediately after its formation largely from the success of Fairbanks' films.



The Mark of Zorro

Fairbanks was determined to have Pickford become his wife, but she was still married to actor Owen Moore. He finally gave her an ultimatum. She then obtained a fast divorce in the small Nevada town of Minden, Nevada, on March 2, 1920. Fairbanks leased the Beverly Hills mansion Grayhall and was rumored to have used it during his courtship of Pickford.

The couple married on March 28, 1920. Pickford's divorce from Moore was contested by Nevada legislators, however, and the dispute was not settled until 1922. Even though the lawmakers objected to the marriage, the public went wild over the idea of "Everybody's Hero" marrying "America's Sweetheart". They were greeted by large crowds in London and Paris during their European honeymoon, becoming Hollywood's first celebrity couple.

During the years they were married, Fairbanks and Pickford were regarded as "Hollywood Royalty," famous for entertaining at their Beverly Hills estate, Pickfair.



Douglas Fairbanks in the title role in *Robin Hood* (1922).

By 1920, Fairbanks had completed twenty-nine films (twenty-eight features and one two-reel short), which showcased his ebullient screen persona and athletic ability. By 1920, he had the inspiration of staging a new type of adventure-costume picture, a genre that was then out of favor with the public; Fairbanks had previously been a comic in his other films. In *The Mark of Zorro*, Fairbanks combined his appealing screen persona with the new adventurous, costume element. It was a smash success and parlayed the actor into the rank of superstar. For the remainder of his career in silent films, he continued to produce and star in ever more elaborate, impressive costume films, such as *The Three Musketeers* (1921), *Douglas Fairbanks as Robin Hood* (1922), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *The Black Pirate* (1926, the first full-length Technicolor film), and *The Gaucho* (1927). Fairbanks spared no expense and effort in these films, which established the standard for all future swashbuckling films.

In 1921, he, Pickford, Chaplin, and others, helped to organize the Motion Picture Fund to assist those in the industry who could not work, or were unable to meet their bills.

During the first ceremony of its type, he and Pickford placed their hand and foot prints in wet cement at the newly opened Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on April 30, 1927. Fairbanks was elected first President of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences that same year, and he presented the first Academy Awards at the Roosevelt Hotel. Fairbanks also has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7020 Hollywood Boulevard.

His last silent film was the lavish *The Iron Mask* (1929), a sequel to 1921's *The Three Musketeers* which included an introductory prologue spoken by Fairbanks. While Fairbanks had flourished in the silent genre, the restrictions of early sound films dulled his enthusiasm for film-making. Also, his athletic abilities and general health began to decline, in part due to years of heavy chain-smoking. He and Pickford chose to make their first talkie as a joint venture, playing Petruchio and Kate in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1929). This film, and his subsequent sound films, were poorly received by Depression era audiences. The last film he acted in was the British production *The Private Life of Don Juan* (1934), after which he retired from acting.

Final years



Fairbanks' tomb at Hollywood Forever Cemetery

Fairbanks and Pickford separated in 1933, after he began an affair with Sylvia, Lady Ashley. They divorced in 1936, with Pickford keeping the Pickfair estate. Within months Fairbanks and Ashley were married in Paris.

He continued to be marginally involved in the film industry and United Artists, but his later years lacked the intense focus of his film years. His health continued to decline, and in his final years he lived at 705 Ocean Front (now Pacific Coast Highway) in Santa Monica, California, although much of his time was spent traveling abroad with Sylvia.

In December 1939, at 56, Fairbanks had a heart attack in his sleep and died a day later at his home in Santa Monica. By some accounts, he had been obsessively working out against medical advice, trying to regain his once-trim waistline. Fairbanks's famous last words were, "I've never felt better." His funeral service was held at the Wee Kirk o' the Heather Church in Glendale's Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery where he was placed in a crypt in the Great Mausoleum. He was deeply mourned and honored by his colleagues and fans for his contributions to the film industry and Hollywood.

Two years following his death, he was removed from Forest Lawn by his widow, who commissioned an elaborate marble monument for him featuring a long rectangular reflecting pool, raised tomb, and classic Greek architecture in Hollywood Forever Cemetery. The monument was dedicated in a ceremony held in October 1941, with Fairbanks' close friend Charles Chaplin reading a remembrance. The remains of his son, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., were also interred here upon his death in 2000.

Legacy

In 1998, a group of Fairbanks fans started the Douglas Fairbanks Museum in Austin, Texas. The museum building was temporarily closed for mold remediation and repairs in February 2010. Plans and fundraising efforts are underway to re-open the museum to the public. In the meantime an online virtual museum project makes parts of the collections and past exhibits available for viewing on the museum's website.

In 2002, AMPAS opened the "Fairbanks Center for Motion Picture Study" located at 333 S. La Cienega Boulevard in Beverly Hills. The building houses the Margaret Herrick Library.

On January 24, 2009, AMPAS opened an exhibition at their Fourth Floor Gallery dedicated to Fairbanks titled, "Douglas Fairbanks: The First King of Hollywood". The exhibit featured costumes, props, pictures, and documents from his career and personal life. The exhibit ran until April 2009. In addition to the exhibit, AMPAS screened *Thief of Bagdad* and *The Iron Mask* in March 2009. Recently, due to his involvement with the USC Fencing Club, a bronze statue of Fairbanks was erected in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Courtyard of the new School of Cinematic Arts building on the University of Southern California campus. Fairbanks was a key figure in the film school's founding in 1929, and in its curriculum development.

Dustin Farnum

Dustin Lancy Farnum (May 27, 1874 – July 3, 1929) was an American singer, dancer and an actor in silent movies during the early days of motion pictures. After a great success in a number of stage roles, in 1914 he landed his first film role in the movie 'Soldiers of Fortune', and later in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Squaw Man*. Although he played a wide variety of roles, he tended toward Westerns and became one of the biggest stars of the genre. He was married to actress Winifred Kingston. He was the older brother of actor William Farnum and the lesser known silent film director Marshall Farnum(died 1917). He also was the father of (with Winifred Kingston) late radio actress Estelle "Dustine" Runyon (1925-1983).



Earle Williams

Earle Williams (b. February 28, 1880 in Sacramento, California – d. April 25, 1927 in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California) was a silent film star.

Vitagraph company's leading man in the 1910s, Earle Williams was voted America's number one star in 1915, starting his career on stage as a teenager, the year he made perhaps his most popular film of all, *The Juggernaut*. Vitagraph wrecked a real train in this action melodrama, which co-starred Williams with his most frequent leading lady, Anita Stewart. They were also teamed in the studio's earliest and perhaps most famous entry in the then-popular serial genre, *The Goddess* in 1915, and Williams made a dashing gentleman thief in Vitagraph's 1917 version of the ever popular Arsene Lupin. He continued his popularity streak into the 1920s, often portraying stalwart military heroes. Williams' early death was attributed to bronchial pneumonia. He was forty-seven years old.



Edna Purviance

Edna Purviance (October 21, 1895 – January 11, 1958) was an American actress during the silent movie era. She was the leading lady in many Charlie Chaplin movies. In a span of eight years, she appeared in over thirty films with Chaplin.



The Blue Book of the Screen

Early life

Edna Purviance (pronounced Purr-VYE-ance) was born in Paradise Valley, Nevada, to Louis and Madison Gates Purviance. When she was three, the family moved to Lovelock, Nevada, where they assumed ownership of a hotel property. Her parents divorced in 1902, and her mother later married Robert Nurnberger, a German plumber. Growing up, Purviance was a talented pianist. She left Lovelock in 1913, and attended business college in San Francisco.

Career



Photoplay: The Aristocrat of Motion Picture Magazines 1915

In 1915, Chaplin was working on his second film with Essanay Studios, working out of Niles, California, one hour southeast of San Francisco. He was looking for a leading lady for *A Night Out*, and one of his associates noticed Purviance at a Tate's Café in San Francisco and thought she should be cast in the role. Chaplin arranged a meeting with her, and although he was concerned that she might be too serious for comedic roles, she won the job.

Chaplin and Purviance were romantically involved during the making of his Essanay, Mutual, and First National films of 1915–1917. Purviance appeared in 33 of Chaplin's productions, including the 1921 classic *The Kid*. Her last film with him, *A Woman of Paris*, was also her first lead role. She went on to appear in two more films: *The Sea Gull*, also known as *A Woman of the Sea*—which Chaplin never released—and *Education de Prince*, a French film released in 1927, just before she retired as an actress. Chaplin kept her on his payroll until her death.

Personal life



Edna Purviance in *The Adventurer* (1917)

Although she was romantically involved with Chaplin for several years, Purviance eventually married John Squire, a Pan-American Airlines pilot, whom she wed in 1938 and who died in 1945. Recently silent films, in black-and-white and color, have been discovered that show a glimpse into their life together from the late 1930s and early 1940s, and over 50 production stills from her unreleased film *The Sea Gull*, have also come to light. These stills have been published with the original title list from the film.

Purviance died of cancer on January 11, 1958, at the age of 62. She is interred in the Grand View Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

There is currently a petition drive to commemorate Purviance's career with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In other media

She was portrayed by Penelope Ann Miller in the film *Chaplin*, and more recently by Katie Maguire in the film *Madcap Mabel* (2009).

Emil Jannings

Emil Jannings (23 July 1884 – 2 January 1950) was a German actor. He was not only the first actor to win the Academy Award for Best Actor, but also the first person to be presented an Oscar. He later starred in a number of Nazi propaganda films and became close with Joseph Goebbels.



Emil Jannings and wife (May 1929)

Early life

He was christened as **Theodor Friedrich Emil Janenz** in Rorschach, Switzerland, the son of a German mother and an American father. While he was still young the family moved to Görlitz in Germany and in the town state theatre Jannings started his stage career. He worked in Bremen and Leipzig before joining the Max Reinhardt's theatre company in Berlin.

Career

Jannings was a theater actor who went into films. He starred in the 1922 film version of *Othello* and in F. W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (*Der Letzte Mann*, 1924), as a proud but aged hotel doorman who is demoted to a restroom attendant. Jannings worked with Murnau on two other films, playing the title character in *Herr Tartüff* (1925) and Mephistopheles in *Faust* (1926). He eventually started a career in Hollywood. In 1929 he won the Oscar for two films, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *The Last Command*.

His Hollywood career came to an end with the advent of talkies; his thick German accent was difficult to understand, and his dialogue was dubbed by another actor in the part-talkie *The Patriot* (1928), although after Jannings objected, his voice was restored. He returned to Europe, where he starred opposite Marlene Dietrich in the 1930 film *The Blue Angel*, filmed in English simultaneously with its German version *Der blaue Engel*.

Later life



With Joseph Goebbels in 1938

During the Third Reich, he starred in several films which were intended to promote Nazism, particularly the *Führerprinzip: The Youth of Frederick the Great* (1935), *Der Herrscher* ("The Ruler" 1937), *Ohm Kruger* (*Uncle Kruger*, 1941) and *The Dismissal of Bismarck* (1942). Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels named him "Artist of the State" in 1941.

When troops of the Allied Powers entered Germany in 1945, Jannings reportedly carried his Oscar statuette with him as proof of his former association with Hollywood. However, his active role in Nazi propaganda meant he was subject to de-nazi-fication, and any comeback attempt was doomed. Jannings retired near Salzburg, Austria, and became an Austrian citizen in 1947. Very proficient in financial matters, he was one of the highest paid actors of his time.

Death

Jannings died in 1950, aged 65, in Strobl, from liver cancer. His Best Actor Oscar is now on display at the Film Museum in Berlin.

Cultural depictions

Hilmar Eichhorn portrayed a fictional version of Jannings in *Inglourious Basterds*, directed by Quentin Tarantino.

Erich von Stroheim

Erich von Stroheim (September 22, 1885 – May 12, 1957) was an Austrian-born film star of the silent era, subsequently noted as an auteur for his directorial work.



Background

Stroheim's most recent biographers, such as Richard Koszarski, say that he was born in Vienna, Austria in 1885 as **Erich Oswald Stroheim**, the son of Benno Stroheim, a middle-class hat-maker, and Johanna Bondy, both of whom were practicing Jews.

Stroheim emigrated to America at the end of 1909. On arrival at Ellis Island he claimed to be Count Erich Oswald Hans Carl Maria von Stroheim und Nordenwall, the son of Austrian nobility like the characters he played in his films, but both Billy Wilder and Stroheim's agent Paul Kohner claimed that he spoke with a decidedly lower-class Austrian accent. However Jean Renoir writes in his memoirs: "Stroheim spoke hardly any German. He had to study his lines like a schoolboy learning a foreign language." Later, while living in Europe, Stroheim claimed in published remarks to have "forgotten" his native tongue.

Stroheim was a great fantasist and his authorized biography contains many factual errors.

Film career

By 1914 he was working in Hollywood. He began working in movies in bit-parts and as a consultant on German culture and fashion. His first film, in 1915, was *The Country Boy* in which he was un-credited. His first credited role came in *Old Heidelberg*.

He began working with D. W. Griffith, taking un-credited roles in *Intolerance*. Additionally, Von Stroheim acted as one of the many assistant directors on *Intolerance*, a film remembered in part for its

huge cast of extras. Later, he played the sneering German in such films as *Sylvia of the Secret Service* and *The Hun Within*. In *The Heart of Humanity*, he tore the buttons from a nurse's uniform with his teeth, and when disturbed by a crying baby, threw it out of a window.

Following the end of World War I, Stroheim turned to writing and then directed his own script for *Blind Husbands* in 1919. He also starred in the film. As a director, Stroheim was known to be dictatorial and demanding, often antagonizing his actors. He is considered one of the greatest directors of the silent era, representing on film his by turns cynical and romantic views of human nature. (In the 1932 film *The Lost Squadron* Stroheim played a parody of himself as a fanatic German film director making a World War I movie who orders extras playing dead soldiers to "Stay dead!")

His next directorial efforts were the lost film *The Devil's Pass Key* (1919) and *Foolish Wives* (1922), in which he also starred. Studio publicity for *Foolish Wives* claimed that it was the first film to cost one million dollars.

In 1923, Stroheim began work on *Merry-Go-Round*. He cast the American actor Norman Kerry in a part written for himself 'Count Franz Maximilian Von Hohenegg' and newcomer Mary Philbin in the lead actress role. However studio executive Irving Thalberg fired Von Stroheim during filming and replaced him with director Rupert Julian.



Erich von Stroheim as Sergius Karamzin in *Foolish Wives*

Probably Stroheim's best remembered work as a director is *Greed*, a detailed filming of the novel *McTeague* by Frank Norris. He originally started it as a project with Samuel Goldwyn's Goldwyn Pictures. Stroheim had long wanted to do a film version of the book. He originally intended it to be a highly detailed reproduction of the original, shot mostly at the locations described in the book in San Francisco and Death Valley. The original print ran for an astonishing 10 hours. Knowing this version was far too long, Stroheim cut out almost half the footage, reducing it to a six-hour version to be shown over two nights. It was still deemed too long, so Stroheim and director Rex Ingram edited it into a four-hour version that could be shown in two parts.

However, in the midst of filming, Goldwyn was bought by Marcus Loew and merged into Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. After rejecting Stroheim's attempts to cut it to less than three hours, MGM removed *Greed* from his control and gave it to head scriptwriter June Mathis, with orders to cut it down to a manageable length. Mathis gave the print to a routine cutter, who reduced it to 2.5 hours. In what is considered one of the greatest losses in cinema history, a janitor destroyed the cut footage.

The shortened release version was a box-office failure, and was angrily disowned by Stroheim. In particular, he blamed Mathis for destroying his pet project, since she was credited as a writer due to contractual obligations. However, Mathis had worked with Stroheim before and had long admired him, so it is not likely she would have indiscriminately butchered his film. The film was partially

reconstructed in 1999 by Producer Rick Schmidlin, using the existing footage mixed with surviving still photographs, but *Greedy* has passed into cinema lore as a lost masterpiece.

Stroheim followed with a commercial project, *The Merry Widow* (his most commercially successful film) and the more personal *The Wedding March* and the now-lost *The Honeymoon*.

Stroheim's unwillingness or inability to modify his artistic principles for the commercial cinema, his extreme attention to detail, his insistence on near-total artistic freedom and the resulting costs of his films led to fights with the studios. As time went on he received fewer directing opportunities.

In 1929, Stroheim was dismissed as the director of the film *Queen Kelly* after disagreements with star Gloria Swanson and producer and financier Joseph P. Kennedy over the mounting costs of the film and Stroheim's introduction of indecent subject matter into the film's scenario.

After *Queen Kelly* and *Walking Down Broadway*, a project from which Stroheim was also dismissed, Stroheim returned to working principally as an actor, in both American and French films. He appeared as a guest star in the 1953 anthology drama television series *Orient Express* in the episode entitled *The Man of Many Skins*.

Working in France on the eve of World War II, Stroheim was prepared to direct the film *La dame blanche* from his own story and screenplay. Jean Renoir wrote the dialogue, Jacques Becker was to be assistant director and Stroheim himself, Louis Jouvet and Jean-Louis Barrault were to be the featured actors. Max Cossvan was to produce the film for Demo-Film. The production was prevented by the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939, and Stroheim returned to the United States.

He is perhaps best known as an actor for his role as von Rauffenstein in Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* (1937) and as Max von Mayerling in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950).

For the latter film, which co-starred Gloria Swanson, Stroheim was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor. Excerpts from *Queen Kelly* were used in the film. The Mayerling character states that he used to be one of the three great directors of the silent era, along with D.W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille; many film critics agree that Stroheim was indeed one of the great early directors. Stroheim's character in *Sunset Boulevard* thus had an autobiographical basis that reflected the humiliations suffered through his career.

Stroheim was married three times. Though he was never divorced from his third wife Valerie Germonprez, he lived with actress Denise Vernac, who had worked for him as his secretary since 1938, from 1939 until his death. Vernac also starred with him in several films. Two of Stroheim's sons eventually joined the film business: Erich Jr. (1916–1968)(with Mae Jones) as an assistant director and Josef (1922–2002)(with Valerie Germonprez) as a sound editor.

Stroheim spent the last part of his life in France where his silent film work was much admired by artists in the French film industry. In France he acted in films, wrote several novels that were published in French, and worked on various unrealized film projects. He was awarded the French Légion d'honneur shortly before his death in 1957 in Maurepas, France at the age of 71.

Esther Ralston

Esther Ralston (September 17, 1902 – January 14, 1994) was an American movie actress whose greatest popularity came during the silent era.



Early life and career

Ralston started as a child actress in a family vaudeville act which was billed as "The Ralston Family with Baby Esther, America's Youngest Juliet." From this, she appeared in a few small silent film roles before gaining attention as Mrs. Darling in the 1924 version of *Peter Pan*.

In the late 1920s she appeared in many films for Paramount, at one point earning as much as \$8000 a week, and garnering much popularity, especially in Britain. She appeared mainly in comedies, often portraying spirited society girls, but she also received good reviews for her forays into dramatic roles. In 1962, she had a leading role in the short-lived daytime drama, *Our Five Daughters*.

Retirement

Despite making a successful transition to sound, she was reduced to appearing in B-movies by the mid-1930s, leading to her retirement. By the time she settled down in 1941, she had made over 100 movies. During the mid-1950s as Mrs. Esther Lloyd, a grandmother, she worked in the Seventh Church of Christ Scientist in New York. Happy with her life, Ralston expressed no desire to make a comeback.

Esther Ralston died in Ventura, California on January 14, 1994 of a heart attack.

She was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (6664 Hollywood Boulevard) for her popular work in motion pictures.

Family relationships

She is of no known relation to fellow silent film actress Jobyna Ralston. She was the aunt of television/stage/radio/recording artist Bob Ralston and the great-great aunt of stage and television actor Field Cate.

Evelyn Brent

Evelyn Brent (October 20, 1895 – June 4, 1975) was an American film and stage actress.



Early life

Born **Mary Elizabeth Riggs** in Tampa, Florida and known as Betty, she was a child of 10 when her mother Eleanor died, leaving her father Arthur to raise her alone. After moving to New York City as a teenager, her good looks brought modeling jobs that led to an opportunity to become involved in the still relatively new business of making motion pictures. She originally studied to be a teacher. While attending a normal school in New York she visited the World Film Studio in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Two days later she was working there as an extra making \$3 a day.

Career

She began her film career working under her own name at a New Jersey film studio then made her major debut in the 1915 silent film production of the Robert W. Service poem, *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*.

As Evelyn Brent, she continued to work in film, developing into a young woman whose sultry looks were much sought after. After World War I, she went to London for a vacation. She met American playwright Oliver Cromwell who urged her to accept an important role in *The Ruined Lady*. The production was presented on the London stage. The actress remained four years in England, performing in films produced by British companies. She also worked on stage there before going to Hollywood in 1922.

There, her career received a major boost the following year when she was chosen as one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars. Signed by Douglas Fairbanks Sr., he failed to find a story for Brent. She left his company to join Associated Authors.



Mid-1920s promotional image issued by Film Booking Offices, later acquired by RKO

Evelyn went on to make more than two dozen silent films including three for the noted Austrian director, Josef von Sternberg. In 1928 she starred opposite William Powell in Paramount Pictures' (and her own) first talkie. One film, *Interference* (1928), did not live up to expectations at the box office. Not dissuaded, Brent played major roles in several more features, most notably *The Silver Horde* and the Paramount Pictures all-star revue *Paramount on Parade* (both 1930).

By the early part of the 1930s, she was busy working in secondary roles in a variety of films as well as touring with vaudeville shows.

By 1941 her screen career was at its least prestigious point. Now 45, too mature for ingénue roles, and no longer in demand by major studios, she found plenty of work at the smaller, low-budget studios. She photographed attractively opposite leading men who were also at advanced ages and later stages in their careers: Neil Hamilton in Producers Releasing Corporation's production *Dangerous Lady*, Lee Tracy in the same studio's *The Payoff*, and Jack Holt in the serial *Holt of the Secret Service*, produced by Larry Darmour for Columbia Pictures. Her performances were still persuasive, and her name was still recognizable to moviegoers: theater owners often put "Evelyn Brent" on their marquees. In the early 1940s she worked in the Pine-Thomas "B" action features for Paramount Pictures release. Veteran director William Beaudine cast her in many "B" productions, including *Emergency Landing* (1941), *Bowery Champs* (1944), *The Golden Eye* (1948), and *Again Pioneers* (1950). After performing in more than 120 films, she retired from acting in 1950 and worked for a number of years as an actor's agent.

Evelyn returned to acting in television's *Wagon Train* for one episode in 1960, *The Lita Foladaire Story*.

Private life

Evelyn Brent was married three times. One of her husbands was movie executive Bernard P. Fineman. She married producer Harry D. Edwards. Her last husband was the vaudeville actor Harry Fox for whom the foxtrot dance was named. They were still married when he died in 1959. Several biographical sources claim or suggest that Brent was actually a lesbian or bisexual; she was a fixture of the lesbian social circle in Hollywood during the 1920s.

Brent died of a heart attack in 1975 at her Los Angeles home. She was cremated and interred in the San Fernando Mission Cemetery in Mission Hills, California. For her contribution to the motion picture industry, she was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6548 Hollywood Blvd.

Fay Wray

Fay Wray (born **Vina Fay Wray**; September 15, 1907 – August 8, 2004) was a Canadian-American actress most noted for playing the female lead in *King Kong*. Through an acting career that spanned 57 years, Wray attained international stardom as an actress in horror film roles, leading to many considering her as the first "scream queen".

After appearing in minor film roles, Wray gained media attention being selected as one of the "WAMPAS Baby Stars". This led to Wray being signed to Paramount Pictures as a teenager, where she made more than a dozen films. After leaving Paramount, she signed deals with various film companies, being cast in her first horror film roles among many other types of roles, including in *The Bowery* (1933) and *Viva Villa* (1934), both huge productions starring Wallace Beery. For RKO Radio Pictures, Inc., she starred in the film with which she is most identified, *King Kong* (1933). After the success of *King Kong*, Wray appeared in many major film roles and on television, finishing her acting career in 1980.



Studio publicity photo

Early life

Wray, a descendant of both Springfield, Massachusetts settler William Pynchon and Mormon pioneers, was born on a ranch near Cardston, Alberta, Canada to two Mormons, Elvina Marguerite Jones, who was from Salt Lake City, and Joseph Heber Wray, who was from Kingston upon Hull, England. She was one of six children. Her family returned to the United States a few years after she was born; they moved to Salt Lake City in 1912 and moved to Lark, Utah in 1914. In 1919, they moved to Salt Lake City again, before moving to Hollywood, California, where Fay attended Hollywood High School.

Early acting career



Wray publicity shot from 1930

In 1923, Wray appeared in her first film at the age of 16, landing a role in a short historical film sponsored by a local newspaper. In the 1920s, Wray landed a major role in the silent film *The Coast Patrol* (1925), as well as un-credited bit parts at the Hal Roach Studios.

In 1926, American film association the Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers selected Wray as one of the "WAMPAS Baby Stars", a group of women who they believed to be on the threshold of movie stardom. She was currently under contract to Universal Studios, mostly co-starring in low budget westerns opposite Buck Jones.

The following year in 1927, Wray was signed to a contract with Paramount Pictures. In 1928, director Erich von Stroheim cast Wray as the main female lead in his film *The Wedding March*, released under Paramount, a film noted for its high budget and production values. It was a financial failure, but it gave Wray her first lead role. Wray stayed with Paramount to make more than a dozen more films, staying there to make the transition from silent films to "talkie" films.

Horror films and *King Kong*

After leaving Paramount, Wray signed to various film companies. It was under these deals that Wray was cast in various horror films, including *Doctor X*. However, her greatest known films were produced under her deal with RKO Radio Pictures, Inc.. Her first film under RKO was *The Most Dangerous Game* (1932), co-starring Joel McCrea and shot at night on the same jungle sets that were being used for *King Kong* during the day, with the leads from both films, Wray and Robert Armstrong, appearing in both movies.

The Most Dangerous Game was followed by Wray's most memorable film, *King Kong*. According to Wray, Jean Harlow had been RKO's original choice, but because MGM put Harlow under exclusive contract during the pre-production phase of the film, she became unavailable and Wray was approached by director Merian C. Cooper to play the role of Ann Darrow, the blonde captive of King Kong. Wray was paid \$10,000 dollars to play the role. Wray wore a blonde wig over her naturally dark hair. The film was a commercial success. Wray was reportedly proud that the film saved RKO from bankruptcy. Wray's role would become the one with which she would be most associated. For her appearances in various horror films, many have considered Wray the first "scream queen".

Later career



Wray and Joel McCrea in *The Most Dangerous Game* (1932)

She continued to star in various films, but by the early 1940s, her appearances became sporadic. She retired from acting in 1942, after her second marriage. However, due to financial problems she had to continue acting, and over the next three decades, Wray appeared in minor film roles and also frequently on television.

Wray was cast in the 1953-1954 ABC situation comedy, *The Pride of the Family*, as Catherine Morrison. Paul Hartman played her husband, Albie Morrison. Natalie Wood and Robert Hyatt played their children, Ann and Junior Morrison, respectively.

Wray appeared in three episodes of CBS's courtroom drama *Perry Mason*, the first of which was "The Case Of The Prodigal Parent" (Episode 1-36) aired June 7, 1958.

In 1959, she played Tula Marsh in the episode "The Second Happiest Day" of the CBS anthology series *Playhouse 90*. In 1960, she appeared as Clara in the episode "Who Killed Cock Robin?" of the ABC detective series *77 Sunset Strip*. And in 1963, she played as Mrs. Brubaker in the episode "You're So Smart, Why Can't You Be Good?" episode of the NBC medical drama about psychiatry, *The Eleventh Hour*. She ended her acting career in the made-for TV movie *Gideon's Trumpet* (1980).

In 1988, her autobiography, *On the Other Hand*, was published. In her later years, Wray continued to make public appearances. She was a special guest at the 70th Academy Awards, where the show's host, Billy Crystal, introduced her as the "Beauty who charmed the Beast". She was the only 1920s Hollywood actress in attendance that evening. In January 2003, a 95-year old Wray appeared at the 2003 Palm Beach International Film Festival to celebrate the Rick McKay documentary film *Broadway: The Golden Age, by the Legends Who Were There*, where she was also honored with a "Legend in Film" award. In her later years, she also visited the Empire State Building frequently, once visiting in 1991 as a guest of honor at the building's 60th anniversary, and also in May 2004, which was among her last public appearances. Her final public appearance was at an after-party at the Sardi's restaurant in New York City, following the premiere of the documentary film *Broadway: The Golden Age, by the Legends Who Were There*.

Personal life

Wray was married three times – to the writers John Monk Saunders and Robert Riskin and to the neurosurgeon Dr. Sanford Rothenberg (January 28, 1919 – January 4, 1991).

She had three children: Susan Saunders, Victoria Riskin, and Robert Riskin Jr. She became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1933.

In her autobiography *On The Other Hand: A Life Story* she stated that she was a Republican.

Death



Star on Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6349 Hollywood Blvd.

In 2004, Wray was approached by director Peter Jackson to appear in a small cameo for the 2005 remake of *King Kong*. She met with Naomi Watts, who was to play the role of Ann Darrow, whom Wray originally played. She politely declined the cameo, stating she had no interest in appearing in Jackson's remake, and further claimed the original 'Kong' to be the true 'King.' Before filming of the remake commenced, Wray died in her sleep of natural causes on August 8, 2004, in her Manhattan apartment. Her friend Rick McKay, said that "she just kind of drifted off quietly as if she was going to sleep... she just kind of gave out." She was 96 years old. Wray was buried at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Hollywood, California.

Two days after her death, the lights of the Empire State Building were extinguished for 15 minutes in her memory.

Honors

In 1989, Wray was awarded the Women in Film Crystal Award. Wray was honored with a "Legend in Film" award at the 2003 Palm Beach International Film Festival. For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Wray was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6349 Hollywood Blvd. She received a star posthumously on Canada's Walk of Fame in Toronto on June 5, 2005. A small park near Lee's Creek on Main Street in Cardston, Alberta, her birthplace, was named "Fay Wray Park" in her honor. The small sign at the edge of the park on Main Street has a silhouette of King Kong on it, remembering her role in the film *King Kong*. A large oil portrait of Wray by Alberta artist Neil Boyle is on display in the Empress Theatre in Fort Macleod, Alberta. In May 2006, Wray became one of the first four entertainers to ever be honored by Canada Post by being featured on a postage stamp.

Florence Lawrence

Florence Lawrence (January 2, 1886 – December 28, 1938) was a Canadian inventor and silent film actress. She is often referred to as "The First Movie Star." When she was popular, she was known as "The Biograph Girl," "The Imp Girl," and "The Girl of a Thousand Faces." Lawrence appeared in more than 270 films for various motion picture companies.



Early life

Born **Florence Annie Bridgwood** in Hamilton, Ontario, she was the child of Charlotte A. Bridgwood, a vaudeville actress known professionally as Lotta Lawrence, who was the leading lady and director of the Lawrence Dramatic Company. Her father was George Bridgwood (born Staffordshire, England; died 1898, Hamilton, Wentworth, Ontario, Canada). Florence's surname was changed at age four to her mother's stage name. After her father's death, Florence, her mother and two older brothers moved from Hamilton, Ontario to Buffalo, New York. Florence attended local schools and developed athletic skills, in particular horseback riding and ice-skating.

After graduating from school, Lawrence joined her mother's dramatic company. However, the company disbanded after a series of disputes made it impossible for the members to continue working together. Lawrence and her mother moved to New York City around 1906.

Early Career: Film and Broadway



Florence Lawrence during her career.

She was one of several Canadian pioneers in the film industry who were attracted by the rapid growth of the fledgling motion picture business. In 1906, at age 20, she appeared in her first motion picture. The next year, she appeared in 38 movies for the Vitagraph film company.

During the spring and summer of 1906, Lawrence auditioned for a number of Broadway productions, with no success. However, on 27 December 1906, she was hired by the Edison Manufacturing Company to play Daniel Boone's daughter in *Daniel Boone; or, Pioneer days in America*. She got the part because she knew how to ride a horse. Both she and her mother received parts, and were paid five dollars a day for two weeks of outdoor filming in freezing weather.

In 1907 she went to work for the Vitagraph Company in Brooklyn, New York acting as Moya, an Irish peasant girl in a one-reel version of Dion Boucicault's *The Shaughraun*.

She returned briefly to stage acting, playing the leading role in a road show production of Melville B. Raymond's *Seminary Girls*. Her mother played her last role in this production. After touring with the road show for a year, Lawrence resolved that she would 'never again lead that gypsy life.'

In the spring of 1908 she returned to Vitagraph where she played the lead role in *The Dispatch Beare*. Largely as a result of her equestrian skills, she received parts in eleven films in the next five months.

Film career

Biograph Studios

Also at Vitagraph was a young actor, Harry Solter, who was looking for 'a young, beautiful equestrian girl' to star in a film to be produced by the Biograph Studios under the direction of D.W. Griffith. Griffith, the head of Biograph Studios, had noticed the beautiful blonde-haired woman in one of Vitagraph's films. Because the film's actors received no mention, Griffith had to make discreet enquiries to learn she was Florence Lawrence and to arrange a meeting.

Griffith had intended to give the part to Biograph's leading lady, Florence Turner, but Lawrence managed to convince Solter and Griffith that she was the best suited for the starring role in *The Girl and the Outlaw*. With the Vitagraph Company, she had been earning \$20 a week, working also as a costume

seamstress over and above acting. Griffith offered her a job, acting only, for \$25 a week. Lawrence jumped at it.

After her success in this role, she appeared as a society belle in *Betrayed by a Handprint* and as an Indian in *The Red Girl*. In total, she had parts in most of the 60 films directed by Griffith in 1908. Toward the end of 1908 Lawrence married Harry Solter.

Lawrence quickly gained much popularity, but because her name was never publicized, fans began writing the studio asking for it. Even when her face had gained wide recognition, particularly after starring in the highly successful *Resurrection*, Biograph Studios simply labeled her as "The Biograph Girl". During cinema's formative years, silent screen actors were not named, because studio owners feared that fame might lead to demands for higher wages.

She continued to work for Biograph in 1909. Her demand to be paid by the week rather than daily was met, and she received double the normal rate. She achieved great popularity in the Jones series, film's first comedy series. She played Mrs. Jones in about twelve films. Even more popular than the Jones series were the dramatic love stories in which she co-starred with Arthur Johnson. The two played husband and wife in *The Ingrate*, and the adulterous lovers in *Resurrection*.

Lawrence and Solter began to look elsewhere for work, writing to the Essanay Company to offer their services as leading lady and director. Rather than accepting this offer, however, Essanay reported the offer to Biograph's head office, and they were promptly fired.

Independent Moving Pictures Company



Carl Laemmle's promotion of a film starring Lawrence.

Finding themselves "at liberty," Lawrence and Solter in 1909 were able to join the Independent Moving Pictures Company of America (IMP). The company, founded by Carl Laemmle, the owner of a film exchange (who later absorbed IMP into Universal Pictures, which he also founded and was president of), was looking for experienced filmmakers and actors. Needing a star, he lured Lawrence away from Biograph by promising to give her a marquee. First though, Carl Laemmle organized a publicity stunt by starting a rumor that Lawrence had been killed by a street car in New York City.

Then, after gaining much media attention, he placed ads in the newspapers that announced, "We nail a lie", and included a photo of Lawrence. The ad declared she is alive and well and making *The Broken Oath*, a new movie for his IMP Film Company to be directed by Solter.

Laemmle then had Lawrence make a personal appearance in St. Louis, Missouri in March 1910 with her leading man to show her fans that she was very much alive, making her one of the first performers not already famous in another medium to be identified by name by her studio. Partially as a result of Laemmle's ingenuity, the "star system" was born and before long, Florence Lawrence became a household name. However, her fame was such that the studio executives who had concerns over wage demands soon had their fears proved correct.

Laemmle managed to lure William Ranous (William H. Ranous), one of Vitagraph's best directors, over to IMP. Ranous introduced Laemmle to Lawrence and Solter, and they began to work together. Lawrence and Solter worked for IMP for eleven months, making fifty films. After this, they went on vacation in Europe. When they returned to the United States, they joined a film company headed by Siegmund Lubin (Siegmund "Pop" Lubin), described as the 'wisest and most democratic film producer in history.' Lawrence was once again teamed with Arthur Johnson, and the pair made 48 films together under Lubin's direction.

At the time, the film industry was controlled by the powerful Motion Picture Patents Company, a trust formed by the major film companies. IMP was not a member of the MPPC, and hence operated outside its distribution system. Theaters found showing IMP films lost the right to screen MPPC films. IMP, therefore, had powerful enemies in the film industry. It managed to survive, however, largely because of the popularity of Lawrence.

Lubin Studios

By late 1910, Lawrence left IMP to work for Lubin Studios, advising her fellow young Canadian, the 18-year-old Mary Pickford, to take her place as IMP's star.

Victor Film Company

In 1912, Lawrence and Solter made a deal with Carl Laemmle, forming their own company. Laemmle gave them complete artistic freedom in the company, called Victor Film Company, and paid Lawrence five hundred dollars a week as the leading lady, and Solter two hundred dollars a week as director. They established a film studio in Fort Lee, New Jersey and made a number of films starring Lawrence and Owen Moore before selling out to the new Universal Pictures in 1913. With this new prosperity, Florence was able to realize a 'lifelong dream,' buying a 50-acre (200,000 m²) estate in River Vale, New Jersey. There she was able to garden and grow roses, 'her greatest joy.' In August 1912, she had a fight with her husband, in which he 'made cruel remarks about his mother-in-law.' He left and went to Europe. However, he wrote 'sad' letters to her every day, telling her of his plans to commit suicide. His letters 'softened her feelings' and they were re-united in November 1912. Lawrence announced her intention to retire.

Injury, crash of '29, and suicide

Despite her mooted retirement, Lawrence was induced to return to work in 1914 for her company (Victor Film Company), which was later acquired by Universal Studios. During one of the films, *Pawns of Destiny*, a staged fire got out of control. Lawrence was burned, her hair singed, and she suffered a serious fall. She went into shock for months. She returned to work, but collapsed after its completion.

Blaming Solter for making her do the stunt in which she was injured, the two were divorced. To add to her problems, Universal refused to pay her medical expenses. Lawrence felt betrayed.

Although only 29 years old, she never regained her stature as a leading film star after taking time off to recover from her injuries. In 1920, her husband died. The following year she married automobile salesman Charles Byrne Woodring, but they were divorced in 1931. In 1933 she married for the third time to Henry Bolton. Bolton turned out to be abusive and beat Lawrence severely. The union lasted only five months.

In the spring of 1916, she returned to work for Universal and completed another feature film, *Elusive Isabel*. However, the strain of working took its toll on her and she suffered a serious relapse. She was completely paralyzed for four months. By the time she returned to the screen in 1921, few people remembered her.

In 1921 she traveled to Hollywood to attempt a comeback. However, she had little success, and received a leading role in a minor melodrama (*The Unfoldment*), and then two supporting roles. All of her screen work after 1924 would be in un-credited bit parts. During the 1920s she and her husband Charles began to manufacture a line of cosmetics, which they continued in partnership after their divorce.

When Lawrence's mother died in 1929, she had an expensive bust sculpted for her mother's tomb. By then, in her mid-forties, demand for her in films had long since disappeared and the stock market crash and the ensuing Great Depression saw Lawrence's fortune decline.

Lawrence returned to the screen in 1936, when MGM began giving small parts to old stars for seventy-five dollars a week.

Alone, discouraged, and suffering with chronic pain from myelo-fibrosis, a rare bone marrow disease, she was found unconscious in bed in her West Hollywood apartment on 27 December 1938 after she had ingested ant paste. She was rushed to a hospital but died a few hours later.

Just nine years after she had paid for an expensive memorial for her mother, Lawrence was interred in an unmarked grave not far from her mother in the Hollywood Cemetery, which is now Hollywood Forever Cemetery, in Hollywood, California.

She remained forgotten until 1991, when actor Roddy McDowall, serving on the National Film Preservation Board, paid for a memorial marker that reads: "The Biograph Girl/The First Movie Star."

In William J. Mann's novel *The Biograph Girl* (2000), Mann asks the question, "What if Lawrence didn't die in 1938 from eating ant poison, but is 106 and living in a nursing home in Buffalo, New York?" The novel faithfully covers Lawrence's life up to 1938 and takes it beyond, after her "supposed" suicide.

A biography by Kelly R. Brown, *Florence Lawrence, the Biograph Girl: America's First Movie Star*, was published in 1999.

Inventions

Lawrence invented the first turn signal, a device attached to a motor vehicle's rear fender. Dubbed as the "auto signaling arm", when a driver pressed a button, an arm raised or lowered, with a sign attached indicating the direction of the intended turn. Following this, she developed a brake signal based on the same concept where an arm with a sign reading "STOP" was raised whenever the driver stepped on the

brake pedal. However, Lawrence's inventions were not patented, and others in the rapidly expanding auto industry developed their own versions.

Personal life

She was married three times. First to Harry Solter (1908–1913), then to Charles Woodring (May 12, 1921–1931), and lastly to Henry Bolton, whom she married in 1932 and divorced five months later.

Francis X. Bushman

Francis Xavier Bushman (January 10, 1883 – August 23, 1966) was an American actor, film director, and screenwriter. His matinee idol career started in 1911 in the silent film *His Friend's Wife*, but it did not survive the silent screen era.

Bushman, like many of his contemporaries, moved into the films from the stage. He was performing at Broncho Billy Anderson's Essanay Studios in Chicago, Illinois, when he was noticed for his muscular, sculpted torso. Bushman appeared in nearly 200 feature film roles—more than 175 films before 1920, and 17 in his screen debut year of 1911 alone. He also worked for the Vitagraph studio before signing with Metro in 1915.



Francis X. Bushman during silent film career

Early life

Bushman was born in Baltimore, Maryland. As a young man, he joined the Maryland Athletic Club and began the body building that developed his muscular physique. He cited Eugen Sandow as one of his influences. He worked as a sculptor's model in New York City, often posing in the nude for the classes.

In 1902, Bushman married Josephine Fladune, a seamstress. By the beginning of his film career, they had five children. In 1918, Bushman became the center of a national scandal, when his affair with costar Beverly Bayne became public. His wife divorced him, and three days before the divorce was final, he married Bayne; they later a son. Bushman and the studios had kept his marriage secret, fearing it would affect his popularity. He eventually would be married four times.

Silent film career

Bushman retained the talented services of Harry Reichenbach as his agent. When Bushman noted that he was suited to star in *Ben-Hur*, Reichenbach had an idea to increase his marketability. He took Bushman to see studio executives from the railway station and dropped pennies to the street from his pocket. People followed them, picking up the coins as they went. The studio executives got the impression that Bushman was very popular and cast him as Messala. Bushman was worried that playing the villain would harm his career, and he asked William S. Hart (who had played the part on stage for years) for

advice. Hart advise, "Take it. It's the best part in the play!" Unlike Ramón Novarro, the star of the picture, Bushman knew how to drive a team of horses and a chariot. When *Ben Hur* was remade in 1959, Charlton Heston had to learn the skill and quipped, "The only man in Hollywood who can drive a chariot is Francis X. Bushman — and he's too old!" Bushman was sixteen years older than Novarro, though their characters were supposed to have been children together.

That role might have elevated Bushman's career to stardom, except for allegedly being blacklisted by Louis B. Mayer of the Metro Goldwyn Mayer film studio. Film historians write that when Mayer visited Bushman's home, the valet, not knowing him, had refused him entrance. This imagined insult angered Mayer.

At the peak of his career, Bushman was advertised as "The Handsomest Man in the World". He was also known as "the King of *Photoplay*" or "the King of Movies", before those were later attached to Clark Gable.

Later career

Bushman was paid large salaries during his screen career, and donated his home and the land upon which it stood on Hollywood Boulevard to Sid Grauman who erected his famous Chinese Theater upon it. But his fortune was wiped out in the great crash of 1929, and his career as a movie star had run its course. Bushman eked out a living taking small roles in pictures and attempting to run a few small businesses. On viewing one of his early films, Bushman is said to have remarked, "My God, look at that! I'm putting all my emotion into my *chin*!"

After his film career had waned, Bushman made his broadcasting mark on the CBS Radio network's long-running dramatic serial entitled *Those We Love*. In the soap opera, which ran from 1938 to 1945, Bushman played the role of John Marshall, a father of the twins (played by Richard Cromwell and Nan Grey). Robert Cummings rounded out the cast.

In later years, he made guest appearances on television, playing roles on series such as *Peter Gunn*, *Make Room for Daddy*, *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, *Perry Mason* and *Dr. Kildare*. In 1956, Bushman appeared in a Burns and Allen episode (#73) where he played himself. In 1966, Bushman guest-starred on a two-part episode of, *Batman*. Both Bushman and his *The Grip of the Yukon* co-star, Neil Hamilton, appeared in the episode—their first such reunion in 38 years. Bushman's role—as a wealthy collector of silent pictures and promoter of a silent film festival—was one of his last appearances on camera.

Death and legacy

Francis X. Bushman died from a heart attack, in Pacific Palisades, California, on August 23, 1966. He was interred in Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery. Somewhat fittingly, one of his last television appearances (filmed only weeks prior to his death) had been as a silent film collector menaced by the Riddler on the Batman TV show. After his death an episode of *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (TV series) with Bushman as "Old Man" was released in October 1966.

His son Ralph Everly Bushman (1903–1978) had a film career from the 1920s through the 1940s. 6'4" and good-looking, he was in over 40 films, often playing stuffy upper-class types or menacing gangsters. In *Brown of Harvard* (1926) he was cast against William Haines and Jack Pickford. He was often billed as "Francis X. Bushman, Jr." Another son, Bruce Bushman, was an art director and designer for Walt Disney's animation studio.

Francis Bushman's granddaughter, Barbara Bushman Quine, married actor Harry Morgan. In the season four *M*A*S*H* episode, "The Interview," Harry Morgan's character, Colonel Potter, refers to his glorious cavalry days as, "The days of Francis X. Bushman." A grandson, Pat Conway (1931–1981), the son of film director Jack Conway and Bushman's daughter, Virginia, starred on the ABC western television series *Tombstone Territory*.

Much of Bushman's silent film work has been lost to the ravages of film decomposition. Other than Messala in *Ben-Hur*, he is not well known for any other silent film role even to silent film buffs. Clips of parts of films may show up in the occasional silent film documentary. Thus it is difficult for modern film audiences to appreciate the full breadth of his silent film career.

Gary Cooper

Frank James Cooper, known professionally as **Gary Cooper**, (May 7, 1901 – May 13, 1961) was an American film actor. He was renowned for his quiet, understated acting style and his stoic, but at times intense screen persona, which was particularly well suited to the many Westerns he made. His career spanned from 1925 until shortly before his death in 1961, and comprised more than one hundred films.



in *High Noon* (1952)

Cooper received five Academy Award nominations for Best Actor, winning twice for *Sergeant York* and *High Noon*. He also received an Honorary Award in 1961 from the Academy.

Decades later, the American Film Institute named Cooper among the AFI's 100 Years... 100 Stars, ranking 11th among males from the Classical Hollywood cinema period. In 2003, his performances as Will Kane in *High Noon*, Lou Gehrig in *The Pride of the Yankees*, and Alvin York in *Sergeant York* made the AFI's 100 Years... 100 Heroes and Villains list, all of them as heroes.

Early life

Cooper was born in Helena, Montana, one of two sons of an English farmer from Bedfordshire, who later became an American lawyer and judge, Charles Henry Cooper (1865–1946), and Kent (England)-born Alice (née Brazier) Cooper (1873–1967). His mother hoped for their two sons to receive a better education than that available in Montana and arranged for the boys to attend Dunstable Grammar School in Bedfordshire, England between 1910 and 1913. Upon the outbreak of World War I, Cooper's mother brought her sons home and enrolled them in a Bozeman, Montana, high school.

When Cooper was 13, he injured his hip in a car accident. He returned to his parents' ranch near Helena to recuperate by horseback riding at the recommendation of his doctor. Cooper studied at Iowa's Grinnell College until the spring of 1924, but did not graduate. He had tried out, unsuccessfully, for the college's drama club. He returned to Helena, managing the ranch and contributing cartoons to the local newspaper. In 1924, Cooper's father left the Montana Supreme Court bench and moved with his wife to Los Angeles. Their son, unable to make a living as an editorial cartoonist in Helena, joined them, moving there that same year, reasoning that he "would rather starve where it was warm, than to starve and freeze too."

Career



Cooper in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* with Jean Arthur (1936)

Failing as a salesman of electric signs and theatrical curtains, as a promoter for a local photographer and as an applicant for newspaper work in Los Angeles, Cooper found work as an actor in 1925. He earned money as an "extra" in the motion picture industry, usually cast as a cowboy. He is known to have had an un-credited role in the 1925 Tom Mix Western, *Dick Turpin*. The following year, he had screen credit in a two-reeler, *Lightnin' Wins*, with actress Eileen Sedgwick as his leading lady.

After the release of this short film, Cooper accepted a long-term contract with Paramount Pictures. He changed his name to Gary in 1925, following the advice of casting director Nan Collins, who felt it evoked the "rough, tough" nature of her native Gary, Indiana.



With Marlene Dietrich in *Morocco* (1930)

"Coop," as he was called by his peers, went on to appear in over 100 films. Cooper broke through in a supporting role in *Wings* (1927), the only silent film to win an Academy Award for Best Picture, following that with *Nevada* (1927) co-starring Thelma Todd and William Powell, based on the Zane Gray novel, which was remade in 1944 as an early Robert Mitchum vehicle, the only time Cooper and Mitchum played the same role. He became a major star with his first sound picture, *The Virginian* (1929) opposite Walter Huston as the villainous Trampas. *The Spoilers* appeared the following year with Betty Compson, which was remade in 1942 with Compson lookalike Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne in Cooper's role. Cooper followed this action film with his own Dietrich film entitled *Morocco* (1930) in which he played a Foreign Legionnaire. *Devil and the Deep* (1932) featured Cary Grant in a supporting role with Talullah Bankhead and Cooper in the leads alongside Charles Laughton. The following year, Cooper was the second lead in the sophisticated Ernst Lubitsch comedy production of Noël Coward's *Design for Living*, billed under Fredric March in the kind of fast-talking role Cooper never played again after Cary Grant staked out the light comedy leading man field with his persona-changing *The Awful Truth* four years later. The screen adaptation of *A Farewell to Arms* (1932), directed by Frank Borzage, and the title role in Frank Capra's *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) furthered Cooper's box office appeal.

Cooper was producer David O. Selznick's first choice for the role of Rhett Butler in the 1939 film *Gone with the Wind*. When Cooper turned down the role, he was passionately against it. He is quoted as saying, "*Gone with the Wind* is going to be the biggest flop in Hollywood history. I'm glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling flat on his nose, not me". Alfred Hitchcock wanted him to star in *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) and *Saboteur* (1942). Cooper later admitted he had made a "mistake" in turning down the director. For the former film, Hitchcock cast look-alike Joel McCrea instead.



Cooper in *Along Came Jones*

Cooper cemented his cowboy credentials again in *The Westerner* (1940) opposite Walter Brennan as Judge Roy Bean and followed that immediately afterward with the lavish *North West Mounted Police* (1940), directed by Cecil B. DeMille and featuring Paulette Goddard.



Gary Cooper and Joan Fontaine holding their Oscars at an Academy Awards after party in 1942.

In 1942, Cooper won his first Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance as the title character in *Sergeant York*. Alvin York refused to authorize a movie about his life unless Cooper portrayed him. *Meet John Doe* was released earlier the same year, a smash hit under the direction of Frank Capra. Ingrid Bergman had just made *Casablanca* when she and Cooper collaborated on *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943), based on a novel by Cooper's close friend Ernest Hemingway. As a change of pace, he made a Western comedy lampooning his hesitant speech and mannerisms and his own image in general called *Along Came Jones* (1945) in which he relied on gun-slinging Loretta Young to save him when the chips were down. Cooper also starred in the original version of the Ayn Rand novel *The Fountainhead* (1949) with Patricia Neal.

In 1953, Cooper won his second Best Actor Academy Award for his performance as Marshal Will Kane in *High Noon*, arguably considered his finest role. Ill with an ulcer, he wasn't present to receive his Academy Award in February 1953. He asked John Wayne to accept it on his behalf, a bit of irony in light of Wayne's stated distaste for the film.



Gary Cooper in *Vera Cruz* (1954)

Cooper continued to play the lead in films almost to the end of his life. Among his later box office hits were the stark Western adventure *Garden of Evil* (1954) with Susan Hayward and Richard Widmark; *Vera Cruz* (1954), an extremely influential Western in which he guns down villain Burt Lancaster in a showdown; his portrayal of a Quaker farmer during the American Civil War in William Wyler's *Friendly Persuasion* (1956); and Anthony Mann's *Man of the West* (1958), a hard-edged action Western with Lee J. Cobb. His final motion picture was a British film, *The Naked Edge* (1961), directed by Michael Anderson. Among his final projects was narrating an NBC documentary, *The Real West*, in which he helped clear up myths about famous Western figures.

Cooper appeared in live radio "remakes" of several of his films.

Congressional testimony

In 1944, Cooper joined the anti-communist Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals. While filming *Good Sam*, he testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities on October 23, 1947, characterized as a "friendly" witness. Asked if he had observed "communistic influence in Hollywood", Cooper named no one in particular but said he had "turned down quite a few scripts because I thought they were tinged with communistic ideas"; he also said he had heard statements such as "don't you think the Constitution of the United States is about 150 years out of date?" and "perhaps this would be a more efficient government without a Congress"—statements he characterized as "very un-American". He also told the committee the following:

"Several years ago, when communism was more of a social chit-chat in parties for offices, and so on when communism didn't have the implications that it has now, discussion of communism was more open and I remember hearing statements from some folks to the effect that the communistic system had a great many features that were desirable. It offered the actors and artists — in other words, the creative people — a special place in government where we would be somewhat immune from the ordinary leveling of income. And as I remember, some actor's name was mentioned to me who had a house in Moscow which was very large — he had three cars, and stuff, with his house being quite a bit larger than my house in Beverly Hills at the time — and it looked to me like a pretty phony come-on to us in the picture business. From that time on, I could never take any of this pinko mouthing very seriously, because I didn't feel it was on the level."

Cooper's testimony occurred a month before the Hollywood blacklist was established.

Personal life

Cooper was friends with Ernest Hemingway and spent many vacations with the writer in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Family and relationships

Cooper had high-profile relationships with actresses Clara Bow, Lupe Vélez and the American-born socialite-spy Countess Carla Dentice di Frasso (née Dorothy Caldwell Taylor, formerly wife of British pioneer aviator Claude Grahame-White).



Una Merkel (right) with Phyllis Brooks and Gary Cooper at a Brisbane press conference on their way to entertain the troops (1943)

On December 15, 1933, Cooper wed Veronica Balfe (May 27, 1913 – February 16, 2000), known as "Rocky." Balfe was a New York Roman Catholic socialite who had briefly acted under the name of Sandra Shaw. She appeared in the film *No Other Woman*, but her most widely seen role was in *King Kong*, as the woman dropped by Kong. Her third and final film was *Blood Money*. Her father was governor of the New York Stock Exchange, and her uncle was motion-picture art director Cedric Gibbons. During the 1930s she also became the California state women's skeet shooting champion. Cooper and Balfe had one child, Maria, now Maria Cooper Janis, married to classical pianist Byron Janis.

In the 1950s Cooper was slowly drawn to Catholicism^{</ref>} and was baptized a Catholic in 1958. After he was married, but prior to his conversion, Cooper had affairs with several famous co-stars, including Marlene Dietrich, Grace Kelly and Patricia Neal. He pressured Neal to have an abortion in 1950, because fathering a child out of wedlock could have destroyed his career. Cooper's daughter Maria, when she was a little girl, famously spat at Neal, but many years later, the two became friends. Cooper separated from his wife between 1951 and 1954.

Politics

Cooper was a staunch supporter of the Republican Party. He voted for Calvin Coolidge in 1924 and Herbert Hoover in 1928 and 1932. He openly campaigned for Wendell Wilkie in 1940, and heavily campaigned for Thomas Dewey in 1944.

In 1947, he testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee as a 'friendly witness'. He was a member of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals and in his testimony spoke out against the Communist influence in Hollywood at the time. Fellow members in the Alliance included Clark Gable, Ginger Rogers, Victor Fleming and Barbara Stanwyck among many others.

Death

In April 1960, Cooper underwent surgery for prostate cancer after it had spread to his colon. It spread to his lungs and bones shortly thereafter.

Cooper was too ill to attend the Academy Awards ceremony in April 1961, so his close friend James Stewart accepted the honorary Oscar on his behalf. Stewart's emotional speech hinted that something was seriously wrong, and the next day newspapers ran the headline, "Gary Cooper has cancer." One month later, on May 13, 1961, six days after his 60th birthday, Cooper died.

Cooper was originally interred in Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Culver City, California. In May 1974 his body was removed from the Grotto Section of Holy Cross Cemetery, when his widow Veronica remarried and moved to New York, and she had Cooper's body exhumed and reburied in Sacred Heart Cemetery, in Southampton, New York, on Long Island. Veronica "Rocky" Cooper-Converse died in 2000 and was buried near Cooper at Sacred Heart Cemetery.

George O'Brien

George O'Brien (April 19, 1899 – September 4, 1985) was an American actor, popular during the silent film era and into the talkie era of the 1930s, best known today as the lead actor in F. W. Murnau's 1927 film *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans*.



circa 1925 – photograph by Melbourne Spurr

Early life

Born in San Francisco, California, O'Brien was the oldest son of Daniel J. and Margaret L. (Donahue) O'Brien; O'Brien's father later became the Chief of Police for the City of San Francisco (Dan O'Brien ordered the arrest of Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle in September 1921 at the scandalous Labor Day party held by Arbuckle). After his retirement from that office, Dan was the Director of Penology for the State of California.

In 1917 O'Brien enlisted in the United States Navy to fight in World War I, serving on a Submarine chaser. He volunteered to act as a stretcher bearer for wounded Marines and was decorated for bravery. Right after the war O'Brien became Light Heavyweight champion of the Pacific Fleet.

Career

O'Brien came to Hollywood in his early twenties hoping to become a cameraman and did work as an assistant cameraman for a while, for both Tom Mix and Buck Jones. He began his acting career in bit parts and as a stuntman. One of his earliest roles was in the 1922 George Melford-directed drama *Moran of the Lady Letty*, most notable for starring Rudolph Valentino. In 1924 O'Brien received his first starring role in the drama *The Man Who Came Back* opposite the English actress Dorothy Mackaill. That same year he was chosen by the famed movie director John Ford to star in *The Iron Horse* opposite actress Madge Bellamy. The film was an immense success at the box-office and O'Brien made nine more films for Ford. In 1927 he starred in the F. W. Murnau-directed *Sunrise* opposite Janet Gaynor, which won three Academy Awards.

O'Brien would spend the remainder of the 1920s as an extremely popular leading man in films, often starring in action and adventure roles alongside such popular actresses of the era as Alma Rubens, Anita Stewart, Dolores Costello, Madge Bellamy, Olive Borden (with whom he was linked romantically during the 1920s) and Janet Gaynor. With the advent of sound, George O'Brien became a popular star of

Westerns and rarely took parts outside of the Western film genre. Throughout the 1930s, O'Brien was a consistent Top Ten box-office draw appearing in scores of Westerns, often atop his horse named Mike.

During World War II, O'Brien re-enlisted in the United States Navy where he served as a beach-master in the Pacific and was decorated several times. He left service with the rank of commander. He later joined the United States Naval Reserve and retired with the rank of captain in 1962, having four times been recommended for the rank of admiral. Following his service in World War II, O'Brien would occasionally take feature parts in films directed by his old friend and mentor John Ford including *Fort Apache*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, and *Cheyenne Autumn*.

While serving in the Naval Reserve, O'Brien took on a project for the Department of Defense as part of President Eisenhower's "People to People" program. He was project officer for a series of orientation films on three Asian countries. One of these films, on Korea, was directed by his old friend, John Ford. The other two countries covered were Formosa (Taiwan) and the Philippines.

Personal life

O'Brien dated actress Olive Borden from 1926 until 1930. He married actress Marguerite Churchill on July 15, 1933. Their first child, Brian, died 10 days after his birth. Daughter Orin O'Brien became a double bassist for the New York Philharmonic. Their youngest child Darcy O'Brien, was a successful writer and college professor. George and Marguerite divorced in 1948.

Death

O'Brien suffered a stroke in 1981 and was bedridden the last few years of his life. He died in 1985 in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. For his contribution to the motion picture industry, George O'Brien was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6201 Hollywood Blvd., in Los Angeles, California.

Geraldine Farrar

Geraldine Farrar (February 28, 1882 – March 11, 1967) was an American soprano opera singer and film actress, noted for her beauty, acting ability, and "the intimate timbre of her voice." She had a large following among young women, who were nicknamed "Gerry-flappers".



Early life and opera career

Farrar was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, the daughter of baseball player Sidney Farrar and his wife Henrietta Barnes. At 5 she began studying music in Boston and by 14 was giving recitals. Later she studied voice with the American soprano Emma Thursby in New York, in Paris, and finally with the Italian baritone Francesco Graziani in Berlin. Farrar created a sensation at the Berlin Hofoper with her debut as *Marguerite* in Charles Gounod's *Faust* in 1901 and remained with the company for three years, during which time she continued her studies with famed German soprano Lilli Lehmann. (She had been recommended to Lehmann by another famous soprano of the previous generation, Lillian Nordica.). She appeared in the title roles of Ambroise Thomas' *Mignon* and Jules Massenet's *Manon*, as well as Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*. Her admirers in Berlin included Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany, with whom she is believed to have had a relationship beginning in 1903.

After three years with the Monte Carlo Opera, she made her debut at the New York Metropolitan Opera in *Romeo et Juliette* on November 26, 1906. She appeared in the first Met performance of Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in 1907 and remained a member of the company until her retirement in 1922, singing 29 roles there in nearly 500 performances. She developed a great popular following, especially among New York's young female opera-goers, who were known as "Gerry-flappers". Farrar created the title roles in Pietro Mascagni's *Amica* (Monte Carlo, 1905), Puccini's *Suor Angelica* (New York, 1918), and Umberto Giordano's *Madame Sans-Gêne* (New York, 1915) as well as the Goosegirl in Engelbert Humperdinck's *Die Königskinder* (New York, 1910)

She recorded extensively for the Victor Talking Machine Company and was often featured prominently in that firm's advertisements. She also appeared in silent movies, which were filmed between opera seasons. Farrar starred in more than a dozen films from 1915 to 1920, including Cecil B. De Mille's 1915 adaptation of Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen*. One of her most notable screen roles was as Joan of Arc in the 1917 film *Joan the Woman*.

According to her biographer, Elizabeth Nash:

Unlike most of the famous bel canto singers of the past who sacrificed dramatic action to tonal perfection, she was more interested in the emotional than in the purely lyrical aspects of her roles. According to Miss Farrar, until prime donne can combine the arts of Sarah Bernhardt and Nellie Melba, dramatic ability is more essential than perfect singing in opera

In 1960 Farrar was awarded two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, in the music and film categories. However, the *Los Angeles Times*, which has documented and photographed every star as part of its ongoing Hollywood Star Walk project, was unable to locate the star honoring her film career. (Her music star is present and accounted for at 1711 Vine Street.)

Gallery



Geraldine Farrar as Marguerite in Faust.



Geraldine Farrar in an evening gown.



Farrar as Carmen for a silent film.



Geraldine Farrar and Enrico Caruso in Julien.



Farrar in costume as Nedda in Pagliacci.



Geraldine Farrar in performance.



Geraldine Farrar wearing a fur hat for a portrait.



Farrar in public.

Personal life



Farrar as Manon

Farrar had a seven-year love affair with the Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini. Her ultimatum, that he leave his wife and children and marry her, resulted in Toscanini's abrupt resignation as principal conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in 1915. He returned to Italy. Farrar was close friends with the star tenor Enrico Caruso and there has been speculation that they too had a love affair, but no substantial evidence of this has surfaced. It is said that Caruso coined her motto: *Farrar fara* ("Farrar will do it").

Her marriage to cinema actor Lou Tellegen on February 8, 1916 was the source of considerable scandal, terminating, as a result of her husband's numerous affairs, in a very public divorce in 1923. The circumstances of the divorce were brought again to public recollection by Tellegen's bizarre 1934 suicide in Hollywood.

Farrar retired from opera in 1922 at the age of 40. Her final performance was as Leoncavallo's Zazà. By this stage, her voice was in premature decline due to overwork. According to the American music critic Henry Pleasants, the author of *The Great Singers from the Dawn of Opera to Our Own Time* (first published 1967), she gave between 25 and 35 performances each season at the Met alone. They included 95 appearances as Madama Butterfly and 58 as Carmen in 16 seasons. The title role in Puccini's *Tosca*, which she had added to her repertoire in 1909, was another one of her favorite Met parts.

Farrar continued to give recitals until 1931 and was briefly the intermission commentator for the radio broadcasts from the Met during the 1934-35 season. Her autobiography, *Such Sweet Compulsion*, published in 1938, was written in alternating chapters purporting to be her own words and those of her mother, with Mrs. Farrar rather floridly recounting her daughter's many accomplishments.

Farrar died in Ridgefield, Connecticut of a heart attack in 1967, aged 85, and was buried in Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla, New York. She had no children.

Fiction

The American author Barbara Paul has written several murder mystery novels based on Geraldine Farrar, Enrico Caruso, and the Metropolitan Opera.

Gloria Swanson

Gloria Swanson (March 27, 1899 – April 4, 1983) was an American actress, singer and producer. She was one of the most prominent stars during the silent film era as both an actress and a fashion icon, especially under the direction of Cecil B. DeMille, made dozens of silents and was nominated for the first Academy Award in the Best Actress category. She had also produced her own films such as the controversial *Sadie Thompson* and *The Love of Sunya*. In 1929, Swanson successfully transitioned to talkies with *The Trespasser*.



However, personal problems and changing tastes saw her popularity wane during the 1930s when she moved into theater and television. Today she is best known for her role as Norma Desmond, a faded silent film star, in the critically acclaimed film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950).

Early life

Gloria Josephine May Swanson was born in a small house in Chicago, Illinois in 1899 to Adelaide (née Klanowski) and Joseph Theodore Swanson, a soldier. She attended Hawthorne Scholastic Academy. Her father was from a strict Lutheran Swedish American family, and her mother was of German, French and Polish ancestry.

Although born in Chicago because of her father's attachment to the Army, they moved frequently and she ended up spending most of her childhood on the island of Puerto Rico and in Key West, Florida. It was not her intention to enter show business, but on a whim one of her aunts took her to a small film company in Chicago called Essanay Studios for a visit and Swanson was asked to come back to work as an extra. After a few months as an extra working with among others, Charlie Chaplin, and making \$13.50 a week, she left school to work full time at the studio. Soon though her parents separated and she and her mother moved to California.

Films



Gloria Swanson in a frame or production still from the 1919 film *Don't Change Your Husband*.



Gloria Swanson in a production still from the 1920 film *Why Change Your Wife?*.



Gloria Swanson, 1921

Swanson made her film debut in 1914 as an extra in *The Song of Soul* for Essanay. While on a tour of the studio, she asked to be in the movie just for fun. Essanay hired her to feature in several movies, including *His New Job*, directed by and starring Charlie Chaplin. Swanson auditioned for the leading female role in *His New Job*, but Chaplin did not see her as leading lady material and cast her in the brief role of a stenographer.

Swanson moved to California in 1916 to appear in Mack Sennett's Keystone comedies opposite Bobby Vernon, and in 1919 she signed with Paramount Pictures and worked often with Cecil B. DeMille, who turned her into a romantic lead in such films as *Don't Change Your Husband* (1919), *Male and Female* (1919) with the famous scene posing as "the Lion's Bride" with a real lion, *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920), *Something to Think About* (1920), and *The Affairs of Anatol* (1921).

In the space of two years, Swanson rocketed to stardom and was one of the most sought-after actresses in Hollywood. Swanson later appeared in a series of films directed by Sam Wood. She starred in *Beyond the Rocks* (1922) with her long-time friend Rudolph Valentino. (Long believed to be a lost film, *Beyond the Rocks* was rediscovered in 2004 in a private collection in The Netherlands and is now available on DVD.)

Swanson continued to make costume drama films for the next few years. So successful were her films for Paramount that the studio was afraid of losing her and gave in to many of her whims and wishes.

During her heyday, audiences went to her films not only for her performances, but also to see her wardrobe. Frequently ornamented with beads, jewels, peacock and ostrich feathers, *haute couture* of the day or extravagant period pieces, one would hardly suspect that she was barely five feet (1.52 m) tall. Her fashion, hair styles, and jewels were copied around the world. She was the screen's first clothes horse and was becoming one of the most famous and photographed women in the world.

In 1925, she starred in the first French-American co-production, *Madame Sans-Gêne*, directed by Léonce Perret. Filming was allowed for the first time at many of the historic sites relating to Napoleon. While it was well received at the time, no prints are known to exist, and it is unfortunately considered to be a lost film. During the production of *Madame Sans-Gêne*, Swanson met her third husband Henri, Marquis de la Falaise, who had been hired to be her translator during the film's production. After four months' residence in France, she returned to the United States as European nobility, now known as the Marquise. She got a huge welcome home with parades in both New York and Los Angeles. She appeared in a 1925 short produced by Lee DeForest in his Phono-film sound-on-film process.

She made a number of films for Paramount, among them *The Coast of Folly*, *Stage Struck* and *Fine Manners*. In 1927, she decided to turn down a million dollar a year contract with Paramount to join the newly-created United Artists, where she was her own boss and could make the films she wanted, with whom she wanted, and when.

Her first independent film, *The Love of Sunya*, was directed by Albert Parker, and based on the play *The Eyes of Youth* by Max Marcin and Charles Guernon. Produced by and starring Swanson, it also stars John Boles and Pauline Garon. It is the story of a young woman granted the ability to see into her future, including her future with different men.

The story had been filmed previously as *Eyes of Youth* starring Clara Kimball Young (that production was also directed by Albert Parker and was responsible for the discovery of Rudolph Valentino by June Mathis.) The production was marred by several problems, mainly a suitable cameraman to deal with the film's intricate double exposures, as Swanson was not used to taking charge, and filming took place in New York. It premiered at the grand opening of the Roxy Theatre in New York City on March 11, 1927. (Swanson was pictured in the ruins of the Roxy on October 14, 1960, during the demolition of the theater, in a famous photo taken by Time-Life photographer Eliot Elisofon and published in *Life* magazine.)

The production had been a disaster and Swanson felt its success would be mediocre at best. On the advice of Joseph Schenck, she relented and returned to Hollywood, whereupon Schenck begged her to film something more commercial. She agreed but ended up filming the more controversial *Sadie Thompson* instead.

Sadie Thompson

Feeling she would never have as much artistic freedom and independence as she had at that moment, Swanson decided she "wanted to make my *Gold Rush*." Schenck pleaded with her to do a commercially successful film like *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney*. Swanson felt it too formulaic, and decided to call upon director Raoul Walsh, who was signed with Fox Film Corporation at the time.

Walsh had been known for bringing controversial material to film, and at their first meeting suggested the John Colton and Clemence Randolph play *Rain* (1923). The play had been based on a story by W. Somerset Maugham in 1921 titled *Miss Thompson*. Swanson had seen Jeanne Eagels perform the role twice, and enjoyed it.

However, because of its content, producing the film under the tight restrictions of the Hays Code would be almost impossible. The play was on the unofficial blacklist, and had quietly been banned from filmmaking a year earlier. To try to avoid issues with the code, Swanson and Walsh decided to leave out profanity, rename 'Reverend Davidson' 'Mr. Davidson', and claim it was in the interest of morality to produce the picture as Irving Thalberg had produced *The Scarlet Letter* (1926) at MGM.

Swanson invited Will Hays over for luncheon and summarized the plot, naming the author and the sticking points. According to Swanson, Hays made a verbal promise that he would have no problem with the making of such a film. Swanson set about getting the rights to the play by having Schenck pretend to buy it in the name of United Artists, never to be used. Thus they were able to obtain the story rights for \$60,000 instead of the original \$100,000. When news broke concerning just what was intended with the play, the three authors threatened to sue. However, Swanson later contacted Maugham about rights to a sequel, and he offered to grant them for \$25,000. Maugham claimed Fox had asked about a sequel at the same time Swanson had bought the original story's rights. The sequel was to follow the further exploits of Sadie in Australia, but was never made.

Swanson and Walsh set about writing the script, and discreetly placed an ad announcing the film, thinking no one noticed, as Charles Lindbergh had just completed his historic transatlantic flight. However, the press picked up on it and sensationalized the story. United Artists received a threatening two-page telegram from the MPAA signed by all its members, including Fox (Walsh's studio) and Hays himself. In addition, the rest of the signors owned several thousand movie houses, and if they refused to screen the film it could be a financial disaster. This was the first time Swanson had heard the name of Joseph P. Kennedy, with whom she would later have an affair, and who would arrange financing for her next few pictures, including *Queen Kelly* (1929).

Swanson was angered by the response, as she felt those very studios had produced questionable films themselves, and were jealous at not having the chance to produce *Rain*. After another threatening telegram, she decided to first appeal to the MPAA, and then the newspapers. She only heard back from Marcus Loew, who promised to appeal on her behalf, and since he owned a chain of theatres this eased some of her concerns. Figuring the silence meant the matter had been dropped, Swanson began filming on *Sadie Thompson*, which already had a quarter of a million dollars invested in it.

Before casting began, the young Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. wanted to audition for the role of Handsome O'Hara. However, Swanson felt he was too young and not right for the role. Lionel Barrymore had been first picked to play Davidson but was thought to be too ill at the time, though he did eventually win the role. Barrymore wore the same outfit for an entire week, aggravating Swanson. She asked some of the crew to tell him to change and wash, which he did indeed do. Aside from this, Swanson was happy with

his performance. Walsh hadn't appeared in front of a camera in 8 years, and feared he wouldn't be able to both direct and act at the same time. However, two days into filming, his fears had disappeared.

Much of the filming took place on Santa Catalina Island near Long Beach, California. Swanson took ill shortly after, and met a doctor who started her life-long love of macrobiotic diets. A week into shooting, Sam Goldwyn called cameraman George Barnes away. Swanson was furious, but the loan contract had allowed Goldwyn to call him away as he pleased. Not wanting to let a hundred extras sit around for days, Swanson and Walsh tried to hire two more cameramen, but both were unsatisfactory. Mary Pickford had offered the services of her favorite cameraman Charles Rosher, who was called in, but despite doing a decent job couldn't match Barnes' work. Through Loew, MGM loaned Oliver Marsh, who completed the picture.

The cameraman fiasco was extremely costly to the production, yet shooting continued. With the picture half finished, it was already well over budget, and Schenck was wary, as Swanson's first picture had also been over budget and underperformed. Swanson talked with her advisors and sold her home in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, and offered to sell her New York City penthouse as well.

Despite reports that "dirty" words can be read on the characters' lips, Swanson claims the censors went over everything with a fine-toothed comb. However, Swanson admitted that one line she was shouting at Davidson went, "*You'd rip the wings off of a butterfly, you son of a bitch!*" when recounting a conversation with Walsh later in life. If the word rain was used in a title, they asked that it be removed. They also wanted to change Davidson's name to something else, but Swanson and Walsh refused.



Sadie Thompson Lobby Card 1928

The film was a success, and was the only silent independent film of Swanson's to do well at the box office. In fact, it was one of her last financially successful films, including the talkies *The Trespasser* and *Sunset Blvd.* It went on to make \$1,000,000 during its U.S. run. However, at Kennedy's advice, Swanson had sold her distribution rights for the film to Schenck, as Kennedy felt it would be a commercial failure. He also didn't care for the image Swanson portrayed in the film. By this point *Queen Kelly* had been a disaster, and Swanson regretted it. The film made the top 10 best pictures of the year list as well. It would be Raoul Walsh's final role, as he subsequently lost his eye in an accident.

The film was nominated for awards for Best Actress in a Leading Role (Gloria Swanson) and Best Cinematography. Swanson did not attend the ceremony, and always felt it was like "comparing apples to oranges".

Contemporary reviews called it racy but excellent, and especially praised Swanson's acting.

Today, everything but the final reel (stopping just after Davidson finds Sadie in his room) exists in good condition.

Queen Kelly

One of the most infamous of Hollywood's unfinished films, *Queen Kelly* (1929), was directed by Erich von Stroheim and produced by Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr., father of the future President John F. Kennedy. Produced in 1928-29, it starred Swanson in the title role, with Walter Byron and Seena Owen.

It is the story of Prince Wolfram, who is betrothed to mad Queen Regina V of Kronberg. On maneuvers (as punishment for consorting with other women), he spies Kelly walking with the other students of a convent. Enthralled by her beauty, he kidnaps her that night from the convent, takes her to his room and professes his love for her. When the Queen finds them together the next morning, she whips Kelly and throws her out of the castle. Regina then puts Wolfram in prison for his refusal to marry the Queen. Kelly goes to German East Africa to visit her dying Aunt, and is forced to marry the disgusting Jan. The Aunt dies after the wedding, and Kelly refuses to live with Jan, becoming the head of her aunt's brothel. Her extravagances and style earn her the name Queen Kelly.

Production of the costly film was shut down after complaints by Swanson about von Stroheim and the general direction the film was taking. Though the European scenes were full of innuendo, and featured a philandering prince and a sex-crazed queen, the scenes set in Africa were grim and, Swanson felt, distasteful. In later interviews, Swanson claimed that she had been misled by the script, which referred to her character arriving in, and taking over, a dance hall; looking at the rushes, it was obvious the 'dance hall' was actually a brothel.

Stroheim was fired from the film, and the African storyline was scrapped. Swanson and Kennedy still wanted to salvage the European material, as it had been so costly and time-consuming, and had potential market value. An alternate ending was shot on November 24, 1931. In this ending, directed by Swanson and photographed by Gregg Toland, Prince Wolfram is shown visiting the palace. A nun leads him to the chapel, where Kelly's body lies in state. This has been called the "Swanson ending." The film was not theatrically released in the United States, but it was shown in Europe and South America with the Swanson ending tacked on. This was due to a clause in Stroheim's contract.

A short extract of the film appears in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), representing an old silent picture Swanson's character Norma Desmond—herself a silent movie star—had made. Von Stroheim is also a primary character in *Sunset Boulevard* as her ex-director, ex-husband, and current butler. By some accounts, von Stroheim suggested the clip be used for its heavy irony. This was the first time audiences in the U.S. were allowed to see any footage of the infamous collaboration.

In the 1960s, it was shown on television with the Swanson ending, along with a taped introduction and conclusion in which Swanson spoke about the history of the project. By 1985, Kino International had acquired the rights to the movie and restored two versions: one that uses still photos and subtitles in an attempt to wrap up the storyline, and the other the European "suicide ending" version.

Talkies

To try to recover from the *Queen Kelly* fiasco, Swanson jumped into making talkies, even singing in *The Trespasser* (1929), *Indiscreet* (1931), and *Music in the Air* (1934).

The Trespasser tells the story of a "kept woman" who maintains a lavish lifestyle. It stars Swanson, Robert Ames, Purnell Pratt, Henry B. Walthall, and Wally Albright. The movie was written and directed by Edmund Goulding and released by United Artists. It earned Swanson an Academy Award nomination in her talkie debut. It was filmed simultaneously in a silent and a talking version, and was a smash hit.

The Trespasser was an important film for Swanson, following the disastrous *Queen Kelly* and the hit *Sadie Thompson*, and garnered Swanson her second Oscar nomination. Sadly for Swanson, *The*

Trespasser proved to be one of her only two hit talkies, the other being *Sunset Boulevard*, made over 20 years later. Subsequent follow-ups like *What a Widow!*, *Indiscreet*, *Tonight or Never*, *Perfect Understanding*, and *Music in the Air* all proved to be box-office flops. Despite the disappointments following *The Trespasser*, Swanson was well remembered by Billy Wilder, a writer on *Music in the Air*, when he was casting the part of Norma Desmond in his masterpiece *Sunset Boulevard* (1950).

Even though she managed to make the transition to talkies, as her career began to decline, Swanson relocated permanently to New York City in 1938, where she began an inventions and patents company called Multiprizes, which kept her occupied during the years of World War II. This small company had the sole purpose of rescuing Jewish scientists and inventors from war-torn Europe and bringing them to the United States. She helped many escape, and some useful inventions came from the enterprise. She made another film for RKO Radio Pictures in 1941, began appearing in the legitimate theatre, and starred in her own television show in 1948.

Never one to dwell on the past, she threw herself into painting and sculpting, writing a syndicated column, touring in summer stock, engaging in political activism, radio and television work, clothing and accessories design and marketing, and making occasional appearances on the big screen. But it was not until 1950 when *Sunset Boulevard* was released (earning her yet another Academy award nomination), that she achieved mass recognition again.

Sunset Boulevard



Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)

After Mae West and several former silent screen actresses (including Mary Pickford and Pola Negri) all declined the role, in 1950 Swanson starred in *Sunset Boulevard*, portraying Norma Desmond, a faded silent movie star who falls in love with the younger screenwriter Joe Gillis, played by William Holden. Norma Desmond lives in the past, assisted by her butler Max, played by Erich von Stroheim. Her dreams of a comeback are subverted as she becomes delusional. There are cameos from actors of the silent era in the film, including Buster Keaton, H. B. Warner and Anna Q. Nilsson. Cecil B. DeMille plays himself in a pivotal scene.

This has since been called the greatest film about Hollywood. Many of the lines from the film have become pop-culture mainstays, and are often used to describe Swanson herself; among them: "The Greatest Star of them all," "I am big; it's the pictures that got small," "We didn't need dialogue, we had faces," and "All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my close-up." She received her third Best Actress Oscar nomination, but lost to Judy Holliday for *Born Yesterday*.

She received several subsequent acting offers but turned most of them down, saying they tended to be pale imitations of Norma Desmond. Her last major Hollywood motion picture role was the poorly received *Three for Bedroom "C"* in 1952. In 1956, Swanson made *Nero's Mistress*, which also starred Vittorio de Sica and Brigitte Bardot. Her final screen appearance was as herself in *Airport 1975*.

Though Swanson only made three films after *Sunset Boulevard*, she starred in numerous stage and television productions during her remaining years. She was active in various business ventures, travelled extensively, wrote articles, columns, and an autobiography, painted and sculpted, and became a passionate advocate of various health and nutrition topics. In 1966 The George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, honored Swanson with a career film retrospective titled "A Tribute to Gloria Swanson" that screened some of her films over a few days.

Television and theater



Swanson with Fred MacMurray in the promo of *My Three Sons*, 1965.

Swanson hosted one of the first live television series in 1948, *The Gloria Swanson Hour*, in which she invited friends and others to be guests. Swanson also later hosted a television anthology series, *Crown Theatre with Gloria Swanson*, in which she occasionally acted.

Through the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, Swanson appeared on many and various talk and variety shows such as *The Carol Burnett Show* in 1973 and *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* to recollect on her films and to lampoon them as well. She was twice the "mystery guest" on *What's My Line*. She acted in "Behind the Locked Door" on *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* in 1964, and in the same year was nominated for a Golden Globe award for her performance in *Burke's Law*. A guest appearance on *The Dick Cavett Show* with Janis Joplin (fall 1970) was another memorable TV appearance.

Her most famous television appearance, however, is a 1966 episode of *The Beverly Hillbillies* titled "The Gloria Swanson Story," in which she plays herself. In the episode, the Clampetts mistakenly believe Swanson is destitute, and decide to finance a comeback movie for her—in a silent film. Her last acting role, aside from playing herself in *Airport 1975*, was in the made-for-TV horror film *Killer Bees* (1974).

After near-retirement from film, Swanson appeared in many plays throughout her later life, beginning in the 1940s. She toured with *A Goose for the Gander*, *Reflected Glory*, and *Let Us Be Gay*. After her success with *Sunset Boulevard*, she starred on Broadway in a revival of *Twentieth Century* (1951) with Jose Ferrer, and in *Nina* with David Niven. Her last major stage role was in the 1971 Broadway production of *Butterflies Are Free* at the Booth Theatre.

Personal life



In her apartment in New York, 1972

Swanson became a vegetarian around 1928 and was an early health food advocate who was known for bringing her own meals to public functions in a paper bag. Swanson told actor Dirk Benedict about macrobiotic diets when he was battling prostate cancer at a very young age. He had refused conventional therapies and credited this kind of diet and healthy eating with his recovery. In 1975 Swanson traveled the United States and helped to promote the book *Sugar Blues* written by her husband, William Dufty.

In early 1980, Swanson's 520-page autobiography, *Swanson on Swanson*, was published by Random House and became a national best-seller. It was translated into French, Italian and Swedish editions. That same year, she also designed a stamp cachet for the United Nations Postal Administration and chaired the New York chapter of "Seniors for Reagan-Bush".

She was a lifelong member of the Lutheran church; her father was of Swedish Lutheran descent and he too was a member of the same church.

Marriages and relationships

Throughout her life and her many marriages, Swanson was always known as Miss Swanson. Though she legally took the names of her husbands, her own personality and fame always overshadowed them.

Swanson's first husband was the actor Wallace Beery (1885–1949), whom she married on her 17th birthday. In her autobiography *Swanson on Swanson*, she wrote that Beery raped her on their wedding night. Beery also impregnated Swanson in 1917. Not wanting her to have the child, he tricked her into drinking a concoction that induced an abortion. Though they still worked together at Sennett they separated and finally divorced two years later.

She married Herbert K. Somborn (1881–1934), then president of Equity Pictures Corporation and later the owner of the Brown Derby restaurant, in 1919. Their daughter, Gloria Swanson Somborn (October 7, 1920—December 28, 2000), was born in 1920. Their divorce, finalized in January 1925, was sensational and led to Gloria having a "morals clause" added to her studio contract. Somborn accused her of adultery with 13 men including Cecil B. DeMille, Rudolph Valentino, and Marshall Neilan. During their divorce Swanson wanted another child and in 1923 she adopted a baby boy, Sonny Smith (1922–1975), whom she renamed Joseph Patrick Swanson.

Her third husband was the French aristocrat Henri, Marquis de la Falaise de la Coudraye (1898–1972), whom she married on January 28, 1925 after the Somborn divorce was finalized. Though Henri was a Marquis and the grandson of Richard and Martha Lucy Hennessy from the famous Hennessy Cognac family, he was not rich and had to work for a living. He was originally hired to be her assistant and interpreter in France while she was filming *Madame Sans-Gêne* (1925). Gloria was the first film star to marry European royalty, and the marriage became a global sensation. She conceived a child with him, but had an abortion which, in her autobiography, she said she regretted.

Later Henri became a film executive representing Pathé (USA) in France through Joseph P. Kennedy, who was running the studio. Many now assume he was given the position which kept him in France for ten months a year to simply keep him out of the way. This marriage ended in divorce in 1930. Soon after, Henri was married for a second time, this time to actress Constance Bennett.

While still married to Henri, Swanson had an affair with the married Joseph P. Kennedy for a number of years. He became her business partner and their relationship was an open secret in Hollywood. He took over all of her personal and business affairs and was supposed to make her millions. Unfortunately, after the disastrous *Queen Kelly* Kennedy left her, and her finances were in worse shape than when he came into her life. Two books have been written about the affair.

After the marriage to Henri and her affair with Kennedy were over, she married Michael Farmer (1902–1975) in August 1931. Because of the possibility that Swanson's divorce from La Falaise had not been final at the time of the wedding, she was forced to remarry Farmer the following November, by which time she was four months pregnant with Michelle Bridget Farmer, who was born in 1932. Swanson and Farmer divorced in 1934. Their daughter, Michelle, stayed with her mother, was often on the set of *Sunset Boulevard*, and at age 18 moved to France where she still lives.

In 1945, she married William N. Davey. According to Swanson, after discovering Davey in a drunken stupor, she and daughter Michelle, believing they were being helpful, left a trail of Alcoholics Anonymous literature around their apartment. Davey quickly packed up and left. This divorce was finalized in 1946. For the next thirty years, Swanson would not be married, and was able to pursue her own interests.

Swanson joined the ranks of celebrities that have been stalked. In the early 1950s, she was pursued by a World War II veteran, Samuel Golden, who claimed that the two were destined to be married and would give her 2/3 of his children as well as divulge secrets about the Navy's computer systems if she would run away with him. Recent declassified FBI documents disclose J. Edgar Hoover's obsession with seeing Golden tried for treason, but Golden dropped out of sight, apparently in the Greater Boston area.

Swanson's final marriage was in 1976 and lasted until her death. Her sixth husband and widower, writer William Dufty (1916–2002), was the co-author of Billie Holiday's autobiography *Lady Sings the Blues*, the author of *Sugar Blues*, a 1975 best-selling health book still in print, and the author of the English version of Georges Ohsawa's *You Are All Sanpaku*. He was best known as a book ghost-writer and as a newspaperman, working for many years at the *New York Post*, where he was assistant to the editor from 1951-1960. Dufty first met Swanson in 1965 and by 1967 they were living together as a couple. Swanson shared her husband's deep enthusiasm for macrobiotic diets and they traveled widely together to speak about sugar and food. They promoted his book *Sugar Blues* together in 1975 and wrote a syndicated column together. It was through this book and Dufty that Swanson first got to know John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Swanson later testified on his behalf at his immigration hearing in New York to get a U.S. green card, which he eventually received. Being a well-respected author and "book doctor," Dufty also ghost-wrote Swanson's best-selling 1980 autobiography *Swanson on Swanson* for her and with her help. They were prominent socialites and had homes and lived in many places, including New

York City, Rome, Portugal, and Palm Springs, California. After Swanson's death Dufty returned to his former home in Birmingham, Michigan. Dufty died of cancer in 2002.

Death

Shortly after returning to New York from her home in Portugal, on April 4, 1983, Swanson died in New York City in New York Hospital from a heart ailment, aged 84. She was cremated and her ashes interred at the Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest on Fifth Avenue, in New York City, attended by only a small circle of family. Her death created worldwide headlines, with *The New York Times* echoing a line from *Sunset Boulevard*, calling her, "The greatest star of them all."

After Swanson's death, there were a series of auctions from August to September 1983 at William Doyle Gallery in New York of the star's furniture and decorations, jewelry, fashion collection, career and personal memorabilia.

Legacy

Gloria Swanson has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame; one for motion pictures at 6748 Hollywood Boulevard, and another for television at 6301 Hollywood Boulevard. In 1982, a year before her death, Swanson sold her archives of over 600 boxes for an undisclosed sum, including photographs, artwork, copies of films and private papers including correspondence, contracts and financial dealings to the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The second-largest collection of Swanson materials is held in the family archives of Timothy A. Rooks. In the last years of her life Swanson professed a desire to see *Beyond the Rocks*, but the film was unavailable and considered lost. The film was rediscovered and screened in 2005. Swanson was survived by both of her daughters, her son having died in 1975, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren in the United States and France. Arguably one of the greatest stars of early Hollywood, today Swanson is most remembered for her portrayal of Norma Desmond in 1950's *Sunset Boulevard*.

Portrayals

Swanson has been played both on television and in film by:

Debi Mazar in *Return to Babylon* (2008)

Ann Turkel in *White Hot: The Mysterious Murder of Thelma Todd* (1991)

Madolyn Smith Osborne in *The Kennedys of Massachusetts* (1990)

Diane Venora in *The Cotton Club* (1984)

Greta Garbo

Greta Garbo (18 September 1905 – 15 April 1990), born **Greta Lovisa Gustafsson**, was a Swedish film actress. Garbo was an international star and icon during Hollywood's silent and classic periods. Many of Garbo's films were sensational hits, and all but three were profitable. Garbo was nominated four times for an Academy Award and received an honorary one in 1954 for her "unforgettable screen performances". She also won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress for both *Anna Karenina* (1935) and *Camille* (1936). In 1999, the American Film Institute ranked Garbo fifth on their list of greatest female stars of all time, after Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Audrey Hepburn, and Ingrid Bergman.



Garbo in a publicity still for *Susan Lenox* (1931)

Garbo launched her career with a leading role in the 1924 Swedish film *The Saga of Gosta Berling*. Her performance caught the attention of Louis B. Mayer, chief executive of Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM), who brought her to Hollywood in 1925. She immediately stirred interest with her first silent film, *Torrent*, released in 1926; a year later, her performance in *Flesh and the Devil*, her third movie, made her an international superstar.

With her first talking film, *Anna Christie* (1930), she received her first Academy Award nomination. MGM marketers enticed the public with the catch-phrase "Garbo talks!" That same year she won a second Oscar nomination for her performance in *Romance*. In 1932, her immense popularity allowed her to dictate the terms of her contract, and she became increasingly choosy about her roles. Many critics and film historians consider her performance as the doomed courtesan Marguerite Gautier in *Camille* to be her finest. The role gained her a third Academy Award nomination. After working exclusively in dramatic films, Garbo turned to comedy with *Ninotchka* (1939), which earned her a fourth Academy Award nomination, and *Two-Faced Woman* (1941).

In 1941, she retired after appearing in 27 films. Although she was offered many opportunities to return to the screen, she declined most of them. Instead, she lived a private life, shunning publicity.

Childhood and youth

Greta Lovisa Gustafsson was born in Stockholm, Sweden. She was the third and youngest child of Anna Lovisa (née Karlsson, 1872–1944)—a homemaker and later employee at a jam factory—and Karl Alfred Gustafsson (1871–1920), a laborer. She had two siblings: Sven Alfred (1898–1967) and Alva Maria (1903–1926).

Her parents met in Stockholm where her father made occasional trips from his home in Frinnaryd. He moved to Stockholm to become independent, and worked in various odd jobs, such as street cleaner, grocer, factory worker and butcher's assistant. He married Anna, who had recently relocated from Högsby. The Gustafssons were impoverished and lived in a three-bedroom cold-water flat at Blekingegatan No. 32. They raised their three children in a working-class district regarded as the city's slum. Garbo would later recall:

It was eternally gray—those long winter's nights. My father would be sitting in a corner, scribbling figures on a newspaper. On the other side of the room my mother is repairing ragged old clothes, sighing. We children would be talking in very low voices, or just sitting silently. We were filled with anxiety, as if there were danger in the air. Such evenings are unforgettable for a sensitive girl. Where we lived, all the houses and apartments looked alike, their ugliness matched by everything surrounding us.

As a child, Garbo was a shy daydreamer. She hated school and preferred to play alone. Yet she was an imaginative child, and a natural leader who became interested in theatre at an early age. She directed her friends in make-believe games and performances and dreamed about becoming an actress. Later, she would participate in amateur theatre with her friends and frequent the Mosebacke Theater. At the age of 13, Garbo graduated from school and typical of a Swedish working-class girl at that time she did not attend high school; she would later confess she had an inferiority complex about this.

In the winter of 1919, the Spanish flu spread throughout Stockholm, and Garbo's father, to whom she was very close, became ill. He began missing work and eventually lost his job. Garbo stayed at home looking after him and taking him to the hospital for weekly treatments. In 1920, when she was 14 years old, he died. Alva, Garbo's older sister, began work in an insurance office while studying stenography.

Career

Early career (1920–1924)

She began her first job in 1920 as a soap-lather girl in a barbershop. Eventually, her friends advised to look for a better job. She then applied for, and accepted, a position in the PUB department store, running errands and working in the millinery department. Before long, she began modeling hats for the store's catalogs. Her success led to a more lucrative job as a fashion model for PUB. In 1921, a director of film commercials for the store cast Garbo in a role advertising women's clothing. Thus began Garbo's cinematic career. In 1922, Garbo caught the attention of director Erik Arthur Petschler who gave her a part in his short comedy, *Peter the Tramp*.

From 1922 to 1924, she studied at The Royal Dramatic Theatre's Acting School in Stockholm. She was recruited in 1924 by director Mauritz Stiller to play a principal part in his classic film *The Saga of Gosta Berling*, a dramatization of the famous novel by Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf. She played opposite Swedish film actor Lars Hanson. Stiller became her mentor, training her as a film actress and managing all aspects of her nascent career. She followed her role in *Gosta Berling* with a starring role in the 1925 German film *Die freudlose Gasse* (*The Joyless Street* or *The Street of Sorrow*), directed by G. W. Pabst and co-starring Asta Nielsen.

Accounts differ on the circumstances of her first contract with Louis B. Mayer, at that time vice president and general manager of Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM). Victor Seastrom, a respected Swedish director at MGM, was good friends with Stiller and encouraged Mayer to meet him on a trip to Berlin. There are two versions of what happened next. In one, Mayer, always looking for new talent, had done his research and was interested in Stiller. He made an offer but Stiller demanded that Garbo be part of any contract, convinced that she would be an asset to his career. Mayer balked, but eventually agreed to a private viewing of *Gosta Berling*. He was immediately struck by Garbo's presence and became more interested in her than in Stiller. "It was her eyes", his daughter recalled him saying; "I can make a star out of her." In the second version, Mayer had already seen *Gosta Berling* before his Berlin trip and Garbo was his primary interest. On the way to the screening, Mayer said to his daughter, "This director is wonderful but what we really ought to look at is the girl.... The girl, look at the girl!" In any case, a contract was drafted that included both of them and after several months, the two set sail for America on the last day of June 1925.

Silent films (1925–1929)



Garbo with Ricardo Cortez in *Torrent* (1926)

Stiller and Garbo arrived in Hollywood in the first week of July 1925. Although she expected to work with Stiller on her first film, she was cast in *Torrent* (1926), an adaptation of a novel by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, with director Monta Bell. She displaced Aileen Pringle, ten years her senior, and played a vamp opposite Ricardo Cortez. *Torrent* did well at the box office despite its cool reception by the trade press. But Garbo's performance was acclaimed.

The success led Irving Thalberg, head of production at MGM (who had at first labeled Garbo "absolutely unusable"), to cast her in a similar role in *The Temptress* (1926), based on another Ibáñez novel. After only one film, she was given top billing, playing opposite Antonio Moreno. Her mentor Stiller, who had persuaded her to take the part, was assigned to direct. For both Garbo (who did not want to play another vamp and did not like the script any more than she did the first one) and Stiller, *The Temptress* was a harrowing experience. Garbo remembered it as a picture associated with doom: on the fourth day of production, she received a telegram from Stockholm informing her of the death of her sister Alva at the age of twenty-three. MGM did not permit Garbo to return to Sweden for the funeral. Shortly thereafter, Stiller, who spoke little English, had difficulty adapting to the studio system, and did not get on with Moreno, was replaced by Fred Niblo. Reshooting *The Temptress* was expensive. Even though it became one of the top-grossing films of the 1926–27 season, with nearly \$1 million in receipts, it was, because of its cost, the only Garbo film of the period to lose money. However, Garbo again got very good reviews, and MGM had a new star.



During filming of *Die freudlose Gasse* (1925)

Garbo went on to make eight more silent films. With the exception of *Torrent*, all of her silent movies were profitable and most were hugely successful. She starred in three of them with popular leading man John Gilbert. Their on-screen chemistry soon translated into an off-camera romance, and by the end of their first production, *Flesh and the Devil* (1927), Garbo began living with Gilbert. Despite Garbo's popularity as a silent movie star, the studio feared that her Swedish accent might impair her work in sound, and delayed the shift for as long as possible. MGM itself made a slow changeover to sound. Her last silent movie, *The Kiss* (1929), was also the studio's.

Queen of MGM (1930–1939)

Garbo successfully made the transition to talkies. Publicized with the slogan "Garbo talks!", *Anna Christie* (1930), a film adaptation of the 1922 play by Eugene O'Neill, provided her first speaking role. The movie was the highest-grossing film of the year and she received her first Academy Award nomination. She won a second Academy Award nomination the same year for her performance in her next picture, *Romance* (1930). A German version of *Anna Christie* was also made in 1930. In 1931, she played the World War I spy in *Mata Hari* opposite screen idol Ramón Novarro and was subsequently part of an all-star cast in *Grand Hotel* (1932), in which she played a Russian ballerina. Both of these films were blockbuster hits and the phenomenon of "Garbomania" reached its zenith. Although her domestic popularity was undiminished through the mid-1930s, most of her subsequent films made more money internationally.

After a contract dispute with MGM, she signed a new contract with the studio in July 1932 which gave her more control over her films and co-stars. Garbo demonstrated great loyalty to John Gilbert, whose career was fading, and, despite Mayer's objection, insisted that he co-star in 1933's *Queen Christina* in which she played one of her most celebrated roles. (Laurence Olivier had originally been chosen to play opposite her.) In 1935, David O. Selznick wanted to cast her as the dying heiress in *Dark Victory*, but Garbo chose Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1935), in which she played another of her most renowned roles. Her subsequent role as the doomed courtesan opposite Robert Taylor in George Cukor's *Camille* (1936) earned her a third Academy Award nomination, and many film critics regard it as her finest performance.

After the disappointing *Conquest* (1937), Garbo was one of several major stars—including Crawford, Davis, Dietrich, and Katharine Hepburn—called "box office poison" in an open letter published by the National Theater Distributors of America. She then made a comeback in her first comedy playing opposite Melvyn Douglas in Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka* (1939). *Ninotchka* succeeded in lightening her somber and melancholy image, and she earned a fourth Academy Award nomination. The film was marketed with the tagline "Garbo laughs!", playing off the tagline for *Anna Christie*.

Last work (1940–1948)

With her last film, George Cukor's *Two-Faced Woman* (1941), MGM attempted to capitalize on Garbo's success as a comedienne by casting her in a romantic comedy which sought to portray her as an ordinary girl. She played a double role that featured her dancing the rumba, swimming, and skiing. The film was a critical, although not entirely a commercial, failure. Garbo referred to the film as "my grave". She was offered many roles in the coming years and showed interest in several, but in each case, she either turned down the part or the project did not come to fruition.

In 1948, Garbo signed a contract for \$200,000 with producer Walter Wanger, who had produced *Queen Christina* in 1933, to shoot a picture based on Balzac's *La Duchesse de Langeais*. Max Ophüls was slated to adapt and direct. Garbo made several screen tests, learned the script, and arrived in Rome in the summer of 1949 to shoot the picture. However, the financing failed to materialize and the project was abandoned. The screen tests—the last time Garbo stepped in front of a movie camera—were thought to have been lost for 40 years before resurfacing in someone's garage. Parts of the screen tests were included in the 2005 TCM documentary *Garbo* and show her still radiant at age 43.

In retirement

In general, Garbo in retirement led a private life of simplicity and leisure, assiduously trying to avoid the publicity she loathed. Contrary to myth, she was never a recluse either during her Hollywood years or in retirement—which is not to say she didn't spend a lot of time alone. She has been forever linked to one of her lines in *Grand Hotel*: "I want to be alone." But she later remarked, "I never said, 'I want to be alone. I only said, I want to be *left* alone. There is all the difference". In retirement she had many friends (in the United States and Europe) with whom she spent time and traveled. Occasionally, she jet-setted with well-known and wealthy personalities.

Beginning in the 1940s, She became something of an art collector. Many of the paintings she purchased were of negligible value, but she did buy, for example, two impressionist paintings by Renoir and a still-life by Pierre Bonnard.

Still, she often floundered about what to do and how to spend her time, always struggling with her life-long melancholy, or depression, and anxiety, and her many eccentricities.

On 9 February 1951, she became a naturalized citizen of the United States. In 1953, she bought a seven-room apartment at 450 East 52nd Street in Manhattan, New York City, where she lived for the rest of her life.

In 1969, Italian motion picture director Luchino Visconti attempted to bring Garbo back to the screen. He had actively been working on a film adaptation of Proust's colossal work *Remembrance of Things Past* since 1969 with a prospective cast including Silvana Mangano, Alain Delon, Helmut Berger, Charlotte Rampling, Laurence Olivier and Garbo in the small part of Maria Sophia, Queen of Naples. Reportedly, Garbo went to Rome and did a color screen test for the role in 1971. Visconti exclaimed: "I am very pleased at the idea that this woman, with her severe and authoritarian presence, should figure in

the decadent and rarefied climate of the world described by Proust." Visconti's dream of making his Proust film came closest to realization in 1971, but with its length of almost four hours, the budget turned out to be astronomical, and the project didn't materialize.

Throughout her life, Garbo was known for taking long, daily walks with companions or by herself. She walked the streets of New York City dressed casually and wearing large sunglasses. "Garbo-watching" became a sport for photographers, the media, admirers, and fans who were obsessed with her, but she maintained her elusive mystique to the end.

Personal life

From the early days of her career, Garbo avoided the social functions in Hollywood, preferring to spend her time alone or with a few friends. She seldom signed autographs, answered no fan mail, and gave few interviews. Her refusal to give interviews gave rise to the press reporter expression "pulling a Garbo" or "going Garbo", referring to any such actions. In her 1928 *Photoplay* interview she said:

I have always been moody. When I was just a little child, as early as I can remember, I have wanted to be alone. I detest crowds, don't like many people. I used to crawl into a corner and sit and think, think things over.



With her mother Anna Gustafsson, she returns to Sweden in December 1939 for the first time since her departure for Hollywood in 1925.

She is closely associated with a line from *Grand Hotel*, one which the American Film Institute in 2005 voted the 30th most memorable movie quote of all time, "I want to be alone, I just want to be alone", a theme echoed in several of her other roles. For example, in *Love* (1927) a title card reads, "I like to be alone"; in *The Single Standard* (1929) her character says, "I am walking alone because I *want* to be alone"; in *Susan Lenox (Her Fall and Rise)* (1931) she says to a suitor, "This time I rise... and fall... alone"; in *Inspiration* (1931) she tells a fickle lover, "I just want to be alone for a little while"; in *Mata Hari* (1931) she says to her new amour, "I never look ahead. By next spring I shall probably be... quite alone"; and in *Ninotchka* (1939) emissaries from Russia ask her, "Do you want to be alone comrade"? "No", she bluntly answers. By the early 1930s, the phrase had become indelibly linked with Garbo's persona, if not her actual life.

In a surprise interview granted to the press on board the liner *Kungsholm* in October 1938 in New York City, she was asked if she had enjoyed her vacation with conductor Leopold Stokowski). Sighing huskily, Garbo replied, "You cannot have a vacation without peace and you cannot have peace unless left alone."

Garbo never married, had no children, and lived alone.

Her most famous romance was with her frequent co-star, John Gilbert, with whom she lived in 1926 and 1927. MGM capitalized on her relationship with Gilbert after their huge hit, *Flesh and the Devil*, by costarring them again in two more hits, *Love* (1927) and *A Woman of Affairs* (1928). Gilbert allegedly proposed to her numerous times. Legend has it that when a double marriage was arranged in 1926 (with Eleanor Boardman and King Vidor), Garbo failed to appear at the ceremony. Garbo's recent biographers, however, have questioned the veracity of this story. Cecil Beaton wrote in his memoirs about his affair with Garbo between 1946 and 1948. In his diary, Erich Maria Remarque discusses a liaison with her in 1941. In 1937, she met conductor Leopold Stokowski with whom she had a highly publicized friendship or romance while travelling throughout Europe in 1938. It was thought that she had a tryst with Rouben Mamoulian, her director in *Queen Christina* (1933), and an affair with George Brent, her co-star in *The Painted Veil* (1934). In 1940, Garbo met the Russian-born millionaire George Schlee who was married to fashion designer Valentina. Schlee, who split his time between the two, became Garbo's close companion and advisor until his death in 1964.

Recent biographers and others speculate that she was bisexual, or lesbian, and that she had intimate relationships with women as well as with men. Garbo was introduced to stage and screen actress Lilyan Tashman in 1927 and allegedly had an affair with her; silent film star Louise Brooks stated that she and Garbo had a brief liaison the following year. In 1931, Garbo befriended the writer and socialite Mercedes de Acosta, introduced to her by the author Salka Viertel, and the pair allegedly began a sporadic and volatile romance. They remained friends—with ups and downs—for almost thirty years. When de Acosta published her controversial 1960 memoir, *Here Lies the Heart*, they became permanently estranged. In 2005, Swedish actress Mimi Pollak, a close friend in drama school, released the letters Garbo had written her during their sixty year correspondence. Several letters suggest she may have been in love with Pollak throughout her life. After learning of Pollak's pregnancy in 1930, for example, Garbo wrote, "We cannot help our nature, as God has created it. But I have always thought you and I belonged together." In 1975, she sent a poem to Pollak about "not being able to touch the hand of beloved friend with whom might have been walking through life".

Death



Gravestone of Greta Garbo

Greta Garbo died on 15 April 1990, aged 84, in New York Hospital as a result of pneumonia and renal failure. She had been successfully treated for breast cancer in 1984. Garbo was cremated, and after a long legal battle, her ashes were finally interred in 1999 at Skogskyrkogården Cemetery just south of her native Stockholm.

She had invested wisely, primarily in stocks and bonds, and left her entire estate, \$32,042,429, to her niece, Gray Reisfield.

Honors, awards, and nominations

Garbo was nominated four times for an Academy Award for Best Actress, including twice in 1930, for *Anna Christie* and *Romance*. She lost out to Irving Thalberg's wife, Norma Shearer, who won for *The Divorcee*. In 1937, Garbo was nominated for *Camille*, but Luise Rainer won for *The Good Earth*. Finally, in 1939, Garbo was nominated for *Ninotchka*, but again came away empty-handed. *Gone With the Wind* swept the major awards, including Best Actress, which went to Vivien Leigh. She was awarded an Academy Honorary Award "for her unforgettable screen performances" in 1954. She did not show up at the ceremony, and the statuette was mailed to her home address.

She twice received the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress for *Anna Karenina*, 1935, and *Camille*, 1936.

She won the National Board of Review Best Acting Award for *Camille*, 1936, *Ninotchka*, 1939, and *Two-Faced Woman*, 1941.

The Swedish royal medal, Litteris et Artibus, awarded to people who have made important contributions to culture, especially music, dramatic art or literature, was presented to Garbo in January 1937.

In a 1950 *Daily Variety* opinion poll, Garbo was voted Best Actress of the Half Century,

In November 1983, Garbo was made a Commander of the Swedish Order of the Polar Star by order of King Carl XVI Gustaf, the King of Sweden.

In 1999, the American Film Institute ranked Garbo fifth on their list of greatest female stars of all time, after Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Audrey Hepburn, and Ingrid Bergman.

For her contributions to cinema, she has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6901 Hollywood Boulevard.

She was once designated the most beautiful woman who ever lived by the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

In September 2005, the United States Postal Service and Swedish Posten jointly issued two commemorative stamps bearing her image.

On 6 April 2011, the Bank of Sweden announced that Garbo's portrait will be featured on the 100 krona banknote, beginning in 2014–15.

Legacy

Garbo was an international superstar—some say the greatest—during the late silent era and the so-called "Golden-Age" of Hollywood and is a cinematic legend. Almost immediately, with the sudden popularity of her first pictures, she became a screen icon. For most of her career, she was the highest paid actor or actress at MGM, making her for many years its biggest star.

In her silent films, Garbo introduced an unprecedented eroticism to the screen.

She has been praised in the media and by personalities in cinema and culture:

Ephraim Katz (*The Film Encyclopedia: The Complete Guide to Film and the Film Industry*):

Of all the stars who have ever fired the imaginations of audiences, none has quite projected a magnetism and a mystique equal to Garbo's. "The Divine", the "dream princess of eternity", the "Sarah Bernhardt of films", are only a few of the superlatives writers used in describing her over the years. ... She played heroines that were at once sensual and pure, superficial and profound, suffering and hopeful, world-weary and life-inspiring".

Bette Davis:

Her instinct, her mastery over the machine, was pure witchcraft. I cannot analyze this woman's acting. I only know that no one else so effectively worked in front of a camera.

George Cukor:

She had a talent that few actresses or actors possess. In close-ups she gave the impression, the illusion of great movement. She would move her head just a little bit and the whole screen would come alive, like a strong breeze that made itself felt.

Robert E. Sherwood (1929):

She is one of the most amazing, puzzling, most provocative characters of this extraordinary age. She definitely doesn't belong in the 20th century. She doesn't even belong in this world.

James Card:

On screen, she's the greatest who ever was, or ever will be.

Kenneth Tynan:

What, when drunk, one sees in other women, one sees in Garbo sober.

Garbo is the subject of four documentary features, including:

The Divine Garbo (1990), TNT, produced by Ellen M. Krass and Susan F. Walker, narrated by Glenn Close

Greta Garbo: The Mysterious Lady (1998), Biography Channel, narrated by Peter Graves

Greta Garbo: A Lone Star (2001), AMC

Garbo (2005), TCM, directed by silent film expert Kevin Brownlow and narrated by Julie Christie

During Garbo's Hollywood career, the animated cartoons frequently caricatured her. These include, from Warner Brothers:

I've Got to Sing a Torch Song (1933)

Porky's Road Race (1937)

Speaking of the Weather (1937)

Have You Got Any Castles? (1938)

Porky's Five and Ten (1938)

Malibu Beach Party (1940)
Hollywood Steps Out (1941).

Among the Disney cartoons that caricatured her are:

Mickey's Gala Premiere (1933)
Mickey's Polo Team (1936)
Mother Goose Goes Hollywood (1938)
The Autograph Hound (1939).

In the 1984 film *Garbo Talks*, directed by Sidney Lumet, a man attempts to fulfill his dying mother's request by arranging for her to meet the Great Garbo, reflecting the still strong popular obsession with the star.

Harold Lloyd

Harold Clayton Lloyd, Sr. (April 20, 1893 – March 8, 1971) was an American film actor and producer, most famous for his silent comedies.



Harold Lloyd in 1928

Harold Lloyd ranks alongside Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton as one of the most popular and influential film comedians of the silent film era. Lloyd made nearly 200 comedy films, both silent and "talkies", between 1914 and 1947. He is best known for his "Glasses Character", a resourceful, success-seeking go-getter who was perfectly in tune with 1920s era America.

His films frequently contained "thrill sequences" of extended chase scenes and daredevil physical feats, for which he is best remembered today. Lloyd hanging from the hands of a clock high above the street in *Safety Last!* (1923) is one of the most enduring images in all of cinema. Lloyd did many of these dangerous stunts himself, despite having injured himself in August, 1919 while doing publicity pictures for the Roach studio. An accident with a bomb mistaken as a prop resulted in the loss of the thumb and index finger of his right hand (the injury was disguised on future films with the use of a special prosthetic glove, though the glove often did not go by unnoticed).

Although Lloyd's individual films were not as commercially successful as Charlie Chaplin's on average, he was far more prolific (releasing twelve feature films in the 1920s while Chaplin released just three), and made more money overall (\$15.7 million to Chaplin's \$10.5 million).

Early life and early roles

Lloyd was born in Burchard, Nebraska to James Darsie Lloyd and Elizabeth Fraser; his paternal great-grandparents were from Wales. When he was a child, his parents divorced and Lloyd chose to stay with his father who was always dreaming up grand get-rich-quick schemes that ended in disasters. They eventually ended up in Omaha where Lloyd had his first acting experience in a local stock company. He attended East High School and San Diego High School and received his stage training at the School of Dramatic Art (San Diego). In 1912, his father J. Darsie "Foxy" Lloyd was awarded the then-massive sum of \$6,000 in a personal injury judgment (although this was split evenly between Lloyd and his lawyer) after being run over by an Omaha beer truck. Reportedly, on the toss of a coin ("Heads is New York or Nashville or where I decide!, tails is San Diego"), he and Lloyd moved west.

Lloyd had acted in theatre since boyhood, and started acting in one-reel film comedies shortly after moving to California. He soon began working with Thomas Edison's motion picture company, and eventually formed a partnership with fellow struggling actor and director Hal Roach, who had formed his own studio in 1913. The hard-working Lloyd became the most successful of Roach's comic actors between 1915 and 1919.

Lloyd hired Bebe Daniels as a supporting actress in 1914; the two of them were involved romantically and were known as "The Boy" and "The Girl." In 1919, she left Lloyd to pursue her dramatic aspirations. Lloyd replaced Daniels with Mildred Davis in 1919. Lloyd was tipped off by Hal Roach to watch Davis in a movie. Reportedly, the more Lloyd watched Davis the more he liked her. Lloyd's first reaction in seeing her was that "she looked like a big French doll!" Davis retired from acting in 1923, and Jobyna Ralston became Lloyd's co-star.

From 1915 to 1917, Lloyd and Roach created more than 60 one-reel comedies.



Lloyd in *A Sailor-Made Man* (1921), his first feature.

Silent shorts and features

By 1918, Lloyd and Roach had begun to develop his character beyond an imitation of his contemporaries. Harold Lloyd would move away from tragicomic personas, and portray an everyman with unwavering confidence and optimism. The "Glasses Character" (often named "Harold" in the silent films) was a much more mature comedy character with greater potential for sympathy and emotional depth, and was easy for audiences of the time to identify with. The Glasses Character is said to have been created after Roach suggested that Harold was too handsome to do comedy, without some sort of disguise; previously, he had worn a fake mustache as the Chaplinesque "Lonesome Luke". Unlike most silent comedy personas, "Harold" was never typecast to a social class, but he was always striving for success and recognition. Within the first few years of the character's debut, he had portrayed social ranks ranging from a starving vagrant in *From Hand to Mouth* to a wealthy socialite in *Captain Kidd's Kids*.



Harold Lloyd in *Grandma's Boy* (1922).

Beginning in 1921, Roach and Lloyd moved from shorts to feature length comedies. These included the acclaimed *Grandma's Boy*, which, (along with Chaplin's *The Kid*), pioneered the combination of complex character development and film comedy, the highly popular *Safety Last!* (1923), which cemented Lloyd's stardom (and is the oldest film on the American Film Institute's List of 100 Most Thrilling Movies), and *Why Worry?*.

Lloyd and Roach parted ways in 1924, and Lloyd became the independent producer of his own films. These included his most accomplished mature features *Girl Shy*, *The Freshman* (his highest-grossing silent feature), *The Kid Brother*, and *Speedy*, his final silent film. *Welcome Danger* was originally a silent film but Lloyd decided late in the production to remake it with dialogue. All of these films were enormously successful and profitable, and Lloyd would eventually become the highest paid film performer of the 1920s. They were also highly influential and still find many fans among modern audiences, a testament to the originality and film-making skill of Lloyd and his collaborators. From this success he became one of the wealthiest and most influential figures in early Hollywood.

Talkies and transition

In 1924, Lloyd formed his own independent film production company, the Harold Lloyd Film Corporation, with his films distributed by Pathé and later Paramount and Twentieth Century-Fox. Lloyd was a founding member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Released a few weeks before the start of the Great Depression, *Welcome Danger* was a huge financial success, with audiences eager to hear Lloyd's voice on film. Lloyd's rate of film releases, which had been one or two a year in the 1920s, slowed to about one every two years until 1938.

The films released during this period were: *Feet First*, with a similar scenario to *Safety Last* which found him clinging to a skyscraper at the climax; *Movie Crazy* with Constance Cummings; *The Cat's-Paw*, which was a dark political comedy and a big departure for Lloyd; and *The Milky Way*, which was Lloyd's only attempt at the fashionable genre of the screwball comedy film.

To this point the films had been produced by Lloyd's company. However, his go-getting screen character was out of touch with Great Depression movie audiences of the 1930s. As the length of time between his film releases increased, his popularity declined, as did the fortunes of his production company. His final film of the decade, *Professor Beware*, was made by the Paramount staff, with Lloyd functioning only as actor and partial financier.

On March 23, 1937, Lloyd sold the land of his studio *Harold Lloyd Motion Picture Company* to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The location is now the site of the Los Angeles California Temple.

Lloyd produced a few comedies for RKO Radio Pictures in the early 1940s but otherwise retired from the screen until 1947. He returned for an additional starring appearance in *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock*, an ill-fated homage to Lloyd's career, directed by Preston Sturges and financed by Howard Hughes. This film had the inspired idea of following Harold's Jazz Age, optimistic character from *The Freshman* into the Great Depression years. *Diddlebock* opened with footage from *The Freshman* (for which Lloyd was paid a royalty of \$50,000, matching his actor's fee) and Lloyd was sufficiently youthful-looking to match the older scenes quite well. Lloyd and Sturges had different conceptions of the material and fought frequently during the shoot; Lloyd was particularly concerned that while Sturges had spent three to four months on the script of the first third of the film, "the last two thirds of it he wrote in a week or less". The finished film was released briefly in 1947, then shelved by producer Hughes. Hughes issued a re-cut version of the film in 1951 through RKO under the title *Mad Wednesday*. Such was Lloyd's disdain that he sued Howard Hughes, the California Corporation and RKO for damages to his reputation "as an outstanding motion picture star and personality", eventually accepting a \$30,000 settlement.

Marriage and home life

Lloyd married his leading lady, Mildred Davis, on Saturday, February 10, 1923. Together, they had two children: Gloria Lloyd (born 1923), and Harold Clayton Lloyd, Jr., (1931–1971). They also adopted Gloria Freeman (1924–1986) in September 1930, whom they renamed Marjorie Elizabeth Lloyd, but who was known as "Peggy" for most of her life. Lloyd, for a time, discouraged Davis from continuing her acting career. He later relented, but by that time her career momentum was lost. Davis died in 1969, two years before Lloyd's death. Lloyd's son was gay, and according to Annette D'Agostino Lloyd (no relation) in the book *Harold Lloyd: Master Comedian*, Harold Sr. took this in good spirit. Harold Jr. died from complications of a stroke.



Harold Lloyd and future wife: Mildred Davis in *I Do* in 1921

Lloyd's Beverly Hills home, "Greenacres", was built in 1926–1929, with 44 rooms, 26 bathrooms, 12 fountains, 12 gardens, and a nine hole golf course. The estate left the possession of the Lloyd family in 1975, after a failed attempt to maintain it as a public museum.

The grounds were subsequently subdivided, but the main house and the estate's principal gardens remain and are frequently used for civic fundraising events and as a filming location, appearing in films like *Westworld* and *The Loved One*. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Radio and retirement

In October 1944, Lloyd emerged as the director and host of *The Old Gold Comedy Theater*, an NBC radio anthology series, after Preston Sturges, who had turned the job down, recommended him for it. The show presented half-hour radio adaptations of recently successful film comedies, beginning with *Palm Beach Story* with Claudette Colbert and Robert Young.

Some saw *The Old Gold Comedy Theater* as being a lighter version of *Lux Radio Theater*, and it featured some of the best-known film and radio personalities of the day, including Fred Allen, June Allyson, Lucille Ball, Ralph Bellamy, Linda Darnell, Susan Hayward, Herbert Marshall, Dick Powell, Edward G. Robinson, Jane Wyman, and Alan Young, among others. But the show's half-hour format—which meant the material might have been truncated too severely—and Lloyd's sounding somewhat ill at ease on the air for much of the season (though he spent weeks training himself to speak on radio prior to the show's premiere, and seemed more relaxed toward the end of the series run) may have worked against it.

The Old Gold Comedy Theater ended in June 1945 with an adaptation of *Tom, Dick and Harry*, featuring June Allyson and Reginald Gardiner and was not renewed for the following season. Many years later, acetate discs of 29 of the shows were discovered in Lloyd's home, and they now circulate among old-time radio collectors.

Lloyd remained involved in a number of other interests, including civic and charity work. Inspired by having overcome his own serious injuries and burns, he was very active as a Shriner with the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children. He was a Past Potentate of Al-Malaikah Shrine in Los Angeles, and was eventually selected as Imperial Potentate of the Shriners of North America for the year 1949-50.

He appeared as himself on several television shows during his retirement, first on Ed Sullivan's variety show *Toast of the Town* June 5, 1949 and again on July 6, 1958. He appeared as the Mystery Guest on *What's My Line?* on April 26, 1953, and twice on *This Is Your Life*: on March 10, 1954 for Mack Sennett, and again on December 14, 1955 on his own episode. During both appearances, Lloyd's hand injury can clearly be seen.

Lloyd studied colors, microscopy, and was very involved with photography, including 3D photography and color film experiments. Some of the earliest 2-color Technicolor tests were shot at his Beverly Hills home (These are included as extra material in the *Harold Lloyd Comedy Collection* DVD Box Set). He became known for his nude photographs of models, such as Bettie Page and stripper Dixie Evans, for a number of men's magazines. He also took photos of Marilyn Monroe lounging at his pool in a bathing suit, which were published after their deaths. In 2004, his granddaughter Suzanne produced a book of selections from his photographs, *Harold Lloyd's Hollywood Nudes in 3D!* (ISBN 1-57912-394-5).

Lloyd also provided encouragement and support for a number of younger actors, such as Debbie Reynolds, Robert Wagner, and particularly Jack Lemmon, whom Harold declared as his own choice to play him in a movie of his life and work.

Renewed interest



The Harold Lloyd Comedy Collection of DVDs, released November 2005.

Lloyd kept copyright control of most of his films and re-released them infrequently after his retirement. Lloyd did not grant cinematic release because in the main most theaters could not accommodate an organist, and Lloyd did not wish his work to be accompanied by a pianist: "I just don't like pictures played with pianos. We never intended them to be played with pianos". Similarly, his features were never shown on television as Lloyd's price was high: "I want \$300,000 per picture for two showings. That's a high price, but if I don't get it, I'm not going to show it. They've come close to it, but they haven't come all the way up". As a consequence, his reputation and public recognition suffered in comparison with Chaplin and Keaton, whose work has generally been more available.

Also, Lloyd's film character was so intimately associated with the 1920s era that attempts at revivals in 1940s and 1950s were poorly received, when audiences viewed the 1920s (and silent film in particular) as old-fashioned.

In the early 1960s, Lloyd produced two compilation films, featuring scenes from his old comedies, *Harold Lloyd's World of Comedy* and *The Funny Side of Life*. The first film was premiered at the 1962 Cannes Film Festival, where Lloyd was feted as a major rediscovery. The renewed interest in Lloyd helped restore his status among film historians. Throughout his later years he screened his films for audiences at special charity and educational events, to great acclaim, and found a particularly receptive audience among college audiences: "Their whole response was tremendous because they didn't miss a gag; anything that was even a little subtle, they got it right away".

Following his death, and after extensive negotiations, most of his feature films were leased to Time-Life Films in 1974. As Tom Dardis confirms: "Time-Life prepared horrendously edited musical-sound-track versions of the silent films, which are intended to be shown on TV at sound speed, and which represent everything that Harold feared would happen to his best films".

Through the efforts of Kevin Brownlow and David Gill and the support of granddaughter Suzanne Lloyd Hayes, the British Thames Silents series re-released some of the feature films in the early 1990s on home video, at corrected projection speeds and with new orchestral scores by Carl Davis. More recently, the remainder of Lloyd's great silent features and many shorts were fully restored, with new orchestral scores by Robert Israel. These are now frequently shown on the Turner Classic Movies (TCM) cable channel. An acclaimed 1990 documentary (*Harold Lloyd: The Third Genius*) by Brownlow and Gill, which was shown as part of the PBS series *American Masters*, also created a renewed interest in Lloyd's work in the early 1990s. A DVD Collection of restored versions of most of his feature films (and his more important shorts) was released by New Line Cinema in partnership with the Harold Lloyd Trust in November 2005, along with limited theatrical screenings in New York and other cities in the

US, Canada and Europe. Annette Lloyd has also said that if there is a large-enough show of support by fans, a second collection may be released in the future.

Academy Award

In 1953, Lloyd received a special Academy Award for being a "master comedian and good citizen." The second citation was a snub to Chaplin, who at that point had fallen foul of McCarthyism and who had had his entry visa to the United States revoked. Regardless of the political overtones, Lloyd accepted the award in good spirit.

Death

Lloyd died at age 77 from prostate cancer on March 8, 1971, in Beverly Hills, California. He was interred in a crypt in the Great Mausoleum at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

Walk of Fame

Harold Lloyd has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. His was only the fourth ceremony preserving his handprints, footprints, autograph, and outline of his famed glasses (which were actually a pair of sunglasses with the lenses removed), at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, in 1927. In 1994, he was honored with his image on a United States postage stamp designed by caricaturist Al Hirschfeld.

Harry Carey

Harry Carey (January 16, 1878 – September 21, 1947) was an American actor and one of silent film's earliest superstars. He was the father of Harry Carey Jr., who was also a prominent actor.



Harry Carey in the 1920 film *'If Only' Jim*



Human Stuff (1920).

Early life and career

Carey was born **Henry DeWitt Carey II** in The Bronx, New York, a son of Henry DeWitt Carey, a prominent lawyer and judge of the New York Supreme Court, and his wife Ella J. Ludlum. He grew up on City Island, Bronx.

Carey was a cowboy, railway superintendent, author, lawyer and playwright. He attended Hamilton Military Academy, then studied law at New York University. When a boating accident led to pneumonia, he wrote a play while recuperating and toured the country performing in it for three years. His play was very successful, but Carey lost it all when his next play was a failure. In 1911, his friend Henry B. Walthall introduced him to director D.W. Griffith, with whom Carey would make many films.

Career

Carey is best remembered as one of the first stars of the Western film genre. One of his most popular roles was as the good-hearted outlaw Cheyenne Harry. The Cheyenne Harry franchise spanned three decades, from *A Knight of the Range* (1916) to *Aces Wild* (1936). Carey starred in director John Ford's first feature film, *Straight Shooting* (1918).

Carey's rugged frame and craggy features were well suited to westerns and outdoor adventures. When sound films arrived, Carey displayed an assured, gritty baritone voice that suited his rough-hewn screen personality. He was the logical choice for the title role in MGM's outdoor jungle epic *Trader Horn*. By this time Carey, already in his fifties, was too mature for most leading roles, and the only starring roles that he was offered were in low-budget westerns and serials. He soon settled into a comfortable career as a solid, memorable character actor; he received an Oscar nomination for his role as the President of the

Senate in the 1939 film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Among his other notable later roles were that of M/Sgt. Robert White, crew chief of the bomber "Mary Ann" in the 1943 Howard Hawks film *Air Force* and Mr. Melville, the cattle buyer, in Hawks's *Red River*. Carey made his Broadway stage debut in 1940, in *Heavenly Express*, with John Garfield.

Personal life

He married at least twice and perhaps a third time (census records for 1910 indicate he had a wife named Clare E. Carey, and some references state that he was also married to actress Fern Foster). His last marriage was to actress Olive Fuller Golden (1896–1988). They purchased a large ranch in Saugus, California, north of Los Angeles, which, in 2005, was turned into Tesoro Adobe Historic Park.

Their son, Harry Carey, Jr., would become a character actor, most famous for his roles in Westerns. Father and son both appear (albeit in different scenes) in the 1948 film, *Red River*, and mother and son are both featured in 1956's *The Searchers*.

Death

Harry Carey died in 1947 from a combination of lung cancer, emphysema and coronary thrombosis, at the age of 69. He was interred in Woodlawn Cemetery in the family mausoleum in The Bronx, New York.

Honors and homage

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Harry Carey has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1521 Vine Street.

As an homage to him, John Wayne held his right elbow with his left hand in the closing shot of *The Searchers*, imitating a stance Carey himself often used in his films. According to Wayne, both he and Carey's widow Olive (who costarred in the film) wept when the scene was finished.

In 1976, he was inducted into the Western Performers Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Harry Langdon

Harry Philmore Langdon (June 15, 1884 – December 22, 1944) was an American comedian who appeared in vaudeville, silent films (where he had his greatest fame), and talkies. He was briefly partnered with Oliver Hardy.



Langdon (center) with the comedy team of Olsen and Johnson.

Life and career

Born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, he began working in vaudeville then joined Vitagraph Movie Studios. He eventually went over to Keystone Studios where he became a major star. At the height of his film career he was considered one of the four best comics of the silent film era. His screen character was that of a wide-eyed, childlike man with an innocent's understanding of the world and the people in it. He was a first-class pantomimist.



1927 *Harper's Bazaar* ad for *Long Pants*.

Most of Langdon's 1920s work was produced at the famous Mack Sennett studio. His screen character was so unique, and his antics so different from the broad Sennett slapstick, that he soon had a following. Success led him into feature films, directed by Arthur Ripley and Frank Capra. When Langdon had such good directors guiding him, he produced work that rivaled Charlie Chaplin's, Harold Lloyd's, and Buster Keaton's. His best films were *The Strong Man* (1926), *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp* (1926) and *Long Pants* (1927). After his initial success, Langdon took creative control of his films and career, but his appeal faded soon afterward. His last starring silent feature was made in 1928. Capra later claimed that Langdon's decline stemmed from the fact that, unlike the other great silent comics, he never fully

understood what made his own film character successful. However, Langdon's biographer William Schelly among others have expressed skepticism about this claim, arguing that Langdon had established his character in vaudeville long before he entered movies, added by the fact that he wrote most of his own material during his stage years. The truth most likely lies somewhere between these two points, but history shows that Langdon's greatest success was while being directed by Capra, and once he took hold of his own destiny, his original film comedy persona dropped sharply in popularity with audiences. This is likely not due to Langdon's material, which he had always written himself, but with his inexperience with the many fine points of directing, at which Capra excelled, but at which Langdon was a novice.

Harry Langdon's babyish character didn't adapt well to sound films; as producer Hal Roach remarked, "he was not so funny articulate" (he initially featured Langdon in several "talkie" shorts in 1929-'30, but those were unsuccessful, and Harry was released from his contract). But Langdon was a big enough name to command leads in short subjects for Educational Pictures and Columbia Pictures. In 1938 he adopted a Caspar Milquetoast-type, henpecked-husband character that served him well, he also contributed to comedy scripts as a writer, notably for Laurel and Hardy. Langdon continued to work steadily in low-budget features and shorts, always playing mild-mannered goofs, into the 1940s. As a point of interest, when Hal Roach was in a contract dispute with Stan Laurel, one-half of the great Laurel and Hardy comedic pair, the studio paired Langdon with Oliver Hardy in a 1939 film titled *Zenobia*.

Harry Langdon kept busy right up until his death in 1944 (in Los Angeles, from a cerebral hemorrhage). He was interred in the Grand View Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. At the height of his career, Langdon was making \$7,500 per week, a fortune for the times. Upon his death, *The New York Times* wrote, "His whole appeal was a consummate ability to look inexpressibly forlorn when confronted with manifold misfortunes--usually of the domestic type. He was what was known as 'dead-pan'...the feeble smile and owlish blink which had become his stock-in-trade caught on in a big way, and he skyrocketed to fame and fortune..."

In 1997, his hometown of Council Bluffs celebrated "Harry Langdon Day" and in 1999 named Harry Langdon Boulevard in his honor. For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Harry Langdon has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6925 Hollywood Blvd.

Henry B. Walthall

Henry Brazeale Walthall (March 16, 1878 – June 17, 1936) was an American film actor.



Career

Walthall began his career as a stage actor, appearing on Broadway in a supporting role in William Vaughn Moody's *The Great Divide* in 1906–1908. His career in movies began in 1908, in the film *Rescued from an Eagle's Nest*, which also featured another young actor named D.W. Griffith. As the industry grew in size and popularity, Griffith emerged as a director and Walthall found himself a mainstay of the Griffith company, frequently working alongside such Griffith regulars as Owen Moore, Kate Bruce and Jack and Mary Pickford. He followed Griffith's departure from New York's Biograph to California's Reliance-Majestic Studios in 1913.

Given the relatively short length of films in the early years, Walthall frequently found himself cast in dozens of films each year. For those still unfamiliar with his face however, he gained national attention in 1915 for his role as Colonel Ben Cameron in Griffith's highly influential and controversial epic *The Birth of a Nation*. Walthall's portrayal of a Confederate veteran rounding up the Ku Klux Klan won him large-scale fame, and Walthall was soon able to emerge as a leading actor in the years leading up to the 1920s, parting ways with Griffith.

He continued through the 1920s, appearing in *The Plastic Age* with Gilbert Roland and Clara Bow and a 1926 adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* opposite Lillian Gish. Now in his 40s, he found his roles increasingly more of the "character" variety. Having experience as a stage actor, Walthall continued his career into the 1930s until his death.

He has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame located at 6201 Hollywood Boulevard.

Personal life

Walthall was married twice. His first marriage, to actress Isabel Fenton, ended in divorce after ten years in 1917. His second marriage, to actress Mary Charleson lasted from the following year until his death from influenza in 1936.

Hoot Gibson

Hoot Gibson (August 6, 1892 – August 23, 1962) was an American rodeo champion and a pioneer cowboy film actor, director and producer.

Early life and career

Born **Edmund Richard Gibson** in Tekamah, Nebraska, he learned to ride a horse while still a very young boy. His family moved to California when he was seven years old. As a teenager he worked with horses on a ranch, which led to competition on bucking broncos at area rodeos. Given the nickname "Hoot Owl" by co-workers, the name evolved to just "Hoot".

In 1910, film director Francis Boggs was looking for experienced cowboys to appear in his silent film short, *Pride of the Range*. Gibson and another future star of Western films, Tom Mix, were hired. Gibson made a second film for Boggs in 1911. After the director was killed by a deranged employee, Gibson was hired by director Jack Conway to appear in his 1912 Western, *His Only Son*.

Acting for Gibson was then a minor sideline and he continued competing in rodeos to make a living. In 1912 he won the all-around championship at the famous Pendleton Round-Up in Pendleton, Oregon and the steer roping World Championship at the Calgary Stampede.

Gibson's career was temporarily interrupted with service in the United States Army during World War I. When the war ended, he returned to the rodeo business and became good friends with Art Acord, a fellow cowboy and movie actor. The two participated in summer rodeo then went back to Hollywood for the winter to do stunt work. For several years, Gibson had secondary film roles (primarily in Westerns) with stars such as Harry Carey. By 1921 the demand for cowboy pictures was so great that Gibson began receiving offers for leading roles. Some of these offers came from up-and-coming film director John Ford, with whom Gibson developed a lasting friendship and working relationship.

Financial difficulties and later life

From the 1920s through the 1940s, Hoot Gibson was a major film attraction, ranking second only to Tom Mix as a western film box office draw. He successfully made the transition to talkies and as a result became a highly paid performer. He appeared in his own comic books and was wildly popular until singing cowboys such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers displaced him.

In 1927, actor Gibson, and five other California businessmen sponsored *The Spirit of Los Angeles*, a modification of the International CF-10 for an attempt at winning the Dole Air Derby. Gibson had his name painted on the nose for publicity. The aircraft crashed in the San Francisco Bay before the start of the race.

In 1933, Gibson injured himself when he crashed his plane while racing cowboy star Ken Maynard in the National Air Races. Later, the two friends teamed up to make a series of low budget movies in the twilight of their careers.

Gibson's years of substantial earnings did not see him through his retirement. He had squandered much of his income on high living and poor investments. By the 1950s, Gibson faced financial ruin, aided in part by costly medical bills from serious health problems. To get by and pay his bills, he earned money as a greeter at a Las Vegas casino. For a time, he worked in a carnival and took virtually any job his dwindling name value could obtain.

Personal life

Hoot Gibson married Rose August Wenger, a rodeo performer he had met at the Pendleton Round-Up in Oregon sometime between 1911 and 1913. Under the name Helen Gibson, she would become a major film star in her own right for a time, notably in the lead role of *The Hazards of Helen* adventure film serial. Census records for 1920 indicate that they were living separately, Hoot Gibson listing himself as married, Helen listing herself as widowed.

Following their separation/divorce, Gibson met a young woman named Helen Johnson, whom he married in either 1920 or 1922 and with whom he had one child, Lois Charlotte Gibson. They divorced in 1930. The fact that Hoot Gibson was married to two consecutive women who used the name Helen Gibson in some fashion has led to a good deal of confusion.

After his divorce from Helen Johnson Gibson, Gibson had a brief marriage to film actress Sally Eilers. That marriage ended in 1933. Gibson married a final time, to Dorothy Dunstan, on July 3, 1942.

Death

Hoot Gibson died of cancer in 1962 in Woodland Hills, Los Angeles, California and was interred in the Inglewood Park Cemetery in Inglewood, California.

Legacy

For his contribution to motion pictures, Hoot Gibson has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1765 Vine Street. In 1979, he was inducted into the Western Performers Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Jack Holt

Jack Holt (May 31, 1888 – January 18, 1951) was an American motion picture actor. He was a leading man of silent and sound films, and was known for his many roles in Westerns.



Early life

Holt was born **Charles John Holt** in New York City. He grew up in Winchester, Virginia, and he often said he was born there. Back in Manhattan, Holt attended Trinity School. He then enrolled in the Virginia Military Institute, but his misbehavior got him expelled. He stopped trying to become a lawyer and went on the road, taking odd jobs. North of San Francisco in 1914, he volunteered to tumble down a very steep embankment into the Russian River in a stunt for a film crew shooting a scene for *Salomy Jane*. In gratitude, the director gave him a bit part in the film.

Film career

Holt went to Hollywood and picked up some stunt and bit part assignments in serials. At Universal Pictures, Holt's on-screen performances caught the attention of Francis Ford and his brother John Ford, and Grace Cunard. Holt worked as a supporting player for them at Universal Pictures, and starred in serials.

Holt, with his dapper mustache, prominent jaw, and quick-with-his-fists manner, personified rugged masculinity. Holt became Columbia Pictures' most reliable leading man, and scored personal successes in three Frank Capra action dramas, *Submarine* (1928), *Flight* (1929), and *Dirigible* (1931), Holt's no-nonsense characterizations were eclipsed by those of younger, tough-talking actors like James Cagney and Chester Morris, but Holt continued to work in low-budget action features, almost always for Columbia, through 1940. Holt's long tenure at Columbia came to an end when he had an argument with studio chief Harry Cohn. Cohn, anxious to teach the actor a lesson in humility, gave him a low-prestige assignment: the starring role in a 15-chapter serial. Holt made the serial—*Holt of the Secret Service* (1941)—and it turned out well enough for Columbia to promote it vigorously, introducing this veteran

action star to serial audiences. But that was the last straw for the proud Holt, who left Columbia for other studios.

In later years Holt became an elder statesman among action stars, as in *Trail of Robin Hood* (1950), where he is the senior member of a cowboy fraternity including Roy Rogers, Allan Lane, Tom Keene, Tom Tyler, Kermit Maynard, and Rex Allen. His son, Tim Holt, had established himself as a star in his own right, and Jack Holt played against type (as a grubby vagrant) in Tim's famous film, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948). Jack Holt's daughter, Jennifer Holt, also enjoyed a successful screen career, mostly in Universal Pictures westerns. The only time Jack, Tim and Jennifer worked together was in 1946 when the three Holts appeared together on a CBS radio program entitled "All Star Western Theater", a country flavored show featuring Western music by Foy Willing and the Riders of the Purple Sage with a dramatic sketch. The Holts played father, son and daughter.

Death

Jack Holt died from a heart attack in Los Angeles, California and is buried there in the Los Angeles National Cemetery.

Contribution

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Jack Holt has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6313-½ Hollywood Blvd. Holt was the visual inspiration for Chester Gould's "Dick Tracy" and Al Capp's "Fearless Fosdick."

Margaret Mitchell, when discussing the movie casting of her character Rhett Butler in *Gone With the Wind* (1939) -- a process in which she had no say -- expressed a preference for Jack Holt as Butler, because her personal favorite, Charles Boyer, had a French accent.

Janet Gaynor

Janet Gaynor (October 6, 1906 – September 14, 1984) was an American actress and painter.



in *A Star Is Born* (1937)

One of the most popular actresses of the silent film era, in 1928 Gaynor became the first winner of the Academy Award for Best Actress for her performances in three films: *Seventh Heaven* (1927), *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927) and *Street Angel* (1928). This was the only occasion on which an actress has won for multiple roles. This rule would be changed three years later by AMPAS. Her career continued with the advent of sound film, and she achieved a notable success in the original version of *A Star Is Born* (1937).

She worked only sporadically after the late 1930s. Severely injured in a 1982 vehicle collision, the incident contributed to her death two years later.

Early life

Born **Laura Augusta Gainor** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, her family moved west to San Francisco during her childhood. When she graduated from high school in 1923, Gaynor decided to pursue an acting career. She moved to Los Angeles, where she supported herself working in a shoe store, receiving \$18 per week (2009: \$230).

She managed to land unbilled small parts in several feature films and comedy shorts for two years. Finally, in 1926, at the age of 20, she was cast in the lead role in *The Johnstown Flood* (1926), the same year she was selected as one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars (with Joan Crawford, Dolores del Río and others). Her outstanding performance won her the attention of producers, who cast her in a series of films.

Rising career

Within a year, Gaynor was one of Hollywood's leading ladies. Her performances in *Seventh Heaven* (the first of twelve movies she would make with actor Charles Farrell) and both *Sunrise*, directed by F. W. Murnau, and *Street Angel* (in 1927, also with Charles Farrell) earned her the first Academy Award for Best Actress in 1928. At the time, the award was awarded for multiple roles: it was given on the basis of the actor's total work over the year, and not just for one particular performance. Gaynor was not only the first, but until 1986 (when Marlee Matlin won her Oscar), she was also the youngest actress to win an Academy Award for Best Actress. At the time of their respective wins, Gaynor was 22 years old and Matlin was 21 years old.

Gaynor was one of only a handful of leading ladies who made a successful transition to sound films. For a number of years, Gaynor was the Fox studios foremost actress and was given the choice of prime roles, starring in such films as *Delicious* (1931), *Merely Mary Ann* (also 1931) and *Adorable* (1933). However, when Darryl F. Zanuck merged his fledgling studio, 20th Century Pictures, with Fox Film Corporation to form Twentieth Century Fox, her status became precarious and even tertiary to that of actresses Loretta Young and Shirley Temple. She managed to terminate her contract with the studio and achieved acclaim in films produced by David O. Selznick in the mid-1930s.

In 1937, she was again nominated for an Academy Award, this time for her role in *A Star Is Born*. After appearing in *The Young in Heart*, she left film industry for nearly twenty years, returning one last time in 1957 as Pat Boone's mother in *Bernardine*.

In 1939, she played Baroness Mary Vetsera in the Lux Radio Theater episode of January 1, 1939 – Mayerling.

Later life and death



Gaynor's gravestone

Gaynor was married to producer Paul Gregory from December 24, 1964 to her death on September 14, 1984. Previous marriages were to Jesse Lydell Peck from September 11, 1929 to April 7, 1933, and to MGM costume designer Adrian from August 14, 1939 to his death on September 13, 1959. Gaynor had one son with Adrian, Robin Gaynor Adrian, born in 1940. In addition to acting, Gaynor was an accomplished visual artist and her oil paintings were featured at the Wally Findlay Galleries show in New York, March 25 to April 7, 1977.

Gaynor was close friends with actress Mary Martin, with whom she frequently travelled. A Brazilian press report noted that Gaynor and Martin briefly lived with their respective husbands in the state of Goiás in the 1950s and 1960s.

She died on September 14, 1984, at the age of 77, due largely to the aftermath of a traffic accident in San Francisco two years earlier; specifically, her death resulted from complications following several operations. In the accident, a driver named Robert Cato ran a red light at the corner of California Street and Franklin and crashed into her Luxor taxicab. The crash killed Mary Martin's manager Ben Washer and injured the other passengers, including Gaynor's husband Paul Gregory, as well as her close, long-time friend, Mary Martin. Gaynor was in serious condition with eleven broken ribs, a fractured collarbone, pelvic fractures, an injured bladder and a damaged kidney. The drunk driver of the van, Robert Cato, was sentenced to a three-year prison term for drunken driving and vehicular manslaughter in the accident.

She was interred in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Hollywood, California next to her second husband Adrian, but her stone reads "Janet Gaynor Gregory," her legal name after her marriage to her third husband, producer and director Paul Gregory. Her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame can be found at 6284 Hollywood Blvd.

Jean Harlow

Jean Harlow (March 3, 1911 – June 7, 1937) was an American film actress and sex symbol of the 1930s. Known as the "Blonde Bombshell" and the "Platinum Blonde" (due to her platinum blonde hair), Harlow was ranked as one of the greatest movie stars of all time by the American Film Institute. Harlow starred in several films, mainly designed to showcase her magnetic sex appeal and strong screen presence, before making the transition to more developed roles and achieving massive fame under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). Harlow's enormous popularity and "laughing vamp" image were in distinct contrast to her personal life, which was marred by disappointment, tragedy, and ultimately her sudden death from renal failure at age 26.



circa 1930

Early life

Harlow was born **Harlean Harlow Carpenter** in Kansas City, Missouri. The name is sometimes incorrectly spelled Carpentier, which came from later studio press releases in an attempt to sound more aristocratic, and the inaccuracy has been frequently repeated. Her father, Mont Clair Carpenter (1877–1974), was a dentist who came from a working-class background and attended dental college in Kansas City. Her mother, Jean Poe Carpenter (née Harlow), was the daughter of a wealthy real estate broker, Skip Harlow, and his wife Ella Harlow (née Williams). The marriage was arranged by Skip Harlow in 1908 and Jean, an intelligent and strong-willed woman, was resentful and became very unhappy in the marriage. The couple lived in Kansas City in a house owned by Skip Harlow.

Harlean was nicknamed "The Baby", a name that would stick with her for the rest of her life. She did not learn that her name was actually Harlean and not "Baby" until the age of five, when she began to attend Miss Barstow's Finishing School for Girls in Kansas City. Harlean and Mother Jean, as she became known when Harlean became a film star, remained very close as the relationship eased Mother Jean's empty existence and unhappy marriage. "She was always all mine," she said of her daughter. Harlean's mother was extremely protective and coddling, instilling a sense that her daughter owed everything she had to her.

With her daughter at school, Mother Jean became increasingly frustrated and filed for divorce, which was finalized, uncontested, on September 29, 1922. She was granted sole custody of Harlean, who loved her father but would rarely see him for the rest of her life.

Mother Jean moved with Harlean to Hollywood in 1923 with hopes of becoming an actress. Harlean attended the Hollywood School for Girls and met some of Hollywood's future figures, including Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Joel McCrea and Irene Mayer Selznick. Mother Jean's dream of stardom did not come true as she was too old, at age 34, to begin a film career in an era when major roles were usually assigned to teenage girls. Facing dwindling finances, the pair returned to Kansas City within two years after Skip Harlow issued the ultimatum that they return or he would disinherit her. Harlean dropped out of school in Hollywood in the spring of 1925. Several weeks later, Skip Harlow sent her to a summer camp called Camp Cha-Ton-Ka in Michigamme, Michigan, where Harlean became ill with scarlet fever. Mother Jean traveled to Michigan to care for Harlean, rowing herself across the lake to the camp when she was told that she could not see her daughter.

Marriage

Harlean attended the Ferry Hall School (now Lake Forest Academy) in Lake Forest, Illinois. Mother Jean had ulterior motives for Harlean's attendance at the school, as it was close to the Chicago home of Mother Jean's beau, Marino Bello. Freshmen were paired with a "big sister" from the senior class and Harlean's big sister introduced her to Charles "Chuck" McGrew, heir to a large fortune, in the fall of 1926. And soon, the two began to date. On January 18, 1927, Mother Jean married Bello, although Harlean was not present.

Sixteen-year-old Harlean and twenty-year-old McGrew eloped on September 21, 1927. McGrew turned 21 two months after the marriage and received part of his large inheritance. The couple moved to Los Angeles in 1928, settling into a home in Beverly Hills, where Harlean thrived as a wealthy socialite. McGrew hoped to distance Harlean from her mother with the move. Neither McGrew nor Harlean worked, and both, especially McGrew, were thought to drink heavily.

Career beginnings

In Los Angeles, Harlean befriended Rosalie Roy, a young aspiring actress. Lacking a car, Roy asked Harlean to drive her to Fox Studios for an appointment. It was there that Harlean was noticed by Fox executives sitting in the car waiting for her friend. Harlean was approached by the executives, but stated that she was not interested. She was given dictated letters of introduction to Central Casting. Recounting this story a few days later, Rosalie Roy made a wager with Harlean that she did not have the nerve to go back and audition for roles. Unwilling to lose a wager and pressed by her enthusiastic mother, Harlean drove to Central Casting and signed in under her mother's maiden name, Jean Harlow.

After several calls from Central Casting, who had called for "Miss Harlow", and a number of rejected job offers, Harlean was pressured by her mother, now relocated to Los Angeles, into accepting work. Harlow then appeared in her first film, *Honor Bound*, as an unbilled extra for \$7 a day. This led to bit parts in silent films such as *Moran of the Marines* (1928), *Chasing Husbands*, *Why Is a Plumber?* (1927) and *Unkissed Man*. In December 1928, she signed a five-year contract with Hal Roach Studios for \$100 per week. She had more substantial roles in Laurel and Hardy's short *Double Whoopee*, and appeared in two other films alongside the double act. In March 1929, however, she parted with Roach, who tore up her contract after Harlow told him, "It's breaking up my marriage; what can I do?" In June 1929, Harlow separated from her husband and moved-in with her mother and Bello.

After her separation, Harlow worked as extra in several movies, and was cast as an extra in *The Love Parade* (1929), followed by small roles in *This Thing Called Love* and *The Saturday Night Kid* (1929), a Clara Bow movie. Her next extra work was in *Weak But Willing* (1929). During filming of *Weak But Willing* in 1929, she was spotted by James Hall, an actor filming a Howard Hughes film called *Hell's*

Angels. Hughes, re-shooting the film from silent into sound, needed a new actress because the original actress, Greta Nissen, had a Norwegian accent that proved undesirable for a talkie. Harlow made a test and got the part.

Hughes signed Harlow to a five-year, \$100 per week contract on October 24, 1929. *Hell's Angels* premiered in Hollywood on May 27, 1930 at Grauman's Chinese Theater. During the shooting, Harlow met MGM executive Paul Bern. The movie made Harlow an international star and a sensation with audiences, but critics were less than enthusiastic. *Variety* was a bit more charitable in remarking, "It doesn't matter what degree of talent she possesses ... nobody ever starved possessing what she's got." *The New Yorker* called Harlow "plain awful." She was again an un-credited extra, in the 1931 Chaplin film *City Lights*.



Jean Harlow and Clark Gable in a promotional still for *The Secret Six* (1931)

With no projects planned for Harlow, Hughes sent her to New York, Seattle and Kansas City for *Hell's Angels* premieres. In 1931, loaned out by Hughes' Caddo Company to other studios, Harlow began to gain more attention when she appeared in *The Secret Six* with Wallace Beery and Clark Gable, *Iron Man* with Lew Ayres and Robert Armstrong, and *The Public Enemy* with James Cagney. Though the films ranged from moderate to smash hits, Harlow's acting ability was damned by critics as awful and was mocked. Concerned, Hughes sent her on a brief publicity tour, which was not a success, as Harlow dreaded such personal appearances.

Harlow was next cast in *Platinum Blonde* (1931) with Loretta Young. Hughes convinced the producers of *Platinum Blonde* to rename it from its original title of *Gallagher* in order to promote Harlow's image, for whom the tag had just been invented by Hughes's publicity director. Many of Harlow's female fans began dyeing their hair platinum to match hers. To capitalize on this craze, Hughes' team organized a series of "Platinum Blonde" clubs across the nation, with a prize of \$10,000 to any beautician who could match Harlow's shade. However, Harlow herself denied her hair was dyed.

Harlow next filmed *Three Wise Girls* (1932), after which Paul Bern arranged to borrow her for *The Beast of the City* (1932). When the shooting wrapped, Harlow booked a ten-week personal appearance tour in the East Coast. To the surprise of many, especially Harlow herself, she packed every theatre in which she appeared, often appearing multiple nights in one venue. Despite critical disparagement and poor roles, Harlow's popularity and following was large and growing, and in February 1932, the tour was extended for additional six weeks.

Apprised of this, Paul Bern, by now romantically involved with Harlow, spoke to Louis B. Mayer about buying-out her contract with Hughes and signing her to MGM, however Mayer would have none of it. MGM's leading ladies were presented in an elegant way, and Harlow's silver screen image was that of a floozy, which was abhorrent to Mayer. Bern then began urging close friend Irving Thalberg, production head of MGM, to sign Harlow, noting Harlow's pre-existing popularity and established image. After initial reluctance, Thalberg agreed, and on March 3, 1932, Harlow's twenty-first birthday, Bern called

her with the news that MGM had purchased Harlow's contract from Hughes for \$30,000. Harlow officially joined the studio on April 20, 1932. Her first task at MGM would be a screen test for *Red-Headed Woman*.

According to Fay Wray, who played Ann Darrow in the classic *King Kong* (1933), Harlow was the original choice to play the screaming blonde heroine. Because MGM put Harlow under exclusive contract during the pre-production phase of the film, she became unavailable for *Kong*, and the part went to the brunette Wray, wearing a blonde wig.

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer



in *Red Dust* (1932)

Harlow became a superstar at MGM and was given superior movie roles to show off not only her beauty but also what turned out to be a genuine comedic talent. In 1932, she had the starring role in *Red-Headed Woman*, for which she received \$1,250 a week, and *Red Dust*, her second film with Clark Gable. These films showed her to be much more at ease in front of the camera and highlighted her skill as a comedienne. Harlow and Gable worked well together and co-starred in a total of six films. She was also paired multiple times with Spencer Tracy and William Powell. As her star ascended, the power of Harlow's name was sometimes used to boost up-and-coming male co-stars, such as Robert Taylor and Franchot Tone.

At this point, MGM began to distance Harlow's public persona from that of her screen characters, changing her childhood surname from common "Carpenter" to chic "Carpentier", claiming that writer Edgar Allan Poe was one of her ancestors, and publishing photographs of Harlow doing charity work. MGM tried to change her image from a brassy, exotic platinum blonde to the more mainstream, all-American type preferred by studio boss Mayer. Her early image proved difficult to change, and once Harlow was heard muttering, "My God, must I always wear a low-cut dress to be important?" Though Harlow's screen image changed dramatically throughout her career, one constant was her apparent sense of humor.

During the making of *Red Dust*, Harlow's second husband, MGM producer Paul Bern, was found shot dead at their home, creating a lasting scandal. Initially, there was speculation that Harlow had killed Bern, though Bern's death was officially ruled a suicide. Harlow kept silent, survived the ordeal, and became more popular than ever.



in *Riffraff* (1936)

After Bern's death, Harlow began an indiscreet affair with boxer Max Baer. Although he was separated from his wife, Dorothy Dunbar, at the time of their affair, Dunbar threatened divorce proceedings, naming Harlow as a correspondent for "alienation of affection", a legal term for adultery. MGM defused the situation by arranging a marriage between Harlow and cinematographer Harold Rosson. Still feeling the aftershocks of Bern's mysterious death, the studio did not want another Harlow scandal on its hands. Rosson and Harlow were friends, and Rosson went along with the plan. They quietly divorced seven months later.

After the box office hits *Hold Your Man* and *Red Dust*, MGM realized it had a goldmine in the Harlow-Gable teaming and paired them in two more films: *China Seas* with Wallace Beery and Rosalind Russell and *Wife vs. Secretary* with Myrna Loy and young James Stewart. Other co-stars included Spencer Tracy, Robert Taylor and William Powell.

By the mid-1930s, Harlow was one of the biggest stars in the United States and, it was hoped, MGM's next Greta Garbo. Still young, her star continued to rise while the popularity of other female stars at MGM, such as Joan Crawford and Norma Shearer, waned. Harlow's movies continued to make huge profits at the box office, even during the middle of the Depression. Some credit them with keeping MGM profitable at a time when other studios were falling into bankruptcy.

Following the end of her third marriage in 1934, Harlow met William Powell, another MGM star, and quickly fell in love. Reportedly, the couple were engaged for two years, but differences kept them from formalizing their relationship (she wanted children; he did not). Harlow also said that Louis B. Mayer would never allow them to marry.

Late career and death

Harlow was a registered Democrat and visited Franklin D. Roosevelt on the occasion of his 1937 birthday.

Harlow complained about ill health on May 20, 1937, when she was filming *Saratoga*. Her symptoms – fatigue, nausea, water weight and abdominal pain – did not seem very serious to her doctor, who believed she was suffering from gall bladder infection and flu. However, he was apparently not aware of Harlow's ill health during the previous year: a severe sunburn, bad flu attack and septicemia after a wisdom tooth extraction. In addition, her friend and co-star Myrna Loy noticed Harlow's grey complexion, fatigue and weight gain. On May 29, Harlow was shooting a scene in which the character she was playing had a fever. Harlow was clearly sicker than her character, and when she leaned against her co-star Clark Gable between scenes she said, "I feel terrible. Get me back to my dressing room." Harlow requested that the assistant director phone William Powell, who left his own set to escort Harlow back home.

On May 30, Powell checked on Harlow, and recalled her mother from a holiday trip when he found her condition had not improved and summoned her doctor to her home. Harlow's illnesses had delayed three previous films (*Wife vs. Secretary*, *Suzy* and *Libeled Lady*), so there was no great concern initially. On June 2, it was announced that Harlow was suffering from the flu. Harlow felt better on June 3 and co-workers expected her back on the set by Monday, June 7. Press reports were contradictory, with headlines like "Jean Harlow seriously ill" and "Harlow past illness crisis". When Harlow said on June 6 that she could not see Powell properly, he again called a doctor. As she slipped into a deep slumber and experienced difficulty breathing, the doctor finally realized that she was suffering from something other than gall bladder infection or flu.

That same evening, Harlow was taken to Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, where she slipped into a coma. 26-year-old Jean Harlow died in the hospital on Monday June 7, 1937, at 11:37 a.m. In the doctor's press releases, the cause of death was given as cerebral edema, a side effect of renal or kidney failure. Hospital records mention uremia.

For years, rumors circulated about Harlow's death. Some claimed that her mother refused to call a doctor because she was a Christian Scientist, or that Harlow herself declined hospital treatment or surgery. There were also rumors that Harlow had died because of alcoholism, a botched abortion, over-dieting, sunstroke, poisoning due to platinum hair dye, or various venereal diseases. However, based on medical bulletins, hospital records and testimony of her relatives and friends, it was proven to be a case of kidney disease. From the onset of her illness, despite resting at home, Harlow was attended by a doctor, two nurses visited her house and various equipment was brought from a nearby hospital. However, Harlow's mother barred some visitor, such as the MGM doctor, who later stated that it was because they were Christian Scientists. It has been suggested that she still wanted to control her daughter, but there is no truth to the allegation that she refused medical care for Harlow.

Harlow's kidney failure could not have been cured in the 1930s. The death rate from acute kidney failure has decreased to 25% only after the advent of antibiotics, dialysis and kidney transplantation. Harlow's grey complexion, recurring illnesses and severe sunburn were signs of the disease as her kidneys had been slowly failing and toxins accumulated in her body, exposing her to other illnesses and causing symptoms included swelling, fatigue and lack of appetite. Toxins also adversely impacted her brain and central nervous system. Speculation has suggested that Harlow suffered a post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis, following scarlet fever when she was young, which may have caused high blood pressure and ultimately kidney failure.

News of Harlow's death spread quickly. Spencer Tracy wrote in his diary, "Jean Harlow died today. Grand gal." One of the MGM writers later said: "The day Baby died there wasn't one sound in the commissary for three hours." MGM closed down on the day of Harlow's funeral on June 9. She was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California in the Great Mausoleum in a private room of multicolored marble which William Powell bought for \$25,000. She was buried in the gown she wore in *Libeled Lady*, and in her hands she held a white gardenia and a note in which Powell had written: "Goodnight, my dearest darling." Spaces in the same room were reserved for Harlow's mother and William Powell. Harlow's mother was buried there in 1958, but Powell remarried in 1940 and was buried elsewhere when he died in 1984. There is a simple inscription on Harlow's grave, "Our Baby".

MGM planned to replace Harlow in *Saratoga* with another actress, but because of public objections the film was finished by using three doubles (one for close-ups, one for long shots and one for dubbing Harlow's lines) as well as writing her character out of some scenes. True to their star until the end, fans came out in droves to see Harlow's last movie, *Saratoga*. The film was MGM's highest grossing picture

of 1937 and proclaimed to be her best film. Ever since the film's release, viewers have tried to spot these stand-ins and signs of Harlow's illness.

Novel

Harlow wrote a novel, entitled *Today is Tonight*. According to Arthur Landau in his introduction to the 1965 paperback edition, Harlow stated her intention to write the book around 1933–1934, but it was not published during her lifetime. After her death, Landau writes, her mother sold the film rights to MGM, but no film was made. The publication rights to the novel were passed from Harlow's mother to a family friend and the book was finally published in 1965.

Film portrayals

In 1965, two films about Jean Harlow were released, both called *Harlow*. One starred Carroll Baker and the other, Carol Lynley. Both were poorly received and did not perform well at the box office. In 1978, Lindsay Bloom portrayed her in *Hughes and Harlow: Angels in Hell*. More recently, Gwen Stefani briefly appeared as Harlow in Martin Scorsese's 2004 Howard Hughes biopic *The Aviator*.

Joan Crawford

Joan Crawford (March 23, 1905 – May 10, 1977), born **Lucille Fay LeSueur**, was an American actress in film, television and theatre.



Crawford photographed in 1948

Starting as a dancer in traveling theatrical companies before debuting on Broadway, Crawford was signed to a motion picture contract by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1925. Initially frustrated by the size and quality of her parts, Crawford began a campaign of self-publicity and became nationally known as a flapper by the end of the 1920s. In the 1930s, Crawford's fame rivaled MGM colleagues Norma Shearer and Greta Garbo. Crawford often played hardworking young women who find romance and financial success. These "rags-to-riches" stories were well-received by Depression-era audiences and were popular with women. Crawford became one of Hollywood's most prominent movie stars and one of the highest paid women in the United States, but her films began losing money and by the end of the 1930s she was labeled "box office poison".

After an absence of nearly two years from the screen, Crawford staged a comeback by starring in *Mildred Pierce* (1945), for which she won the Academy Award for Best Actress. In 1955, she became involved with the Pepsi-Cola Company through her marriage to company Chairman Alfred Steele. After his death in 1959, Crawford was elected to fill his vacancy on the board of directors but was forcibly retired in 1973. She continued acting in film and television regularly through the 1960s, when her performances became fewer; after the release of the British horror film *Trog* in 1970, Crawford retired from the screen. Following a public appearance in 1974, after which unflattering photographs were published, Crawford withdrew from public life and became more and more reclusive until her death in 1977.

Crawford married four times. Her first three marriages ended in divorce; the last ended with the death of husband Al Steele. She adopted five children, one of whom was reclaimed by his birth mother. Crawford's relationships with her two older children, Christina and Christopher, were acrimonious. Crawford disinherited the two and, after Crawford's death, Christina wrote a "tell-all" memoir, *Mommie Dearest*, in which she alleged a lifelong pattern of physical and emotional abuse perpetrated by Crawford.

Crawford was voted the tenth greatest female star in the history of American cinema by the American Film Institute.

Early life

Crawford was born **Lucille Fay LeSueur** in San Antonio, Texas, the third child of Tennessee-born Thomas E. LeSueur (1868–1938), a laundry laborer of French Huguenot and Jersey ancestry, and Anna Bell Johnson (1884–1958), who was of Swedish and Irish descent. Her older siblings were Daisy LeSueur, who died very young, and Hal LeSueur. Thomas LeSueur abandoned the family a few months before Crawford's birth. He reappeared in Abilene, Texas in 1930 as a 62-year-old construction laborer on the George R. Davis House, built in Prairie School architecture.

Crawford's mother subsequently married Henry J. Cassin. The family lived in Lawton, Oklahoma, where Cassin ran a movie theater. Crawford was unaware that Cassin was not her birth father until her brother Hal told her. The 1910 federal census for Comanche County, Oklahoma, enumerated on April 20, showed Henry and Anna living at 910 "D" Street in Lawton. Crawford was listed as five years old, thus showing 1905 as her likely year of birth. However, the state of Texas did not require the filing of birth certificates until 1908, allowing Crawford to claim she was born in 1908.

Crawford preferred the nickname "Billie" as a child and she loved watching vaudeville acts perform on the stage of her stepfather's theater. The instability of her family life affected her education and her level of schooling never really progressed beyond the fourth grade. Her ambition was to be a dancer. However, in an attempt to escape piano lessons to run and play with friends, she leaped from the front porch of her home and cut her foot deeply on a broken milk bottle. Crawford had three operations and was unable to attend elementary school for a year and a half. She eventually fully recovered and returned to dancing.

Around 1916, Crawford's family moved to Kansas City, Missouri. Cassin was first listed in the City Directory in 1917, living at 403 East Ninth Street. While still in elementary school, Crawford was placed in St. Agnes Academy, a Catholic school in Kansas City. Later, after her mother and stepfather broke up, she stayed on at St. Agnes as a work student. She then went to Rockingham Academy, also as a work student. She later claimed the headmaster's wife there beat her and forged her grades to hide the fact that young Lucille spent far more time working, primarily cooking and cleaning, rather than being able to study academically. While attending Rockingham she began dating and had her first serious relationship, with a trumpet player named Ray Sterling. It was Sterling who reportedly inspired her to begin challenging herself academically. In 1922, she registered at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, giving her year of birth as 1906. Crawford attended Stephens for only four months before withdrawing after she realized she was not prepared for college.

Career

Early career



Joan Crawford in 1928

Under the name Lucille LeSueur, Crawford began dancing in the choruses of traveling revues and was spotted dancing in Detroit by producer Jacob J. Shubert. Shubert put her in the chorus line for his 1924 show, *Innocent Eyes*, at the Winter Garden Theatre on Broadway in New York City. While appearing in *Innocent Eyes* Crawford met a saxophone player named James Welton. The two were allegedly married in 1924 and lived together for several months, although this supposed marriage was never mentioned in later life by Crawford. She wanted additional work and approached Loews Theaters publicist Nils Granlund. Granlund secured a position for her with producer Harry Richmond's act and arranged for her to do a screen test which he sent to producer Harry Rapf in Hollywood. Stories have persisted that Crawford further supplemented her income by appearing in one or more stag, or soft-core pornographic, films, although this has been disputed. Rapf notified Granlund on December 24, 1924 that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had offered Crawford a contract at \$75 a week. Granlund immediately wired the 19 year old LeSueur – who had returned to her mother's home in Kansas City – with the news; she borrowed \$400 for travel expenses. The night after Christmas she left Kansas City and arrived in Culver City, California on January 1, 1925.

As Lucille LeSueur, her first film was *Pretty Ladies* in 1925, which starred ZaSu Pitts. Also in 1925 she appeared in small roles in the films *The Only Thing* and *Old Clothes*. MGM publicity head Pete Smith recognized her ability but felt that her name sounded fake; it also, he told studio head Louis B. Mayer, sounded like "Le Sewer". Smith organized a contest in conjunction with the fan magazine *Movie Weekly* to allow readers to select her new name. Initially the name "Joan Arden" was selected but, when another actress was found to have prior claim to that name, the alternate name "Crawford" became the choice. Crawford initially wanted her new first name to be pronounced "Jo-Anne". She hated the name Crawford, saying it sounded like "crawfish". Her friend, actor William Haines, quipped, "They might have called you 'Cranberry' and served you every Thanksgiving with the turkey!" Crawford continued to dislike the name throughout her life but, she said, she "liked the security that went with it".

Self-promotion and early successes

Growing increasingly frustrated over the size and quality of the parts she was given, Crawford embarked on a campaign of self-promotion. As MGM screenwriter Frederica Sagor Maas recalled, "No one decided to make Joan Crawford a star. Joan Crawford became a star because Joan Crawford decided to become a star." She began attending dances in the afternoons and evenings at hotels around Hollywood, where she often won dance competitions with her performances of the Charleston and the Black Bottom. Her strategy worked, and MGM cast her in the film where she first made an impression on audiences, Edmund Goulding's *Sally, Irene and Mary* (1925). She played Irene, a struggling chorus girl. In the same year, Crawford worked on *Lady of the Night*, starring Norma Shearer. Crawford was made up and used as a double for Shearer and her face is briefly seen. Crawford coveted the roles that Shearer played but knew that Shearer's husband, producer Irving Thalberg, guaranteed Shearer first choice of roles in any MGM property. "How can I compete with Norma?" Crawford was quoted as saying. "She sleeps with the boss."

The following year, Crawford was named one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars, along with Mary Astor, Mary Brian, Dolores Costello, Dolores del Río, Janet Gaynor and Fay Wray. For the next two years, Crawford appeared in increasingly important films. In 1926, she made *Paris*, where she was able to show her sex appeal. She became the romantic interest for some of MGM's leading male stars, among them Ramón Novarro, William Haines, John Gilbert and Tim McCoy. Crawford appeared in *The Unknown* (1927), starring Lon Chaney, Sr. who played a carnival knife thrower with no arms. Crawford played his skimpily clad young carnival assistant whom he hopes to marry. She stated that she learned more about acting from watching Chaney work than from anything else in her career. "It was then", she

said, "I became aware for the first time of the difference between standing in front of a camera, and acting."

In 1928, Crawford starred opposite Ramón Novarro in *Across to Singapore*, but it was her role as Diana Medford in *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928) that catapulted her to stardom. The role established her as a symbol of modern 1920s-style femininity that rivaled the image of her friend Clara Bow, the original IT girl, who was Hollywood's foremost flapper. A stream of hits followed *Our Dancing Daughters*, including two more flapper-themed movies, in which Crawford embodied for her legion of fans (many of whom were women) an idealized vision of the free-spirited, all-American girl. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote of her:

Joan Crawford is doubtless the best example of the flapper, the girl you see in smart night clubs, gowned to the apex of sophistication, toying iced glasses with a remote, faintly bitter expression, dancing deliciously, laughing a great deal, with wide, hurt eyes. Young things with a talent for living.

On June 3, 1929, Crawford married Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. at Saint Malachy's Roman Catholic Church in New York City, although neither apparently was Catholic. Fairbanks was the son of Douglas Fairbanks and the stepson of Mary Pickford, who were considered Hollywood royalty. Fairbanks Sr. and Pickford were opposed to the marriage and did not invite the couple to their home, Pickfair, for eight months after the marriage. The relationship between Crawford and Fairbanks, Sr. eventually warmed; she called him "Uncle Doug" and he called her "Billie". Following that first invitation, Crawford and Fairbanks, Jr. became more frequent guests, which was hard on Crawford. While the Fairbanks men played golf together, Crawford was left either with Pickford or alone.

To rid herself of her Southwestern accent, Crawford tirelessly practiced diction and elocution. She said:

If I were to speak lines, it would be a good idea, I thought, to read aloud to myself, listen carefully to my voice quality and enunciation, and try to learn in that manner. I would lock myself in my room and read newspapers, magazines and books aloud. At my elbow I kept a dictionary. When I came to a word I did not know how to pronounce, I looked it up and repeated it correctly fifteen times.

Her first talkie was *Untamed* (1929), opposite Robert Montgomery, which was a box office success. Crawford made an effective transition to sound movies. One critic wrote, "Miss Crawford sings appealingly and dances thrillingly as usual; her voice is alluring and her dramatic efforts in the difficult role she portrays are at all times convincing."

From Queen of the Movies to box office poison



Crawford in *Rain* (1932)

With the early sound film, *Our Blushing Brides* (1930), another financial success, MGM began to develop a more sophisticated image of Crawford, rather than continuing to promote her flapper girl

persona of the silent era. In 1931, she starred opposite Clark Gable in *Possessed*. They began an affair during the production, resulting in an ultimatum from studio chief Louis B. Mayer to Gable that the affair end. Gable complied, although for many years their affair resumed sporadically and secretly. Upon release, *Possessed* was an enormous hit.

The studio then cast her in *Grand Hotel*, which starred the most famous actors of the 1930s and was MGM's most prestigious movie of 1932. Crawford later achieved continued success with *Letty Lynton* (1932). Soon after its release, a plagiarism suit forced MGM to withdraw it. It has never been shown on television or made available on home video, and is therefore considered the "lost" Crawford film. The film is mostly remembered because of the "Letty Lynton dress", designed by Adrian: a white cotton organdy gown with large ruffled sleeves, puffed at the shoulder. It was with this gown that Crawford's broad shoulders began to be accentuated by costume. Macy's copied the dress in 1932, and it sold over 500,000 replicas in the United States.



With Wallace Beery in *Grand Hotel* (1932)

In May 1933, Crawford divorced Fairbanks. Crawford cited "grievous mental cruelty"; "a jealous and suspicious attitude" toward her friends and "loud arguments about the most trivial subjects" lasting "far into the night". Following *Possessed*, Crawford starred opposite Gable in the hit *Dancing Lady* (1933), in which she received top billing. Crawford's next movies, *Sadie McKee*, *Chained* and *Forsaking All Others* (all 1934), were among the top money makers of the mid-1930s.

In 1935, Crawford married her second husband, Franchot Tone, a stage actor from New York who planned to use his film salary to finance his theatre group. Tone and Crawford appeared together in *Today We Live* (1933) and were immediately drawn to each other, although Crawford was hesitant about entering into another romance so soon after her split from Fairbanks. The couple built a small theatre at Crawford's Brentwood home and put on productions of classic plays for select groups of friends. Before and during their marriage, Crawford worked to promote Tone's Hollywood career but Tone was ultimately not interested in being a movie star and Crawford eventually wearied of the effort. Tone began drinking and physically abusing Crawford and she filed for divorce, which was granted in 1939. Crawford and Tone eventually reconciled their friendship and Tone even proposed in 1964 that they remarry. When Tone died in 1968, Crawford arranged for him to be cremated and his ashes scattered at Muskoka Lakes, Canada.

The *Motion Picture Herald* placed Crawford on its list of the top-ten moneymaking stars from 1932, the first year of the poll, through 1936 and *Life* magazine proclaimed her "First Queen of the Movies" in 1937. Later in 1937 she dropped out of the top ten for the first time. In 1938 the *Independent Film Journal* named her and several other stars as "box office poison" based on their supposed lack of popular appeal. However, Crawford made a comeback with her role as home-wrecker Crystal Allen in director George Cukor's *The Women* in 1939. She broke from formula by taking the unglamorous role of Julie in *Strange Cargo* (1940), her eighth and final film with Gable. Crawford then starred as a facially

disfigured blackmailer in *A Woman's Face* (1941), a remake of a European film which had starred Ingrid Bergman in the lead role three years earlier. While the film was only a moderate box office success, her performance was hailed by many critics.

Crawford adopted her first child, a daughter, in 1940. Because she was single, California law prevented her from adopting within the state so she arranged the adoption through an agency in Las Vegas. The child was temporarily called Joan until Crawford changed her name to Christina. She married actor Phillip Terry on July 21, 1942 after a six-month courtship. Together the couple adopted a son whom they named Christopher, but his birth mother reclaimed the child. They adopted another boy, whom they named Phillip Terry, Jr. After the marriage ended in 1946, Crawford changed the child's name to Christopher Crawford. After 18 years, Crawford's contract with MGM was terminated by mutual consent on June 29, 1943. In lieu of one more movie owed under her contract, MGM bought her out for \$100,000. During World War II she was a member of American Women's Voluntary Services.

Move to Warner Bros.

For \$500,000, Crawford signed with Warner Bros. for a three movie deal and was placed on the payroll on July 1, 1943. She also made a cameo with many other stars in the G.I. morale-booster *Hollywood Canteen* (1944). Crawford said one of the main reasons she signed with Warner Bros. was because she wanted to play the character "Mattie" in a proposed 1944 film version of Edith Wharton's novel *Ethan Frome* (1911).



Joan Crawford in *Mildred Pierce* (1945)

Crawford wanted to play the title role in *Mildred Pierce* (1945), but Bette Davis was the studio's first choice. However, Davis turned the role down. Director Michael Curtiz did not want Crawford and told Jack Warner, "She comes over here with her high-hat airs and her goddamn shoulder pads... why should I waste my time directing a has-been?" Curtiz demanded Crawford prove her suitability by taking a screen test. After the test, Curtiz agreed to Crawford's casting. Crawford starred opposite Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, Eve Arden, Ann Blyth and Butterfly McQueen. *Mildred Pierce* was a resounding critical and commercial success. It epitomized the lush visual style and the hard-boiled film noir sensibility that defined Warner Bros. movies of the later 1940s, earning Crawford the Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role.

From 1945 to 1952, Crawford reigned as a top star and respected actress, appearing in such roles as Helen Wright in *Humoresque* (1946), Louise Howell Graham in *Possessed* (1947, for which she was nominated for a second Oscar for Best Actress) and the title role in *Daisy Kenyon* (also 1947). She did a critically well received send-up of her screen image in a cameo in the Doris Day-Jack Carson musical, *It's a Great Feeling* (1949). Other movie roles of the era include Lane Bellamy in *Flamingo Road* (1949), a dual role in the film noir *The Damned Don't Cry* (1950), and the title role of *Harriet Craig*

(1950) at Columbia Pictures. After filming *This Woman Is Dangerous* (1952), Crawford asked to be released from her Warner Bros. contract. As she had done before, Crawford triumphed as Myra Hudson in *Sudden Fear* (1952) at RKO, which was the movie that introduced her co-star, Jack Palance, to the screen and earned Crawford a third and final Oscar nomination for Best Actress.

Crawford adopted two more children in 1947, fraternal twins whom she named Cindy and Cathy.

Radio and television

Crawford worked in the radio series *The Screen Guild Theater* on January 8, 1939; *Good News; Baby*, broadcast March 2, 1940 on Arch Oboler's *Lights Out; The Word on Everyman's Theater* (1941); *Chained* on the *Lux Radio Theater* and Norman Corwin's *Document A/777* (1948). She appeared in episodes of anthology television series in the 1950s and, in 1959, made a pilot for her series, *The Joan Crawford Show*, but the show was never picked up by a network.

Al Steele and Pepsi Cola Company

Crawford married her final husband, Alfred Steele, at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas on May 10, 1955. Crawford and Steele met at a party in 1950 when Steele was an executive with Coca-Cola. They renewed their acquaintance at a New Year's Eve party in 1954. Steele by that time had become the President of Pepsi Cola. Alfred Steele would later be named Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Pepsi Cola. Crawford traveled extensively on behalf of Pepsi following the marriage. She estimated that she traveled over 100,000 miles for the company. Steele died of a heart attack in April 1959. Crawford was initially advised that her services were no longer required. After she told the story to Louella Parsons, Pepsi reversed its position and Crawford was elected to fill the vacant seat on the board of directors. Crawford, left near-penniless following Steele's death, accepted a supporting role in the film *The Best of Everything* (1959). It was her first non-starring role in her later career.

Crawford received the sixth annual "Pally Award", which was in the shape of a bronze Pepsi bottle. It was awarded to the employee making the most significant contribution to company sales. In 1973, Crawford was forcibly retired from the company at the behest of company executive Don Kendall, whom Crawford had referred to for years as "Fang."

Later career

After her triumph in RKO's *Sudden Fear*, Crawford appeared in films ranging from the camp western film *Johnny Guitar* (1954) to the drama *Autumn Leaves* (1956), opposite a young Cliff Robertson. By the early 1960s, however, Crawford's status in motion pictures had diminished.



As Blanche Hudson in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962)

Crawford starred as Blanche Hudson, a wheelchair bound former A-list movie star in conflict with her psychotic sister in the highly successful thriller *What Ever Happened To Baby Jane?* (1962). Despite the actresses' earlier tensions, Crawford suggested Bette Davis for the role of Jane. The two stars maintained publicly that there was no feud between them. However, Crawford accused Davis of kicking her during the filming of a scene in which Jane attacks Blanche, and reportedly retaliated by wearing weights under her clothes in a scene in which Davis had to carry her. The director, Robert Aldrich, explained that Davis and Crawford were each aware of how important the film was to their respective careers and commented, "It's proper to say that they really detested each other, but they behaved absolutely perfectly." After filming was completed, their public comments against each other allowed the tension to develop into a lifelong feud. The film became a huge success, recouping its costs in 11 days of nationwide release and temporarily reviving Crawford's career. Davis was nominated for an Academy Award for her performance as Jane Hudson. Crawford secretly contacted the other Oscar nominees in the category (Katharine Hepburn, Geraldine Page and Anne Bancroft, all East Coast-based actresses), to let them know if they could not attend the ceremony, she would be happy to accept the Oscar on their behalf; all agreed. Both Davis and Crawford were backstage when the absent Anne Bancroft was announced as the winner, and Crawford accepted the award on her behalf. Davis claimed for the rest of her life that Crawford campaigned against her, a charge Crawford denied. That same year, Crawford starred as Lucy Harbin in William Castle's horror mystery *Strait-Jacket* (1964).

Director Robert Aldrich cast Crawford and Davis in *Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte* (1964). After a campaign of harassment by Davis while the film was on location in Louisiana, Crawford returned to Hollywood and entered a hospital. After a prolonged absence in which Crawford was accused of feigning illness, Aldrich was forced to replace her with Olivia de Havilland. Crawford was devastated. "I heard the news of my replacement over the radio, lying in my hospital bed", Crawford said. "I wept for 39 hours." Crawford nursed grudges against Davis and Aldrich for the rest of her life, saying of Aldrich, "He is a man who loves evil, horrendous, vile things." (to which Aldrich replied, "If the shoe fits, wear it, and I am very fond of Miss Crawford.")

Upon her release from the hospital Crawford played the role of Amy Nelson in *I Saw What You Did* (1965), another William Castle vehicle. She starred as Monica Rivers in Herman Cohen's horror thriller film *Berserk!* (1967). After the film's release, Crawford guest-starred as herself on *The Lucy Show*. The episode, "Lucy and the Lost Star", first aired on February 26, 1968. Crawford struggled during rehearsals and drank heavily on-set, leading series star Lucille Ball to suggest replacing her with Gloria Swanson. Crawford was letter-perfect the day of the show and received two standing ovations from the studio audience.

In October 1968, Crawford's 29-year-old daughter, Christina (who was then acting in New York on the CBS TV soap opera *The Secret Storm*), needed immediate medical attention for a ruptured ovarian tumor. Until Christina was well enough to return, Crawford offered to play her role, to which producer Gloria Monty readily agreed. Although Crawford did well in rehearsal, she lost her composure while taping and the director and producer were left to struggle to piece together the necessary footage.

Crawford's appearance in the 1969 TV film *Night Gallery* (which served as pilot to the series that followed), marked one of Steven Spielberg's earliest directing jobs. She starred on the big screen one final time, playing Dr. Brockton in Herman Cohen's science fiction horror film *Trog* (1970), rounding out a career spanning 45 years and over 80 motion pictures. Crawford made three more TV appearances, as Stephanie White in an episode of *The Virginian* (1970), entitled "The Nightmare"; as Allison Hayes in the made-for-TV movie *Beyond the Water's Edge* (1972); and as Joan Fairchild (her final performance) on an episode of the television series, *The Sixth Sense*, entitled, "Dear Joan: We're Going To Scare You To Death" (1972).

Final years and death

In 1970, Crawford was presented with the Cecil B. DeMille Award by John Wayne at the Golden Globes, which was telecast from the Coconut Grove at The Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. She also spoke at her alma mater, Stephens College, from which she never graduated.

Crawford published her autobiography, *A Portrait of Joan* – written with Jane Kesner Ardmore – in 1962 through Doubleday. Crawford's next book, *My Way of Life*, was published in 1971 by Simon and Schuster. Those expecting a racy tell-all were disappointed, although Crawford's meticulous ways were revealed in her advice on grooming, wardrobe, exercise, and even food storage.

Crawford was active in various Democratic causes along with longtime friend Myrna Loy. Upon her death there was found in her apartment photographs of John F. Kennedy, whom she voted for in the 1960 presidential election.

In September 1973, Crawford moved from apartment 22-G to the smaller apartment 22-H in the Imperial House. Her last public appearance was September 23, 1974, at a party honoring her old friend Rosalind Russell at New York's Rainbow Room. Russell was suffering from breast cancer and arthritis at the time. When Crawford saw the unflattering photos of both stars that appeared in the papers the next day, she said, "If that's how I look, then they won't see me anymore." Crawford cancelled all public appearances, began declining interviews and left her apartment less and less. Her dental-related issues, including surgery which left her in need of round the clock nursing care, also plagued her from 1972 until the middle of 1975. While on antibiotics for this problem in October 1974, Crawford's drinking caused her to black out, slip and strike her face. This incident scared her enough to give up drinking and smoking, although in public she insisted it was due to her return to Christian Science. The whole incident is recorded in a series of letters sent to her insurance company held at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, as well as being documented by her friend, Carl Johnnes, in his book.

On May 8, 1977, Crawford gave away her beloved Shih Tzu "Princess Lotus Blossom", which she was too weak to care for properly. Crawford died two days later at her New York apartment from a heart attack, while also ill with pancreatic cancer. A funeral was held at Campbell Funeral Home, New York, on May 13, 1977. In her will, which was signed October 28, 1976, Crawford bequeathed to her two youngest children, Cindy and Cathy, \$77,500 each from her \$2,000,000 estate. She explicitly disinherited the two eldest, Christina and Christopher, writing "It is my intention to make no provision herein for my son Christopher or my daughter Christina for reasons which are well known to them."

A memorial service was held for Crawford at All Souls' Unitarian Church on Lexington Avenue in New York on May 16, 1977, and was attended by, among others, her old Hollywood friend Myrna Loy. Another memorial service, organized by George Cukor, was held on June 24 in the Samuel Goldwyn Theater at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, California. Crawford was cremated and her ashes placed in a crypt with her last husband, Alfred Steele, in Ferncliff Cemetery, Hartsdale, New York.

Crawford's hand and footprints are immortalized in the forecourt of Grauman's Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood. She also has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1750 Vine Street. In 1999, *Playboy* listed Crawford as one of the "100 Sexiest Women of the 20th century", ranking her #84.

Mommie Dearest

In November 1978, a year and a half after Crawford's death, Christina published *Mommie Dearest*, which contained allegations that Crawford was emotionally and physically abusive to Christina and her brother Christopher. Many of Crawford's friends and co-workers, including Van Johnson, Ann Blyth, Marlene Dietrich, Myrna Loy, Cesar Romero, and Crawford's other daughters, Cathy and Cindy, denounced the book, categorically denying any abuse. But others, including Betty Hutton, Helen Hayes, James MacArthur, June Allyson, Liz Smith, and Rex Reed witnessed abuse. Bette Davis supported Christina's version, saying that Christina could not have made it up (Davis, while still alive, would later become the target of her own daughter B. D. Hyman's tell-all in 1985, *My Mother's Keeper*). *Mommie Dearest* became a bestseller and was made into the 1981 film *Mommie Dearest*, starring Faye Dunaway as Crawford. Dunaway would later express regret for her portrayal of Crawford in her autobiography, *Looking for Gatsby*, believing that her career had been damaged by the portrayal and at the hands of Crawford's friends.

Jobyna Ralston

Jobyna Ralston (November 21, 1899 – January 22, 1967) was an American stage and film actress.



Studio publicity photo taken in the 1920s

Early life and career

Born **Jobyna Lancaster Raulston** in South Pittsburg, Tennessee in 1899 to parents who named her after famed entertainer of the time, Jobyna Howland. Ralston's mother, a portrait photographer, carefully groomed her daughter for a show business career.

At the age of nine she gave her first stage performance in Cinderella during the grand opening of the Wilson theatre/Opera House in 1909. Around 1915, Ralston attended acting school in New York. She later danced chorus and sang in Broadway productions, her first being *Two Little Girls in Blue*. This production marked her Broadway debut, when she was 21. Comedian Max Linder saw her on stage and persuaded her to go to Hollywood, where she appeared in a number of his films. She also co-starred in *Humor Risk* (1921), the fabled lost comedy short film that was to be the film debut of the Marx Brothers. Soon director Hal Roach began to star the actress in one-reel comedies. She abandoned the stage for the screen in 1922 when her mother's health began to decline, and she needed to make more money to help pay the medical bills.

Starring with Harold Lloyd

In 1923 she was named by the film industry as one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars. This award was given every year to the top up and coming female stars. This same year she starred with silent comedian Harold Lloyd in *Why Worry?*, and for the next five years appeared in six of Lloyd's feature films as his leading lady. It is for these performances and her onscreen chemistry with Lloyd that she is best remembered today. She would start the trend for romantic comedies with *Girl Shy* (1924).

Silent film career

As a freelance actress, Ralston co-starred with Richard Arlen, in the first Oscar-winning film, *Wings* (1927). She had a feature role in a film which also featured Clara Bow, Gary Cooper, and Buddy Rogers. She would star in eleven more motion pictures, among them *Special Delivery* (1927) co-starring Eddie Cantor. Her film career ended after two early talkies when she became a mother. Her last talkie, *Rough Waters* (1930), found her acting with Rin Tin Tin.

Personal life and death

Ralston was married twice, the first time to childhood beau John Campbell, the second in 1927 to actor Richard Arlen, whom she had met on the set of *Wings*. They had one child, actor Richard Arlen, Jr. Ralston and Arlen divorced in 1945.

During the last five years of her life Ralston suffered from rheumatism and had a series of strokes. She died in 1967 from pneumonia at the Motion Picture Country Home in Woodland Hills, Los Angeles, California. She was 67 years old.

John Barrymore

John Sidney Blyth (February 15, 1882 – May 29, 1942), better known as **John Barrymore**, was an acclaimed American actor. He first gained fame as a handsome stage actor in light comedy, then high drama and culminating in groundbreaking portrayals in Shakespearean plays *Hamlet* and *Richard III*. His success continued with motion pictures in various genres in both the silent and sound eras. Barrymore's personal life has been the subject of much writing before and since his passing in 1942. Today John Barrymore is mostly known for his roles in movies like *Dr Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* (1920), *Grand Hotel* (1932), *Dinner at Eight* (1933), *Twentieth Century* (1934), and *Don Juan* (1926), the first ever movie to use a Vitaphone soundtrack.



John Barrymore (aged 40) in 1922

A member of a multi-generation theatrical dynasty, he was the brother of Lionel Barrymore and Ethel Barrymore, and was the paternal grandfather of Drew Barrymore.

Early life

Barrymore was born in the Philadelphia home of his maternal grandmother. His parents were Maurice Barrymore and Georgie Drew Barrymore. His maternal grandmother was Louisa Lane Drew (aka Mrs. Drew), a prominent and well-respected 19th-century actress and theater manager, who instilled in him and his siblings the ways of acting and theatre life. His uncles were John Drew, Jr. and Sidney Drew.

Barrymore fondly remembered the summer of 1896 in his youth, spent on his father's rambling estate on Long Island. He and Lionel lived a Robinson Crusoe-like existence, attended by a black servant named Edward. John was expelled from Georgetown Preparatory School in 1898 after being caught entering a bordello.

Barrymore studied to be an artist and worked on New York newspapers before deciding to go into the family business as an actor. He made his stage debut in 1903. He first appeared on the London stage two years later.

While still a teenager, he courted showgirl Evelyn Nesbit in 1901 and 1902. For years, rumors swirled that Nesbit had become pregnant and that Barrymore had arranged an abortion, disguised as an operation for "appendicitis". In 1906, another Nesbit lover, famed architect Stanford White, was murdered by Nesbit's husband, Pittsburgh millionaire Harry K. Thaw. Barrymore was subpoenaed to testify at Thaw's trial in defense hopes of showing that Nesbit had a history of "immorality." Both Barrymore and Nesbit denied the abortion story under oath.

Barrymore was staying at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco when the 1906 earthquake struck. He had starred in a production of *The Dictator* and was booked to tour Australia with it. Since he loathed this prospect, he hid, spending the next few days drinking at the home of a friend on Van Ness Avenue. During this drinking jag, he worked out a plan to exploit the earthquake for his own ends. He decided to present himself as an on-the-scene "reporter", making up virtually everything he claimed to have witnessed. Twenty years later, Barrymore finally confessed to his deception, but by then, he was so famous that the world merely smiled indulgently at his admission." His account was written as a "letter to my sister Ethel". He was sure the letter would be "worth at least a hundred dollars." In terms of publicity it earned Barrymore a thousand times that amount.

Barrymore was also great friends and a drinking buddy with baseball legend Mike Donlin. Donlin eventually appeared in two of Barrymore's silent movies, *Raffles The Amateur Cracksman* and *The Sea Beast*.

Early theatre and film career

Barrymore delivered some of the most critically acclaimed performances in theatre and film history and was widely regarded as the screen's greatest performer during a movie career spanning 25 years as a leading man in more than 60 films.

Barrymore specialized in light comedies until convinced by his friend, playwright Edward Sheldon, to try serious drama. Thereafter Barrymore created a sensation in John Galsworthy's *Justice* (1916) co-starring Cathleen Nesbitt. It would be Nesbitt who would introduce him to Blanche Oelrichs. He followed this triumph with Broadway successes in *Peter Ibbetson* (1917), a role his father Maurice had wanted to play, Tolstoy's *Redemption* (1918) and *The Jest* (1919), co-starring his brother Lionel, reaching what seemed to be the zenith of his stage career as Richard III in 1920. Barrymore suffered a conspicuous failure in his wife Michael Strange's play *Clair de Lune* (1921), but followed it with the greatest success of his theatrical career with *Hamlet* in 1922, which he played on Broadway for 101 performances and then took to London in 1925.

Barrymore entered films around 1913 with the feature *An American Citizen*. He or someone using the name *Jack Barrymore* is given credit for four short films made in 1912 and 1913, but this has not been proven to be John Barrymore. Barrymore was most likely convinced into giving films a try out of economic necessity and the fact that he hated touring a play all over the United States. He could make a couple of movies in the off-season theater months or shoot a film in one part of a day while doing a play in another part. He also may have been goaded into films by his brother Lionel and his uncle Sidney, who had both been successfully making movies for a couple of years. Some of Barrymore's silent film roles included A. J. Raffles in *Raffles the Amateur Cracksman* (1917), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), *Sherlock Holmes* (1922), *Beau Brummel* (1924), Captain Ahab in *The Sea Beast* (1926), and *Don Juan* (1926). When talking pictures arrived, Barrymore's stage-trained voice added a new dimension to his screen work. He made his talkie debut with a dramatic reading of the big Duke of Gloucester speech from *Henry VI, part 3* in Warner Brothers' musical revue *The Show of Shows* ("Would they were wasted: marrow, bones and all"), and reprised his Captain Ahab role in *Moby Dick* (1930). His other

leads included *The Man from Blankley's* (1930), *Svengali* (1931), *The Mad Genius* (1931), *Grand Hotel* (1932) (in which he displays an affectionate chemistry with his brother Lionel), *Dinner at Eight* (1933), *Topaze* (1933) and *Twentieth Century* (1934). He worked opposite many of the screen's foremost leading ladies, including Greta Garbo, Katharine Hepburn, Jean Harlow, Joan Crawford, and Carole Lombard. In 1933, Barrymore appeared as a Jewish attorney in the title role of *Counsellor at Law* based on Elmer Rice's 1931 play. As critic Pauline Kael later wrote, he "seems an unlikely choice for the ghetto-born lawyer...but this is one of the few screen roles that reveal his measure as an actor. His 'presence' is apparent in every scene; so are his restraint, his humor, and his zest."

Later career

Barrymore collapsed on his boat, *The Mariner*, in 1929 off the coast of Mexico while on honeymoon with wife Dolores, requiring admittance into doctor's care. Much of his newly occurring health problems most likely stemmed from his consumption of bad and sometimes nearly poisonous illegal alcohol during the period of Prohibition in the United States. In the late 1930s, Barrymore began to lose his ability to remember his lines, and his diminished abilities were apparent in a surviving screen test that he made for an aborted film version of *Hamlet* in 1934. From then on, he insisted on reading his dialogue from cue cards. He gave one last bravura Shakespeare performance, as an overage Mercutio in the 1936 MGM *Romeo and Juliet*. He continued to give creditable performances in lesser pictures, for example as Inspector Nielson in some of Paramount Pictures' Bulldog Drummond mysteries, and offered one last bravura dramatic turn in RKO's 1939 feature *The Great Man Votes*. After that, his remaining screen roles were broad caricatures of himself, as in *The Great Profile* (with "Oh, Johnny, How You Can Love" as his theme music) and *World Premiere*. In the otherwise undistinguished *Playmates* with band leader Kay Kyser, Barrymore recited the "To Be, or Not to Be" soliloquy from *Hamlet*. In 1937, Barrymore visited India, the land where his father had been born. In his private life, during his last years, he was married to his fourth and last wife, Elaine Barrie, a union that turned out to be disastrous. His brother Lionel tried to help him find a small place near Lionel's house and to convince him to stay away from impetuous marriages, which usually ended in divorce and put a strain on his once large income.

He was known for calling people by nicknames of his own creation. Dolores Costello was known in his writing alternately as "Small Cat," "Catkiwee," "Winkie", and "Egg." He called Lionel "Mike", and Ethel called John "Jake". He called Blanche Oelrichs "Fig" and called their daughter Diana "Treepeeewee".

Street Naming

The Fort Lee Film Commission of Fort Lee, New Jersey, successfully petitioned the Borough to change the name of the intersection of Main Street and Central Road to John Barrymore Way on February 15 (Barrymore's birthday) in 2010. This was the site of the old Buckheister's Hotel where in 1900 the then 18-year-old John Barrymore made his stage debut in a Fort Lee Fire House fundraiser directed by his father Maurice Barrymore in the play "A Man of the World." See the book "Great times Good Times The Odyssey of Maurice Barrymore" by James Kotsilibas-Davis and "The House of Barrymore" by Margot Peters as sources for this information as well as the Fort Lee Film Commission (www.fortleefilm.org). At the time Maurice Barrymore lived in the Coytesville section of Fort Lee with his son John Barrymore and Maurice was a member of the Coytesville (Fort Lee) Fire Department.

Death

Barrymore collapsed while appearing on Rudy Vallee's radio show and died in his hospital room, May 29, 1942. His dying words were "Die? I should say not, dear fellow. No Barrymore would allow such a conventional thing to happen to him." Gene Fowler attributes different dying words to Barrymore in his biography *Good Night, Sweet Prince*. According to Fowler, John Barrymore roused as if to say something to his brother Lionel; Lionel asked him to repeat himself, and he simply replied, "You heard me, Mike."

According to Errol Flynn's memoirs, film director Raoul Walsh "borrowed" Barrymore's body before burial, and left his corpse propped in a chair for a drunken Flynn to discover when he returned home from The Cock and Bull Bar. This was re-created in the movie *W.C. Fields and Me*. Other accounts of this classic Hollywood tale substitute actor Peter Lorre in the place of Walsh, but Walsh himself tells the story in Richard Schickel's 1973 documentary *The Men Who Made the Movies*. However, Barrymore's great friend Gene Fowler denied the story, stating that he and his son held vigil over the body at the funeral home until the funeral and burial.

He was buried in East Los Angeles, at Calvary Cemetery, on June 2. Surviving family members in attendance were his brother Lionel and his daughter Diana. Ex wife Elaine also attended. Among his active pallbearers were Gene Fowler, John Decker, W.C. Fields, Herbert Marshall, Eddie Mannix, Louis B. Mayer, and David O. Selznick. Years later, Barrymore's son John had the body reinterred at Philadelphia's Mount Vernon Cemetery.

Legacy

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, John Barrymore has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6667 Hollywood Boulevard.

Barrymore had been a friend and contemporary (and drinking buddy) of his fellow Philadelphian W. C. Fields. In the 1976 film *W.C. Fields and Me*, Barrymore was played by Jack Cassidy. Cassidy, like Flynn and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. idolized Barrymore. Barrymore was also portrayed by Christopher Plummer (who was a friend of Diana Barrymore) in the 1996 two-man show *Barrymore*, and by Errol Flynn in the 1958 film *Too Much, Too Soon*.

He is mentioned in the lyrics of the song "I May Be Wrong (But I Think You're Wonderful)" by Harry Sullivan and Harry Ruskin, written in 1929, which became the theme song of the Apollo Theater in New York, and which was recorded by many artists including Doris Day in 1950.

In addition, his ghost is a major character in Paul Rudnik's comedy *I Hate Hamlet*.

Marriages

Katherine Corri Harris (1890–1927), an actress who starred in the 1918 film *The House of Mirth*, on September 1, 1910 and divorced in 1917.

Blanche Marie Louise Oelrichs (1890–1950), aka "Michael Strange," on August 5, 1920 and divorced her in 1925. They had one child:

Diana Blanche Barrymore (1921–1960), who died at age 38 of an overdose of alcohol and sleeping pills. A semi-autobiographical story of her life was depicted in *Too Much, Too Soon*, starring Errol Flynn as John Barrymore

Dolores Costello (1903–1979), actress and model best known for *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1936) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1941); they married on November 24, 1928 and divorced in 1935. They had two children:

Dolores Ethel Mae Barrymore (born 1930)

John Drew Barrymore (1932–2004) (father of Drew Barrymore)

Elaine Barrie (née Elaine Jacobs), (1916–2003), an actress; married November 9, 1936 and divorced 1940

Stage appearances

A Man of the World (1900) (Cincinnati)

Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines (1901) (Philadelphia)

Madga (1903) (Chicago)

Leah the Foresaken (1903)

Glad of It (December 28, 1903 – January 1904) (Broadway)

The Dictator (April 4 – May 30, 1904; return engagement August 24 – September 1904) (Broadway and San Francisco)

Yvette (1904) (benefit performance for Actors Fund)

Pantaloon / Alice Sit-by-the-Fire (December 25, 1905 – March 1906) (Broadway)

Sunday (1905) (national tour)

His Excellency the Governor (Revival) (April 4 – May 1907) (Broadway)

The Boys of Company B (April 8 – July 1907) (replacement for Arnold Daly) (Broadway)

Toddles (March 16 – April 1908) (Broadway)

The Candy Shop (1908)

A Stubborn Cinderella (January 25 – April 10, 1909) (Broadway)

The Fortune Hunter (September 4, 1909 – July 1910) (Broadway and national tour)

Uncle Sam (October 30 – December 1911) (Broadway)

Princess Zim-Zim (1911) (national tour)

A Slice of Life (January 29 – March 1912) (Broadway and national tour)

Half a Husband/On the Quiet/The Honor of the Family/The Man from Home (1912) (summer repertory; Rochester, New York and Los Angeles)

The Affairs of Anatol (Revival) (October 14 – December 1912) (Broadway and national tour)

A Thief for a Night (1913) (Chicago)

Believe Me Xantippe (August 19 – October 1913) (Broadway)

The Yellow Ticket (January 20 – June 1914) (Broadway)

Kick In (October 15, 1914 – March 1915) (Broadway)

Justice (April 3 – July 1916) (Broadway)

Peter Ibbetson (April 17 – June 1917) (Broadway)

Redemption (October 3, 1918 – March 1919) (Broadway)

The Jest (April 9 – June 14, 1919; return engagement September 19, 1919 – February 28, 1920) (Broadway)

King Richard III (Revival) (March 6 – April 1920) (Broadway and London)

Clair de Lune (April 18 – June 1921) (Broadway)

Hamlet (Revival) (November 16, 1922 – February 1923; return engagement November 26 – December 1923; 1925) (Broadway, national tour, and London)

My Dear Children (1939; January 31 – May 18, 1940) (Broadway)

John Gilbert

John Gilbert (July 10, 1897 – January 9, 1936) was an American actor and a major star of the silent film era.



Known as "the great lover," he rivaled even Rudolph Valentino as a box office draw. Though he was often cited as one of the high profile examples of an actor who was unsuccessful in making the transition to talkies, there was speculation that his decline as a star had to do with studio politics and money and not the sound of his screen voice.

Life and career

Born **John Cecil Pringle** in Logan, Utah, to stock company actor parents, he struggled through a childhood of abuse and neglect before moving to Hollywood as a teenager. He first found work as an extra with the Thomas Ince Studios, and soon became a favorite of Maurice Tourneur, who also hired him to write and direct several pictures. He quickly rose through the ranks, building his reputation as an actor in such films as *Heart o' the Hills* with Mary Pickford. In 1921, Gilbert signed a three year contract with Fox Film Corporation, where he was cast as a romantic leading man. Some of his films for Fox include *Monte Cristo*, an adaptation of *The Count of Monte Cristo*; *St. Elmo*, an adaptation of a popular book of the period; *The Wolf Man*, not a horror film, the story of a man who believes he murdered his fiancée's brother while drunk and many others. At the time, Gilbert did not sport his famous mustache, and this made his features more uneven and a little less handsome, and Fox plainly did not realize what huge potential he had.

In 1924, he moved to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, where he became a full-fledged star with such high-profile films as *His Hour* directed by King Vidor and written by Elinor Glyn; *He Who Gets Slapped* (1924), co-starring Lon Chaney, Sr. and Norma Shearer, and directed by Victor Sjöström; and *The Merry Widow* (1925) directed by Erich von Stroheim and co-starring Mae Murray. In 1925, Gilbert was once again directed by Vidor in the war epic *The Big Parade*, which became the second highest grossing silent film. His performance in this film made him a major star. The following year, Vidor reunited

Gilbert with two of his co-stars from that picture, Renée Adorée and Karl Dane, for the film *La Bohème* which also starred Lillian Gish.

Gilbert married the successful film actress Leatrice Joy in 1922. The union produced a daughter, Leatrice Gilbert Fountain, but the tempestuous marriage only lasted two years. The couple divorced in 1924, with Joy charging that Gilbert was a compulsive philanderer.

In 1926, Gilbert made *Flesh and the Devil*, his first film with Greta Garbo. They soon began a very public relationship, much to the delight of their fans. Gilbert wanted to marry her, but Garbo continually balked. Legend has it that a wedding was finally planned but Garbo failed to appear at the ceremony. Recent Garbo biographers, however, have questioned the veracity of this story. Despite their rocky off-screen relationship, they continued to generate box-office revenue for the studio, and MGM paired them in two more silents *Love* (1927), a modern adaptation of *Anna Karenina*, and *A Woman of Affairs* (1928). The former film was slyly advertised by MGM as "Garbo and Gilbert in *Love*."

Career decline

Throughout his time at MGM, Gilbert frequently clashed with studio head Louis B. Mayer over creative, social and financial matters. It was said that at the apparent double wedding of Garbo and Gilbert and director King Vidor and actress Eleanor Boardman, Mayer made a crude remark about Garbo to the distraught Gilbert, causing him to physically attack the mogul. This story has been disputed by some historians. Although one eye-witness—the bride, Eleanor Boardman—claimed to have seen the assault, others deny that it occurred.

In any case, Mayer apparently detested Gilbert and was disgruntled that the actor had just signed an ironclad contract for six pictures at \$250,000 each. It was suggested that Mayer deliberately gave Gilbert bad scripts and ineffective directors in an effort to void the contract.

With the coming of sound, Gilbert's vocal talents made a good first impression in the all-star musical comedy *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*, appearing in a Technicolor sequence with Norma Shearer. They played the "balcony scene" from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, first as written, and then repeating the scene in current slang. Reviewers for the film did not note any problems with Gilbert's voice at this time and, in fact, some praised it.

Audiences awaited Gilbert's first romantic role on the talking screen. The vehicle was the Ruritanian romance *His Glorious Night*. According to film reviews of the day, audiences laughed nervously at Gilbert's performance. The fault was not Gilbert's voice but the awkwardly scripted, overly ardent scenes of lovemaking; in one scene, Gilbert keeps kissing his leading lady (Catherine Dale Owen) while saying "I love you" over and over again. (This scene was famously parodied in the 1952 MGM musical *Singin' in the Rain*, where a preview of the fictional *The Dueling Cavalier* flops disastrously). Director King Vidor stated that Rudolph Valentino, Gilbert's main rival in the 1920s for romantic leads, probably would have suffered the same fate in the talkie era, had he lived.

Gilbert became increasingly depressed by progressively inferior films and idle stretches between productions, but he resolved to thwart Louis B. Mayer's master plan and see the six-picture contract through. Gilbert's fortunes were temporarily restored by MGM's production chief Irving Thalberg. Thalberg gave Gilbert two projects that were character studies, giving Gilbert an excellent showcase for his versatility. *The Phantom of Paris*, originally intended for Lon Chaney who died from cancer in 1930, cast Gilbert as a debonair magician and showman who is falsely accused of murder, and uses his mastery of disguise to unmask the real killer. *Downstairs* was based on Gilbert's original story, with the actor playing against type as a scheming, blackmailing chauffeur. The films were well received by

critics and fans, but did not return him to the heights of stardom. Shortly after making *Downstairs*, he married co-star Virginia Bruce; the couple divorced in 1934. Gilbert played out the contract with one last, unimportant "B" picture, and left the studio in 1933.

Greta Garbo insisted that John Gilbert must return to MGM, to play her leading man in *Queen Christina*, directed by Rouben Mamoulian. Garbo was top-billed, with Gilbert's name beneath the title. The picture also failed to revive his career. Columbia Pictures gave him a chance for a comeback in 1934; *The Captain Hates the Sea* featured a capable performance by Gilbert as a frustrated playwright, but off-screen the ensemble cast of heavy drinkers did nothing for Gilbert's discipline, and the film turned out to be his last.

Personal life

Gilbert was married four times (including once to film and stage actress Ina Claire), and had two daughters. His daughter Leatrice Gilbert Fountain (from his marriage to silent-film actress Leatrice Joy), wrote an acclaimed biography of her father's life published in 1985, and continues as a source of information on his life and career. His granddaughter, Lorin Hart, is a musician/folk singer in California.

Death

By 1934, alcoholism had severely damaged Gilbert's health; he died of a heart attack without ever regaining his former reputation. Toward the end of his life, Gilbert became involved with Marlene Dietrich, and at the time of his death he was slated to star opposite her in the film *Desire*. Gilbert's ashes were interred in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

Gilbert has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1755 Vine Street and in 1994, he was honored with his image on a United States postage stamp designed by caricaturist Al Hirschfeld.

Josephine Baker

Josephine Baker (June 3, 1906 – April 12, 1975) was an American dancer, singer, and actress who found fame in her adopted homeland of France. She was given such nicknames as the "Bronze Venus", the "Black Pearl", and the "Créole Goddess".



Josephine Baker in Havana, Cuba (1950)

Baker was the first African American female to star in a major motion picture, to integrate an American concert hall, and to become a world-famous entertainer. She is also noted for her contributions to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States (she was offered the unofficial leadership of the movement by Coretta Scott King in 1968 following Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, but turned it down), for assisting the French Resistance during World War II, and for being the first American-born woman to receive the French military honor, the Croix de guerre.

Early life

Baker was born **Freda Josephine McDonald** in St. Louis, Missouri, the daughter of Carrie McDonald. Her estate identifies vaudeville drummer Eddie Carson as her natural father. A biography written by her foster son Jean-Claude Baker stated:

Her mother, Carrie, was adopted in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1886 by Richard and Elvira McDonald, both of whom were former slaves of African and Native American descent. When Baker was eight she was sent to work for a white woman who abused her, burning Baker's hands when she put too much soap in the laundry. She later went to work for another woman.

Baker dropped out of school at the age of 12 and lived as a street child in the slums of St. Louis, sleeping in cardboard shelters and scavenging for food in garbage cans. Her street-corner dancing attracted attention and she was recruited for the St. Louis Chorus vaudeville show at 15. She then headed to New York City during the Harlem Renaissance, performing at the Plantation Club and in the chorus of the popular Broadway revues *Shuffle Along* (1921) with Adelaide Hall and *The Chocolate Dandies* (1924). She performed as the last dancer in a chorus line, a position in which the dancer traditionally performed in a comic manner, as if she was unable to remember the dance, until the encore,

at which point she would not only perform it correctly, but with additional complexity. Baker was then billed as "the highest-paid chorus girl in vaudeville".

On October 2, 1925, she opened in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, where she became an instant success for her erotic dancing and for appearing practically nude on stage. After a successful tour of Europe, she reneged on her contract and returned to France to star at the Folies Bergères, setting the standard for her future acts. She performed the *Danse sauvage*, wearing a costume consisting of a skirt made of a string of artificial bananas. Her success coincided (1925) with the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs, which gave birth to the term "Art Deco", and also with a renewal of interest in ethnic forms of art, including African. Baker represented one aspect of this fashion. In later shows in Paris she was often accompanied on stage by her pet cheetah, Chiquita, who was adorned with a diamond collar. The cheetah frequently escaped into the orchestra pit, where it terrorized the musicians, adding another element of excitement to the show.

Rise to fame

After a short while she was the most successful American entertainer working in France. Ernest Hemingway called her "... the most sensational woman anyone ever saw." In addition to being a musical star, Baker also starred in three films which found success only in Europe: the silent film *Siren of the Tropics* (1927), *Zouzou* (1934) and *Princesse Tam Tam* (1935). She also starred in *Fausse Alerte* (English title: *The French Way*) in 1940.



Baker costumed for the Danse banane from the Folies Bergères production *Un Vent de Folie* in Paris in 1927, her most famous banana costume



Josephine Baker in a topless photo shoot.

At this time she also scored her most successful song, "J'ai deux amours" (1931) and became a muse for contemporary authors, painters, designers, and sculptors including Langston Hughes, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pablo Picasso, and Christian Dior. Under the management of Giuseppe Pepito Abatino — a Sicilian former stonemason who passed himself off as a count — Baker's stage and public persona, as well as her singing voice, were transformed.

In 1934 she took the lead in a revival of Jacques Offenbach's 1875 opera *La créole* at the Théâtre Marigny on the Champs-Élysées of Paris, which premiered in December of that year for a six month run. In preparation for her performances she went through months of training with a vocal coach. In the words of Shirley Bassey, who has cited Baker as her primary influence, "... she went from a 'petite danseuse sauvage' with a decent voice to 'la grande diva magnifique' ... I swear in all my life I have never seen, and probably never shall see again, such a spectacular singer and performer."

Despite her popularity in France, she never obtained the same reputation in America. Upon a visit to the United States in 1935-1936, her performances received poor opening reviews for her starring role in the *Ziegfeld Follies* and she was replaced by Gypsy Rose Lee later in the run.

Baker returned to Paris in 1937, married a Frenchman, Jean Lion, who was Jewish, and became a French citizen. They were married in the French city of Crévecœur le Grand. The wedding was presided over by the mayor at the time, Jammy Schmidt. During the ceremony, when she was asked if she was ready to give up her American citizenship, it has been claimed that she renounced it without difficulty.

Her affection for France was so great that when World War II broke out, she volunteered to spy for her adopted country. Baker's agent's brother approached her about working for the French government as an "honorable correspondent", if she happened to hear any gossip at parties that might be of use to her adopted country, she could report it. Baker immediately agreed, since she was against the Nazi stand on race, not only because she was black but because her husband was Jewish. Her café society fame enabled her to rub shoulders with those in-the-know, from high-ranking Japanese officials to Italian bureaucrats, and report back what she heard. She attended parties at the Italian embassy without any suspicion falling on her and gathered information. She helped in the war effort in other ways, such as by sending Christmas presents to French soldiers. When the Germans invaded France, Baker left Paris and went to the Château des Milandes, her home in the south of France, where she had Belgian refugees living with her and others who were eager to help the Free French effort led from England by Charles de Gaulle. As an entertainer, Baker had an excuse for moving around Europe, visiting neutral nations like Portugal, and returning to France. Baker assisted the French Resistance by smuggling secrets written in invisible ink on her sheet music.

She helped mount a production in Marseille to give herself and her like-minded friends a reason for being there. She helped quite a lot of people who were in danger from the Nazis get visas and passports to leave France. Later in 1941, she and her entourage went to the French colonies in North Africa; the stated reason was Baker's health (since she really was recovering from another case of pneumonia) but the real reason was to continue helping the Resistance. From a base in Morocco, she made tours of Spain and pinned notes with the information she gathered inside her underwear (counting on her celebrity to avoid a strip search) and made friends with the Pasha of Marrakesh, whose support helped her through a miscarriage (the last of several) and emergency hysterectomy she had to go through in 1942. Despite the state of medicine in that time and place, she recovered, and started touring to entertain Allied soldiers in North Africa. She even persuaded Egypt's King Farouk to make a public appearance at one of her concerts, a subtle indication of which side his officially neutral country leaned toward. Later, she would perform at Buchenwald for the liberated inmates who were too frail to be moved.

After the war, for her underground activity, Baker received the Croix de guerre, the Rosette de la Résistance, and was made a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur by General Charles de Gaulle.

In January 1966, she was invited by Fidel Castro to perform at the Teatro Musical de La Habana in Havana, Cuba. Her spectacular show in April of that year led to record breaking attendance. In 1973, Baker opened at Carnegie Hall to a standing ovation. In 1974, she appeared in a Royal Variety Performance at the London Palladium.



Josephine Baker dancing the Charleston, 1926

Civil rights activism

Although based in France, Baker supported the American Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s. She protested in her own way against racism, adopting 12 multi-ethnic orphans, whom she called the "Rainbow Tribe." In addition, she refused to perform for segregated audiences in the United States. Her insistence on mixed audiences helped to integrate shows in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In 1951, Baker made charges of racism against Sherman Billingsley's Stork Club in Manhattan, where she alleged that she'd been refused service. Actress Grace Kelly, who was at the club at the time, rushed over to Baker, took her by the arm and stormed out with her entire party, vowing never to return (and she never did). However, during his work on the *Stork Club* book, author and *New York Times* reporter Ralph Blumenthal was contacted by Jean-Claude Baker, one of Josephine Baker's sons. Having read a Blumenthal-written story about Leonard Bernstein's FBI file, he indicated that he had read his mother's FBI file and using comparison of the file to the tapes, said he thought the Stork Club incident was overblown. The two women became close friends after the incident. Testament to this was made evident when Baker was near bankruptcy and was offered a villa and financial assistance by Kelly (who by then was princess consort of Rainier III of Monaco).

Baker worked with the NAACP. In 1963, she spoke at the March on Washington at the side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Wearing her Free French uniform emblazoned with her medal of the Légion d'honneur, she was the only woman to speak at the rally. After King's assassination, his widow Coretta Scott King approached Baker in Holland to ask if she would take her husband's place as leader of the American Civil Rights Movement. After many days of thinking it over, Baker declined, saying her children were "too young to lose their mother".

Personal life

Baker had 12 children through adoption. She bore only one child herself, stillborn in 1941, an incident which precipitated an emergency hysterectomy. Baker raised two daughters, French-born Marianne and Moroccan-born Stellina, and ten sons, Korean-born Akio, Japanese-born Jeannot (or Janot), Colombian-born Luis, Finnish-born Jari, French-born Jean-Claude and Noël, Israeli-born Moïse, Algerian-born Brahim, Ivorian-born Koffi, and Venezuelan-born Mara. For some time, Baker lived with her children and an enormous staff in a castle, Château de Milandes, in Dordogne, France.

There is evidence to suggest that Baker was bisexual. Her son Jean-Claude Baker and co-author Chris Chase state in *Josephine: The Hungry Heart* that she was involved in numerous lesbian affairs, both while she was single and married, and mention six of her female lovers by name. Clara Smith, Evelyn Sheppard, Bessie Allison, Ada "Bricktop" Smith, and Mildred Smallwood were all African-American women whom she met while touring on the black performing circuit early in her career. She was also reportedly involved intimately with French writer Colette. Not mentioned, but confirmed since, was her affair with Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Jean-Claude Baker, who interviewed over 2,000 people while writing his book, wrote that affairs with women were not uncommon for his mother throughout her lifetime. He was quoted in one interview as saying:

"She was what today you would call bisexual, and I will tell you why. Forget that I am her son, I am also a historian. You have to put her back into the context of the time in which she lived. In those days, Chorus Girls were abused by the white or black producers and by the leading men if he liked girls. But they could not sleep together because there were not enough hotels to accommodate black people. So they would all stay together, and the girls would develop lady lover friendships, do you understand my English? But wait wait...If one of the girls by preference was gay, she'd be called a bull dyke by the whole cast. So you see, discrimination is everywhere."

Death

On April 8, 1975, Baker starred in a retrospective revue at the Bobino in Paris, *Joséphine à Bobino 1975*, celebrating her 50 years in show business. The revue, financed by Prince Rainier, Princess Grace, and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, opened to rave reviews. Demand for seating was such that fold-out chairs had to be added to accommodate spectators. The opening-night audience included Sophia Loren, Mick Jagger, Shirley Bassey, Diana Ross and Liza Minnelli.

Four days later, Baker was found lying peacefully in her bed surrounded by newspapers with glowing reviews of her performance. She was in a coma after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. She was taken to Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, where she died, aged 68, on April 12, 1975. Her funeral was held at L'Église de la Madeleine. The first American woman to receive full French military honors at her funeral, Baker locked up the streets of Paris one last time. She was interred at the *Cimetière de Monaco* in Monte Carlo.

Legacy

Place Joséphine Baker in the Montparnasse Quarter of Paris was named in her honor. She has also been inducted into the St. Louis Walk of Fame and the Hall of Famous Missourians. Her name has also been incorporated at Paris Plage, a man-made beach along the river Seine "Piscine Joséphine Baker".

Two of Baker's sons, Jean-Claude and Jarry (Jari), grew up to go into business together, running the restaurant Chez Josephine on Theatre Row, 42nd Street, New York, which celebrates Baker's life and works.

Portrayals



Baker pictured in her most famous costume for the *Danse banane*

In 2006, Jérôme Savary produced a musical, "A La Recherche de Josephine – New Orleans for Ever" (Looking for Josephine). The story revolved around the history of jazz and Baker's career.

In 1991, Baker's life story, *The Josephine Baker Story*, was broadcast on HBO. Lynn Whitfield portrayed Baker, and won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries or a Movie--becoming the first Black actress to win the award in this category.

Josephine Baker appears in her role as a member of the French Resistance in Johannes Mario Simmel's 1960 novel, *"Es Muss Nicht Immer Kaviar Sein"* (*On a pas toujours du caviar*).

The 2004 erotic novel *Scandalous* by British author Angela Champion uses Baker as its heroine and is inspired by Baker's sexual exploits and later adventures in the French Resistance. In the novel, Baker, working with a fictional black Canadian lover named Drummer Thompson, foils a plot by French fascists in 1936 Paris.

Her influence upon and assistance with the careers of husband and wife dancers Carmen De Lavallade and Geoffrey Holder are discussed and illustrated in rare footage in the 2005 Linda Atkinson/Nick Doob documentary, *Carmen and Geoffrey*.

Beyoncé Knowles has portrayed Baker on various accounts throughout her career. During the 2006 Fashion Rocks show, Knowles performed "Dejá Vu" in a revised version of the *Danse banane* costume. In Knowles's video for "Naughty Girl", she is seen dancing in a huge champagne glass à La Baker. In *I Am... Yours: An Intimate Performance at Wynn Las Vegas*, Beyonce lists Baker as an influence of a section of her live show.

In the 1997 animated film *Anastasia*, Baker appears with her cheetah during the musical number "Paris Holds the Key (to Your Heart)". A character clearly based upon Baker (topless, wearing the famous 'banana skirt') appears in the opening sequence of the 2003 animated film *Les Triplettes de Belleville*.

A German submariner mimics Baker's *Danse banane* in the film *Das Boot*.

In 2010, Keri Hilson portrayed Baker in her single "Pretty Girl Rock".

Artist Hassan Musa portrayed Baker in a series of paintings called *Who needs Bananas?*

In 2011, Sonia Rolland portrayed Baker in the film *Midnight in Paris*.

Ken Maynard

Ken Maynard (July 21, 1895 – March 23, 1973) was an American motion picture stuntman and actor.



Ken Maynard in *Old Santa Fe* (1934)

Biography

Born Kenneth Olin Maynard in Vevay, Indiana, he was one of five children. His younger brother, Kermit Maynard, also became a stuntman and actor.

Working at carnivals and circuses, starting at age 16, Maynard became an accomplished horseman. As a young man, he performed in rodeos and was a trick rider with *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show*. During World War I, he served in the United States Army.

After the war, Maynard returned to show business as a circus rider with Ringling Brothers. When the circus was playing in Los Angeles, California, actor Buck Jones encouraged Maynard to try work in the movies. Maynard soon had a contract with Fox Studios.

He first appeared in silent motion pictures in 1923 and in addition to acting also did stunt work. His horsemanship and rugged good looks made Maynard a cowboy star. His white stallion, "Tarzan", also became famous. He became one of the first singing cowboys with Columbia Records, recording two songs, "The Lone Star Trail" and "The Cowboy's Lament". Maynard moved to Universal Studios, where he made his first films with a musical soundtrack. He sang two songs in *Sons of the Saddle* (1930).

In 1931 and 1932, Maynard worked for Tiffany Productions and Sono Art-World Wide Pictures before moving back to Universal in 1933. Maynard played several instruments and was featured playing the fiddle in *The Fiddlin' Buckaroo* (1933) and the banjo in *The Trail Drive* (1933). Maynard moved to Mascot Pictures in 1934.

With his white cowboy hat, fancy shirt, and pair of six-shooters, from the 1920s to the mid-1940s, Maynard appeared in more than 90 films. However, his alcoholism severely impacted his life and his career ended in 1944. He made appearances at state fairs and rodeos. He then owned a small circus operation featuring rodeo riders but eventually lost it to creditors. The significant amount of money he

had earned vanished, and he lived a desolate life in a rundown mobile home. During these years, Maynard was supported by an unknown benefactor, long thought to be Gene Autry.

More than 25 years after his last starring role, Maynard returned to two small parts in films in 1970 and 1972.

Ken Maynard died penniless in 1973 at the Motion Picture Home in Woodland Hills, California. He was interred at Forest Lawn Cypress Cemetery in Cypress, California. Maynard's funeral is described in detail in James Horwitz's book *They Went Thataway*.

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Ken Maynard has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6751 Hollywood Blvd.

Laura La Plante

Laura La Plante (November 1, 1904 – October 14, 1996) was an American actress, best-known for her roles in silent films.



Early acting career

Born as **Laura LaPlant**, La Plante made her acting debut at the age of 15, and in 1923 was named as one of the years WAMPAS Baby Stars. During the 1920s she appeared in more than sixty films. Among her early film appearances were *Big Town Round-Up* (1921), with cowboy star Tom Mix, and the serials *Perils of the Yukon* (1922) and *Around the World in Eighteen Days* (1923).

The majority of her films (i.e. from 1921 to 1930) were made for Universal Pictures. During this period she was the studio's most popular star, "an accomplishment duplicated only by Deanna Durbin years later." One of her earliest surviving films is *Smouldering Fires* (1925) directed by Clarence Brown and costarring Pauline Frederick. Her best remembered film is arguably the silent classic *The Cat and the Canary* (1927), although she also achieved acclaim for *Skinner's Dress Suit* (1926), with Reginald Denny, the part-talkie *The Love Trap* (1929), directed by William Wyler, and the 1929 part-talkie film version of *Show Boat* (1929), adapted from the novel of the same name by Edna Ferber.

Although this last film was an adaptation of the novel, and not of the famous musical play that the novel was based on, some songs from the play were tossed into the film as box-office insurance. La Plante, however, did not actually sing in the movie; her singing was dubbed by Eva Olivetti, one of the first instances in which this was done in a motion picture. Quite unusual for its day, a scene of La Plante in *Show Boat* was broadcast on early British television.

Transition to "talking films"

The advent of "Talkies" effectively shortened her career. Only in her mid-twenties, La Plante proved to be a quite natural and appealing presence in early talkies but the huge wave of new stars in those years overshadowed her. She made her last appearances for Universal in the Technicolor musical extravaganza *King of Jazz* (1930).

For a while she free-lanced, appearing in *God's Gift to Women* (Warner Bros., 1931), directed by Michael Curtiz and co-starring Frank Fay, and *Arizona* (Columbia, 1931), co-starring a young John Wayne.

Later career

La Plante subsequently went to England where she appeared in several "quota quickies", including *Man of the Moment* (1935), with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. La Plante was briefly considered to replace Myrna Loy in the *Thin Man* series when Loy thought about leaving, but Loy stayed as "Nora Charles", and La Plante's career never rebounded.

She retired from the screen in 1935, making only two later films, 1957's *Spring Reunion* being her last. Her younger sister, actress Violet La Plante, never achieved her sister Laura's level of fame, but, like Laura, was herself named as a "WAMPAS Baby Star", with her "WAMPAS" title coming in 1925. In 1954 Laura La Plante made a guest appearance (as herself, Mrs. Laura Asher) on Groucho Marx's quiz show *You Bet Your Life*. She talked about her husband, Irving Asher, who had just lost 25 lbs. and completed "Elephant Walk" with Elizabeth Taylor in "Ceylon". Mrs. Asher asked that her winnings, if any, go to the Motion Picture Relief Fund. They got three out of four questions correct to win \$215.

Death

She died in Woodland Hills, California from Alzheimer's disease, aged 91. There is a Laura La Plante Road in Agoura Hills, California.

Laurel and Hardy

Laurel and Hardy were one of the most popular and critically acclaimed comedy double acts of the early Classical Hollywood era of American cinema. Composed of thin Englishman Stan Laurel (1890–1965) and heavy American Oliver Hardy (1892–1957) they became well known during the late 1920s to the mid-1940s for their slapstick comedy, with Laurel playing the clumsy and childlike friend of the pompous Hardy. They made over 100 films together, initially two-reelers (short films) before expanding into feature length films in the 1930s. Their films include *Sons of the Desert* (1933), the Academy Award winning short film *The Music Box* (1932), *Babes in Toyland* (1934), and *Way Out West* (1937). Hardy's catchphrase "Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into!" is still widely recognized.



Laurel and Hardy in *Way Out West* (1937)

Prior to the double act both were established actors with Laurel appearing in over 50 films and Hardy in over 250 films. Although the two comedians first worked together on the film *The Lucky Dog* (1921), this was a chance pairing and it was not until 1926, when both separately signed contracts with the Hal Roach film studio, that they began appearing in movie shorts together. Laurel and Hardy officially became a team the following year in the silent short film *Putting Pants on Philip* (1927). The pair remained with the Roach studio until 1940, then appeared in eight "B" comedies for 20th Century Fox and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer from 1941 to 1945. After finishing their movie commitments at the end of 1944, they concentrated on stage shows, embarking on a music hall tour of England, Ireland, and Scotland. In 1950 they made their last film, a French/Italian co-production called *Atoll K*, before retiring from the screen. In total they appeared together in 107 films. They starred in 40 short sound films, 32 short silent films and 23 full-length feature films, and made 12 guest or cameo appearances, including the recently discovered *Galaxy of Stars* promotional film (1936).

A common comedy routine was a tit-for-tat fight. Their silent film *Big Business* (1929), which includes one of these routines, was added to the Library of Congress as a national treasure in 1992. Notable Laurel traits included crying like a baby while being berated and scratching his hair when in shock. On December 1, 1954, the team made their only American television appearance, surprised by Ralph Edwards on his live NBC-TV program, *This Is Your Life*.

The works of Laurel and Hardy have been re-released in numerous theatrical reissues, television revivals, 16 mm and 8 mm home movies, feature-film compilations, and home video since the 1930s. They were voted the seventh greatest comedy act in a 2005 UK poll by fellow comedians. The duo's signature tune, known variously as "The Cuckoo Song", "Ku-Ku", or "The Dance of the Cuckoos", played on the opening credits of their films. The official Laurel and Hardy appreciation society is known as The Sons of the Desert, after a fraternal society in their film of the same name.

Before the teaming

Stan Laurel

Stan Laurel (June 16, 1890 – February 23, 1965) was born Arthur Stanley Jefferson in Ulverston, Lancashire, England. His father, Arthur Joseph Jefferson, was a theatrical entrepreneur and theatre owner in Northern England and Scotland, who with his wife was a major force in the industry. Laurel was born into a family with theatre in its blood. In 1905 the Jefferson family moved to Glasgow to be closer to their business mainstay, The Metropole Theatre, with Laurel making his stage debut in a Glasgow hall called the Panoptikon, a month short of his 16th birthday. Arthur Jefferson secured Laurel his first acting job with a theatrical juvenile company, Levy and Cardwell, specializing in Christmas Pantomimes. In 1909 he was employed by Britain's leading comedy impresario, Fred Karno, working as a supporting actor and as an understudy of Charlie Chaplin. Laurel said of Karno "There was no one like him. He had no equal. His name was box-office." In 1912 Laurel left England with a Fred Karno Troupe, to tour the United States of America, Laurel expected the tour to be merely a pleasant interval in his life before returning to London, however he had in actuality emigrated. In 1917 Laurel was teamed with Mae Dahlberg, they worked as a double act for stage and film and were common law husband and wife. Laurel made his film debut with Dahlberg in *Nuts in May* (1917). It was while working with her that he started using the stage name Stan Laurel, changing his name legally in 1931. Dahlberg held Laurel's career back because she demanded parts in Laurel's films and her tempestuous nature made her difficult to work with, dressing room arguments between the two were common, so film producer Joe Rock paid her to leave Laurel and return to her native Australia. In 1925 Laurel joined the Hal Roach film studio as a director and writer and between May 1925 and September 1926 he was credited in at least 22 films. Laurel starred in over 50 films for various producers before teaming up with Hardy. However without Hardy he experienced only modest success because it was difficult for producers, writers and directors to figure out what character he might be playing, and American audiences knew him either as a "Nutty burglar" or as a Charlie Chaplin imitator.

Oliver Hardy

Oliver Hardy (January 18, 1892 – August 7, 1957) was born Norvell Hardy in Harlem, Georgia. He took his father's first name, calling himself "Oliver Norvell Hardy." His off-screen nicknames were "Ollie" and "Babe." Hardy's nickname "Babe" originated from an Italian barber near the Lubin Studios in Jacksonville, Florida who would rub Hardy's face with talcum powder and say, "That's nice a baby!" which the other Lubin actors mimicked. Hardy was billed as "Babe Hardy" in his early films. By his late teens, Hardy was a popular stage singer, and he operated his own movie house in Milledgeville, Georgia, the Palace Theater, financed partially by his mother. Seeing film comedies inspired him with an urge to take up comedy himself and in 1913, he began working with Lubin Motion Pictures in Jacksonville, Florida. He started out by helping around the studio with lights, props and other duties, gradually learning the craft as a script-clerk. Around the same time, he married his first wife, Madelyn Salosihn. In 1914, Hardy acted as Babe in his first film called *Outwitting Dad*. Between 1914 and 1916, Hardy made 177 shorts as Babe with the Vim Comedy Company, which were released up to the end of 1917. Exhibiting a versatility in playing heroes, villains and even female characters, Hardy became much in demand as a supporting actor, comic villain or second banana. For the next 10 years he memorably assisted star comics Billy West, a Charlie Chaplin imitator, Jimmy Aubrey, Larry Semon and Charley Chase. In total, Hardy starred or co-starred in more than 250 silent shorts, about 150 of which have been lost. While in New York, his abortive effort to enlist in 1917 led him and his wife, Madelyn, to seek new opportunities in California.

History

Films



Laurel and Hardy appeared for the first time together in *The Lucky Dog* (1921). In this lobby card scene, Stan Laurel (left), is attacked by Oliver Hardy (above) as Jack Lloyd spots that Stan's faithful dog has retrieved Oliver's lit stick of dynamite.



Laurel and Hardy in their 1939 feature film *The Flying Deuces*.

The first film pairing of the two comedians, although as separate performers, took place in *The Lucky Dog* (1921). The exact date the film was produced isn't recorded, however film historian Bo Berglund dated it between late 1920 and January 1921. The association was so casual that based upon interviews given in the 1930s both had forgotten it entirely. The plot sees Laurel befriended by a stray dog who after a number of lucky escapes saves Laurel from being blown up by a stick of dynamite, while Hardy was a mugger attempting to rob Laurel. Several years later, both comedians had separately signed for the Hal Roach film studio and next appeared in *45 Minutes From Hollywood* (1926).

Hal Roach was the most important person character in their film careers; he brought them together officially as a team and paid their wage for over 20 years. Charley Rogers worked closely with the three men for many years and said "It could not have happened if Laurel, Hardy and Roach had not met at the right place and at the right time. Their first "official" film together was *Putting Pants on Philip* (1927). The plot sees Laurel as Philip, a young Scottish man newly arrived in the United States in full Kilted splendor, after various mishaps surrounding the kilt his uncle played by Hardy tries to put him in trousers.

Laurel speaking to John McCabe said "Of all the questions we're asked, the most frequent is how did we come together? I always explain that we just came together naturally." Laurel and Hardy were joined by accident and grew by indirection. In 1926 both were part of the Roach Comedy All Stars – a group of actors of similar standing who took part in a series of films, quite unwittingly Laurel and Hardy's parts became larger and the parts of their fellow stars became less, because Laurel and Hardy were the best actors. The teaming was suggested by Leo McCarey who was their supervising director between 1927-1930, during this period McCarey and Laurel jointly devised the team's format. After the teaming they played the same characters for 30 years.

Although Hal Roach employed writers and directors such as H. M. Walker, Leo McCarey, James Parrott, James W. Horne on Laurel and Hardy films, Laurel would rewrite entire sequences or scripts, have the cast and crew improvise on the soundstage, and meticulously review the footage for editing. By 1929 Laurel was the head writer. The writing sessions were gleeful chaos; Stan had three or four writers who joined him in a perpetual game of 'Can You Top This?' As Laurel so obviously relished writing gags, Hardy was more than happy to leave the job to his partner. From this point Laurel was also the uncredited film director. He ran the Laurel and Hardy set no matter who was in the director's chair, but never felt compelled to assert his authority. Roach remarked "Laurel bossed the production. With any director if Laurel said 'I don't like this idea,' the director didn't say 'Well, you're going to do it anyway.' That was understood." As Laurel made so many suggestions there wasn't much left for the credited director to do.

In 1929 the silent era of film was coming to an end and most silent-film actors saw their careers decline with the advent of sound. Silent film actors failed to make the transition because they decided their prime duty was to tell stories in words, and they misused sound through over-emphasis or there was poor recording. Laurel and Hardy avoided this pitfall because they decided to continue making primarily visual films. They did not ignore sound but they were not ruled by it. They proved skillful in their melding of visual and verbal humor, and made a seamless transition to the talking era in their first sound film *Unaccustomed As We Are* (1929). The title took its name from the familiar phrase "Unaccustomed as we are to public speaking". In the opening dialogue Laurel and Hardy began by spoofing the very slow and self conscious speech of the early talking actors, a routine they would use regularly.

Laurel and Hardy's first starring feature film was *Pardon Us* (1931). The most memorable Laurel and Hardy film is *The Music Box* (1932), the image of the duo forever pushing a piano up a tremendous flight of steps has stuck in the public consciousness. The film won an Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Subject in 1932. While many enthusiasts claim the superiority of *The Music Box*, their silent film *Big Business* (1929) is by far the most consistently acclaimed. The plot sees Laurel and Hardy as Christmas tree salesman involved in a classic Tit for Tat battle with James Finlayson, eventually destroying both his car and house. *Big Business* was added to the Library of Congress in the United States as a national treasure in 1992. *Sons of the Desert* (1933) is considered Laurel and Hardy's best feature film.

Babes in Toyland (1934) retains a timeless appeal and remains a perennial on American T.V. at Christmas. Hal Roach spoke scathingly about the film and Laurel's behavior during its making. Laurel was unhappy with Roach's plot and after an argument was allowed to make the film his own way. The rift permanently damaged Roach-Laurel relations to the point that Roach said that after *Toyland* he no longer wished to produce Laurel and Hardy films, although their association continued for another six years.

In 1940 Laurel and Hardy left the Hal Roach film studio. Between 1941 and 1945 they made 6 feature films for 20th Century Fox and 2 for MGM. Laurel's relations with 20th Century executives were

particularly bad because they refused to let Laurel and Hardy use their usual characters. Instead they had to act character parts given to them; consequently the films went from bad to worse. Laurel and Hardy's two films with MGM had the same problem. Laurel, speaking to John McCabe, said "We had no say in those films and it sure looked it. So we gave up the ghost." I can't tell you how much it hurt me to do those pictures, and how ashamed I am of them." The films were however profitable and Fox kept making Laurel and Hardy comedies after discontinuing its other "B" series films.

Laurel and Hardy made one final film together *Atoll K* (1951), it was a French and Italian co-production directed by Leo Joannon, which was plagued by language barriers, production problems, and both Laurel and Hardy's grave health issues during shooting, Hardy began to lose weight precipitously and developed an irregular heartbeat while Laurel experienced painful prostate complications. Critics were disappointed with its storyline, English dubbing, and Laurel's sickly physical appearance. The film was not a success, and brought an end to Laurel and Hardy's film careers.

A number of their films were re-shot with Laurel and Hardy talking in Spanish, Italian, French or German. The plots for these films were similar to the English language version although the supporting cast were often native language actors. Laurel and Hardy could not speak a foreign language and they received voice coaching to reproduce their lines. *Pardon Us* (1931) was re-shot in all four foreign languages. *Blotto* (1930), *Chickens Come Home* (1931) and *Below Zero* (1930) had a French and Spanish version.

Most of the Laurel and Hardy films survive, and have never gone out of circulation permanently. Three of their 107 films are considered lost, as they have not been seen in full since the 1930s. The silent *Hats Off* (1927) has vanished completely. The first half of *Now I'll Tell One* (1927) is lost and the second half has yet to be released on video. In the operatic Technicolor musical *The Rogue Song* (1930) Laurel and Hardy appear in 10 sequences, only one of which is known to exist along with the complete soundtrack.

Style of comedy and characterizations

The humor of Laurel and Hardy was generally visual with slapstick used for emphasis. They often had physical arguments with each other, which were quite complex and involved cartoon violence, and their characters preclude them from making any real progress in even the simplest endeavors. Much of their comedy involves milking a joke, where a simple idea provides a basis from which to build several gags without following a defined narrative.

Laurel and Hardy had an inherent physical contrariety. Stan Laurel was of average height and weight, but appeared small and slight next to Oliver Hardy, who was 6 ft 1 in (1.85 m) tall and weighed about 280 lb (127 kg) in his prime. Laurel kept his hair short on the sides and back, but let it grow long on top to create a natural "fright wig". At times of shock he would simultaneously cry while pulling up his hair. In contrast, Hardy's thinning hair was pasted on his forehead in spit curls and he wore a toothbrush moustache. To achieve a flat-footed walk, Laurel removed the heels from his shoes. Both wore Bowler hats, with Laurel's being narrower than Hardy's, and with a flattened brim. The characters' normal attire also called for wing collar shirts, with Hardy wearing a standard neck tie which he would twiddle and Laurel a bow tie. Hardy's sports jacket was too small for him and done up with one straining button, whereas Laurel's double breasted jacket was loose fitting.

A common routine the team performed was a "tit-for-tat" fight with an adversary. This could be with their wives—often played by Mae Busch, Anita Garvin or Daphne Pollard—or with a neighbor, often played by Charlie Hall or James Finlayson. Laurel and Hardy would accidentally damage someone else's property, with the injured party retaliating by ruining something belonging to Laurel or Hardy. After calmly surveying the damage they would find something else to vandalize and conflict would escalate

until both sides were simultaneously destroying property in front of each other. An early example of the routine occurs in their classic short, *Big Business* (1929), which was added to the Library of Congress as a national treasure in 1992, and one of their short films, which revolves entirely around such an altercation, was titled *Tit for Tat* (1935).

One of their best-remembered dialogue routines was the "Tell me that again" routine. Laurel would tell Hardy a genuinely smart idea he had come up with, and Hardy would reply, "Tell me that again." Laurel would attempt to repeat the idea, but jumble it into utter nonsense. Hardy, who had difficulty understanding Laurel's idea when expressed clearly, would understand perfectly when hearing the jumbled version.

While much of their comedy remained visual, various lines of humorous dialogue appeared in Laurel and Hardy's talking films. Some examples include: • "You can lead a horse to water, but a pencil must be led." (Laurel, *Brats*) • "I was dreaming I was awake, but I woke up and found me-self asleep." (Laurel, *Oliver the Eighth*) • "A lot of weather we've been having lately." (Hardy, *Way Out West*)

In some cases, their comedy bordered on the surreal, a style Stan Laurel called "white magic". For example, in *Way Out West* (1937), Laurel clenches his fist and pours tobacco into it, as if it were a pipe. Then, he flicks his thumb upward as if he held a lighter. His thumb ignites, and he matter-of-factly lights his "pipe." The amazed Hardy, seeing this, would unsuccessfully attempt to duplicate it throughout the rest of the film. Much later in the film, Hardy finally succeeds – only to be terrified when his thumb catches fire.

Rather than showing Hardy suffering the pain of misfortunes such as falling down stairs or being beaten by a thug, banging and crashing sound effects were often used so the audience could visualize the scene for themselves.

Why Girls Love Sailors (1927) was a significant film for Hardy because it gave him two of his most enduring trademarks. The first was his "tie-twiddle" to demonstrate embarrassment. Hardy, while acting, had been met with a pail of water in the face. He said "I had been expecting it, but I didn't expect it at that particular moment. It threw me mentally and I couldn't think what to do next, so I waved the tie in a kind of tiddly-widdly fashion to show embarrassment while trying to look friendly." His second trademark was the "camera look" in which he breaks the fourth wall. Hardy said "I had to become exasperated, so I just stared right into the camera and registered my disgust"

Off-screen, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy were quite the opposite of their movie characters: Laurel was the industrious "idea man," while Hardy was more easygoing.

Final years

After *Atoll K*, Laurel and Hardy took several months off, so that Laurel could recuperate. Upon their return to the European stage, they undertook a successful series of public appearances in short sketches Laurel had written: "A Spot of Trouble" (in 1952) and "Birds of a Feather" (in 1953).



The pair on *This Is Your Life*.

On December 1, 1954, the team made their only American television appearance, surprised by Ralph Edwards on his live NBC-TV program, *This Is Your Life*. Lured to the Knickerbockers Hotel as a subterfuge for a business meeting with producer Bernard Delfont, the doors opened to their suite #205, flooding the room with light and the voice of Edwards. The telecast was preserved on a kinescope and later released on home video. Partly due to the positive response from the television broadcast, the pair was renegotiating with Hal Roach Jr. for a series of color NBC Television specials to be called *Laurel and Hardy's Fabulous Fables*. However, plans for the specials were shelved, as the aging comedians suffered from declining health.

In 1955, Laurel and Hardy made their final public appearance together, taking part in *This Is Music Hall*, a BBC Television program about the Grand Order of Water Rats, a British variety organization. Laurel and Hardy provide a filmed insert during which they reminisce about their friends in British variety. They made their final appearance on camera in 1956 in a home movie titled "One Moment Please". The film was shot by a family friend at Laurel's home, it is without audio and lasts three minutes.

Under doctor's orders to improve a heart condition, Hardy lost over 100 pounds (45 kg; 7.1 st) in 1956. Several strokes resulted in loss of mobility and speech. He died of a stroke on August 7, 1957. Longtime friend Bob Chatterton said Hardy weighed just 138 pounds (63 kg; 9.9 st) at the time of his death. Hardy was laid to rest at Pierce Brothers Valhalla Memorial Park, North Hollywood.

Just after Hardy's death, Laurel and Hardy's films returned to movie theaters, as clips of their work were featured in Robert Youngson's silent-film compilation *The Golden Age of Comedy*. For the remaining eight years of his life, Stan Laurel refused to perform, even turning down Stanley Kramer's offer to make a cameo in his landmark 1963 movie, *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. In 1960, Laurel was given a special Academy Award for his contributions to film comedy. Despite not appearing onscreen after Hardy's death, Laurel did contribute gags to several comedy filmmakers. Most of his writing was in the form of correspondence; he insisted on answering every fan letter personally. Late in life, he hosted many visitors of the new generation of comedians and celebrities, including Dick Cavett, Jerry Lewis, Peter Sellers, Marcel Marceau and Dick Van Dyke. Laurel lived until 1965, surviving to see the duo's work rediscovered through television and classic film revivals. He died on February 23 in Santa Monica, and is buried at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles, California.

Supporting cast

Laurel and Hardy's films included a memorable supporting cast, some of whom appeared regularly.

Harry Bernard, played bit parts as waiter, bartender and cop.

Mae Busch played a formidable Mrs. Hardy, and some other characters.

Charley Chase, the Hal Roach film star and brother of James Parrott, Laurel and Hardy writer/director, made 4 appearances.

Baldwin Cooke played bit parts as waiter, bartender and cop.

James Finlayson, a small, balding, moustachioed Scotsman known for displays of indignation and squinting "double takes", made 33 appearances.

Anita Garvin was a memorable Mrs. Laurel.

Billy Gilbert, made many appearances, most notably in the classic *The Music Box* (1932).

Charlie Hall, who usually played angry "little men", appeared nearly 50 times.

Jean Harlow, the "Blonde Bombshell" had a small role in their short *Double Whoopee* (1929) and two other films, before her breakout stardom.

Arthur Housman made memorable appearances as a comic drunk.

Edgar Kennedy master of the "slow burn", often appeared as a cop, hostile neighbor or relative.

Walter Long played grizzled, physically threatening villains.

Sam Lufkin appeared several times.

Daphne Pollard was featured, mostly as Oliver's shrewish wife.

Charley Rogers, the English actor, appeared several times.

Tiny Sandford was a very tall and burly man who played authority figures, notably cops.

Thelma Todd appeared several times.

Ben Turpin the cross eyed actor made two memorable appearances.

Music

The duo's famous signature tune, known variously as "The Cuckoo Song", "Ku-Ku", or "The Dance of the Cuckoos", was composed by Roach musical director Marvin Hatley as the on-the-hour chime for the Roach studio radio station. Laurel heard the tune on the station, and asked Hatley to use it as the Laurel and Hardy theme song. In Laurel's eyes, the song's melody represented Hardy's character (pompous and dramatic), while the harmony represented Laurel's own character (somewhat out of key, and only able to register two notes: "coo-coo"). The original theme, recorded by two clarinets in 1930, was re-recorded with a full orchestra in 1935. Leroy Shield composed the great majority of the music used in the Laurel and Hardy short sound films. A compilation of songs from their films titled *Trail of the Lonesome Pine* was released in 1975. The title track was released as a single in the UK and reached #2 in the charts.

Influence and legacy



Silhouette portrait of the duo in Redcar, England

Catchphrases

The catchphrase most used by Laurel and Hardy on film is:

The phrase, which was earlier used by W. S. Gilbert in *The Mikado* (1885) and again in *The Grand Duke* (1896), was first used by Hardy in *The Laurel-Hardy Murder Case* (1930). In popular culture the catchphrase is often misquoted as "Well, here's another ***fine*** mess you've gotten me into." The misquoted version of the phrase was never used by Hardy on film; the misunderstanding stems from the title of their film *Another Fine Mess* (1930). Numerous variations of the quote appeared on film. In *Chickens Come Home* (1931), Ollie says impatiently to Stan, "Well...." with Stan replying, "Here's another nice mess I've gotten you into." In *Thicker than Water* (1935) and *The Fixer-Uppers* (1935), the phrase becomes "Well, here's another nice kettle of fish you pickled me in!" In *Saps at Sea* (1940) it becomes "Well, here's another nice bucket of suds you've gotten me into!"

"D'oh!" is a catchphrase used by James Finlayson, the mustachioed Scottish actor who appeared in 33 Laurel and Hardy films. The phrase, expressing surprise, impatience, or incredulity, was the inspiration for "D'oh!" as spoken by the fictional character Homer Simpson in the long running animated comedy *The Simpsons*. The Simpson's first intentional use of "d'oh!" occurred in the Ullman short "Punching Bag" (1988).

The Sons of the Desert

The official Laurel and Hardy appreciation society is known as The Sons of the Desert, after a fraternal society in their film of the same name (1933). It was founded in New York City in 1965 by Laurel and Hardy biographers John McCabe, Orson Bean, Al Kilgore, Chuck McCann and John Municino; with the sanction of Stan Laurel. Since the group's inception, well over 150 chapters of the organization have formed across North America, Europe and Australia. An Emmy-winning film documentary about the group, *Revenge of the Sons of the Desert*, has been released on DVD as part of *The Laurel and Hardy Collection, Vol. 1*.

Posthumous revivals

Since the 1930s, the works of Laurel and Hardy have been re-released in numerous theatrical reissues, television revivals (broadcast, especially public television, and cable), 16 mm and 8 mm home movies, feature-film compilations, and home video. After Stan Laurel's death in 1965, there were two major motion-picture tributes: *Laurel and Hardy's Laughing '20s*, Robert Youngson's compilation of the team's silent-film highlights; and *The Great Race*, a large-scale salute to slapstick which director Blake Edwards dedicated to "Mr. Laurel and Mr. Hardy." For many years the duo were impersonated by Jim MacGeorge (as Laurel) and Chuck McCann (as Hardy) in children's TV shows and television commercials for various products.

There are two Laurel and Hardy museums, one in Laurel's birthplace, Ulverston, United Kingdom, and the other in Hardy's birthplace, Harlem, Georgia, United States

Maurice Sendak showed three identical Oliver Hardy figures as bakers preparing cakes for the morning in his award-winning children's book *In the Night Kitchen* (1970). This is treated as a clear example of "interpretative illustration" wherein the comedians' inclusion harked back to the author's own childhood.

Additionally, the Beatles used cut-outs of Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy as two of the cutout celebrity crowd for the cover of their masterpiece 1967 album, *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Of the two, Stan Laurel is more recognizable.

A 2005 poll by fellow comedians and comedy insiders of the top 50 comedians for *The Comedian's Comedian*, a TV documentary broadcast on UK's Channel 4, voted the duo the seventh greatest comedy act ever, making them the most popular double act on the list.

Numerous colorized versions of copyright-free Laurel and Hardy features and shorts have been reproduced by a multitude of production studios. Although the results of adding color were often in dispute, many of the popular titles are currently only available in the colorized version. The color process often renders the print into an "unwatchable" state, while some scenes were altered or deleted, dependent on the source material used. Many Laurel and Hardy films have been colorized. *Helpmates* (1932) was the first film to undergo the process, it was experimented upon by Colorization Inc., a subsidiary of Hal Roach Studios in 1983. Colorization became a success for the studio and *Helpmates* was released on home video with the colorized version of *The Music Box* (1932) in 1986. The technology for this process was inferior compared to today's digital colorization technology. There were numerous continuity errors and garish color design choices. However the most significant criticism that these versions received revolved around their editing, whole scenes were altered or deleted altogether, changing the character of the film.

Merchandiser Larry Harmon claimed ownership of Laurel's and Hardy's likenesses, and issued Laurel and Hardy toys and coloring books. He co-produced a series of *Laurel and Hardy* cartoons in 1966 with Hanna-Barbera Productions. His animated versions of Laurel and Hardy guest-starred in a 1972 episode of Hanna-Barbera's *The New Scooby-Doo Movies*. In 1999, Harmon produced a direct-to-video feature, the live-action comedy *The All-New Adventures of Laurel and Hardy: For Love or Mummy*, with actors Bronson Pinchot and Gailard Sartain playing the lookalike nephews of the original Laurel and Hardy, Stanley Thinneus Laurel and Oliver Fatteus Hardy.

Leni Riefenstahl

Helene Bertha Amalie "Leni" Riefenstahl (22 August 1902 – 8 September 2003) was a German film director, actress and dancer widely noted for her aesthetics and innovations as a filmmaker. Her most famous film was *Triumph des Willens* (*Triumph of the Will*), a propaganda film made at the 1934 Nuremberg congress of the Nazi Party. Riefenstahl's prominence in the Third Reich along with her personal friendship with Adolf Hitler thwarted her film career following Germany's defeat in World War II, after which she was arrested but released without any charges.

Triumph of the Will gave Riefenstahl instant and lasting international fame, as well as infamy. Although she directed only eight films, just two of which received significant coverage outside of Germany, Riefenstahl was widely known all her life. The propaganda value of her films made during the 1930s repels most modern commentators but many film histories cite the aesthetics as outstanding. *The Economist* wrote that *Triumph of the Will* "sealed her reputation as the greatest female filmmaker of the 20th century".

In the 1970s Riefenstahl published her still photography of the Nuba tribes in Sudan in several books such as *The Last of the Nuba*. She was active up until her death and also published marine life stills and released the marine-based film *Impressionen unter Wasser* in 2002.

After her death, the Associated Press described Riefenstahl as an "acclaimed pioneer of film and photographic techniques". *Der Tagesspiegel* newspaper in Berlin noted, "Leni Riefenstahl conquered new ground in the cinema". The BBC said her documentaries "were hailed as groundbreaking film-making, pioneering techniques involving cranes, tracking rails, and many cameras working at the same time".

Biography

Early life

Riefenstahl was born in August 1902. She was christened Helene Bertha Amalie. She was born into a prosperous family. Her father owned a successful heating and ventilation company and he wanted her to follow him into the world of business. However, her mother believed that Leni's future was in show business. In 1918, when she was 16, she started dance and ballet classes at the Grimm-Reiter Dance School in Berlin, where she quickly became a star pupil.

Riefenstahl gained a reputation on Berlin's dance circuit and she quickly moved into films. She made a series of films for Arnold Fanck, and one of them, *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* (1929), co-directed by G. W. Pabst, saw her fame spread to countries outside of Germany. Riefenstahl produced and directed her own work called *Das Blaue Licht* (1932), co-written by Carl Mayer and Béla Balázs. This film won the Silver Medal at the Venice Film Festival. In the film, Riefenstahl played a peasant girl who protected a glowing mountain grotto. The film attracted the attention of Hitler, who believed she epitomized the perfect German female.

Dancer and actress

Riefenstahl took dancing lessons and attended dance academies from an early age and began her career as a self-styled and well-known interpretive dancer, traveling around Europe and working with director Max Reinhardt in a show funded by Jewish producer Harry Sokal. After injuring her knee while performing in Prague, she saw a nature film about mountains (*der Berg des Schicksals*, 1924) and

became fascinated with the possibilities of this sort of film. She went to the Alps to meet the film's director, Arnold Fanck, hoping to secure the lead in his next project. Instead, Riefenstahl met Luis Trenker who had starred in Fanck's films, who wrote to the director about her.

Riefenstahl went on to star in many of Fanck's mountain films as an athletic and adventurous young woman with a suggestive appeal; she became an accomplished mountaineer during the winters of filming on mountains and learned filmmaking techniques. Riefenstahl went on to have a prolific career as an actress in silent films. She was popular with the German public and highly regarded by directors. In 1930, she lost the lead role in the Josef von Sternberg-directed *The Blue Angel* to her neighbor, Marlene Dietrich. Her last acting role before becoming a director was the 1933 U.S.-German co-productions of the Arnold Fanck-directed, German-language *SOS Eisberg* and the Tay Garnett-directed, English-language *SOS Iceberg*. The movies were filmed simultaneously and produced and distributed by Universal Studios. *SOS Iceberg* was Riefenstahl's only English-language film role as an actress. One of her fans at this time was Adolf Hitler. Riefenstahl accompanied Fanck to the 1928 Olympic Games in St. Moritz, where she became interested in athletic photography and filming.

When presented with the opportunity to direct *Das Blaue Licht (The Blue Light)* (1932), she took it. Breaking from Fanck's style of setting realistic stories in fairytale mountain settings, Riefenstahl—working with leftist screen writers Béla Balázs and Carl Mayer—filmed *Das Blaue Licht* as a romantic, wholly mystical tale which she thought of as more fitting to the terrain. She co-wrote, directed and starred in the film and produced it under the banner of her own company, Leni Riefenstahl Productions. *Das Blaue Licht* won the Silver Medal at the Venice Biennale and played to full audiences all over Europe. However, it was not universally well-received, for which Riefenstahl blamed the critics, many of them Jewish. Upon its 1938 re-release, the names of co-writer Béla Balázs and producer Harry Sokal, both Jewish, were removed from the credits; some reports claim this was at Riefenstahl's behest. The director later turned over the name of her Jewish co-screenwriter to Nazi Propagandist Julius Streicher. Riefenstahl received invitations to travel to Hollywood to create films, but she refused the offers in order to stay in Germany with a boyfriend.

Propaganda/documentaries



Leni Riefenstahl with Heinrich Himmler at Nuremberg in 1934

Riefenstahl heard candidate Adolf Hitler speak at a rally in 1932 and was mesmerized by his talent as a public speaker. Describing the experience in her memoir, Riefenstahl wrote: "I had an almost apocalyptic vision that I was never able to forget. It seemed as if the Earth's surface were spreading out in front of me, like a hemisphere that suddenly splits apart in the middle, spewing out an enormous jet of water, so powerful that it touched the sky and shook the earth". According to the *Daily Express* of April 24, 1934, Leni Riefenstahl had read *Mein Kampf* during the making of her film *The Blue Light*. This newspaper article quotes her as having commented, "The book made a tremendous impression on me. I became a confirmed National Socialist after reading the first page. I felt a man who could write such a book would undoubtedly lead Germany. I felt very happy that such a man had come". She wrote to

Hitler requesting a meeting. After meeting with Hitler she was offered the opportunity to direct *Sieg des Glaubens*, an hour-long feature film about the fifth Nazi Party rally at Nuremberg in 1933. Riefenstahl agreed to direct the movie after returning from filming a movie in Greenland.



Hitler congratulates Riefenstahl in 1934

Riefenstahl's film of the 1934 Nazi party rally in Nuremberg

Impressed with Riefenstahl's work, Hitler asked her to film the upcoming 1934 Party rally in Nuremberg, the sixth such rally. At first, according to Riefenstahl's memoir, she resisted and did not want to create further Nazi films; instead, she wanted to direct a feature film based on Hitler's favorite opera, Eugen d'Albert's *Tiefland*. Riefenstahl received private funding for the production of *Tiefland*, but the filming in Spain was derailed. Hitler was able to convince her to film *Triumph* instead, on the condition that she not be required to make further films for the party. She also told Hitler she wanted the freedom to act again: "I would not be able to go on living if I had to give up acting".

The resulting chronicle of the Nuremberg Rally, *Triumph des Willens* (named by Hitler), was generally recognized as a masterful, epic, innovative work of documentary filmmaking. *Triumph of the Will* became a rousing success in Germany. It made Riefenstahl the first female film director to achieve international recognition. In interviews for the 1993 film *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*, Riefenstahl adamantly denied any deliberate attempt to create pro-Nazi propaganda and said she was disgusted that *Triumph of the Will* was used in such a way.

Despite vowing not to make any more films about the Nazi Party, in 1935, Riefenstahl made the 18-minute *Day of Freedom: Armed Forces* about the German army. Like *Victory of Faith* and *Triumph of the Will* this was filmed at the annual Nazi Party rally at Nuremberg. Riefenstahl never denied making this short 18 minute film. However she always claimed this film was a sub-set of "Triumph of the Will" added to mollify the German army which felt it was not represented well in the 1934 filming of "Triumph of the Will". Over a million Germans had participated in the 1934 rally in Nuremberg. Later, yearly rallies held in Nuremberg got even bigger. The 1935 rally is noted for pronouncements about the status of Jews in Germany. These became known as the Nuremberg Laws which for Jews in Europe would soon become matters of life and death.

In 1936, Hitler invited Riefenstahl to film the Olympic Games in Berlin, a film which Riefenstahl claimed had been commissioned by the International Olympic Committee. She also went to Greece to take footage of the games' original site at Olympia, where she was aided by Greek photographer Nelly. This material became *Olympia*, a successful film which has since been widely noted for its technical and aesthetic achievements. She was one of the first filmmakers to use tracking shots in a documentary, placing a camera on rails to follow the athletes' movement, and she is noted for the slow motion shots included in the film. Riefenstahl's work on *Olympia* has been cited as a major influence in modern sports photography. Riefenstahl filmed competitors of all races, including African-American Jesse Owens in what would later become famous footage.



Riefenstahl with Joseph Goebbels (1937)

Olympia was very successful in Germany after it premiered for Hitler's 49th birthday in 1938, and its international debut led Riefenstahl to embark on an American publicity tour in an attempt to secure commercial release. In 1937, Riefenstahl told a reporter for the *Detroit News*: "To me, Hitler is the greatest man who ever lived. He truly is without fault, so simple and at the same time possessed of masculine strength". She arrived in New York City in November 1938, five days before Kristallnacht, or 'night of broken glass'; when news of the event reached America, Riefenstahl maintained that Hitler was innocent. On November 18, she was received by Henry Ford in Detroit and *Olympia* was shown at "The Chicago Engineers Club" two days later. Avery Brundage stated that it was "The greatest Olympic film ever made" and Riefenstahl left for Hollywood, where she was received by the German Consul Georg Gyssling, on November 24. She negotiated with Louis B. Mayer and on December 8, Walt Disney brought her on a three hour tour showing her the on-going production of *Fantasia*.

After the *Goebbels Diaries* surfaced, researchers learned that Riefenstahl had been friendly with Joseph Goebbels and his wife, Magda, attending the opera with them and coming to the Goebbels' parties. However, Riefenstahl maintained that Goebbels was upset that she had rejected his advances and was jealous of her influence on Hitler, seeing her as an internal threat; therefore, his diaries could not be trusted. By later accounts, Goebbels thought highly of Riefenstahl's filmmaking but was angered with what he saw as her overspending on the Nazi-provided filmmaking budgets.

World War II

During the Invasion of Poland, Riefenstahl was photographed in Poland wearing a military uniform and a pistol on her belt in the company of German soldiers; she had gone to the site of the battle as a war correspondent. On 12 September 1939 she was in the town of Końskie when 30 civilians were executed there, in retaliation for an alleged attack on German soldiers. According to her memoir, Riefenstahl tried to intervene but a furious German soldier held her at gunpoint and threatened to shoot her on the spot. She claimed she did not realize the victims were Jews. Close-up photographs of a distraught Riefenstahl survive from that day. Nevertheless, by 5 October 1939, Riefenstahl was back in occupied Poland filming Hitler's victory parade in Warsaw. She left Poland and apparently chose not to make any Nazi-related movies after this, however.

On 14 June 1940, the day Paris was declared an open city by the French and occupied by German troops, Riefenstahl wrote to Hitler in a telegram, "With indescribable joy, deeply moved and filled with burning gratitude, we share with you, my Führer, your and Germany's greatest victory, the entry of

German troops into Paris. You exceed anything human imagination has the power to conceive, achieving deeds without parallel in the history of mankind. How can we ever thank you?" She later explained: "Everyone thought the war was over, and in that spirit I sent the cable to Hitler". Riefenstahl was friends with Hitler for 12 years, and reports vary as to whether she ever had an intimate relationship with him. According to Ernst Hanfstaengl, who was a close friend of Hitler throughout the later 1920s and early 1930s, Riefenstahl tried to begin a relationship with Hitler early on but was turned down by him. For whatever reason, her relationship with Hitler had declined by 1944, when her brother Heinz died on the Russian Front of the war.

After the Nuremberg rallies trilogy and *Olympia*, Riefenstahl began work on the movie she had tried and failed to direct once before, *Tiefland*. On Hitler's direct order the German government paid her 7 million reichsmarks in compensation. From 23 September until 13 November 1940 she filmed in Krün near Mittenwald. The extras playing Spanish women and farmers were drawn from gypsies (Sinti) detained in a camp at Salzburg-Maxglan who were forced to work with her. Filming at the Babelsberg Studios near Berlin began 18 months later in April 1942 and lasted into summer. This time Sinti and Roma from the Marzahn detention camp near Berlin were compelled to work as extras. A surviving document from camp Marzahn shows a list of 65 inmates who were ordered to serve in the production. 50 stills from the filming in Krün near Mittenwald were later found and from these, surviving prisoners were able to identify 29 camp inmates who worked for Riefenstahl and were then deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in the first weeks of March 1943 following Himmler's December 1942 decree. To the end of her life, despite overwhelming evidence that concentration camp occupants had been forced to work on the movie unpaid, Riefenstahl continued to maintain all the film extras survived and that she had met them after the war. Riefenstahl sued a filmmaker, Nina Gladitz, who said Riefenstahl personally chose the extras at their holding camp; Gladitz had found one of the Gypsy survivors and matched his memory with stills of the movie for a documentary Gladitz was filming. The German court found for Gladitz, agreeing that Riefenstahl had known the extras were from a concentration camp, and they agreed with Riefenstahl on only one count (finding that Riefenstahl had not informed the Gypsies that they would be sent to the Auschwitz camp after filming was completed).

After similar statements made by Riefenstahl were objected to by Roma groups in Germany, on her 100th birthday the Frankfurt prosecutor's office opened an investigation into whether Riefenstahl had denied the Holocaust. This issue came up again in 2002, when Riefenstahl was one hundred years old and she was taken to court by a Roma group for denying the Nazis had exterminated gypsies. Riefenstahl apologized, saying, "I regret that Sinti & Roma had to suffer during the period of National Socialism. It is known today that many of them were murdered in concentration camps".

The last time Riefenstahl saw Hitler was when she married Peter Jacob on 21 March 1944, shortly after she had introduced Jacob to Hitler in Kitzbühel, Austria. Riefenstahl and Jacob divorced in 1946.

In October 1944 the production of *Tiefland* moved to Barrandov Studios in Prague for interior filming. Lavish sets made these shots some of the most costly in the film but they were finished within days. The film was not edited and released until almost 10 years later.

As Germany's military collapsed in the spring of 1945 Riefenstahl left Berlin and was hitchhiking with a group of men, trying to reach her mother, when she was taken into custody by American troops. She walked out of a holding camp, beginning a series of escapes and arrests across the chaotic landscape. At last making it back home on a bicycle, she found that American troops had seized her house, then was surprised by how kindly they treated her.

Post-war life and career

Detention and trials

Writer Budd Schulberg, assigned by the US Navy to the OSS for intelligence work while attached to John Ford's documentary unit, was ordered to arrest Riefenstahl at her chalet in Kitzbühel, Austria, ostensibly to have her identify the faces of Nazi war criminals in German film footage captured by the Allied troops. Riefenstahl claimed she was not aware of the nature of the internment camps. According to Schulberg, "She gave me the usual song and dance. She said, 'Of course, you know, I'm really so misunderstood. I'm not political.'" However, when Riefenstahl later claimed she had been forced to follow Goebbels' orders under threat of being sent to a concentration camp, Schulberg asked her why she should have been afraid if she did not know concentration camps existed. When shown photographs of the camps, Riefenstahl reportedly reacted with horror and tears.

Riefenstahl continued to maintain she was "fascinated" by the National Socialists but politically naïve and ignorant about any war crimes. From 1945 through 1948 she was held in sundry American and French-run detention camps and prisons along with house arrest but although Riefenstahl was tried four times by various postwar authorities, she was never convicted through "denazification" trials either for her alleged role as a propagandist or for the use of concentration camp inmates in her films. However, she was found to be a "fellow traveler" who was sympathetic to the Nazis.

Riefenstahl later said that her biggest regret was meeting Hitler: "It was the biggest catastrophe of my life. Until the day I die people will keep saying, 'Leni is a Nazi', and I'll keep saying, 'But what did she do?'" She won more than 50 libel cases against people accusing her of knowledge having to do with Nazi crimes.

Thwarted film projects

Most of the negatives for Riefenstahl's finished films and other production materials relating to her unfinished projects were lost towards the end of the war. The French government confiscated all of her editing equipment, along with the production reels of *Tiefland*. After years of legal wrangling these were returned to her, but the French government had reportedly damaged some of the film stock whilst trying to develop and edit it and a few key scenes were missing (although Riefenstahl was surprised to find the original negatives for *Olympia* in the same shipment). She edited and dubbed what elements were left and *Tiefland* premiered on 11 February 1954 in Stuttgart, however, it was denied entry into the Cannes Film Festival. Although Riefenstahl lived for almost another half century, *Tiefland* was her last feature film.

Riefenstahl tried many times (15 by her count) to make films during the 1950s and 1960s but was met with resistance, public protests and sharp criticism. Many of her filmmaking peers in Hollywood had fled Nazi Germany and were unsympathetic to her. Although both film professionals and investors were willing to support her work, most of the projects she attempted were stopped owing to ever-renewed and highly negative publicity about her past work for the Third Reich. In 1956, inspired by Ernest Hemingway's 1935 novel *Green Hills of Africa*, she began an ambitious film project in Africa drawn from another novel called *Schwarze Fracht* (*Black Freight*). Whilst scouting shooting locations, she almost died from injuries received in a truck accident. After waking up from a coma in a Nairobi hospital, she finished writing the script there, but was soon thoroughly thwarted by uncooperative locals, the Suez Canal crisis and bad weather (only test shots were ever made).

In 1954, Jean Cocteau insisted on *Tiefland* being shown at the Cannes Film Festival, which he was running that year. Cocteau greatly admired the film. In 1960, Riefenstahl unsuccessfully attempted to prevent filmmaker Erwin Leiser from juxtaposing scenes from *Triumph of the Will* with footage from concentration camps in his film *Mein Kampf*. Riefenstahl had high hopes for a collaboration with

Cocteau called *Friedrich und Voltaire*, wherein Cocteau was to play two roles. They thought the film might symbolize the "love-hate relationship" between Germany and France. Cocteau's illness and 1963 death put an end to this project. A musical remake of *The Blue Light* with L. Ron Hubbard and Philip Hudsmith also fell through.

Photography and final film

In the 1960s, Riefenstahl became interested in Africa from Hemingway's book and from the photographs of George Rodger. Rodger, who had taken the first photographs of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, refused to help Riefenstahl meet Africans, citing their respective backgrounds. Riefenstahl took up photography, documenting a diverse array of subjects. She traveled many times to Africa to photograph the Nuba tribes in Sudan, with whom she sporadically lived, learning about their culture so she could photograph them more easily. They readily accepted her since they knew nothing of her past. She began a lifelong companionship with her cameraman Horst Kettner, who was 40 years her junior and assisted her with the photographs; they were together from the time she was 60 and he was 20. She was granted Sudanese citizenship for her services to the country, becoming the first foreigner to receive a Sudanese passport.

Her books with photographs of the tribes were published in 1974 and 1976 as *The Last of the Nuba* and *The People of Kau* and were both international bestsellers. While heralded by many as outstanding color photographs, they were harshly criticized by Susan Sontag, who claimed in a review that they were further evidence of Riefenstahl's "fascist aesthetics". The Art Director's Club of Germany awarded Leni a gold medal for the best photographic achievement of 1975. She also sold the pictures to German magazines. She photographed the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and rock star Mick Jagger and his wife Bianca for the *Sunday Times*. Years later she photographed Las Vegas entertainers Siegfried and Roy. She befriended Andy Warhol and was a Guest of Honor at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal.

In her later years, Riefenstahl became known for her longevity and physical stamina, although she often suffered considerable pain from old injuries. At age 72, Riefenstahl began pursuing underwater photography after lying about her age to gain certification for scuba diving (she cut 20 years off her age). In 1978, she published a book of her below-water photographs, *Korallengärten (Coral Gardens)* followed by the 1990 book; *Wunder unter Wasser (Wonder under Water)*. On August 22, 2002, her 100th birthday, Riefenstahl released a film called *Impressionen unter Wasser (Underwater Impressions)*, an idealized documentary of life in the oceans and her first film in over 25 years. At age 100, she was still photographing marine life and gained the distinction of being the world's oldest scuba diver. Riefenstahl was a member of Greenpeace for 8 years.

She survived a helicopter crash in Sudan in 2000 while trying to learn the fates of her Nuba friends during the Sudanese civil war and was airlifted to a Munich hospital.

Second marriage and death

Riefenstahl celebrated her 101st birthday on August 22, 2003 and married Horst Kettner

Leni Riefenstahl died in her sleep on the late evening of September 8, 2003 at her home in Pöcking, Germany. She had been suffering from cancer. She was buried in Munich's Waldfriedhof cemetery.

There was varied response in the obituary pages of leading publications, although most recognized her technical breakthroughs in film making:

The *Daily Telegraph* wrote that she

“was perhaps the most talented female cinema director of the 20th century; her celebration of Nazi Germany in film ensured that she was certainly the most infamous...Critics would later decry her fascination with the athletes' physiques as fascistic; but in truth her interest was born not of racist ends but of the delight she, as a former dancer, took in the human form. ”

“Opinions will be divided between those who see her as a young, talented and ambitious woman caught up in the tide of events which she did not fully understand, and those who believe her to be a cold and opportunist propagandist and a Nazi by association.”

The Independent wrote that

At the end of her long life she was still the controversial femme fatale of German films...She was interested in beauty, adventure and films, but she was famous for being the woman you love to hate.”

Views of critics

In his book *The Story of Film*, film scholar Mark Cousins claims, "Next to Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock, Leni Riefenstahl was the most technically talented Western film maker of her era".

Reviewer Gary Morris called Riefenstahl "an artist of unparalleled gifts, a woman in an industry dominated by men, one of the great formalists of the cinema on a par with Eisenstein or Welles". Pauline Kael called *Triumph* and *Olympia* "the two greatest films ever directed by a woman".

Film biographies

In 1993, she was the subject of the acclaimed German documentary film *The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*, directed by Ray Müller. Riefenstahl appeared in the film and answered several questions and detailed the production of her films. She was also the subject of Müller's 2000 documentary film *Leni Riefenstahl: Her Dream of Africa*, documenting her return to Sudan to visit the Nuba.

The Guardian reported in April 2007 that British screenwriter Rupert Walters was writing a movie based on Riefenstahl's life which would star actress Jodie Foster. The project had been in the works for more than seven years under the working title *The Leni Riefenstahl Project*. The project is co-produced by Primary Pictures and Foster's own Egg Pictures. Foster said in 1999, "There is no other woman in the 20th century who has been so admired and vilified simultaneously". The project had not been able to capture Riefenstahl's consent while she was alive, since Riefenstahl requested the ability to veto any scenes she did not agree with; Riefenstahl also preferred Sharon Stone as the star of the movie rather than Foster. Both Foster and Madonna had sought the rights to Riefenstahl's autobiography since the early 1990s. Director Paul Verhoeven corresponded with Riefenstahl about a separate film biography. In 2011, the director Steven Soderbergh revealed that he had spent 6 months working on a biopic of Riefenstahl. He ultimately abandoned the project over concerns of its commercial prospects and instead pursued the pandemic thriller, *Contagion*.

In popular culture

Riefenstahl's filming merits are discussed between characters in the Quentin Tarantino film *Inglourious Basterds*. Tarantino explained the significant presence of Third Reich filmmaking in his film: "Riefenstahl and Goebbels despised each other. He was in charge of every single person in the German film industry with the sole exception of her".

Leni, an award winning play by Sarah Greenman, is based on the life and work of Leni Riefenstahl. It saw productions in Oakland, California in 2004, Portland, Oregon in 2007, Seattle, Washington in 2008, and was showcased at the New York Fringe Festival in 2007.

A play based on Riefenstahl, *Playing Leni* (originally titled *Dysfictional Circumstances*) by David Robson and John Stanton, won the Hotel Obligado Audience Choice Award for New Work at the 2010 Spark Showcase in Philadelphia. It subsequently received a staged reading at the Philly Fringe Festival and was produced in May 2011 by Madhouse Theater.

Riefenstahl was referenced by a character in the 8th season of the movie-lampooning television show, *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, as the characters in the show watch the 1950s horror film *The Leech Woman*. As the main female lead character of the film is transformed to a younger version of herself with a potion, robot Tom Servo, upon seeing the newly rejuvenated character, says: "They turned her into Leni Riefenstahl!"

Lila Lee

Lila Lee (July 25, 1901 – November 13, 1973) was a prominent screen actress of the early silent film era.



Early life

Lila Lee was born **Augusta Wilhelmena Fredericka Appel** in Union Hill, New Jersey into a middle-class family of German immigrants who relocated to New York City when Lila was quite young. Searching for a hobby for their gregarious young daughter, the Appels enrolled Lila in Gus Edwards' kiddie review shows where she was given the nickname of "Cuddles"; a name that she would be known by for the rest of her acting career. Her stage work became so popular with the public that her parents had her educated with private tutors. Edwards would become Lee's long-term manager.

Career

In 1918 she was chosen for a film contract by Hollywood film mogul Jesse Lasky for Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, which later became Paramount Pictures. Her first feature *The Cruise of the Make-Believes* garnered the seventeen year old starlet much public acclaim and Lasky quickly sent Lee on an arduous publicity campaign. Critics lauded Lila for her wholesome persona and sympathetic character parts. Lee quickly rose to the ranks of leading lady and often starred opposite such matinee heavies as Conrad Nagel, Gloria Swanson, Wallace Reid, Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle, and Rudolph Valentino.

In 1922 Lee was cast as *Carmen* in the enormously popular film *Blood and Sand*, opposite matinee idol Rudolph Valentino and silent screen vamp Nita Naldi; Lee subsequently won the first WAMPAS Baby Stars award that year. Lee continued to be a highly popular leading lady throughout the 1920s and made scores of critically praised and widely watched films.

As the *Roaring Twenties* drew to a close, Lee's popularity began to wane and Lee positioned herself for the transition to talkies. She is one of the few leading ladies of the silent screen whose popularity did not nosedive with the coming of sound. She went back to working with the major studios and appeared, most notably, in *The Unholy Three*, in 1930, opposite Lon Chaney Sr. in his only talkie. However, a

series of bad career choices and bouts of recurring tuberculosis and alcoholism hindered further projects and Lee was relegated to taking parts in mostly grade B-movies.

Personal life

Lila was married and divorced three times. Her first husband was actor James Kirkwood, Sr., whom she married in 1923. The marriage ended in August 1931 on grounds of her desertion. Lee and Kirkwood had a son in 1924, James Kirkwood, Jr., whose custody was granted to his father; he became a highly regarded playwright and screenwriter whose works include *A Chorus Line* and *P.S. Your Cat Is Dead*. Her second husband was broker Jack R. Peine (married 1934, divorced 1935) and her third husband was broker John E. Murphy (married 1944, divorced 1949).

Lee made several uneventful appearances in stage plays in the 1940s, and starred in early television soap operas in the 1950s. In 1973 Lee died of a stroke at Saranac Lake, New York. For her contribution as an actress in motion pictures, she was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1716 Vine Street, in Hollywood, California.

Lillian Gish

Lillian Diana Gish (October 14, 1893 – February 27, 1993) was an American stage, screen and television actress whose film acting career spanned 75 years, from 1912 to 1987.



She was a prominent film star of the 1910s and 1920s, particularly associated with the films of director D.W. Griffith, including her leading role in Griffith's seminal *Birth of a Nation* (1915). Her sound-era film appearances were sporadic, but included memorable roles in the controversial western *Duel in the Sun* (1946) and the offbeat thriller *Night of the Hunter* (1955). She did considerable television work from the early 1950s into the 1980s, and closed her career playing, for the first time, opposite Bette Davis in the 1987 film *The Whales of August*.

The American Film Institute (AFI) named Gish 17th among the greatest female stars of all time. She was awarded an Honorary Academy Award in 1971, and in 1984 she received an AFI Life Achievement Award.

Early life

Lillian Diana Gish was born in 1893 in Springfield, Ohio. She was the daughter of Mary Robinson McConnell (an Episcopalian) and James Leigh Gish (who was of German Lutheran descent). Gish's father left the family before she was old enough to remember him; her mother then took up acting to support the family. She had a younger sister, Dorothy. When Lillian and Dorothy were old enough, they joined the theatre, often traveling separately in different productions. They also took modeling jobs.

The first several generations of Gishes were Dunkard ministers. Her great-great-great grandfather came to America on the ship *Pennsylvania Merchant* in 1733 and received a land grant from William Penn. Her great-great grandfather was in the American Revolutionary War and is buried in a cemetery in Pennsylvania for such soldiers, a bit of an oddity because Dunkards are supposed to be more pacifist than Amish or Quakers. Letters between her and a Pennsylvania college professor indicate that her knowledge of her family background was limited.

In 1912, their friend Mary Pickford introduced the sisters to D. W. Griffith, and helped get them contracts with Biograph Studios. Lillian Gish would soon become one of America's best-loved actresses. Although she was already nineteen, she gave her age as 16 to the studio.

Career

The sisters debuted in Griffith's short film *An Unseen Enemy* (1912). Lillian went on to star in many of Griffith's most acclaimed films, including *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Intolerance* (1916), *Broken Blossoms* (1919), *Way Down East* (1920) and *Orphans of the Storm* (1921). One of the enduring images of Gish's silent film years is the climax of the melodramatic *Way Down East*, in which Gish's character floats unconscious on an ice floe towards a raging waterfall, her long hair trailing in the water.



Lillian Gish in *Broken Blossoms*



1921 fan magazine cover by Rolf Armstrong

Having appeared in over 25 short films and features in her first two years as a movie actress, Lillian became a major star, becoming known as "The First Lady of the Silent Screen" and appearing in lavish productions, frequently of literary works such as *The Scarlet Letter*. MGM released her from her contract in 1928 after the failure of *The Wind* (1928), now recognized by many as among her finest performances and one of the most distinguished works of the late silent period.

She directed one film, *Remodeling Her Husband* (1920), when D. W. Griffith took his unit on location—he told Gish that he thought the crew would work harder for a girl. Gish never directed again, telling reporters at the time that directing was a man's job.

With her debut in talkies only moderately successful, she acted on the stage for the most part in the 1930s and early 1940s, appearing in roles as varied as Ophelia in Guthrie McClintic's landmark 1936 production of *Hamlet* (with John Gielgud and Judith Anderson) and Marguerite in a limited run of *La Dame aux Camélias*. Of the former, she said, with pride, "I played a lewd Ophelia!".



Lillian Gish as Anna Moore in D. W. Griffith's film *Way Down East* (1920)

Returning to movies, Gish was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in 1946 for *Duel in the Sun*. The scenes of her character's illness and death late in that film seemed intended to evoke the memory of some of her silent film performances. She appeared in films from time to time for the rest of her life, notably in *Night of the Hunter* (1955) as a rural guardian angel protecting her charges from a murderous preacher played by Robert Mitchum. She was considered for various roles in *Gone with the Wind* ranging from Ellen O'Hara, Scarlett's mother, which went to Barbara O'Neil, to prostitute Belle Watling, which went to Ona Munson.

Gish made numerous television appearances from the early 1950s into the late 1980s. Her most acclaimed television work was starring in the original production of *The Trip to Bountiful* in 1953. She appeared as Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna in the short-lived 1965 Broadway musical *Anya*. In addition to her later acting appearances, Gish became one of the leading advocates on the lost art of the silent film, often giving speeches and touring to screenings of classic works. In 1975, she hosted *The Silent Years*, a PBS film program of silent films.



Gish in 1973

Gish received a Special Academy Award in 1971 "For superlative artistry and for distinguished contribution to the progress of motion pictures." In 1979, she was awarded the Women in film Crystal Award in Los Angeles. In 1984, she received an American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement Award, becoming only the second female recipient (preceded by Bette Davis in 1977), and the only recipient who was a major figure in the silent era. She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1720 Vine Street.

Her last film role was in *The Whales of August* in 1987 at the age of 93, with Vincent Price, Bette Davis and Ann Sothorn, in which she and Davis starred as elderly sisters in Maine. Her final professional appearance was a cameo on the 1988 studio recording of Jerome Kern's *Show Boat*, starring Frederica von Stade and Jerry Hadley, in which she affectingly spoke the few lines of *The Old Lady on the Levee* in the final scene. The last words of her long career were, "Good night, dear."

Some in the entertainment industry were angry that Gish did not receive an Oscar nomination for her role in *The Whales of August*. Gish herself was more complacent, remarking that it saved her the trouble of "losing to Cher" (who did, in fact, win for her performance in *Moonstruck*).

Personal life



Lillian and her sister Dorothy

Gish never married or had children. The association between Gish and D. W. Griffith was so close that some suspected a romantic connection, an issue never acknowledged by Gish, although several of their associates were certain they were at least briefly involved. For the remainder of her life, she always referred to him as "Mr. Griffith."

She was involved with producer Charles Duell and drama critic and editor George Jean Nathan. In the 1920s, Gish's association with Duell was something of a tabloid scandal because he had sued her and made the details of their relationship public.

During the period of political turmoil in the United States that lasted from the outbreak of World War II in Europe until the attack on Pearl Harbor, she maintained an outspoken non-interventionist stance. She was an active member of the America First Committee, an anti-intervention organization founded by

retired General Robert E. Wood with aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh as its leading spokesman. She said she was blacklisted by the film and theater industries until she signed a contract in which she promised to cease her anti-interventionist activities and never disclose the fact that she had agreed to do so.

She maintained a very close relationship with her sister Dorothy, as well as with Mary Pickford, for her entire life. Another of her closest friends was actress Helen Hayes; Gish was the godmother of Hayes' son James MacArthur.

Death

She died in her sleep of natural causes on February 27, 1993, aged 99 and is interred beside her sister Dorothy at Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in New York City. Her estate, which she left to Hayes (who died a month later) was valued at several million dollars, and went to provide prizes for artistic excellence.

Legacy

The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize

A street in Massillon, Ohio is named after Gish, who had lived there during an early period of her life and fondly referred to it as her hometown throughout her career.

Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio is home to the Gish Film Theater and Gallery, which is dedicated to the works of both Dorothy and Lillian Gish.

Gish was a leading character in *The Biograph Girl*, a 1980 stage musical about the silent film era.

The Smashing Pumpkins titled their 1991 debut album, "Gish", after her.

Lili Damita

Lili Damita (July 10, 1904 – March 21, 1994) was a French actress who appeared in 33 movies between 1922 and 1937.



Early life and education

Born **Liliane Marie-Madeleine Carré** in Blaye, France, she was educated in convents and ballet schools in several European countries, including France, Spain and Portugal. At 14, she was enrolled as a dancer at the Opera de Paris.

By the age of 16, she was performing in popular music halls, eventually appearing in the Revue at the Casino de Paris. She also worked as a photographic model. Offered a role in film as a prize for winning a magazine beauty competition in 1921, she appeared in several silent films before being offered her first leading role in *Das Spielzeug von Paris* (1925) by Hungarian-born director Michael Curtiz, whom she married in 1925 (they divorced a year later). She was an instant success, and Curtiz directed her in two more films: *Fiaker Nr 13* (1926) and *Der Goldene Schmetterling* (1926). Damita continued appearing in German productions directed by Robert Wiene (*Die Grosse Abenteurerin*; 1927), G.W. Pabst (*Man Spielt nicht mit der Liebe*; 1926), and British director Graham Cutts (*The Queen Was in the Parlour*; 1927).

Career

In 1928, at the invitation of Samuel Goldwyn she went to Hollywood, making her American debut in a film titled *The Rescue*. Leased out to various studios, she appeared with stars such as Gary Cooper, Maurice Chevalier, Laurence Olivier, Cary Grant, and James Cagney. Her films included the box office successes *The Cock-Eyed World* (1929), the semi-silent *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1929), and *This Is the Night* (1932).

Personal life



Lili Damita and husband Errol Flynn at Los Angeles airport, 1941

In 1935, she married her second husband, a virtual unknown who would become Hollywood's biggest box office attraction, Errol Flynn, with whom she had a son, Sean Leslie Flynn (born 1941). Following the marriage, she retired from the screen. The couple divorced in 1942. (Barbara Hershey portrayed her in the TV film *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* based on Errol Flynn's autobiography.)

While living in Palm Beach, Florida, Damita married Allen Loomis, a retired Fort Dodge, Iowa dairy owner, and spent part of each year living there.

During the Vietnam War, her son Sean Flynn was working as a freelance photo journalist under contract to *Time* magazine when he and fellow journalist Dana Stone went missing on the road south of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on April 6, 1970. Although Damita spent an enormous amount of money searching for her son, he was never found, and in 1984 Sean Leslie Flynn was declared legally dead. DNA testing was conducted on remains found in Cambodia and turned over to the U.S. embassy in March 2010. However, the results, released June 30, 2010 by JPAC, showed the remains were not of those of Sean Flynn.

Death

Lili Damita died of Alzheimer's disease in Palm Beach, Florida, aged 89, and was interred in the Oakland Cemetery in Fort Dodge, Iowa, her third husband's hometown.

Lois Wilson

Lois Wilson (June 28, 1894 – March 3, 1988) was an American actress best known for her work during the silent film era. She also directed two short films and was a scenario writer.



Lois Wilson, 1923

Early life

Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Wilson's family moved to Alabama when she was still very young. She earned a degree from Alabama Normal College (now the University of West Alabama), and became a school teacher. Wilson moved to California when she won a beauty contest put on by Universal Studios and the Birmingham News in 1915. This pageant was the predecessor to the Miss Alabama/Miss America pageant system, and Wilson is considered the first Miss Alabama. Upon arriving in Hollywood, she secured a small part in *The Dumb Girl of Portici*, which starred the ballerina Anna Pavlova.

Career

After appearing in several films at various studios, Wilson settled in at Paramount Pictures in 1919, where she remained until 1927. She was a WAMPAS Baby Star of 1922, and all told, appeared in 150 movies. Her most recognized screen portrayals are Molly Wingate in *The Covered Wagon* (1923) and Daisy Buchanan in the silent film version of *The Great Gatsby* (1926). She acted opposite such leading male stars of her era as Rudolph Valentino and John Gilbert.

Wilson played both romantic leads and character parts. Despite making a successful transition to sound, Wilson was dissatisfied with the roles she received in the 1930s and she soon retired in 1941, making only three films after 1939. Lois ventured to Broadway and television following her final role in *The Girl From Jones Beach* (1949) with Ronald Reagan. Wilson played in the network soap operas *The Guiding Light* in (1952) and *The Edge of Night*. She portrayed featured character roles.

Wilson was also the model of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Celebration's official poster, "America Welcomes the World" in 1926.

Personal life

She was once described as having a screen image of "the soft, marrying kind of woman"; in real life, however, she never married. She was chosen by Paramount Pictures to represent the motion picture industry at the British Empire Exposition of 1924. She was described as "a typical example of the American girl in character, culture and beauty".

Lois Wilson died of pneumonia at Riverside Hospital for Skilled Care in Reno, Nevada on March 3, 1988. She was 93 years old. She was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. Her funeral service was conducted at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills, California.

Lon Chaney, Sr.

Lon Chaney (April 1, 1883 – August 26, 1930), nicknamed "**The Man of a Thousand Faces**," was an American actor during the age of silent films. He was one of the most versatile and powerful actors of early cinema. He is best remembered for his characterizations of tortured, often grotesque and afflicted characters, and his groundbreaking artistry with film makeup.



Lon Chaney during the production of *The Miracle Man*, 1919

Early life

Lon Chaney was born **Leonidas Frank Chaney** in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to Frank H. Chaney and Emma Alice Kennedy; his father had mostly English and some French ancestry, and his mother was of Scottish, English, and Irish descent. Her father, Jonathan Ralston Kennedy, founded the "Colorado School for the Education of Mutes" (now, Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind) in 1874, and Chaney's parents met there. Both of Chaney's parents were deaf, and as a child of deaf adults Chaney became skilled in pantomime. He entered a stage career in 1902, and began traveling with popular Vaudeville and theater acts. In 1905, he met and married 16-year-old singer Cleva Creighton (Frances Cleveland Creighton) and in 1906, their first child and only son, Creighton Chaney (a.k.a. Lon Chaney, Jr.) was born. The Chaney family continued touring, settling in California in 1910.

Marital troubles developed and in April 1913, Cleva went to the Majestic Theater in downtown Los Angeles, where Lon was managing the *Kolb and Dill* show, and attempted suicide by swallowing mercuric chloride. The suicide attempt failed and ruined her singing career; the ensuing scandal and divorce forced Chaney out of the theater and into film.

The time spent there is not clearly known, but between the years 1912 and 1917, Chaney worked under contract for Universal Studios doing bit or character parts. His skill with makeup gained him many parts in the highly competitive casting atmosphere. During this time, Chaney befriended the husband-wife director team of Joe De Grasse and Ida May Park, who gave him substantial roles in their pictures, and further encouraged him to play macabre characters.

Chaney also married one of his former colleagues in the *Kolb and Dill* company tour, a chorus girl named Hazel Hastings. Little is known of Hazel, except that her marriage to Chaney was solid. Upon marrying, the new couple gained custody of Chaney's 10-year-old son Creighton, who had resided in various homes and boarding schools since Chaney's divorce in 1913.

Career

By 1917 Chaney was a prominent actor in the studio, but his salary did not reflect this status. When Chaney asked for a raise, studio executive William Siström replied, "You'll never be worth more than one hundred dollars a week."

After leaving the studio, Chaney struggled for the first year as a character actor. It was not until 1918 when playing a substantial role in William S. Hart's picture, *Riddle Gawne*, that Chaney's talents as a character actor were truly recognized by the industry.



Lon Chaney in *The Phantom of the Opera*

In 1917 Universal presented Chaney, Dorothy Phillips, and William Stowell as a team in *The Piper's Price*. In succeeding films, the men alternated playing lover, villain, or other man to the beautiful Phillips. They would occasionally be joined by Claire DuBrey nearly making the trio a quartet of recurring actors from film to film. So successful were the films starring this group that Universal produced fourteen films from 1917 to 1919 with Chaney, Stowell, and Phillips. The films were usually directed by Joe De Grasse or his wife Ida May Park, both friends of Chaney's at Universal. When Chaney was away branching out on films such as *Riddle Gawne* and *The Kaiser, Beast of Berlin*, Stowell and Phillips would continue on as a duo until Chaney's return. Stowell and Phillips made *The Heart of Humanity* (1918), bringing in Eric von Stroheim for a part as the villain that could easily have been played by Chaney. *Paid in Advance* (1919) was the group's last film together, for the chiseled featured Stowell was sent to Africa by Universal to scout locations for a movie. En route from one city to another, Stowell was in the caboose when it was hit by the locomotive from another train; he was killed instantly. The majority of these films are lost but a few, including *Triumph* and *Paid in Advance* survive in private collections or un-restored in European or Russian archives.

In 1919, Chaney had a breakthrough performance as "The Frog" in George Loane Tucker's *The Miracle Man*. The film displayed not only Chaney's acting ability, but also his talent as a master of makeup. Critical praise and a gross of over \$2 million put Chaney on the map as America's foremost character actor.

Chaney is chiefly remembered as a pioneer in such silent horror films as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. His ability to transform himself using makeup techniques he invented earned him the nickname of "Man of a Thousand Faces." In an autobiographical 1925 article published in *Movie* magazine, Chaney referred to his specialty as "extraordinary characterization."



Lon Chaney in *The Penalty*

He also exhibited this adaptability with makeup in more conventional crime and adventure films, such as *The Penalty*, in which he played an amputee gangster. Chaney appeared in 10 films directed by Tod Browning, often portraying disguised and/or mutilated characters, including carnival knife-thrower Alonzo the Armless in *The Unknown* (1927) opposite Joan Crawford. In 1927, Chaney co-starred with Conrad Nagel, Marceline Day, Henry B. Walthall and Polly Moran in the Tod Browning horror film, *London After Midnight*, considered one of the most legendary lost films. His final cinema role was a sound remake of his silent classic *The Unholy Three* (1930), his only "talkie" and the only film in which Chaney utilized his versatile voice. The actor signed a sworn statement declaring that five of the key voices in the film (the ventriloquist, the old woman, a parrot, the dummy and the girl) were his own.

In Quasimodo, the bell ringer of Notre Dame, and Erik, the "phantom" of the Paris Opera House, Chaney created two of the most grotesquely deformed characters in film history. However, the portrayals sought to elicit a degree of sympathy and pathos among viewers not overwhelmingly terrified or repulsed by the monstrous disfigurements of these victims of fate.

"I wanted to remind people that the lowest types of humanity may have within them the capacity for supreme self-sacrifice," Chaney wrote in *Movie* magazine. "The dwarfed, misshapen beggar of the streets may have the noblest ideals. Most of my roles since *The Hunchback*, such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *He Who Gets Slapped*, *The Unholy Three*, etc., have carried the theme of self-sacrifice or renunciation. These are the stories which I wish to do."

"He was someone who acted out our psyches. He somehow got into the shadows inside our bodies; he was able to nail down some of our secret fears and put them on-screen," Ray Bradbury once explained. "The history of Lon Chaney is the history of unrequited loves. He brings that part of you out into the open, because you fear that you are not loved, you fear that you never will be loved, you fear there is some part of you that's grotesque, that the world will turn away from."

Chaney's talents extended beyond the horror genre and stage makeup. He was also a highly skilled dancer, singer and comedian. Many who did not know Chaney were surprised by his rich baritone voice and his sharp comedic skills.



Lon Chaney as "Mr. Wu," conducting an orchestra of women.

Chaney and his second wife Hazel led a discreet private life distant from the Hollywood social scene. Chaney did minimal promotional work for his films and for MGM Studios, purposefully fostering a mysterious image, and he reportedly intentionally avoided the social scene in Hollywood.

In the final five years of his film career (1925–1930), Chaney worked exclusively under contract to MGM, giving some of his most memorable performances. His portrayal of a tough-as-nails marine drill instructor in *Tell It to the Marines* (1926), one of his favorite films, earned him the affection of the US Marine Corps, who made him their first honorary member from the motion picture industry. He also earned the respect and admiration of numerous aspiring actors, to whom he offered mentoring assistance, and between takes on film sets he was always willing to share his professional observations with the cast and crew.

Death



1923 Lon Chaney portrait

During the filming of *Thunder* in the winter of 1929, Chaney developed pneumonia. In late 1929 he was diagnosed with bronchial lung cancer. This was exacerbated when artificial snow, made out of cornflakes, lodged in his throat during filming and quickly created a serious infection. Despite aggressive treatment, his condition gradually worsened, and seven weeks after the release of the remake

of *The Unholy Three*, he died of a throat hemorrhage. His death was deeply mourned by his family, the film industry and by his fans. The US Marine Corps provided a chaplain and Honor Guard for his funeral. He was interred at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery, in Glendale, California, next to the crypt of his father. His wife Hazel was interred there upon her death in 1933. For unknown reasons, Chaney's crypt has remained unmarked.

Legacy

In 1957, Chaney was the subject of a biopic titled *Man of a Thousand Faces*, and was portrayed by James Cagney. Though much of the plot was fictional, the film was a moving tribute to Chaney and helped boost his posthumous fame. During his lifetime, Chaney had boasted he would make it difficult for biographers to portray his life, saying that "between pictures, there is no Lon Chaney." This was in line with the air of mystery he purposefully fostered around his makeup and performances.

Lon Chaney has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 1994, he was honored by having his image designed by noted caricaturist Al Hirschfeld, placed on a United States postage stamp. The stage theater at the Colorado Springs Civic Auditorium is named after Lon Chaney.



Lon Chaney High Sierra House

In 1929, Chaney built an impressive stone cabin in the remote wilderness of the eastern Sierra Nevada, near Big Pine, California, as a retreat. The cabin (designed by architect Paul Williams) still stands, and is preserved by the Inyo National Forest Service.

Chaney's son Creighton, renamed Lon Chaney, Jr., became a film actor after his father's death, and is best remembered for roles in horror films, especially *The Wolf Man*. The Chaney's appeared on US postage stamps as the Phantom of the Opera and the Wolf Man, with the set completed by Bela Lugosi as Dracula and Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster and The Mummy. He and his son are mentioned in the Warren Zevon song "Werewolves of London".

Following his death, Chaney's famous makeup case was donated by his wife Hazel to the Los Angeles County Museum, where it is sometimes displayed for the public. Makeup artist and Chaney biographer Michael Blake considers Chaney's case the most important artifact in the history of film makeup.

In 1978, Gene Simmons of the rock band KISS wrote a song about Lon Chaney called "Man of 1,000 Faces" for his first solo album. Simmons had been influenced by the old black and white classic horror movies growing up in New York City.

An episode of *The New Scooby Doo Movies* entitled "The Exterminator" has a tribute to Lon Chaney as mysterious master of disguise actor "Lorne Chumley" and his butler "Otto" (as a tribute to Erich von Stroheim).

Horror Illogium, guitarist of the Australian extreme metal band Portal, stated that Lon Chaney in a few of his roles was the ideal figure for what the band wanted to portray to its imagery and sound.

Chaney is the subject of a documentary feature called *Lon Chaney: A Thousand Faces* (2000), produced by silent film expert Kevin Brownlow and narrated by Kenneth Branagh.

Louise Brooks

Mary Louise Brooks (November 14, 1906 – August 8, 1985), generally known by her stage name **Louise Brooks**, was an American dancer, model, showgirl and silent film actress, noted for popularizing the bobbed haircut. Brooks is best known for her three feature roles including two G. W. Pabst films: in *Pandora's Box* (1929), *Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929), and *Prix de Beauté* (*Miss Europe*) (1930). She starred in 17 silent films and, late in life, authored a memoir, *Lulu in Hollywood*.



Louise Brooks circa 1926

Early life

Born in Cherryvale, Kansas, Louise Brooks was the daughter of Leonard Porter Brooks, a lawyer, who was usually too busy with his practice to discipline his children, and Myra Rude, an artistic mother who determined that any "squalling brats she produced could take care of themselves".^{:11}

Rude was a talented pianist who played the latest Debussy and Ravel for her children, inspiring them with a love of books and music. None of this protected her nine-year old daughter Louise from sexual abuse at the hands of a neighborhood predator. This event had a major influence on Brooks' life and career, causing her to say in later years that she was incapable of real love, and that this man "must have had a great deal to do with forming my attitude toward sexual pleasure....For me, nice, soft, easy men were never enough – there had to be an element of domination". (When Brooks at last told her mother of the incident, many years later, her mother suggested that it must have been Louise's fault for "leading him on".^{:548})

Brooks began her entertainment career as a dancer, joining the Denishawn modern dance company (whose members included founders Ruth St. Denis, and Ted Shawn, as well as a young Martha Graham) in 1922. In her second season with the company, Brooks had advanced to a starring role in one work opposite Shawn. A long-simmering personal conflict between Brooks and St. Denis boiled over one day, however, and St. Denis abruptly fired Brooks from the troupe in 1924, telling her in front of the other members that "I am dismissing you from the company because you want life handed to you on a silver salver".^{:53} The words left a strong impression on Brooks; when she drew up an outline for a planned autobiographical novel in 1949, "The Silver Salver" was the title she gave to the tenth and final chapter.^{:429}

Thanks to her friend Barbara Bennett (sister of Constance and Joan), Brooks almost immediately found employment as a chorus girl in George White's Scandals, followed by an appearance as a featured dancer in the 1925 edition of the Ziegfeld Follies on Broadway. As a result of her work in the *Follies*, she came to the attention of Paramount Pictures producer Walter Wanger, who signed her to a five-year contract with the studio in 1925.^{:100} (She was also noticed by visiting movie star Charlie Chaplin, who was in town for the premiere of his film *The Gold Rush*. The two had an affair that summer.^{:109})

American film career

Brooks made her screen debut in the silent *The Street of Forgotten Men*, in an un-credited role in 1925. Soon, however, she was playing the female lead in a number of silent light comedies and flapper films over the next few years, starring with Adolphe Menjou and W. C. Fields, among others.

She was noticed in Europe for her pivotal vamp role in the Howard Hawks directed silent "buddy film", *A Girl in Every Port* in 1928.

It has been said that her best American role was in one of the early sound film dramas, *Beggars of Life* (1928), as an abused country girl on the run with Richard Arlen and Wallace Beery playing hoboes she meets while riding the rails. Much of this film was shot on location, and the boom microphone was invented for this film by the director William Wellman, who needed it for one of the first experimental talking scenes in the movies. By this time in her life, she was mixing with the rich and famous, and was a regular guest of William Randolph Hearst and his mistress, Marion Davies, at San Simeon, being close friends with Davies' niece, Pepi Lederer. Her distinctive bob haircut, which became eponymous, and is still recognized to this day, helped start a trend; many women styled their hair in imitation of her and fellow film star Colleen Moore. Soon after the film *Beggars Of Life* was made, Brooks, who loathed the Hollywood "scene", refused to stay on at Paramount after being denied a promised raise, and left for Europe to make films for G. W. Pabst, the prominent German Expressionist director.

Paramount attempted to use the coming of sound films to pressure the actress, but she called the studio's bluff. It was not until 30 years later that this rebellious move would come to be seen as arguably the most savvy of her career, securing her immortality as a silent film legend and independent spirit. Unfortunately, while her initial snubbing of Paramount alone would not have finished her in Hollywood altogether, her refusal after returning from Germany to come back to Paramount for sound retakes of *The Canary Murder Case* (1929) irrevocably placed her on an unofficial blacklist. Actress Margaret Livingston was hired to dub Brooks's voice for the film, and the studio claimed that Brooks' voice was unsuitable for sound pictures.

In Europe

Once in Germany, she starred in the 1929 film *Pandora's Box*, directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst in his New Objectivity period. The film is based on two plays by Frank Wedekind (*Erdgeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*) and Brooks plays the central figure, Lulu. This film is notorious for its frank treatment of modern sexual mores, including one of the first screen portrayals of a lesbian. Brooks then starred in the controversial social drama *Diary of a Lost Girl* (1929), based on the book by Margarete Böhme and also directed by Pabst, and *Prix de Beauté* (1930) by Italian author Augusto Genina, the latter being filmed in France, and having a famous surprise ending. All these films were heavily censored, as they were very "adult" and considered shocking in their time for their portrayals of sexuality, as well as their social satire.

Life after film



Brooks as a fashion model

When she returned to Hollywood in 1931, she was cast in two mainstream films: *God's Gift to Women* (1931) and *It Pays to Advertise* (1931). Her performances in these films, however, were largely ignored, and few other job offers were forthcoming due to her informal "blacklisting".

Despite this, William Wellman, her director on *Beggars of Life*, offered her the feminine lead in his new picture, *The Public Enemy* starring James Cagney. However, Brooks turned down the role in order to visit her then-lover George Preston Marshall in New York City, and the part instead went to Jean Harlow, who began her own rise to stardom largely as a result. Brooks later explained herself to Wellman by saying that she hated making pictures because she simply "hated Hollywood", and according to film historian James Card, who came to know Brooks intimately later in her life, "she just wasn't interested....She was more interested in Marshall". In the opinion of Brooks's biographer Barry Paris, "turning down *Public Enemy* marked the real end of Louise Brooks's film career".

For the rest of her movie career, she was reduced to playing bit parts and roles in B pictures and short films. One of her directors at this time was a fellow Hollywood outcast, Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, working under the pseudonym "William Goodrich". Brooks starred in Arbuckle's Educational Pictures comedy short, *Windy Riley Goes Hollywood* (1931).

Brooks retired from the screen after completing one last film, the John Wayne western *Overland Stage Raiders* (1938) in which she played the romantic lead with a long hairstyle that rendered her all but unrecognizable from her "Lulu" days. She then briefly returned to Wichita, where she was raised. "But that turned out to be another kind of hell," she said. "The citizens of Wichita either resented me having been a success or despised me for being a failure. And I wasn't exactly enchanted with them. I must confess to a lifelong curse: My own failure as a social creature." After an unsuccessful attempt at operating a dance studio, she returned East and, after brief stints as a radio actor and a gossip columnist, worked as a salesgirl in a Saks Fifth Avenue store in New York City for a few years, then eked out a living as a courtesan with a few select wealthy men as clients.

"I found that the only well-paying career open to me, as an unsuccessful actress of thirty-six, was that of a call girl...and (I) began to flirt with the fancies related to little bottles filled with yellow sleeping pills."

Brooks had also been a heavy drinker since age 14, but she remained relatively sober to begin writing about film, which became her second career. During this period she began her first major writing project, an autobiographical novel called *Naked on My Goat*, a title taken from Goethe's *Faust*. After working on the novel for a number of years, she destroyed the manuscript by throwing it into an incinerator.

She was a notorious spendthrift for most of her life, even filing for bankruptcy in 1932, but was kind and generous to her friends, almost to a fault. Despite her two marriages, she never had children, referring to herself as "Barren Brooks". Her many lovers from years before had included a young William S. Paley, the founder of CBS. According to *Louise Brooks: Looking For Lulu*, Paley provided a small monthly stipend to Brooks for the rest of her life, and according to the documentary this stipend kept her from committing suicide at one point. She also had an on-again, off-again relationship with George Marshall throughout the 1920s and 1930s (which she described as "abusive"). He was the biggest reason she was able to secure a contract with Pabst. Marshall repeatedly asked her to marry him and after finding that she had had many affairs while they were together, married film actress Corinne Griffith instead.

Rediscovery

French film historians rediscovered her films in the early 1950s, proclaiming her as an actress who surpassed even Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo as a film icon (Henri Langlois: "There is no Garbo, there is no Dietrich, there is only Louise Brooks!"), much to her amusement. It would lead to the still ongoing Louise Brooks film revivals, and rehabilitated her reputation in her home country. James Card, the film curator for the George Eastman House, discovered Louise living as a recluse in New York City about this time, and persuaded her to move to Rochester, New York to be near the George Eastman House film collection. With his help, she became a noted film writer in her own right. A collection of her witty and cogent writings, *Lulu in Hollywood*, was published in 1982. She was profiled by the film writer Kenneth Tynan in his essay, "The Girl With The Black Helmet", the title of which was an allusion to her fabulous bob, worn since childhood, a hairstyle claimed as one of the ten most influential in history by beauty magazines the world over.

She rarely gave interviews, but had special relationships with John Kobal and Kevin Brownlow, the film historians, and they were able to capture on paper some of her personality. In the 1970s she was interviewed extensively, on film, for the documentaries *Memories of Berlin: The Twilight of Weimar Culture* (1976), produced and directed by Gary Conklin, and in the *Hollywood* series (1980) directed by Kevin Brownlow and David Gill. *Lulu in Berlin* (1984) is another rare filmed interview, produced by Richard Leacock and Susan Woll, released a year before her death, but filmed a decade earlier. Author Tom Graves was allowed into Brooks' apartment for an interview in 1982, and later wrote about the at times awkward and tense conversation in his brief book "My Afternoon With Louise Brooks."

As is the case with many of her contemporaries, a number of Brooks' films, according to the documentary *Looking for Lulu*, are considered to be lost. Her key films survive, however, particularly *Pandora's Box* and *Diary of a Lost Girl* which have been released to DVD in North America by the Criterion Collection and Kino Video, respectively. As of 2007, *Prix de Beaute* and *The Show Off* have also seen limited North American DVD release, as well. Her short film (and one of her only talkies), *Windy Riley Goes Hollywood* was included on the DVD release of *Diary of a Lost Girl*. Her final film, *Overland Stage Raiders*, was released to VHS but has yet to receive a North American DVD release.

Legacy

Brooks had always been very self-directed, even difficult, and was notorious for her salty language, which she didn't hesitate to use whenever she felt like it. In addition, she had made a vow to herself never to smile on stage unless she felt compelled to, and although the majority of her publicity photos show her with a neutral expression, she had a dazzling smile. By her own admission, she was a sexually liberated woman, not afraid to experiment, even posing fully nude for art photography, and her liaisons with many film people were legendary, although much of it is speculation.

Louise Brooks as an unattainable film image served as an inspiration for Adolfo Bioy Casares when he wrote his science fiction novel *The Invention of Morel* (1940) about a man attracted to Faustine, a woman who is only a projected 3-D image. In a 1995 interview, Casares explained that Faustine is directly based on his love for Louise Brooks who "vanished too early from the movies". (Elements of *The Invention of Morel*, minus the science fiction elements, served as a basis for Alain Resnais's 1961 film *Last Year at Marienbad*.)

Brooks also had an influence in the graphics world – she had the distinction of inspiring two separate comics: the long-running *Dixie Dugan* newspaper strip by John H. Striebel that started in the late 1920s and ran until 1966, which grew out of the serialized novel and later stage musical, "Show Girl", that writer J.P. McEvoy had loosely based on Louise's days as a Follies girl on Broadway; and the erotic comic books of *Valentina*, by the late Guido Crepax, which began publication in 1965 and continued for many years. Crepax became a friend and regular correspondent with Louise late in her life. Hugo Pratt, another comics artist, also used her as inspiration for characters, and even named them after her.

In her 2011 novel of supernatural horror, *Houdini Heart*, Ki Longfellow uses Brooks as an actual character in the leading character's visions.

In an interview with James Lipton on *Inside the Actors Studio*, Liza Minnelli related her preparation for portraying Sally Bowles in the film *Cabaret*: "I went to my father, and asked him, what can you tell me about thirties glamour? Should I be emulating Marlene Dietrich or something? And he said no, I should study everything I can about Louise Brooks."

In 1991 the British new wave group Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark released a single named "Pandora's Box" as a tribute to Brooks. The video for the single used extensive footage of Brooks from the movie and included a text intro which explained who Brooks was. And, for the 1988 Siouxsie and The Banshees album (*Peepshow*) and tour, singer Siouxsie Sioux sported a hairdo and costumes in Brooks's style.

An exhibit titled "Louise Brooks and the 'New Woman' in Weimar Cinema" ran at the International Center of Photography in New York City in 2007, focusing on Brooks' iconic screen persona and celebrating the hundredth anniversary of her birth.

Personal life

In the summer of 1926, Brooks married Eddie Sutherland, the director of the film she made with Fields, but by 1927 had fallen "terribly in love" with George Preston Marshall, owner of a chain of laundries and future owner of the Washington Redskins football team, following a chance meeting with him that she later referred to as "the most fateful encounter of my life".^{:199} She divorced Sutherland, mainly due to her budding relationship with Marshall, in June 1928.^{:215, 246}

In 1933, she married Chicago millionaire Deering Davis, but abruptly left him in March 1934 after only five months of marriage, "without a good-bye... and leaving only a note of her intentions" behind her.^{:364} According to Card, Davis was just "another elegant, well-heeled admirer", nothing more.^{:364} The couple officially divorced in 1938.

Brooks enjoyed fostering speculation about her sexuality, cultivating friendships with lesbian and bisexual women including Pepi Lederer and Peggy Fears, but eschewing relationships. She admitted to some lesbian dalliances, including a one-night affair with Greta Garbo. She later described Garbo as masculine but a "charming and tender lover". Despite all this, she considered herself neither lesbian nor bisexual:

I had a lot of fun writing 'Marion Davies' Niece', leaving the lesbian theme in question marks. All my life it has been fun for me. When I am dead, I believe that film writers will fasten on the story that I am a lesbian... I have done lots to make it believable All my women friends have been lesbians. But that is one point upon which I agree positively with Isherwood: There is no such thing as bisexuality. Ordinary people, although they may accommodate themselves for reason of whoring or marriage, are one-sexed. Out of curiosity, I had two affairs with girls – they did nothing for me.^{:394-395}

Death

On August 8, 1985, Brooks was found dead of a heart attack after suffering from arthritis and emphysema for many years. She was buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Rochester, New York.

Louise Fazenda

Louise Fazenda (June 17, 1895 – April 17, 1962) was an American film actress, appearing chiefly in silent comedy films.



from the trailer for *The Casino Murder Case* (1935).

Early life

Of Portuguese ancestry, she was born in Lafayette, Indiana. Her father, Joseph Fazenda, was a merchandise broker. After moving west Louise attended Los Angeles High School and St. Mary's Convent. Before trying motion pictures, she worked for a dentist, a candy store owner, and a tax collector and on stage.

Career

Fazenda got her start in comedy shorts as early as 1913 with Joker Studios, frequently appearing with Max Asher and Bobby Vernon. She was soon recruited for Mack Sennett's troupe at Keystone Studios.

As with many Keystone actors, Fazenda's star soon grew larger than Sennett was willing to pay for, and she left Sennett in the early 1920s for better roles and more money. She took a break from making motion pictures in 1921-1922 in order to try vaudeville. Fazenda appeared in a variety of shorts and feature-length films throughout the decade. By the advent of sound pictures, Fazenda was a highly paid actress, making movies for nearly all of the big studios. Fazenda continued through the 1930s, appearing mostly in musicals and comedies. Her skill was in performing character roles. She played such diverse parts as a fussy old maid and a lady blacksmith. She was once accurately described as a plain-looking woman but a highly gifted character comedienne.

Marriage and death

In 1927 Fazenda married noted Warner Brothers' producer Hal B. Wallis, a union which lasted until her death. They had one son, Brent, who became a psychologist in Florida.

The Old Maid, in 1939, was her last of nearly 300 movie appearances. She spent the remainder of her years enjoying life as an art collector until her death caused by a cerebral hemorrhage. Hal Wallis was in Hawaii making a film and left immediately for home. She was interred at the Inglewood Park Cemetery in Inglewood, California. Louise Fazenda has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6801 Hollywood Blvd.

Philanthropist

In 1954 Fazenda read about a woman who died in a car accident. She paid the entire hospital bill of her daughter, who was injured in the wreck. She subsidized the studies of a law student who was contemplating leaving school when his wife became pregnant. At the UCLA Medical Center she helped to feed young children, before she rocked and sang them to sleep. Actress Laura La Plante witnessed her charitable efforts. LaPlante described Fazenda helping children and poor people. One child refused to eat. The actress reportedly went back and forth to the hospital from her home, making various dishes, until she was successful, and the youth regained his health. Among the children she helped there was one Edward Bunker, who described what had happened in his autobiographical *The Education of a Felon*.

Luise Rainer

Luise Rainer (born 12 January 1910) is a former German film actress. Known as The "Viennese Teardrop", she was the first woman to win two Academy Awards, and the first person to win them consecutively. She was discovered by MGM talent scouts while acting on stage in Austria and Germany and after appearing in Austrian films. Aged 101, she is currently the oldest living Academy Award winner.

Her training began in Germany from the age of 16 by leading stage director Max Reinhardt. After a few years, she became recognized as a "distinguished Berlin stage actress", acting with Reinhardt's Vienna theater ensemble. Critics "raved" about her stage and film acting quality, leading MGM to sign her to a three-year contract and bring her to Hollywood in 1935. A number of filmmakers anticipated she might become another Greta Garbo, MGM's leading female star.

Her first American role was in the film *Escapade* (1935), which was soon followed with a relatively small part in the musical biopic *The Great Ziegfeld* (1936). Despite her limited appearances in the film, she "so impressed audiences" that she won the Oscar for Best Actress. For her dramatic telephone scene in the film, she was later dubbed "the Viennese teardrop". In her next role, producer Irving Thalberg was convinced, despite the studio's disagreement, that she could play the part of a poor uncomely Chinese farm wife in *The Good Earth*, based on Pearl Buck's novel about hardship in China. The subdued character she played was such a dramatic contrast to her previous, vivacious character, that she won another Academy Award.

However, she would later remark that by winning two consecutive Oscars, "nothing worse could have happened to me," as audience expectations from then on would be too high to fulfill. She was then given parts in a string of unimportant movies, leading MGM and Rainer to become disappointed, and she ended her brief three-year career in films, soon returning to Europe. Adding to her rapid decline, some feel, was the "poor career advice" given her by then husband, playwright Clifford Odets, along with the unexpected death, at age 37, of her producer, Irving Thalberg, whom she greatly admired. Some film historians consider her the "most extreme case of an Oscar victim in Hollywood mythology". She currently lives in London.

The daughter of Heinz Rainer and Emmy (née Koenigsberger), Rainer was born in Düsseldorf, Germany and raised in Hamburg, Germany and Vienna, Austria. She once told a reporter: "I was born into a world of destruction. The Vienna of my childhood was one of starvation, poverty and revolution." Her father was a businessman who settled in Europe after spending most of his childhood in America, where he was sent at the age of 6 as an orphan. Her mother came from an upper-class German-Jewish family.^{:402} A number of leading film references list her birthplace as Vienna, Austria.

Biographer Margaret Brenman-Gibson writes that Rainer was a premature baby, born two months early. She also had two brothers. Rainer describes her father as being "possessive" and "tempestuous," but whose affections and concern centered on her. Rainer seemed to him as "eternally absent-minded" and "very different." Rainer remembers his "tyrannical possessiveness," and was saddened to see her mother, "a beautiful pianist, and a woman of warmth and intelligence and deeply in love with her husband, suffering similarly".

Although generally shy at home, she was "immensely athletic" in school, becoming a champion runner and an "intrepid" mountain-climber, notes Brenman-Gibson. In addition to expending her energy in athletics, Rainer stated, "I became an actress only because I had quickly to find some vent for the emotion that inside of me went around and around, never stopping." It was her father's wish that she

attend a good finishing school and "marry the right man," she remembers. However, her "rebellious" nature made her appear to be more a "tomboy," while at the same time, "happy to be alone", she feared she was "developing her mother's inferiority complex".

She was only six when she decided to be part of the entertainment world, and recalls being inspired by watching a circus act: "I thought that a man on the wire was marvelous, in his spangles and tights. I wanted to run away and marry him but I never had an opportunity. I am sure, though, that the experience first disclosed to me the entertainment world. For years I longed to be able to walk on a tight wire, too."

At age 16 she chose to follow her dream to become an actress. Under the pretext of visiting her mother, Rainer instead traveled to Düsseldorf and registered at the Dumont Theater, having prearranged an audition the same day. She later began studying acting with Max Reinhardt, and by the time she was 18 there was already an "army of critics" who felt that she had "unusual" talent for a young actress. She became a "distinguished Berlin stage actress" acting with Reinhardt's Vienna theater ensemble. She made her first appearance on the stage at the Dumont Theater in 1928, followed by appearances at various theaters in Jacques Deval's play *Mademoiselle*, Kingsley's *Men in White*, George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, *Measure for Measure*, and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

She later appeared in several German language films before being discovered in 1934 by MGM talent scout Phil Berg while performing in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, who felt that she might appeal to the same audience as Greta Garbo, then one of their most successful performers. Initially, Rainer had no interest in a film career, saying in a 1935 interview: "I never wanted to film. I was only for the theater. Then I saw *A Farewell to Arms* and right away I wanted to film. It was so beautiful."

Rainer summered with her husband Clifford Odets, Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan, among others, at the Pine Brook Country Club located in the countryside of Nichols, Connecticut which was the summer rehearsal headquarters of the Group Theatre (New York) during the 1930s and 1940s.

Hollywood

The Great Ziegfeld (1936)



The Great Ziegfeld

After making a few films in Austria, for which "critics raved", she was offered a three-year contract with MGM and came to Hollywood in 1935 as a hopeful new star. According to biographer Charles Higham,

both MGM studio head Louis B. Mayer and story editor Samuel Marx had seen footage of Rainer before she came to Hollywood, and both felt she had the looks, charm, and especially a "certain tender vulnerability" that Mayer admired in female stars.²⁴⁰ Because of her weak command of English, Mayer assigned actress Constance Collier to train her in correct speech and dramatic modulation, and Rainer's speaking skills improved rapidly.

Upon arriving in Hollywood, Rainer spent eight weeks at the studio without being offered a job. Her first film role in Hollywood was in *Escapade* (1935), which was a remake of one of her Austrian films. She received the part after Myrna Loy gave up the role. By the time Rainer was cast, half of the film was already shot. During the film's first preview, Rainer ran out of the cinema and later said about the event: "On the screen, I looked so big and full of face, it was awful." Following the film's release, Rainer received a lot of publicity and was often acclaimed the 'Elisabeth Bergner of light comedy' by the press. She was hailed as 'Hollywood's next sensation' and had to do several interviews. From the beginning of her Hollywood career, she stated she did not like the stardom or giving interviews, explaining: "Stars are not important, only what they do as a part of their work is important. Artists need quiet in which to grow. It seems Hollywood does not like to give them this quiet. Stardom is bad because Hollywood makes too much of it, there is too much 'bowing down' before stars. Stardom is weight pressing down over the head — and one must grow upward or not at all."

Rainer was next assigned to play the real-life character Anna Held, a small part in the musical biography *The Great Ziegfeld*, which she obtained in August 1935. The film reunited her with actor William Powell, with whom she also co-starred in *Escapade*. Powell was very impressed with Rainer and previously arranged her equal billing for *Escapade*. He described his impressions of her: "She is one of the most natural persons I have ever known. Moreover, she is generous, patient and possesses a magnificent sense of humor. She is an extremely sensitive organism and has a great comprehension of human nature. She has judgment and an abiding understanding which make it possible for her to portray human emotion poignantly and truly. Definitely a creative artist, she comprehends life and its significance. Everything she does has been subjected to painstaking analysis. She thinks over every shade of emotion to make it ring true. In Europe she is a great stage star. She deserves to be a star. Unmistakably she had all the qualities."

Higham notes that the film's producer, Irving Thalberg, decided that "only she could play" the part. However, Rainer states that Mayer "did not want me to do the film, and said 'Anna Held is out of it before the film is halfway through. You are a star now and can't do it!'"¹³ Shortly after shooting began in late 1935, doubts of Rainer's ability to pull off the Anna Held role emerged in the press. She was criticized for not resembling the Polish-born stage performer, on which Leonard commented that any resemblance would have made the film less believable due to the expected constant comparison. The director admitted that "the main reason" Rainer was cast was her eyes, claiming that they "are just as large, just as lustrous, and contain the same tantalizing quality of pseudo naughtiness."

As Thalberg expected, she nonetheless succeeded in acting the role, which required "coquettishness, wide-eyed charm, and vulnerability." Despite her limited appearances in the film, biographer Charles Affron writes that Rainer "so impressed audiences with one highly emotional scene" that she won an Academy Award for Best Actress. In the scene, her character as Anna Held is speaking to her ex-husband Florenz Ziegfeld over the telephone, attempting to congratulate him on his new marriage: "The camera records her agitation; Ziegfeld hears a voice that hovers between false gaiety and despair; when she hangs up she dissolves into tears."

On the evening of the Academy Award ceremonies, Rainer remained at home, not expecting to win any award. When Mayer then learned she won the award, he sent MGM publicity head Howard Strickling racing to her home to get her. When she finally arrived, master of ceremonies George Jessel, during the commotion, made the mistake of introducing Rainer, which Bette Davis had been scheduled to do. She was also awarded the New York Film Critics' Award for the role.

***The Good Earth* (1937)**

Her next film was *The Good Earth* (1937), in which she co-starred with Paul Muni. She was first rated the most likely choice for the female lead in the film adaption back in September 1935, and was cast two months later in November. The role was completely opposite her Anna Held character, where she now portrayed a humble Chinese peasant. For the part, she acted utterly subservient to her husband, perpetually huddled in submission, and barely spoke a word of dialogue during the entire film. The extreme contrast in the role with her last one partly contributed to her winning another Oscar for Best Actress. She became the first actress to win two consecutive Oscars, a feat not matched until Katharine Hepburn's two Oscar wins thirty years later. Film historian Andrew Sarris states that her "comparative muteness was reckoned as an astounding tour de force after her hysterically chattering telephone scene in *The Great Ziegfeld*".

Rainer later recalled that studio head Louis B. Mayer did not approve of the film being produced or her part in it: "He was horrified at Irving Thalberg's insistence for me to play O-lan, the poor uncomely little Chinese peasant. I myself, with the meager dialogue given to me, feared to be a hilarious bore."¹⁴² Rainer remembers Mayer's comments to Thalberg: "She has to be a dismal-looking slave and grow old; but Luise is a young girl; we just have made her glamorous — what are you doing?"¹³ She considers the part as one of the "greatest achievements" in her career, stating that she was allowed to express "realism," even refusing to "wear the rubber mask Chinese look suggested by the make-up department", allowing her to act "genuine, honest, and down-to-earth".

There were a number of serious problems during production, however. George W. Hill, a leading director at the time, was chosen to direct the film, and spent several months in China filming backgrounds and atmospheric scenes of farmlands around the Great Wall and in Peking. Soon after he returned, Hill committed suicide, and the film was postponed until Sidney Franklin took over directing.

Then, before the film was completed, the film's producer, Irving Thalberg, died suddenly at the age of 37. Rainer commented years later, "His dying was a terrible shock to us. He was young and ever so able. Had it not been that he died, I think I may have stayed much longer in films."

Rainer described winning the two Oscars as the "worst possible thing" to befall her career. In a 1938 interview, Rainer exclaimed that being awarded twice made her "work all the harder now to prove the Academy was right." The critic James Agate admired Rainer's performance in *The Good Earth* and described it as "an exquisite rendering", however she was criticized in reviews by *Picturegoer*. Max Breen was among those critics indignant that Greta Garbo's performance in *Camille* had been overlooked in favor of Rainer.

Other films



Dramatic School



Dramatic School

In late 1936, MGM conceived a script called *Maiden Voyage* especially for Rainer. The project was shelved and eventually released as *Bridal Suite* in 1939, starring Annabella as 'Luise'. Another 1936 film project never realized that Rainer was involved in was *Adventure for Three*, which would have co-starred William Powell. In 1938, she played Johann Strauss's long-suffering wife Poldi in the successful Oscar-winning MGM musical biopic *The Great Waltz*, her last big hit.

Her four other films for MGM, *The Emperor's Candlesticks* (1937), *Big City* (1937) with Spencer Tracy, *The Toy Wife* (1938) and *Dramatic School* (1938), were ill-advised and not well received, though Rainer continued to receive praise. *The Emperor's Candlesticks*, in which Rainer was cast in November 1936, reunited Rainer with Powell for the final time. For the film, she wore a red wig and received costumes designed by Adrian, who claimed that Rainer, by the end of 1937, would become one of most influential people in fashion of Hollywood. On set, she received star treatment, having her own dressing room, diction teacher, secretary, wardrobe woman, hairdresser and make-up artist. *The Emperor's Candlesticks* was Rainer's first film for which she received criticism, it being claimed that she did not improve in her acting technique.

Even though reviews were favorable of Rainer's performance in *Big City*, reviewers agreed that the actress was miscast in a 'modern role' and looked "too exotic" as Tracy's wife. Despite the criticism and announcements of leaving Hollywood, Rainer renewed her contract for seven years shortly after the film's release.

Most critics agreed Rainer was "at her most appealing" in *The Toy Wife*, in which she was cast in April 1938. The final MGM Rainer made was *Dramatic School*, in which she was cast in May 1938.

Rainer refused to be stereotyped or to knuckle under to the studio system and studio head Mayer was unsympathetic to her demands for serious roles. Furthermore, she began to fight for a higher salary and she was reported as being difficult and temperamental. Thereby, she missed out on several roles, including the female lead in the Edward G. Robinson gangster film *The Last Gangster* (1937), in which another Viennese actress, Rose Stradner, replaced her. Speaking of Mayer decades later, Rainer recalled, "He said, 'We made you and we are going to destroy you.' Well, he tried his best."

Departure from Hollywood

Rainer made her final film appearance for MGM in 1938 and abandoned the film industry. In a 1983 interview, the actress told how she went to Louis B. Mayer's office and said to him: "Mr. Mayer, I must stop making films. My source has dried up. I work from the inside out, and there is nothing inside to give." Following this altercation, she traveled to Europe, where she helped get aid to children who were victims of the Spanish Civil War. Nevertheless, she was not released from her contract and by 1940, she was still bound to make one more film for the studio. Disenchanted with Hollywood, where she later said it was impossible to have an intellectual conversation, she moved to New York City in 1940 to live with her husband, playwright Clifford Odets, whom she had married in 1937. Rainer and Odets were divorced three years later. Rainer had never made it a secret that she felt terrible as Odets' wife, and exclaimed in a 1938 interview: "All the acting I've done on the stage or screen has been nothing compared to the acting I did in New York, when I tried to make everyone think I was happy – and my heart was breaking." She filed for divorce in mid-1938, but proceedings were delayed "to next October" when Odets fled to England. The divorce was finalized on May 14, 1940. Rainer and Odets summered at Pine Brook Country Club in Nichols, Connecticut, where numerous other members of the Group Theatre (New York) also spent their summers, both acting and writing.

Despite the negativity, Rainer was one of the actresses considered for the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind* (1939), but the idea was not well-received, and she was not given a screen test. In a later interview, Rainer commented on her disappearance in the movie industry by saying: "I was very young. There were a lot of things I was unprepared for. I was too honest, I talked serious instead of with my eyelashes and Hollywood thought I was cuckoo. I worked in seven big pictures in three years. I have to be inspired to give a good performance. I complained to a studio executive that the source was dried up. The executive told me, 'Why worry about the source. Let the director worry about that.' I didn't run away from anybody in Hollywood. I ran away from myself."

Later life and career



Rainer in an Argentinean magazine

While in Europe, Rainer studied medicine and explained she loved being accepted as "just another student", rather than as the screen actress. Meanwhile, she also returned to the stage and made her first appearance at the Palace Theatre, Manchester on May 1, 1939 as Françoise in Jacques Deval's play *Behold the Bride*, and her first London appearance at the Shaftesbury Theatre on May 23, 1939 in the same part. Returning to America, she made her first appearance on the New York stage at the Music Box Theatre in May 1942 as Miss Thing in J. M. Barrie's *A Kiss for Cinderella*.

In World War II, she signed a visa affidavit to get Bertolt Brecht out of Nazi Germany because she "loved his poetry". In return, he wrote the role of Grusha Vashnadze in his 1944 play *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* for Rainer. However they had a disagreement and she never played it.

She made one more film appearance in *Hostages* in 1943 and abandoned film making in 1944 after marrying publisher Robert Knittel. She initially did not plan on returning to the screen, but explained her comeback in 1943 by saying: "All the professor and the other students cared about was whether I could answer the questions, not whether I could come to class looking glamorous. But after that brief return to the stage, I began to realize that all the doors which had been opened to me in Europe, and all the work I had been able to accomplish for refugee children, was due to the fact that people knew me from my screen work. I began to feel a sense of responsibility to a job which I had started and never finished. When I also felt, after that experience at Dennis, that perhaps I did have talent after all, and that my too-sudden stardom was not just a matter of happy accident, I decided to go back."

When Rainer returned to Hollywood, her contract at MGM had long expired and she had no agent. David Rose, head of Paramount Pictures, offered her to star in an English film shot on location, but war conditions prevented her from accepting the role. Instead, Rose suggested her in 1942 to take a screen test for the lead role in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943), but Ingrid Bergman was cast. Rainer eventually settled on a role in the small film *Hostages* (1943) and told the press about the role: "It's certainly not an Academy Award part, and thank goodness, my bosses don't expect me to win an award with it. No, this is something unspectacular but I hope, a step back in the right direction."

Rainer had become an American citizen in the 1940s, but she and Knittel had lived in the UK and Switzerland for most of their marriage. Robert Knittel died in 1989. They had one daughter, Francesca Knittel, now known as Francesca Knittel-Bowyer. Rainer now lives in Belgrave Square, London, in an apartment in the same building once inhabited by fellow two-time Oscar winner Vivien Leigh.

Federico Fellini enticed her to play the cameo role of the writer Dolores in his 1960 Oscar-winning classic *La Dolce Vita*, to the point of her travelling to the Rome location. She quit the production prior to shooting, a fact attributed either to her resistance to an unwanted sex scene, or to her insistence on overseeing her own dialogue. The role was cut from the eventual screenplay.

Rainer made sporadic television and stage appearances following her and her husband's move to Britain, appearing in an episode of the World War II television series *Combat!* in 1965. She took a dual role in a 1983 episode of *The Love Boat*. For the latter she received a standing ovation from the crew. She appeared in *The Gambler* (1997) in a small role, marking her film comeback at the age of 86. She made appearances at the 1998 and 2003 Academy Awards ceremonies as part of special retrospective tributes to past Oscar winners.

On 12 January 2010, Rainer celebrated her centenary in London. Actor Sir Ian McKellen was one of her guests. During that month, she was present at the British Film Institute tribute to her at the National Film Theatre, where she was interviewed by Richard Stirling before screenings of *The Good Earth* and *The Great Waltz*. She also appeared onstage at the National Theatre, where she was interviewed by Sir

Christopher Frayling. In April 2010 she returned to Hollywood to present a TCM festival screening of *The Good Earth*.

Rainer has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6300 Hollywood Boulevard. On 24 February 2011, at the age of 101, she said in an interview to BBC Radio 4 that the Oscars were not as ostentatious as they are now. She also said that she saw the film *The King's Speech* and found it "marvelous". She was sharp and full of wit and dignity.

On September 5, 2011, Rainer travelled to Berlin, Germany to receive a star on the "Boulevard der Stars". Her star was the twenty first issued in 2011 and followed twenty that were issued in 2010. The star was issued as an exception and not without controversy. Rainer had been forgotten when the Boulevard der Stars opened in 2010, despite being Germany's only Academy Award winning actress. In 2011 she was initially rejected by the jury (Senta Berger, Gero Gandert, Uwe Kammann, Dieter Kosslick & Hans Helmut Prinzler) despite being nominated. A prolonged campaign started in October 2010, led by music executive Paul DH Baylay, who noticed Rainer's omission on the Boulevard. Baylay campaigned in Germany, lobbying press and politicians to support the campaign to have the actress and her work recognized. The campaign was supported by The Central Council of Jews. In August 2011, The Boulevard der Stars, finally relented acknowledging the Facebook, email and letter campaign led by Baylay was key in their decision to awarding an extra star in favor of Rainer.

Lupe Vélez

Lupe Vélez (July 18, 1908 – December 14, 1944) was a Mexican film actress. Vélez began her career in Mexico as a dancer, before moving to the U.S. where she worked in vaudeville. She was seen by Fanny Brice who promoted her, and Vélez soon entered films, making her first appearance in 1924. By the end of the decade she had progressed to leading roles. With the advent of talking pictures Vélez acted in comedies, but she became disappointed with her film career, and moved to New York where she worked in Broadway productions.



Lupe Vélez in *Mexican Spitfire* (1940)

Returning to Hollywood in 1939, she made a series of comedies. She also made some films in Mexico. Vélez's personal life was often difficult; a five year marriage to Johnny Weissmuller and a series of romances, were highly publicized. She is often associated with the nicknames "The Mexican Spitfire" and "The Hot Pepper".

Early life

Vélez was born **María Guadalupe Villalobos Vélez** in the city of San Luis Potosí in Mexico, the daughter of an army officer (Jacobo Villalobos Reyes) and his wife (Josefina Vélez), an opera singer, both from prominent families in the state of San Luis Potosí. Her father refused to let her use his last name in theater because at that time it was considered inappropriate for a person from a well-to-do family to be an actor, so she used her mother's surname. Lupe was educated at a convent school in Texas. From an early age, she had a strong temper and an explosive personality. She took dancing lessons and in 1924, made her performing debut at the *Teatro Principal* in Mexico City, along with stars like Maria Conesa, Prudencia Grifell and Mimí Derba. In 1923 she moved to Texas, where she began dancing in vaudeville shows and finding work as a sales assistant. She moved to California, where she met the comedienne Fanny Brice, who promoted her career as a dancer. In 1926 she was cast in her first film by Hal Roach.

Film career



with Ramón Novarro in *Laughing Boy* (1934).

Vélez's first feature-length film was *The Gaucho* (1927) starring Douglas Fairbanks. The next year, she was named one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars, the young starlets deemed to be most promising for movie stardom. Most of her early films cast her in exotic or ethnic roles (Hispanic, Native American, French, Russian, even Asian).

She worked under the direction of notable film directors like Victor Fleming in *The Wolf Song* (1929) opposite Gary Cooper; D. W. Griffith in *Lady of the Pavements* (1928); Tod Browning in *Where East Is East* opposite Lon Chaney and Cecil B. DeMille in *The Squaw Man* in 1931. By the end of the silent era the sparkling personality of Lupe rivaled that of the *Flapper Girl*, Clara Bow.

Within a few years Vélez found her niche in comedies, playing beautiful but volatile foils to comedy stars. Her slapstick battle with Laurel and Hardy in *Hollywood Party* and her dynamic presence opposite Jimmy Durante in *Palooka* (both 1934) are typically enthusiastic Vélez performances. She was featured in the final Wheeler & Woolsey comedy, *High Flyers* (1937), doing impersonations of Simone Simon, Dolores del Río, and Shirley Temple.

In 1934, Velez was one of the victims of the "open season" of the "reds" in Hollywood. With Dolores del Río, Ramón Novarro and James Cagney, she was accused of promoting communism in California.

Vélez was now nearing 30 and had not become a major star. Disappointed, she left Hollywood for Broadway. In New York, she landed a role in *You Never Know*, a short-lived Cole Porter musical. After the run of *You Never Know*, Vélez looked for film work in other countries. Returning to Hollywood in 1939, she snared the lead in a B comedy for RKO Radio Pictures, *The Girl from Mexico*. She established such a rapport with co-star Leon Errol that RKO made a quick sequel, *Mexican Spitfire*, which became a very popular series. Vélez perfected her comic character, indulging in broken-English malapropos, troublemaking ideas, and sudden fits of temper bursting into torrents of Spanish invective. She occasionally sang in these films, and often displayed a talent for hectic, visual comedy. Vélez enjoyed making these films and can be seen openly breaking up at Leon Errol's comic adlibs.

The *Spitfire* films rejuvenated Lupe Vélez's career, and for the next few years she starred in musical and comedy features for RKO, Universal Pictures, and Columbia Pictures in addition to the Spitfire films. In one of her last films, Columbia's *Redhead from Manhattan*, she played a dual role: one in her exaggerated comic dialect, and the other in her actual speaking voice, which was surprisingly fluid and had only traces of a Mexican accent.

Lupe Vélez was very popular with Spanish-speaking audiences. In 1943, she returned to Mexico and starred in the movies *La Zandunga* (1938), and an adaptation of Émile Zola's novel *Nana* (1944), which was well received. Subsequently, she returned to Hollywood.

Romances

Emotionally generous, passionate, and high-spirited, Vélez had a number of highly publicized affairs, including a particularly emotionally draining one with Gary Cooper, before marrying Olympic athlete Johnny Weissmuller (of *Tarzan* fame) in 1933, and later, in 1938, Mexican actor Arturo de Córdova. In the early 1940s she was also linked romantically with Clayton Moore, later known for his television role as the Lone Ranger; Moore insists in his autobiography that he was only a social escort. About her romance with Cooper, Marlene Dietrich said "Gary was totally under the control of Lupe". The marriage with Weissmuller lasted five years; they repeatedly split and finally divorced in 1938. However, her love affair with Gary Cooper lasted until her death.

Death

In the mid-1940s, she had a relationship with the young actor Harald Maresch, and became pregnant with his child. However, other reliable accounts place Gary Cooper, with whom Lupe had had a romantic relationship for years and up to her death, as the father of her unborn child, either making her alleged suicide note bogus, or Maresch only a scapegoat. Unable to face the shame of giving birth to an illegitimate child, she decided to take her own life. Her alleged suicide note read, "To Harald: May God forgive you and forgive me, too; but I prefer to take my life away and our baby's, before I bring him with shame, or killing him. Lupe." She retired to bed after taking an overdose of sleeping pills. According to newspaper accounts, her body was found by her secretary and companion of ten years, Beulah Kinder, on her bed surrounded by flowers, as she had wished.

Andy Warhol's underground film, *Lupe* (1965), starring Edie Sedgwick as Lupe, is loosely based on this fateful night, suggesting that she was found with her head in the toilet due to nausea caused by the overdose. Another report says she tripped and fell head-first into the toilet, knocking herself unconscious and drowning.

In a poll of Mexican filmgoers, actresses like Marquita Rivera and Amalia Aguilar were chosen to star in a Hollywood film based on the life of the actress. However, due to the controversy over Vélez's suicide at that time, the film was never produced.

There is skepticism surrounding whether it was simply the shame of bearing an illegitimate child that led Vélez to end her life. Throughout her life she showed signs of extreme emotion, mania and depression. Consequently, it has been suggested that Vélez suffered from bipolar disorder, which, left untreated, ultimately led to her suicide. Rosa Linda Fregoso writes that Vélez was known for her defiance of contemporary moral convention, and it seems unlikely that she could not have reconciled an "illegitimate child."

Lupe Vélez was laid to rest in the Civil Cemetery of Sorrows (Panteón Civil de Dolores), in the Tacubaya section of Mexico City, in a walled section within the itself walled cemetery, reserved for artists and administered by the National Association of Actors (A.N.D.A.).

References in popular culture

The song "Lupe Vélez" by artist Jimmy Jazz appeared on the *If It Moves...* compilation *Torture Tech Overdrive* (which was later re-released by Cleopatra Records). The song deals with the absurdity of attempting to create a beautiful death in suicide.

In the first episode of the sitcom *Frasier*, "The Good Son", Frasier Crane's producer Roz Doyle tries to improve Frasier's outlook on his life by telling him the story of Lupe Vélez, "last seen with her head in the toilet". Apparently according to Roz, the pills she had taken did not mix well with "the enchilada combo plate she sadly chose as her last meal." When Frasier asks how her story is supposed to make him feel better, Roz responds that sometimes things don't go the way we want them to, but can work out in the end, anyway. She adds, "All she wanted was to be remembered. Will you ever forget that story?".

She was mentioned in *The Simpsons* episode titled "Homer's Phobia". Guest star John Waters gave the Simpson family, sans Homer, a driving tour of Springfield's shopping district, where he pointed out the store where reportedly Vélez bought the toilet she drowned in.

In 2009, Mexican film director Martin Caballero made the short film *Forever Lupe* with Mexican actress Marieli Romo as Lupe Vélez.

In Robert Stone's novel *Children of Light*, a troubled actress refers to a suicide-by-drowning scene she has just acted out as "Lupe Velez takes a dunk."

She is mentioned in the Michael Chabon novel *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, as well as the 2000 film *Wonder Boys*, adapted from the Chabon novel of the same name.

Lya De Putti

Lya De Putti (January 10, 1899 – November 27, 1931) was a Hungarian film actress of the silent era, noted for her portrayal of vamp characters.



Early life and career

Born as **Amalia de Putti** in Vécse, Hungary (today Vojčice, Slovakia), she was one of the four children of Julius de Putti, a cavalry officer, and his wife, the former Countess Maria Katarina Hoyos. She had two brothers, Geza and Alexander, and a sister, Mitzi.

She began her stage career on the Hungarian Vaudeville circuit. She soon progressed to Berlin, where after performing in the ballet, she made her screen debut in 1918. She became the premiere danseuse at the Berlin Winter Garden in 1924.

Around that time German film director Jol Mai noticed her and cast her in her first important film, *The Mistress of the World*. She followed this success with noteworthy performances in *Manon Lescaut* and *Variété* (1925). The latter featured her opposite Emil Jannings and directed by E. A. Dupont. Both films are UFA productions. While in Germany, De Putti starred with such actors as Conrad Veidt, Alfred Abel, Werner Krauss, Grete Mosheim, and Lil Dagover and was filmed by directors F. W. Murnau and Fritz Lang.

The actress came to America in February 1926. At the time she told reporters she was twenty-two years old. Her ocean liner's records list her as having been twenty-six. De Putti was generally cast as a vamp character, and often wore her dark hair short, in a style similar to that of Louise Brooks or Colleen Moore. De Putti starred in D. W. Griffith's *The Sorrows of Satan* (1926). The film was released in two versions, one in America and the other in Europe. In the American version one scene had De Putti fully dressed. The same scene in the European release had De Putti topless.

Private life

De Putti was once rumored to be engaged to Count Ludwig Salm von Hoogstraten, a former husband of the American oil heiress Millicent Rogers. She denied the engagement. In 1913, she married Zoltán Szepessy, a county magistrate. They divorced in 1918. The couple had two daughters, Ilona (b. 1914) and Judith (b. 1916).

Return to Broadway

The following year, De Putti went to Hollywood, but found little success there. Despite working with such distinguished actors as Adolphe Menjou and Zasu Pitts, she failed to make it big, and left the screen by 1929 to attempt to re-start her career on Broadway.

Her Hollywood efforts were inhibited by her foreign accent. Later she went to England to make silent movies and studied the English language. Soon she returned to America to attempt *talkies*.

She was hospitalized to have a chicken bone removed from her throat, and contracted a throat infection. She was taken to the Harbor Sanitarium, then located at 667 Madison Avenue. She reportedly behaved irrationally and eluded her nurses. Eventually she was found in a corridor. She developed pleurisy in her right side, followed by pneumonia in both lungs.

Death

She died in 1931, aged 32, in the Harbor Sanitorium, leaving just £800 (UK equivalent at the time) and a few bits of jewelry. Four years earlier, £800 was her weekly wage. She is interred in the Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York.

Mabel Normand

Mabel Normand (November 9, 1892 – February 23, 1930) was an American silent film comedienne and actress. She was a popular star of Mack Sennett's Keystone Studios and is noted as one of the film industry's first female screenwriters, producers and directors. Onscreen she co-starred in commercially successful films with Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe Arbuckle more than a dozen times each, occasionally writing and directing movies featuring Chaplin as her leading man. At the height of her career in the late 1910s and early 1920s, Normand had her own movie studio and production company.



Throughout the 1920s her name was linked with widely publicized scandals including the 1922 murder of William Desmond Taylor and the 1924 shooting of Courtland S. Dines, who was shot by Normand's chauffeur with her pistol. She was not a suspect in either crime. Her film career declined, possibly due to both scandals and a recurrence of tuberculosis in 1923, which led to a decline in her health, retirement from films and her death in 1930 at age 37.

Early life and career



Mabel Normand, 1918

Born **Amabel Ethelreid Normand** in New Brighton, Staten Island, New York, she grew up in extreme poverty. Her father, Claude Normand, was sporadically employed as a carpenter at Sailors' Snug Harbor home for elderly seamen. Before she entered films at age 16 in 1909, Normand worked as an artist's model, which included posing for postcards illustrated by Charles Dana Gibson, creator of the Gibson Girl image. She met director Mack Sennett while at D. W. Griffith's Biograph Company and embarked on a tumultuous affair with him; he later brought her across when he founded Keystone Studios in 1912. Her first films portrayed her as a bathing beauty, but Normand quickly demonstrated a flair for comedy and became a star of Sennett's short films. Normand appeared with Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe ("Fatty") Arbuckle in many short films.

She played a role in starting Chaplin's film career and acted as his leading lady and mentor in a number of films, sometimes co-writing and/or co-directing films with him. Chaplin had considerable initial difficulty adjusting to the demands of film acting and his performance suffered for it. After his first film appearance in *Making a Living*, Sennett felt he had made a costly mistake. Most historians agree it was Normand who persuaded him to give Chaplin another chance.

In 1914 she starred with Chaplin and Marie Dressler in *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, the first feature-length comedy. Later that same year, Chaplin first played his Tramp character in *Mabel's Strange Predicament*, although it wound up being the second Tramp film released. In 1918, as her relationship with Sennett came to an end, Normand signed a \$3,500 a week contract with Samuel Goldwyn and opened a film studio in Culver City. Her breakup with Sennett seems to have caused Normand to re-evaluate her life and she embarked on a program of self-education, developing keen and lasting interests in reading and books.

Scandals



Autographed photo of Mabel Normand by Fred Hartsook (1876–1930), taken circa 1918.

Director William Desmond Taylor shared her interest in books and the two formed a close relationship. According to author Robert Giroux, Taylor was deeply in love with Normand, who had originally approached him for help in curing her cocaine dependency. Based upon Normand's subsequent statements to investigators, her repeated relapses were devastating for Taylor. According to Giroux, Taylor met with Federal prosecutors shortly before his death and offered to assist them in filing charges against Normand's cocaine suppliers. Giroux expresses a belief that Normand's suppliers learned of this meeting and hired a contract killer to assassinate the director. According to Giroux, Normand suspected the reasons for her lover's murder, but did not know the identity of the triggerman.

On the night of his murder, Normand left Taylor's bungalow at 7:45 p.m. in a happy mood, carrying a book he had given her as a loan. They blew kisses to each other as her limousine drove away. Normand was the last person known to have seen Taylor alive.

The Los Angeles Police Department subjected Normand to a grueling interrogation, but ruled her out as a suspect. Most subsequent writers have done the same. However, Normand's career had already slowed and her reputation was tarnished by revelations of her addiction, which was seen as a moral failing. According to George Hopkins, who sat next to her at Taylor's funeral, Normand wept inconsolably throughout the ceremony.

Dines killing

In 1924 her chauffeur Joe Kelly shot and wounded millionaire oil broker and amateur golfer Courtland S. Dines with her pistol. At the time Dines was romantically involved with Normand's friend (and frequent Chaplin co-star) Edna Purviance.

Later career and death

She continued making films and was signed by Hal Roach Studios in 1926 after discussions with director/producer F. Richard Jones, who had directed her at Keystone. At Roach she made the film *Raggedy Rose* plus four others which were released with publicity support from the Hollywood community (including her friend Mary Pickford).

In 1926 she married actor Lew Cody, with whom she had appeared in *Mickey* in 1918. They lived separately in nearby houses in Beverly Hills before Cody moved in with her. However, Normand's health was in decline. After an extended stay in a sanitarium she died from tuberculosis in Monrovia, California at the age of 37. She was interred as Mabel Normand-Cody at Calvary Cemetery, Los Angeles.

Legacy

Mabel Normand has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her contributions to Motion Pictures, at 6821 Hollywood Boulevard.

Her film *Mabel's Blunder* (1914) was added to the National Film Registry in December 2009.

In June 2010, the New Zealand Film Archive reported the discovery of a print of Normand's film *Won in a Closet* (exhibited in New Zealand under its alternate title *Won in a Cupboard*), a short comedy previously believed lost. This film is a significant rediscovery, as Normand directed this movie as well as starring in the lead role, so it is a showcase for her talents on both sides of the camera.

Quote

Say anything you like, but don't say I love to work. That sounds like Mary Pickford, the prissy bitch. (Normand and Pickford were close friends; this was meant jokingly.)

Cultural references

A nod to Normand's celebrity in early Hollywood came through the name of a leading character in the 1950 film *Sunset Boulevard*, "Norma Desmond", which has been cited as a combination of the names Mabel Normand and William Desmond Taylor.

The 1974 Broadway musical *Mack & Mabel* (Michael Stewart and Jerry Herman) fictionalized the romance between Normand and Mack Sennett. Normand was played by Bernadette Peters and Robert Preston played Mack Sennett.

Stevie Nicks wrote a song called "Mabel Normand" which was never officially released but exists in demo form.

Normand is played by actress Marisa Tomei in the 1992 film *Chaplin*, by Morganne Picard in the motion picture *Return to Babylon* (2008), and more recently by Penelope Lagos in the first bio-pic about her life, a 35-minute dramatic short film appropriately entitled *Madcap Mabel* (2010).

Mack Swain

Mack Swain (February 16, 1876 – August 25, 1935) was an American actor and vaudevillian, prolific throughout the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s.



Mini Biography

Mack Swain was born in 1876 and soon became a talented vaudevillian. In 1913 he was hired by Mack Sennett and appeared in a few Mabel Normand pictures until a year later he became even bigger when 'Charlie Chaplin' arrived at the Keystone Studio. Swain later created a character by the name of Ambrose whom he appeared with Mr. Walrus (Played by comic Chester Conklin) most memorably in "Love Speed & Thrills" (1915).

After that his career began to go downward until Charlie Chaplin rescued it in 1921 and he later appeared in his masterpiece "The Gold Rush" (1925). After "The Gold Rush" he appeared in many Hollywood productions such as Lon Chaney's "Mockery" and "The Last Warning" (1929).

In 1932 he appeared in the academy award nominee for best short "Stout Hearts and Willing Hands" which also co-starred former keystone actors such as Chester Conklin, Hank Mann, Harold Lloyd, Bobby Vernon, Ben Turpin and Owen Moore. He retired from then onwards and died in 1935.

Film career



Born Moroni Swain to Robert Henry Swain and Mary Ingeborg Jensen in Salt Lake City, Utah, he worked in vaudeville before starting in silent film at Keystone Studios under Mack Sennett. While with Keystone, he was teamed up with Chester Conklin to make a series of comedy films. With Swain as "Ambrose" and Conklin as the grand mustachioed "Walrus", they performed these roles in several films including "*The Battle of Ambrose and Walrus*" and "*Love, Speed and Thrills*," both made in 1915. Besides these comedies, the two appeared together in a variety of other films, twenty-six all told, and they also appeared separately and/or together in films starring Mabel Normand, Charles Chaplin, Roscoe Arbuckle and most of the rest of the roster of Keystone players.

He later took his Ambrose character with him to the now-obscure L-KO Kompany. Having already worked with Charles Chaplin at Keystone, Swain began working with Chaplin again at First National in 1921, appearing in *The Idle Class*, *Pay Day* and *The Pilgrim*. He is also remembered for his role as *Big Jim McKay* in the 1925 film *The Gold Rush*, for United Artists, written by and starring Chaplin.

Swain died in Tacoma, Washington in 1935. For his contribution to the motion picture industry, he received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, at 1500 Vine Street.

Madge Bellamy

Madge Bellamy (June 30, 1899 – January 24, 1990) was an American film actress who was a popular leading lady in the 1920s and early 1930s. Her career declined in the sound era, and ended following a romantic scandal in the 1940s.



Early life

Madge Bellamy was born in Hillsboro, Texas in 1899 as **Margaret Derden Philpott** to William Bledsoe Philpott (1864-19??), a professor of English and Annie Margaret Derden (1880–1960). The family was of English and Irish heritage. Her father was an 1884 graduate of Texas A&M University. Besides teaching English, he taught history and languages, and he also edited many scholarly works. Her parents were married on June 22, 1898 in Hillsboro, Hill County, Texas.

Madge Bellamy was raised in San Antonio, Texas until she was 6 years old, and the family later moved to Brownwood, Texas, where her father taught at the local college. When she was 10 years old, the Philpotts moved to Denver, Colorado. Bellamy became interested in acting even as a young girl, and she soon appeared in several plays.

She ran away to New York City at age 17, and she was soon working as an actor and dancer on Broadway. In 1918, she played the lead role in *Pollyanna* on Broadway and in the touring show. She appeared in *Dear Brutus*, *Dream Girl*, and *Peg O' My Heart* on Broadway. In November 1920, she signed an exclusive contract with Thomas H. Ince's newly formed Triangle film company to appear in the film called *Passing Thru*, which was released in the fall of 1921.

Career

Bellamy made her film debut in 1920. After 4 years with Famous Players her contract was picked up by Fox Film Corporation. Her best known films include *Love Never Dies* (1921), *Lorna Doone* (1922), and *The Iron Horse* (1924).

Bellamy made a successful transition to sound film in 1928 with the hit *Mother Knows Best*, but after a dispute with Fox in 1929 she left the studio and could not find work again until 1932 when she began appearing in B movies. She may be best-known for the 1932 film *White Zombie*, in which she starred opposite Bela Lugosi. Her only marriage was brief and childless.

Scandal and decline

In San Francisco in 1943, Bellamy was accused of assault with a deadly weapon for shooting (or shooting at) her wealthy lover, Stanwood Murphy. The incident generated much publicity and effectively ended her already fading career. The facts of the case remain somewhat cloudy. Shortly after the shooting, Bellamy was quoted as saying, "I only winged him, which is what I meant to do. Believe me, I'm a crack shot". Some show business references state outright that she shot him. But her defense attorney, the legendary Jake Ehrlich, contended the actress never hit Murphy despite firing several shots at him at close range, and Ehrlich described that as proof that Bellamy had merely intended to scare her lover.

Bellamy acknowledged having an affair with the married Murphy, a scandalous admission at the time. But attorney Ehrlich characterized her as a wronged woman. He said she had always refused any gifts or support from her rich lover, relying instead on Murphy's promise to marry her once he was divorced. When Murphy married someone else, Ehrlich said, the humiliated actress set out to teach him a lesson. Amid all the claims and counter-claims, the publicity-shy Murphy soon stopped cooperating with investigators. The charge against Bellamy was eventually dropped.

Bellamy made her last screen appearance in *Northwest Trail* in 1945. She lived in poverty for much of her post-screen life, worked selling tools in a shop and was unsuccessful in her attempts at becoming a published novelist. In the 1980s, however, she sold her property during the California real estate boom and by her account made more money than she had during her years in films.

Death

Madge Bellamy died of heart failure in Upland, California, aged 90. Her autobiography, *A Darling of the Twenties*, was published shortly after her death.

Mae Marsh

Mae Marsh (born **Mary Wayne Marsh**, November 9, 1894 – February 13, 1968) was an American film actress with a career spanning over 50 years.



Studio promo photo, c. 1916

Early life

The most frequently told of many stories of Marsh's childhood is that her father, a railroad auditor, died when she was four. Her family moved to San Francisco where her stepfather was killed in the great earthquake of 1906. Her great-aunt then took Mae and Marguerite, her older sister, to Los Angeles, hoping her show business background would open doors for jobs at various movie studios needing extras. However, her father, S. Charles Marsh, was a bartender, not a railroad auditor, and he was alive at least as late as June 1900, when Mae Marsh was nearly six. Her stepfather, oil-field inspector William Hall, could not have been killed in the 1906 earthquake, as he was alive, listed in the 1910 census, living with her mother, May née Warne, and sisters.

Marsh worked as a salesgirl and loitered around the sets and locations while her older sister worked on a film, observing the progress of her sister's performance. She first started as an extra in various movies, and played her first substantial role in the film *Ramona* (1910) at the age of 15.

"I tagged my way into motion pictures," Marsh recalled in *The Silent Picture*. "I used to follow my sister Marguerite to the old Biograph studio and then, one great day, Mr. Griffith noticed me, put me in a picture and I had my chance. I love my work and though new and very wonderful interests have entered my life, I still love it and couldn't think of giving it up.".

Career rise



Mae Marsh in *Intolerance*, 1916

Marsh worked with D.W. Griffith in small roles at Biograph when they were filming in California and in New York. Her big break came when Mary Pickford, resident star of the Biograph lot and a married woman at that time, refused to play the bare-legged, grass-skirted role of Lily-White in *Man's Genesis*. Griffith announced that if Pickford would not play that part in *Man's Genesis* she would not play the coveted title role in his next film, *The Sands of Dee*. The other actresses stood behind Pickford, each refusing in turn to play the part, citing the same objection.

Years later, Marsh recalled in an interview in *The Silent Picture*, "...and he called rehearsal, and we were all there and he said, 'Well now, Miss Marsh, you can rehearse this.' And Mary Pickford said, 'What!' and Mr. Griffith said, 'Yes, Mary Pickford, if you don't do what I tell you I want you to do, I'm going to have someone else do *The Sands of Dee*. Mary Pickford didn't play *Man's Genesis* so Mae can play *The Sands of Dee*.' Of course, I was thrilled, and she was very much hurt. And I thought, 'Well, it's all right with me. That is something.' I was, you know, just a lamebrain."

Working with Mack Sennett and D.W. Griffith, she was a prolific actress, sometimes appearing in eight movies a year and often paired with fellow Sennett protégé Robert Harron in romantic roles. In *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) she played the innocent sister who waits for her brothers to come home from war and who, in one of the film's most racially charged scenes, leaps to her death rather than submit to the lustful advances of Gus, the so-called "renegade Negro" who is later killed by the Ku Klux Klan. In *Intolerance* (1916) she plays the wife who has her baby taken away after her husband is unjustly convicted of murder.

She signed a lucrative contract with Samuel Goldwyn worth \$2,500 per week after *Intolerance*, but none of the films she made with him were particularly successful. After her marriage to Lee Arms, a publicity agent for Goldwyn, in 1918, her film output decreased to about one per year.

Marsh's last notable starring role was as a flapper for Griffith in *The White Rose* in 1923 with Ivor Novello and Carol Dempster. She re-teamed with Novello in 1925 for the film version of his hit stage play, *The Rat*.

“Talkies”

Marsh returned from retirement to appear in "talkies" and played a role in Henry King's remake of *Over the Hill* (1931). She gravitated toward character roles, and worked in this manner for the next several decades. Marsh appeared in numerous popular films, such as *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1932) and *Little Man, What Now?* (1934). She also became a favorite of director John Ford, appearing in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), *3 Godfathers* (1948), and *The Searchers* (1956).

Marsh has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame located at 1600 Vine Street.

Personal life

She married Sam Goldwyn publicity agent Louis Lee Arms, in 1918 and bore three children with him. They were married until her death, in 1968. Her sister Marguerite Marsh died in 1925 at the age of 37. Her only brother Oliver Marsh, a renowned cinematographer, died in 1941. Husband Louis Arms died in June 1989, at age 101. They are buried together in Section 5, at Pacific Crest Cemetery, in Redondo Beach, California.

May McAvoy

May McAvoy (September 8, 1899 – April 26, 1984) was an American actress, who worked mainly during the silent film era. She starred in Hollywood's revolutionary part talking film, *The Jazz Singer*.



Career

McAvoy made her film debut in 1917. After appearing in more than three dozen films, she co-starred with Ramón Novarro and Francis X. Bushman in director Fred Niblo's 1925 production of *Ben-Hur* released by MGM. The feature length film was one of the most lavish and spectacular productions of the silent movie era. She later starred with Al Jolson in the first sound film, *The Jazz Singer*. Although her voice was not heard in that film, she did speak in several other films, including the second "all-talkie" released by Warner Brothers, *The Terror*, directed by Roy Del Ruth and co-starring Conrad Nagel.

For years, a false rumor circulated that she retired from the screen at the transition to sound films due to a lisp or speech impediment. In truth, she married the treasurer of United Artists, who asked her not to work. Later, she returned to films and played small roles during the 1940s and 1950s, making her final film appearance in 1957.

Death

She died in of a heart attack in 1984, and is interred in the Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City, California.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, May McAvoy has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1731 Vine Street.

Mae Murray

Mae Murray (May 10, 1889 – March 23, 1965) was an American actress, dancer, film producer, and screenwriter. Murray rose to fame during the silent film era and was known as "The Girl with the Bee-Stung Lips" and "The Gardenia of the Screen".

Early life and career

Born **Marie Adrienne Koenig** in Portsmouth, Virginia, she first began acting on the Broadway stage in 1906 with dancer Vernon Castle. In 1908, she joined the chorus line of the Ziegfeld Follies, moving up to headliner by 1915. Murray became a star of the club circuit in both the United States and Europe, performing with Clifton Webb, Rudolph Valentino, and John Gilbert as some of her many dance partners.



Murray & Monte Blue in *Broadway Rose* (1922)

In 1908, she was briefly married to stockbroker William M. Schwenker, Jr. In 1916, she married Olympic bobsled champion Jay O'Brien and made her motion picture debut in *To Have and to Hold* that same year. She became a major star for Universal, starring with Rudolph Valentino in *The Delicious Little Devil* and *Big Little Person* in 1919. At the height of her popularity, Murray formed her own production company with her director, John M. Stahl. Critics were sometimes less than thrilled with her over-the-top costumes and exaggerated emoting, but her films were popular with movie going audiences and financially successful.

After divorcing Jay O'Brien in 1917, Murray married former actor and now movie director Robert Z. Leonard the following year and, beginning in 1925, Murray, Leonard, and Stahl produced films at Tiffany Pictures, with *Souls for Sables* (1925), starring Claire Windsor and Eugene O'Brien, as the first film made by Tiffany. For a brief period of time, Murray wrote a weekly column for newspaper scion William Randolph Hearst.

At her career peak in the early 1920s, Murray, along with such other notable Hollywood personalities as Cecil B. DeMille, Douglas Fairbanks, William S. Hart, Jesse L. Lasky, Harold Lloyd, Hal Roach, Donald Crisp, Conrad Nagel and Irving Thalberg was a member of the board of trustees at the Motion Picture & Television Fund – A charitable organization that offers assistance and care to those in the motion picture and television industries without resources. Four decades later, Murray herself received aid from that organization.

In the early 1920s, Murray was painted by the well known Hollywood portrait painter Theodore Lukits(1897–1992). This work titled *Harmony in Jade and Silver* (Private Collection, Northern

California) depicted the actress in the nude, gazing in a mirror. This subtle, rather chaste nude was exhibited at the Pacific Asia Museum in 1999 and two other venues as part of the exhibition *Theodore Lukits, An American Orientalist*.



Mae Murray (Library of Congress)

Career decline

Murray's most famous role was perhaps the title role in the Erich von Stroheim directed film *The Merry Widow* (1925), opposite John Gilbert. When silent films gave way to talkies, Murray made an insecure debut in the new medium in *Peacock Alley* (1930), a remake of her earlier 1921 version *Peacock Alley*. In 1931, she was cast with newcomer Irene Dunne, leading man Lowell Sherman, and with fellow silent screen star Norman Kerry in the talkie *Bachelor Apartment*. The film was critically panned at the time of release and Murray made only one more film, *High Stakes* (1931) also with Sherman.

A crucial blow to her movie career occurred when her fourth husband, "Prince" David Mdivani (a Georgian nobleman whose brothers, Serge and Alexis, married actress Pola Negri and the heiress Barbara Hutton respectively), became her manager and suggested that his new wife leave MGM. Murray took her husband's advice and walked out of her contract with MGM, making a powerful foe of studio boss Louis B. Mayer. Later, she would swallow her pride and plead to return, but Mayer would have none of it. In effect, Mayer's hostility meant that Murray was blacklisted from working for the Hollywood studios. Meanwhile, in 1927, Murray was sued by her then-masseuse, the famous Hollywood fitness guru Sylvia of Hollywood for the outstanding amount of \$2,125 during a humiliating and detailed court case.

Eventually, Murray and Mdivani, who married in 1926, divorced; they had one child, Koran David Mdivani (born February 1927). Koran was raised by Sara Elizabeth "Bess" Cuning of Averill Park, New York, who began taking care of him in 1936, when the child was recovering from a double mastoid operation (Cuning's brother Dr. David Cuning was the surgeon). When Murray attempted to regain custody of her son in 1939, Cuning and her other brothers, John, Ambrose, and Cortland, refused, according to the *New York Times*, at which time Murray and her former husband, Mdivani, entered a bitter custody dispute. It finally ended in 1940, with Murray being given legal custody of the child and the court ordering Mdivani to pay \$400 a month maintenance. However, Koran Mdivani continued to be

raised by Bess Cunning, who adopted him in 1940 as Daniel Michael Cunning. Reportedly, Mdivani had managed to siphon off most of Murray's money.



Mae Murray, 1926

In the 1940s, Murray appeared regularly at Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe, a nightclub which specialized in a "Gay '90s" atmosphere, often presenting stars of the past for nostalgic value. Her appearances collected mixed reviews: her dancing (in particular the Merry Widow Waltz) was well received, but Murray refused to acknowledge her age, wearing heavy layers of makeup and fitting her mature figure into short skirted costumes with plunging necklines.

Final years

Murray's finances continued to collapse, and for most of her later life she lived in poverty. She was the subject of an authorized biography, *The Self-Enchanted* (1959), written by Jane Ardmore, that has often been incorrectly called Murray's autobiography.

She later moved into the Motion Picture House in Woodland Hills, a retirement community for Hollywood professionals. Mae Murray died at age 75. She is interred in Valhalla Memorial Park Cemetery, North Hollywood, California.

Legacy

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Mae Murray has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6318 Hollywood Blvd.

In 2010 author Michael G. Ankerich began work on a biography of Murray.

Marlene Dietrich

Marlene Dietrich (27 December 1901 – 6 May 1992) was a German-American actress and singer.



Dietrich in 1955

Dietrich remained popular throughout her long career by continually re-inventing herself, professionally and characteristically. In the Berlin of the 1920s, she acted on the stage and in silent films. Her performance as Lola-Lola in *The Blue Angel*, directed by Josef von Sternberg, brought her international fame and provided her a contract with Paramount Pictures in the US. Hollywood films such as *Shanghai Express* and *Desire* capitalized on her glamour and exotic looks, cementing her stardom and making her one of the highest paid actresses of the era. Dietrich became a US citizen in 1937, and throughout World War II she was a high-profile frontline entertainer. Although she still made occasional films in the post-war years, Dietrich spent most of the 1950s to the 1970s touring the world as a successful show performer.

In 1999, the American Film Institute named Dietrich the ninth greatest female star of all time.

Childhood

Dietrich was born **Marie Magdalene Dietrich** on 27 December 1901 in Schöneberg, a district of Berlin, Germany. She was the younger of two daughters (her sister Elisabeth being a year older) of Louis Erich Otto Dietrich and Wilhelmina Elisabeth Josephine Felsing, who married in December 1898. Dietrich's mother was from a well-to-do Berlin family who owned a clock making firm and her father was a police lieutenant. Her father died in 1911. His best friend, Eduard von Losch, an aristocrat first lieutenant in the Grenadiers courted Wilhelmina and eventually married her in 1916, but he died soon after as a result of injuries sustained during World War I. Eduard von Losch never officially adopted the Dietrich children, hence Dietrich's surname was never von Losch, as is sometimes claimed. She was nicknamed "Lena" and "Lene" (pronounced Lay-neh) within the family. Around the age of 11, she contracted her two first names to form the then-novel name of "Marlene".

Dietrich attended the Auguste-Viktoria girls school from 1907 – 1917 and graduated from the Viktoria-Suisen-Schule the following year. She studied the violin and became interested in theatre and poetry as a teenager. Her dreams of becoming a concert violinist were cut short when she injured her wrist, but by 1922 she was employed as a violinist in a pit band accompanying silent films at a cinema in Berlin — her first job, from which she was fired after only four weeks.

Early career



Even at the start of her film career, Dietrich would often combine masculine clothes to her wardrobe, giving herself an androgynous quality

Her earliest professional stage appearances were as a chorus girl on tour with Guido Thielscher's *Girl-Kabarett*, vaudeville-style entertainments, and in Rudolf Nelson revues in Berlin. In 1922, Dietrich auditioned unsuccessfully for theatrical director and impresario Max Reinhardt's drama academy; however, she soon found herself working in his theaters as a chorus girl and playing small roles in dramas, without attracting any special attention at first. She made her film debut playing a bit part in the 1922 film, *So sind die Männer*.

She met her future husband, Rudolf Sieber, on the set of another film made that year, *Tragödie der Liebe*. Dietrich and Sieber were married in a civil ceremony in Berlin on 17 May 1923. Her only child, daughter Maria Elisabeth Sieber, was born on 13 December 1924.

Dietrich continued to work on stage and in film both in Berlin and Vienna throughout the 1920s. On stage, she had roles of varying importance in Frank Wedekind's *Pandora's Box*, William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* and *Misalliance*. It was in musicals and revues, such as *Broadway*, *Es Liegt in der Luft* and *Zwei Krawatten*, however, that she attracted the most attention. By the late 1920s, Dietrich was also playing sizable parts on screen, including *Café Elektric* (1927), *Ich küsse Ihre Hand*, *Madame* (1928) and *Das Schiff der verlorenen Menschen* (1929).

Film star

Breakthrough in *The Blue Angel*

In 1929, Dietrich landed the breakthrough role of Lola-Lola, a cabaret singer who causes the downfall of a hitherto respected schoolmaster, in UFA's production, *The Blue Angel* (1930). The film was directed by Josef von Sternberg, who thereafter took credit for having "discovered" Dietrich. The film is also noteworthy for having introduced Dietrich's signature song "Falling in Love Again", which Dietrich recorded for Electrola. She made further recordings in the 1930s for Polydor and Decca.

Paramount Pictures

On the strength of *The Blue Angel*'s international success, and with encouragement and promotion from von Sternberg, who was already established in Hollywood, Dietrich then moved to the U.S. on contract to Paramount Pictures. The studio sought to market Dietrich as a German answer to MGM's Swedish sensation, Greta Garbo.



A still from *Shanghai Express* (1932). Josef von Sternberg used butterfly lighting to enhance Dietrich's features.

Dietrich starred in six films directed by von Sternberg at Paramount between 1930 and 1935: von Sternberg worked very effectively with Dietrich to create the image of a glamorous femme fatale. He encouraged her to lose weight and coached her intensively as an actress – she, in turn, was willing to trust him and follow his sometimes imperious direction in a way that a number of other performers resisted.

Their first American collaboration, *Morocco*, again cast her as a cabaret singer; the film is best remembered for the sequence in which she performs a song dressed in a man's white tie and kisses another woman, both provocative for the era. The film earned Dietrich her only Oscar nomination.

Morocco was followed by *Dishonored* (with Dietrich as a Mata Hari-like spy) and *Blonde Venus*. *Shanghai Express* was von Sternberg and Dietrich's biggest box office hit. Their last two films, *The Scarlet Empress* and *The Devil is a Woman* — the most stylized of their collaborations — were their least commercial ventures. Dietrich later remarked that she was at her most beautiful in *The Devil is a Woman*.

A crucial part of the overall effect was created by von Sternberg's exceptional skill in lighting and photographing Dietrich to optimum effect — the use of light and shadow, including the impact of light

passed through a veil or slatted blinds (as for example in *Shanghai Express*) — which, when combined with scrupulous attention to all aspects of set design and costumes, make this series of films among the most visually stylish in cinema history. Critics still vigorously debate how much of the credit belonged to von Sternberg and how much to Dietrich, but most would agree that neither consistently reached such heights again after Paramount fired von Sternberg and the two ceased working together.

Dietrich's first film after the end of her partnership with von Sternberg was Frank Borzage's *Desire* (1936), a commercial success that gave Dietrich an opportunity to try her hand at romantic comedy. Her next project, *I Loved a Soldier* (1936) ended in a shambles when the film was scrapped several weeks into production due to script problems and disagreements between the star and her director.

Box Office Poison

Extravagant offers lured Dietrich away from Paramount to make *The Garden of Allah* (1936) for independent producer David O'Selznick (she received \$200,000) and to England for Alexander Korda's production, *Knight Without Armour* (1937) (at a salary of \$450,000). Although she was now one of the best paid film stars, her vehicles were costly to produce and neither of the latter two films were financially successful. By this time, Dietrich ranked 126th at the box office and exhibitors labeled her "Box Office Poison" (alongside others like Fred Astaire and Katharine Hepburn).

While she was in London, officials of the Nazi party approached Dietrich and offered her lucrative contracts, should she agree to return to Germany as a foremost film star in the Third Reich. She refused their offers and applied for US citizenship in 1937.

She returned to Paramount to make another romantic comedy, *Angel* (directed by Ernst Lubitsch): reception to the film was so lukewarm that Paramount bought out the remainder of Dietrich's contract. When film projects at other studios fell through, Dietrich and her family set sail for an extended holiday in Europe.

Comeback in “Destry Rides Again”

In 1939, she accepted producer Joe Pasternak's offer (and a pay cut) to play against type in her first film in two years: that of the cowboy saloon girl, Frenchie, in the light-hearted western *Destry Rides Again*, opposite James Stewart. The bawdy role revived her career and *The Boys in the Back Room*, a song she introduced in the film, became a hit when she recorded it for Decca. She played similar types in *Seven Sinners* (1940) and *The Spoilers* (1942), both opposite John Wayne.

While Dietrich arguably never fully regained her former screen glory, she continued performing in the movies, including appearances for such distinguished directors as Billy Wilder, Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles, in films that included *A Foreign Affair*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Rancho Notorious*, *Stage Fright* and *Touch of Evil*.

World War II

Dietrich was known to have strong political convictions and the mind to speak them. In interviews, Dietrich stated that she had been approached by representatives of the Nazi Party to return to Germany, but had turned them down flat. Dietrich, a staunch anti-Nazi, became an American citizen in 1939.



Dietrich signing a soldier's cast (Belgium, 1944).

In December 1941, the U.S. entered World War II, and Dietrich became one of the first celebrities to raise war bonds. She toured the US from January 1942 to September 1943 (appearing before 250 000 troops on the Pacific Coast leg of her tour alone) and it is said that she sold more war bonds than any other star.

During two extended tours for the USO in 1944 and 1945, she performed for Allied troops on the front lines in Algeria, Italy, England and France and went into Germany with Generals James M. Gavin and George S. Patton. When asked why she had done this, in spite of the obvious danger of being within a few kilometers of German lines, she replied, "aus Anstand" — "out of decency".

Her revue, with future TV pioneer Danny Thomas as her opening act, included songs from her films, performances on her musical saw (a skill she had originally acquired for stage appearances in Berlin in the 1920s), and a pretend "mindreading" act. Dietrich would inform the audience that she could read minds, and ask them to concentrate hard on thinking about whatever came into their minds. Then she would walk over to a soldier and earnestly tell him, "Oh, think of something else. I can't possibly talk about *that!*" American church papers reportedly published stories complaining about this part of Dietrich's act.

In 1944, the Morale Operations Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) initiated the Musac project, musical propaganda broadcasts designed to demoralize enemy soldiers. Dietrich, the only performer who was made aware that her recordings would be for OSS use, recorded a number of songs in German for the project, including *Lili Marleen*, a favorite of soldiers on both sides of the conflict. William Joseph Donovan, head of the OSS, wrote to Dietrich, "I am personally deeply grateful for your generosity in making these recordings for us.

At war's end in Europe, Dietrich reunited with her sister Elisabeth and her sister's husband and son. The family had resided in the German city of Belsen throughout the war years running a movie theatre for Nazi officers and officials who oversaw the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Dietrich interceded with Allied officials on their behalf, sheltering them from possible prosecution as Nazi collaborators.

Dietrich was awarded the Medal of Freedom by the US in 1947. She said that this was her proudest accomplishment. She was also awarded the Légion d'honneur by the French government as recognition for her wartime work.

Stage and cabaret



Dietrich often performed parts of her show in top hat and tails. Caricature by Hans Georg Pfannmüller showing Dietrich during a cabaret performance in 1954.

From the early 1950s until the mid-1970s, Dietrich worked almost exclusively as a highly-paid cabaret artist, performing live in large theaters in major cities worldwide.

In 1953, Dietrich was offered a then-substantial \$30,000 per week to appear live at the Sahara Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip. The show was short, consisting only of a few songs associated with her. Her daringly sheer "nude dress" — a heavily beaded evening gown of silk soufflé, which gave the illusion of transparency — designed by Jean Louis, attracted a lot of publicity. This engagement was so successful that she was signed to appear at the Café de Paris in London the following year, and her Las Vegas contracts were also renewed.

Dietrich employed Burt Bacharach as her musical arranger starting in the mid-1950s; together they refined her nightclub act into a more ambitious theatrical one-woman show with an expanded repertoire. Her repertoire included songs from her films as well as popular songs of the day. Bacharach's arrangements helped to disguise Dietrich's limited vocal range – she was a contralto – and allowed her to perform her songs to maximum dramatic effect; together, they recorded four albums and several singles between 1957 and 1964.

She would often perform the first part of her show in one of her body-hugging dresses and a swansdown coat, and change to top hat and tails for the second half of the performance. This allowed her to sing songs usually associated with male singers, like "One For My Baby" and "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face".

"She ... transcends her material," according to Peter Bogdanovich. "Whether it's a flighty old tune like 'I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby' ... a schmaltzy German love song, 'Das Lied Ist Aus' or a

French one 'La Vie en Rose', she lends each an air of the aristocrat, yet she never patronizes ... A folk song, 'Go 'Way From My Window' has never been sung with such passion, and in her hands 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' is not just another anti-war lament but a tragic accusation against us all."

Francis Wyndham offered a more critical appraisal of the phenomenon of Dietrich in concert. He wrote in 1964: "What she does is neither difficult nor diverting, but the fact that she does it at all fills the onlookers with wonder ... It takes two to make a conjuring trick: the illusionist's sleight of hand and the stooge's desire to be deceived. To these necessary elements (her own technical competence and her audience's sentimentality) Marlene Dietrich adds a third — the mysterious force of her belief in her own magic. Those who find themselves unable to share this belief tend to blame themselves rather than her."

Her use of body-sculpting undergarments, nonsurgical temporary facelifts, expert makeup and wigs, combined with careful stage lighting helped to preserve Dietrich's glamorous image as she grew older.



Dietrich In Jerusalem during a tour in Israel, 1960.

Dietrich's return to Germany in 1960 for a concert tour elicited a mixed response. Many Germans felt she had betrayed her homeland by her actions during World War II. During her performances at Berlin's Titania Palast theatre, protesters chanted, "Marlene Go Home!". On the other hand, Dietrich was warmly welcomed by other Germans, including Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt, who was, like Dietrich, an opponent of the Nazis who had lived in exile during their rule. The tour was an artistic triumph, but a financial failure. She also undertook a tour of Israel around the same time, which was well-received; she sang some songs in German during her concerts, including, from 1962, a German version of Pete Seeger's anti-war anthem "Where Have All the Flowers Gone", thus breaking the unofficial taboo against the use of German in Israel. *Dietrich in London*, a concert album, was recorded during the run of her 1964 engagement at the Queen's Theatre.

She performed on Broadway twice (in 1967 and 1968) and won a special Tony Award in 1968. In November 1972 *I Wish You Love*, a version of Dietrich's Broadway show, was filmed in London. She was paid \$250,000 for her cooperation, but was unhappy with the result. The show was broadcast in the UK on the BBC and in the US on CBS in January 1973.

In her sixties and seventies, Dietrich's health declined: she survived cervical cancer in 1965 and suffered from poor circulation in her legs. Dietrich became increasingly dependent on painkillers and alcohol. A stage fall at the Shady Grove Music Fair in Washington DC in 1973 injured her left thigh, necessitating skin grafts to allow the wound to heal. She fractured her right leg in August 1974. "Do you think this is

glamorous? That it's a great life and that I do it for my health? Well it isn't. Maybe once, but not now," Dietrich told Clive Hirschorn in 1973, explaining that she continued performing only for the money.

Final years

Dietrich's show business career largely ended on 29 September 1975, when she broke her leg during a stage performance in Sydney, Australia. Her husband, Rudolf Sieber, died of cancer on 24 June 1976.



Dietrich's gravestone in Berlin. The inscription reads "Hier steh ich an den Marken meiner Tage" (Here I stand at the mile-stone of my days), a paraphrased line from the sonnet *Abschied vom Leben* (Farewell from Life) by Theodor Körner.

Dietrich's final on-camera film appearance was a cameo role in *Just a Gigolo* (1979), starring David Bowie and directed by David Hemmings. Dietrich also performed the title track in the film, and recorded the song for the soundtrack LP.

An alcoholic and dependent on painkillers, Dietrich withdrew to her apartment at 12 avenue Montaigne in Paris. She spent the final 11 years of her life mostly bedridden, allowing only a select few—including family and employees—to enter the apartment. During this time, she was a prolific letter-writer and phone-caller. Her autobiography, *Nimmt nur mein Leben*, was published in 1979.

In 1982, Dietrich agreed to participate in a documentary film about her life, *Marlene* (1984), but refused to be filmed. The film's director, Maximilian Schell, was only allowed to record her voice. He used his interviews with her as the basis for the film, set to a collage of film clips from her career. The final film won several European film prizes and received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary in 1984. *Newsweek* named it "a unique film, perhaps the most fascinating and affecting documentary ever made about a great movie star".

In 1988, Dietrich recorded spoken introductions to songs for a nostalgia album by Udo Lindenberg.

She began a close friendship with the biographer David Bret, one of the few people allowed inside her Paris apartment. Bret is thought to have been the last person outside her family that Dietrich spoke to, two days before her death: "I have called to say that I love you, and now I may die." She was in constant contact with her daughter, who came to Paris regularly to check on her.

In an interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel* in November 2005, Dietrich's daughter and grandson claim that Dietrich was politically active during these years. She kept in contact with world leaders by telephone, including Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, running up a monthly bill of

over \$3,000. In 1989, her appeal to save the Babelsberg studios from closure was broadcast on BBC Radio, and she spoke on television via telephone on the occasion of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990.

Dietrich died of renal failure on 6 May 1992 at the age of 90 in Paris. A service was conducted at La Madeleine in Paris before 3,500 mourners and a crowd of well-wishers outside. Her body, covered with an American flag, was then returned to Berlin, where she was interred at the Städtischer Friedhof III, Berlin-Schöneberg, Stubenrauchstraße 43–45, in Friedenau Cemetery, near her mother's grave and not far away from the house where she was born.

Private life

Unlike her professional celebrity, which was carefully crafted and maintained, Dietrich's personal life was kept out of public view. Dietrich, who was bisexual, enjoyed the thriving gay scene of the time and drag balls of 1920s Berlin.

She married only once, assistant director Rudolf Sieber, who later became an assistant director at Paramount Pictures in France, responsible for foreign language dubbing. Dietrich's only child, Maria Elisabeth Sieber, was born in Berlin on 13 December 1924. She would later become an actress, primarily working in television, known as Maria Riva. When Maria gave birth to a son in 1948, Dietrich was dubbed "the world's most glamorous grandmother". After Dietrich's death, Riva published a frank biography of her mother, titled *Marlene Dietrich* (1990).

Throughout her career Dietrich had an unending string of affairs, some short-lived, some lasting decades; they often overlapped and were almost all known to her husband, to whom she was in the habit of passing the love letters of her men, sometimes with biting comments. During the filming of *Destry Rides Again*, Dietrich started a love affair with co-star Jimmy Stewart, which ended after filming. In 1938, Dietrich met and began a relationship with the writer Erich Maria Remarque, and in 1941, the French actor and military hero Jean Gabin. Their relationship ended in the mid-1940s. She also had an affair with the Cuban-American writer Mercedes de Acosta, who was Greta Garbo's lover. Her last great passion, when she was in her 50s, appears to have been for the actor Yul Brynner, but her love life continued well into her 70s. She counted John Wayne, George Bernard Shaw and John F. Kennedy among her conquests. Dietrich maintained her husband and his mistress first in Europe and later on a ranch in the San Fernando Valley, California.

She was raised a Protestant but lost her faith due to battlefield experiences during her time with the US Army as an entertainer after hearing preachers from both sides invoking God as their support. "I lost my faith during the war and can't believe they are all up there, flying around or sitting at tables, all those I've lost." She once said: "If God exists, he needs to review his plan."

Image and legacy



German stamp issued in 1997 in the Women in German history series

Dietrich was a fashion icon to the top designers as well as a screen icon that later stars would follow. She once said, "I dress for myself. Not for the image, not for the public, not for the fashion, not for men." Her public image and some of her movies included strong sexual undertones, including bisexuality.

A significant volume of academic literature, especially since 1975, analyzes Dietrich's image, as created by the movie industry, within various theoretical frameworks, including that of psycho-analysis. Emphasis is placed, inter alia, on the "fetishistic" manipulation of the female image.

In 1992, a plaque was unveiled at Leberstraße 65 in Berlin-Schöneberg, the site of Dietrich's birth. A postage stamp bearing Dietrich's portrait was issued in Germany on 14 August 1997.

Luxury pen manufacturer MontBlanc produced a limited edition 'Marlene Dietrich' pen to commemorate Dietrich's life. It is platinum-plated and has an encrusted deep blue sapphire.

For some Germans, she remained a controversial figure for having sided with Nazi Germany's foes during the Second World War. In 1996, after some debate, it was decided not to name a street after Dietrich in Berlin-Schöneberg, her birthplace. However, on 8 November 1997, the central Marlene-Dietrich-Platz was unveiled in Berlin to honor Dietrich. The commemoration reads *Berliner Weltstar des Films und des Chansons. Einsatz für Freiheit und Demokratie, für Berlin und Deutschland* ("Berlin world star of film and song. Dedication to freedom and democracy, to Berlin and Germany").

Dietrich was made an honorary citizen of Berlin on 16 May 2002.

The U.S. Government awarded Marlene Dietrich the Medal of Freedom for her war work. Dietrich has been quoted as saying this was the honor of which she was most proud in her life. She was also made a *chevalier* (later *commandeur*) of the Légion d'honneur by the French government.

In 2000 a German biopic film *Marlene* was made directed by Joseph Vilsmaier and starring Katja Flint as Dietrich.

Estate

On 24 October 1993, the largest portion of Dietrich's estate was sold to the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek—after U.S. institutions showed no interest—where it became the core of the exhibition at the Filmmuseum Berlin. The collection includes: over 3,000 textile items from the 1920s through the 1990s, including film and stage costumes as well as over a thousand items from Dietrich's personal wardrobe; 15,000 photographs, by Cecil Beaton, Horst P. Horst, George Hurrell, Lord Snowdon and Edward Steichen; 300,000 pages of documents, including correspondence with Burt Bacharach, Yul Brynner, Maurice Chevalier, Noël Coward, Jean Gabin, Ernest Hemingway, Karl Lagerfeld, Nancy and Ronald Reagan, Erich Maria Remarque, Josef von Sternberg, Orson Welles, and Billy Wilder; as well as other items like film posters and sound recordings.

The contents of Dietrich's Manhattan apartment, along with other personal effects such as jewelry and items of clothing, were sold by public auction by Sotheby's (Los Angeles) on 1 November 1997. The apartment itself (located at 993 Park Avenue) was sold for \$615,000 in 1998.

Marguerite Clark

Marguerite Clark (February 22, 1883 – September 25, 1940) was an American stage and silent film actress.



Early life and theater

Born to a farming family in Avondale, Cincinnati, Ohio, Clark was educated at a Roman Catholic boarding school in Cincinnati. She finished school at age 16, and, having decided to pursue a career in the theatre, she quickly showed herself to be a gifted actress.

After performing for only a short time, she made her Broadway debut in 1900. The 17-year-old went on to star at various venues. In 1903 she was seen on Broadway opposite that hulking comedian DeWolf Hopper in *Mr. Pickwick*. The 6-foot-6-inch (1.98 m) Hopper dwarfed the nearly 5-foot-tall (1.5 m) Clark in their scenes together. Several adventure-fantasy roles followed. In 1909 Clark starred in the whimsical costume play *The Beauty Spot* keeping in line with the kind of fantasy stories she would soon do in films and which would become her hallmark. In 1910 Clark appeared in *The Wishing Ring*, a play directed by Cecil DeMille and later made into a motion picture by Maurice Tourneur. That same 1910 season had Clark appearing in *Baby Mine*, a popular play produced by William A. Brady. In 1912 Clark performed in a starring role with John Barrymore, Doris Keane and Gail Kane in the play *The Affairs of Anatol* later made into a motion picture by Clark's future movie studio Famous Players-Lasky(Paramount) and directed by Cecil DeMille. Also in 1912 Clark starred in a memorable production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This role was a definition of Clark's persona, and she would make an influential film version of the story in 1916. Clark's popularity led to her signing a contract in 1914 to make motion pictures with Famous Players-Lasky Corporation.

Late starting film career



Marguerite in 1916

At age 31 it was relatively late in life for a film actress to begin a career with starring roles, but the diminutive Clark, who stood 4 ft 10 in (1.47 m) tall, had a little-girl look, like Mary Pickford, that belied her years. Also, film was not developed or mature enough to showcase Clark at her youthful best at the turn of the century. These were one of the reasons established Broadway stars refused early film offers. Feature films were unheard of when Clark was in her early 20s. She made her first appearance on screen in the short film *Wildflower*, directed by Allan Dwan.

In 1915 she starred as "Gretchen" in a feature-length production of *The Goose Girl* based on a 1909 best-selling novel by Harold MacGrath. She performed in the feature-length production *The Seven Sisters* (1915), directed by Sidney Olcott, and she reprised a Broadway role, starring in the first feature-length film version of *Snow White* (1916).



Clark and Williams' former mansion on St. Charles Avenue in Uptown New Orleans now houses the latter branch of the New Orleans Public Library

Clark was directed in this by J. Searle Dawley, as well as in a number of films, notably when she played the characters of both "Little Eva St. Clair" and "Topsy" in the feature *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1918). That year Marguerite Clark married New Orleans, Louisiana plantation owner Harry Palmerston Williams (1880–1936) with whom she would remain until his death.

She starred in *Come Out of the Kitchen* (1919), which was filmed in Pass Christian, Mississippi, at Ossian Hall. The same year, she enrolled as a yeowoman in the naval reserves.

Marguerite Clark made all but one of her 40 films with Famous Players-Lasky, her last with them in 1920 titled *Easy to Get*, in which she starred opposite Harrison Ford.

Her next film, in 1921, was made by her own production company for First National Pictures distribution. As one of the most popular actresses going into the 1920s, and one of the industry's best paid, her name alone was enough to ensure reasonable box office success. As such, *Scrambled Wives* was made under her direction, following which she retired at age 38 to be with her husband at their country estate in New Orleans.

After the death of her husband in 1936, Marguerite Clark spent time in New York City, where she died from pneumonia in 1940 at the age of 57. She was buried with her husband in Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Marguerite Clark has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6304 Hollywood Boulevard.

Marie Prevost

Marie Prevost (November 8, 1898 – January 21, 1937) was a Canadian-born actress of the early days of cinema. During her twenty year career, she made 121 silent and talking pictures.



Early life

Born **Mary Bickford Dunn** in Sarnia, Ontario, she was still a child when her family moved first to Denver, Colorado and then later to Los Angeles. While working as a secretary, she applied for and obtained an acting job at the Hollywood studio owned by Mack Sennett. Sennett, who was from a small town outside of Montreal, dubbed her as the exotic "French girl", adding Dunn to his collection of bathing beauties under the stage name of Marie Prevost.

In 1919, Prevost secretly married socialite Sonny Gerke who left her after six months of marriage. Gerke's mother had forbidden him to associate with Prevost because she was an actress, so he was scared to tell his mother of the marriage—and he couldn't get a divorce without revealing that he was married. Prevost, fearful of the bad publicity a divorce would cause, would stay secretly married to Gerke until 1923.

Career rise

One of her first publicly successful film roles came in the 1920 romantic film *Love, Honor, and Behave*, opposite another newcomer and Sennett protégé, George O'Hara. Initially cast in numerous minor comedic roles as the sexy, innocent young girl, she worked in several films for Sennett's studio until 1921 when she signed with Universal. At Universal, Irving Thalberg took an interest in Prevost and decided to make her a star. Thalberg ensured that she received a great deal of publicity and staged numerous publicity events. After announcing that he had selected two films for Prevost to star in, *The Moonlight Follies* (1921) and *Kissed* (1922), Thalberg sent Prevost to Coney Island where she publicly burned her bathing suit to symbolize the end of her bathing beauty days.

While at Universal, Prevost was still relegated to light comedies. After her contract expired, Jack Warner signed her to a two year contract at \$1500 a week at Warner Bros. in 1922. During this time, Prevost was dating actor Kenneth Harlan. Jack Warner had also signed Harlan to a contract and cast the couple in the lead roles in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*. To publicize the film, Warner announced that the couple would marry on the film's set. The publicity stunt worked and thousands of fans sent gifts and letters to the couple. The *Los Angeles Mirror* got wind that Prevost was still married to Sonny Gerke and ran a story with the headline "*Marie Prevost Will be a Bigamist if She Marries Kenneth Harlan*". Warner was livid over the negative publicity and Prevost's failure to disclose her first marriage despite the fact that the publicity stunt was his idea. Warner quickly arranged an annulment and, when the publicity surrounding the scandal died down, Prevost and Harlan were quietly married.

In spite of the bad publicity, Prevost's performance in *The Beautiful and Damned* brought good reviews. Director Ernst Lubitsch chose her for a major role opposite Adolphe Menjou in 1924's *The Marriage Circle*. Of her performance as the beautiful seductress, Ernst Lubitsch said that she was one of the few actresses in Hollywood who knew how to underplay comedy to achieve the maximum effect. This performance, praised by *The New York Times*, resulted in Lubitsch casting her in *Three Women* in 1924 and in *Kiss Me Again* the following year.



c. 1923

Just as her career was blossoming, Prevost's mother was killed in an automobile accident while traveling in Florida with actress Vera Steadman, another Canadian friend, and Hollywood studio owner, Al Christie in 1926.

Decline

Devastated by the loss of her only remaining parent, Prevost began drinking heavily and developed an addiction to alcohol. Her marriage to Harlan ended in a 1927 divorce. Prevost tried to get past her personal torment by burying herself in her work, starring in numerous roles as the temptingly beautiful seductress who in the end was always the honorable heroine. After seeing Prevost in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Howard Hughes cast her as the lead in *The Racket* (1928). During filming, Hughes and Prevost had a brief affair. Hughes quickly broke off the affair leaving Prevost heartbroken and furthering her depression. After playing the lead in *The Racket*, Prevost's days as a leading lady were over.

Prevost's depression caused her to binge on food resulting in significant weight gain. By the 1930s, she was working less and being offered only secondary parts. A notable exception was *Paid* (1930), a role which, while secondary to star Joan Crawford, still garnered her good reviews. As a result of all this, her financial income declined and her growing dependency on alcohol added to her weight problems. By 1934, she had no work at all and her financial situation deteriorated dramatically. The downward spiral became greatly aggravated when her weight problems forced her into repeated crash dieting in order to keep whatever bit part a movie studio offered.

Death

On January 21, 1937, at the age of 38, Prevost died from heart failure brought on by acute alcoholism and malnutrition. Her body was not discovered until January 23, after neighbors complained about her dog's incessant barking. A bellboy, who ignored the note Prevost posted on the door asking that no one knock on the door more than once, finally forced the door open. Prevost was found lying face down on her bed, her legs marked with tiny bites. Prevost's pet dachshund, Maxie, had nipped at her legs in an attempt to wake her up.

Her funeral (which was paid for by Joan Crawford) at the Hollywood Memorial Cemetery was attended by Crawford, Clark Gable, Wallace Beery, and Barbara Stanwyck among others.

In February 1937, it was discovered that Prevost's estate was valued at only \$300 prompting the Hollywood community to create the Motion Picture & Television Country House and Hospital to provide medical care for employees of the television and motion picture industry.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Marie Prevost has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6201 Hollywood Boulevard.

Marion Davies

Marion Davies (January 3, 1897 – September 22, 1961) was an American film actress. Davies is best remembered for her relationship with newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, as her high-profile social life often obscured her professional career.



Early life

Davies was born **Marion Cecilia Douras** on January 3, 1897 in Brooklyn, New York, the youngest of five children born to Bernard J. Douras (1857–1935), a lawyer and judge in New York City; and Rose Reilly (1867–1928). Her father performed the civil marriage of Gloria Gould Bishop. Her elder siblings included Rose, Reine, and Ethel. A brother, Charles, drowned at the age of 15 in 1906. His name was subsequently given to Marion's favorite nephew, the screenwriter Charles Lederer, the son of Marion's sister Reine Davies.

The Douras family lived near Prospect Park in Brooklyn. The sisters changed their surname to Davies, which one of them spotted on a real estate agent's sign in the neighborhood. Even at a time when New York was the melting pot for new immigrants, having a British surname greatly helped one's prospects – the name Davies has Welsh origins. She was educated in a convent.

The sisters all hit the Great White Way, and Marion was signed on as a Ziegfeld girl in the *Ziegfeld Follies* of 1916.

Early career



Portrait of Marion Davies for the June 1920 cover of Theatre Magazine.

After making her screen debut in late 1916 in a fashion newsreel, modeling gowns by Lady Duff-Gordon, she appeared in her first feature film in 1917's *Runaway Romany*. It was a film written by Marion and directed by her brother-in-law, the prominent Broadway producer George W. Lederer. The following year she starred in three films, *The Burden of Proof*, *Beatrice Fairfax*, and *Cecilia of the Pink Roses*. Playing mainly light comedic roles, she quickly became a major film personality, making a small fortune which enabled her to provide financial assistance for her family and friends.

Cecilia of the Pink Roses in 1918 was her first film backed by Hearst. She was on her way to being the most famously advertised actress in the world. During the next 10 years she appeared in 29 films, an average of almost three films a year.

Hearst and Cosmopolitan Pictures

By the mid-1920s, however, her career was often overshadowed by her relationship with the married Hearst and their fabulous social life at San Simeon and Ocean House in Santa Monica; the latter dubbed by Colleen Moore "the biggest house on the beach – the beach between San Diego and Vancouver".

According to her own audio diaries, she had met Hearst long before she had started working in films. Hearst, later formed Cosmopolitan Pictures which would produce several starring vehicles for her. Hearst's relentless efforts to promote her career instead had a detrimental effect, but he persisted, making Cosmopolitan's distribution deals first with Paramount, then Goldwyn, and then Metro Goldwyn Mayer. Davies herself was more inclined to develop her comic talents alongside her friends at United Artists, but Hearst pointedly discouraged this. Davies, in her published memoirs *The Times We Had*, concluded that Hearst's over-the-top promotion of her career, in fact, had a negative result.



Marion Davies, as photographed by Bain News Service.

Hearst loved seeing her in expensive costume pictures, but she also appeared in contemporary comedies like *Tillie the Toiler*, *The Fair Co-Ed* (both 1927), and especially three directed by King Vidor, *Not So Dumb* (1930), *The Patsy* and the backstage-in-Hollywood saga *Show People* (both 1928). *The Patsy* contains her imitations, that she usually did for friends, of silent stars Lillian Gish, Mae Murray and Pola Negri. King Vidor saw Marion as a comedic actor instead of the dramatic actor Hearst wanted her to be. He noticed she was the life of parties and incorporated that into his films.

After seeing photographs of St Donat's Castle in *Country Life* magazine, the Welsh Vale of Glamorgan property was bought and revitalized by Hearst in 1925 as a gift to Davies. Hearst and Davies spent much of their time entertaining, holding lavish parties with guests at their Beverly Hills estate. Frequent guests included, among others, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and a young John F. Kennedy. George Bernard Shaw, upon visiting San Simeon, was quoted as saying "this is what God would have built if he had had the money."

Talking pictures

The coming of sound made Davies nervous because she had never completely overcome a childhood stutter. Her career survived, however, and she made several comedies and musicals during the 1930s, including *Marianne* (1929), *Not So Dumb* (1930), *The Florodora Girl* (1930), *The Bachelor Father* (1931), *Five and Ten* (1931) with Leslie Howard, *Polly of the Circus* (1932) with Clark Gable, *Blondie of the Follies* (1932), *Peg o' My Heart* (1933), *Going Hollywood* (1933) with Bing Crosby, and *Operator 13* (1934) with Gary Cooper. She was involved with many aspects of her films and was considered an astute businesswoman. Her career, however, was hampered by Hearst's insistence that she play distinguished, dramatic parts as opposed to the comic roles that were her forte.

Hearst reportedly had tried to push Irving Thalberg to cast Davies in the title role in *Marie Antoinette*, but Thalberg gave the part to his wife, Norma Shearer. This rejection came on the heels of Davies having been also denied the female lead in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*; Norma Shearer got both roles. Despite Davies' friendship with the Thalbergs, Hearst reacted by pulling his newspaper support for MGM and moved Cosmopolitan Pictures to Warner Brothers. Davies' films there included *Page Miss Glory* (1935), *Hearts Divided*, *Cain and Mabel* (both 1936), and *Ever Since Eve* (1937), her last film.

Cosmopolitan Pictures folded so she left the film business and retreated to San Simeon. Davies would later state in her autobiography that after many years of work she had had enough and decided to devote herself to being Hearst's "companion." In truth, she was intensely ambitious, but realized that at the age of forty, and after twenty years of hard work, that she had not won over the public or the critics not under Hearst's control. Decades after Davies' retirement and death, however, the general consensus among critics is far more appreciative of her efforts, particularly in the field of comedy.

Ince scandal

Hearst and Davies lived as a couple for decades but were never married, as Hearst's wife refused to give him a divorce. At one point, he reportedly came close to marrying Davies, but decided his wife's settlement demands were too high. Hearst was extremely jealous and possessive of her, even though he was married throughout their relationship. Davies was aboard the Hearst yacht when film producer Thomas Ince took ill, and died.

An "urban legend" having to do with a rumored relationship with Chaplin has endured since 1924. Chaplin (among other actresses and actors) and Davies were aboard the yacht the fateful night Thomas Ince died. Despite the lack of evidence to support a relationship, rumors have circulated since that Hearst mistook Ince for Chaplin and shot him in a jealous rage. The rumors were dramatised in the play *The Cat's Meow*, which was later made into Peter Bogdanovich's 2001 film of the same name starring Edward Herrmann as Hearst, Kirsten Dunst as Davies, Eddie Izzard as Chaplin, Joanna Lumley as Elinor Glyn, Jennifer Tilly as gossip columnist Louella Parsons, and Cary Elwes as Ince. Patty Hearst co-authored a novel with Cordelia Frances Biddle titled *Murder at San Simeon* (Scribner, 1996), based upon the death of Ince. The 1999 film *RKO 281*, a dramatization of the events during and after production of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*, depicts Welles being told by screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz that Hearst shot Ince, and references this several times as an analogy for Hearst's efforts to bury the film.

The factual record shows that Thomas Ince suffered an attack of acute indigestion while aboard the yacht and was escorted off the boat in San Diego by another of the guests, Dr. Daniel Carson Goodman, a Hollywood writer and producer. Ince was put on a train bound for Los Angeles, but was removed from the train at Del Mar when his condition worsened. He was given medical attention by Dr. T. A. Parker and a nurse, Jesse Howard. Ince told them that he had drunk liquor aboard Hearst's yacht. Ince was taken to his Hollywood home where he died the following day of a heart condition.

Hearst's death

By the late 1930s, Hearst was suffering financial reversals. After selling St Donat's Castle, Davies bailed him out by writing out a check for \$1 million. Hearst died on August 14, 1951.

The California State Parks staff at Hearst Castle now report at the time of Hearst's death, 51% of his fortune had been willed to Davies.

Marriage

Eleven weeks and one day after Hearst's death, Davies married Horace Brown on October 31, 1951, in Las Vegas. It was not a happy marriage; Brown allegedly encouraged her drinking. Davies filed for divorce twice, but neither was finalized.

In her last years, Davies was involved with charity work. In 1952, she donated \$1.9 million to establish a children's clinic at UCLA, which was changed to The Mattel Children's Hospital in 1998. She also

fought childhood diseases through the *Marion Davies Foundation*. Part of the Medical Center at UCLA is named the Marion Davies Clinic.

She suffered a minor stroke in 1956, and was later diagnosed with cancer of the jaw. She had an operation which appeared to be successful. Soon after the operation Davies fell and broke her leg. The last time Davies was seen by the American public was on January 10, 1960, on an NBC television special called *Hedda Hopper's Hollywood*. Joseph P. Kennedy rented Davies' mansion and worked from behind the scenes to secure his son John F. Kennedy's nomination during the 1960 Democratic National convention in Los Angeles.

Death

Davies died of cancer on September 22, 1961 in Hollywood, California. Her funeral at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Hollywood (donations to the church were from Hollywood celebrities such as Louis B. Mayer's estate (he died in 1957) and Bing Crosby) was attended by many Hollywood celebrities, including Mary Pickford and Mrs. Clark Gable (Kay Spreckels), as well as President Herbert Hoover. She is buried in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery and left an estate estimated at more than \$30 million.

After the death of Davies' niece, Patricia Lake (née Van Cleeve), Lake's family announced that she was in fact the *birth daughter* of Marion Davies and William Randolph Hearst. Prior to the announcement, it had been said that Lake was the daughter of Rosemary Davies (Marion's sister) and her first husband, George Van Cleeve.

Portrayals of Davies

Davies was rumored to be the inspiration for the Susan Alexander character portrayed in Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941), which was based loosely on Hearst's life. This led to various portrayals of Davies as a talentless opportunist.

Welles himself, as stated in his foreword to Davies autobiography *The Times We Had*, said he deeply regretted that so many assumed Susan Alexander was a carbon copy of Davies, and that the real Davies was a great actress and a wonderful woman. He also claimed that the Susan Alexander character owed as much to the Chicago tycoon Samuel Insull's wife, for whom he built an opera house.

Davies was portrayed by Virginia Madsen in the telefilm *The Hearst and Davies Affair* (1985) with Robert Mitchum as Hearst, and Heather McNair in *Chaplin* (1992). Madsen later became a Davies fan and said that she felt she had inadvertently portrayed her as a stereotype, rather than as a real person.

In *RKO 281* (1999), an HBO movie about the making of *Citizen Kane*, she is played by Melanie Griffith, with James Cromwell as Hearst. She is portrayed as a lush who yearns to travel, but stays with Hearst because she loves him, and Hearst's desire to defend her honor is seen as the primary reason he attempts to have *Citizen Kane* banned.

In the Peter Bogdanovich film *The Cat's Meow* (see above), Kirsten Dunst played Davies as a witty, intelligent woman.

A documentary film *Captured on Film: The True Story of Marion Davies* (2001) premiered on Turner Classic Movies.

Mary Astor

Mary Astor (May 3, 1906 – September 25, 1987) was an American actress. Most remembered for her role as Brigid O'Shaughnessy in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) with Humphrey Bogart, Astor began her long motion picture career as a teenager in the silent movies of the early 1920s.



from the trailer for *The Great Lie* (1941)

She eventually made a successful transition to talkies, but almost saw her career destroyed due to public scandal in the mid-1930s. She was sued for support by her parents and was later branded an adulterous wife by her ex-husband during a custody fight over her daughter. Overcoming these stumbling blocks in her private life, Astor went on to even greater success on the screen, eventually winning the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Sandra Kovak in *The Great Lie* (1941). She was an MGM contract player through most of the 1940s and continued to act in movies, on television and on stage until her retirement from the screen in 1964. Astor was the author of five novels. Her autobiography became a bestseller, as did her later book, *A Life on Film*, which was specifically about her career.

Director Lindsay Anderson wrote of her in 1990: "...that when two or three who love the cinema are gathered together, the name of Mary Astor always comes up, and everybody agrees that she was an actress of special attraction, whose qualities of depth and reality always seemed to illuminate the parts she played."

Early life

Mary Astor was born **Lucile Vasconcellos Langhanke** in Quincy, Illinois, the only child of Otto Ludwig Langhanke (October 2, 1871 – February 3, 1943) and Helen Marie de Vasconcellos (April 19, 1881 – January 18, 1947). Both of her parents were teachers.

Her Berlin-born father immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1891 and became a naturalized citizen; her mother was born in Jacksonville, Illinois, of Portuguese and Irish extraction. Langhanke and de Vasconcellos married on August 3, 1904 in Lyons, Kansas. Astor's father was a German teacher at Quincy High School until the U.S. entered World War I. Later on, he began doing light farming. Astor's mother, who had always wanted to be an actress, taught drama and elocution.

Astor was home-schooled in academics and taught to play the piano by her father, who insisted she practice daily. Her piano talents came in handy when she played piano in her films *The Great Lie* and *Meet Me In St. Louis*. In 1919, Astor sent a photograph of herself to a beauty contest in *Motion*

Picture Magazine, becoming a semifinalist. Her father then moved the family to Chicago, where he took a position teaching German in public schools. Lucile took drama lessons and appeared in various amateur stage productions.

The following year, she sent another photograph to *Motion Picture Magazine*, this time becoming a finalist and then runner-up in the national contest. Her father then moved the family to New York, in order for his pretty daughter to become an actress in motion pictures. He managed all her affairs from September 1920 to June 1930.

A Manhattan photographer, Charles Albin, saw a photograph and asked the young girl with haunting eyes and long auburn hair, whose nickname was "Rusty," to pose for him. The Albin photographs were seen by Harry Durant of Famous Players-Lasky and Lucile was signed to a six-month contract with Paramount Pictures. Her name was changed to Mary Astor during a conference between Paramount chief Jesse Lasky, gossip columnist Louella Parsons, and producer Walter Wanger.

Silent movie career



Astor made her debut in the 1920 film *The Scarecrow*. At age 14, she appeared in the 1921 film *Sentimental Tommy*, but her small part in a dream sequence wound up on the cutting room floor. Paramount let her contract lapse. She then appeared in some movie shorts with sequences based on famous paintings. She received critical recognition for the 1921 two-reeler *The Beggar Maid*. Her first feature-length movie was *John Smith* (1922), which was followed that same year by *The Man Who Played God*. In 1923, she and her parents moved to Hollywood.

After appearing in several larger roles at various studios, she was signed by Paramount again, this time to a one-year contract at \$500 a week. She had appeared in several more movies when John Barrymore saw a photograph of her in a magazine and wanted her cast in his upcoming movie. On loan-out to Warner Bros., she starred with him in *Beau Brummel* (1924). The older actor wooed the young actress, but their relationship was severely constrained by Astor's parents' unwillingness to let the couple spend time alone together. It was only because Barrymore convinced the Langhankes that his acting lessons required privacy that the couple managed to be alone at all. Their secret engagement ended largely because of the Langhankes' interference and Astor's inability to escape their heavy-handed authority, but also because Barrymore became involved with Astor's fellow WAMPAS Baby Star Dolores Costello, whom he later married.

In 1925, Astor's parents bought a Moorish style mansion with 1-acre (4,000 m²) of land known as "Moorcrest" in the hills above Hollywood. The Langhankes not only lived lavishly off Astor's earnings, but kept her a virtual prisoner inside Moorcrest. Moorcrest is notable not only for its ornate style, but its place as the most lavish residence associated with the Krotona Colony, a utopian society founded by the Theosophical Society in 1912. Built by Marie Russak Hotchener, a Theosophist with no formal architectural training, the house combines Moorish and Mission Revival styles and contains such Arts and Crafts features as art glass windows (whose red lotus design Astor called "unfortunate"), and Batchelder tiles. Moorcrest, which recently has undergone a multi-million-dollar renovation, is still standing. Before the Langhankes bought it, it was rented by Charlie Chaplin, whose tenure is memorialized by an art glass window featuring the Little Tramp.



Astor's parents were not Theosophists, though the family was friendly with both Marie Hotchener and her husband Harry, both prominent TS members. Marie Hotchener was the person who negotiated Astor's right to a \$5 a week allowance (at a time when she was making \$2500 a week) and the right to go to work unchaperoned by her mother. The following year when she was 19, Astor, fed up with her father's constant physical and psychological abuse as well as his control of her money, climbed from her second floor bedroom window and escaped to a hotel in Hollywood, as recounted in her memoirs. Hotchener facilitated her return by persuading Otto Langhanke to give Astor a savings account with \$500 and the ability to come and go as she pleased. Nevertheless, she did not gain control of her salary until she was 26 years old, at which point her parents sued her for financial support. Astor settled the case by agreeing to pay her parents \$100 a month. Otto Langhanke put Moorcrest up for auction in the early 1930s, hoping to get more than the \$80,000 he had been offered for it; it went for \$25,000.

Astor went on appearing in movies at various studios. When her Paramount contract ended in 1925, she was signed at Warner Bros. Among her assignments was another role with John Barrymore, this time in *Don Juan* (1926). She was named one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars in 1926, along with Mary Brian, Dolores Costello, Joan Crawford, Dolores del Río, Janet Gaynor, and Fay Wray.



On loan to Fox Film Corporation, Astor starred in *Dressed To Kill* (1928), which received good reviews. That same year, she starred in the sophisticated comedy *Dry Martini* at Fox. She later said that, while working on the latter, she "absorbed and assumed something of the atmosphere and emotional climate of the picture." She said it offered "a new and exciting point of view; with its specious doctrine of self-indulgence, it rushed into the vacuum of my moral sense and captivated me completely." When her Warner Bros. contract ended, she signed a contract with Fox for \$3,750 a week.

In 1928, she married director Kenneth Hawks at her family home, Moorcrest. He gave her a Packard automobile as a wedding present and the couple moved into a home high up on Lookout Mountain in Los Angeles above Beverly Hills.

As the movie industry made the transition to talkies, Fox gave her a sound test, which she failed because the studio found her voice to be too deep. Though this was probably due to early sound equipment and the inexperience of technicians, the studio released her from her contract and she found herself out of work for eight months in 1929.

New beginnings

Astor took voice training and singing lessons during her time off, but no roles were offered. Her acting career was then given a boost by her friend, Florence Eldridge (wife of Fredric March), in whom she confided. Eldridge, who was to star in the stage play *Among the Married* at the Majestic Theatre in Downtown Los Angeles, recommended Astor for the second female lead. The play was a success and her voice was deemed suitable, being described as low and vibrant.

She was happy to be back at work, but her happiness soon ended. On January 2, 1930, while filming sequences for the Fox movie *Such Men Are Dangerous*, Kenneth Hawks was killed in a mid-air plane crash over the Pacific. Astor had just finished a matinee performance at the Majestic when Florence Eldridge came to her with the news. She was rushed from the theatre and taken to Eldridge's apartment; a replacement, Doris Lloyd, stepped in for the next show. Astor remained with her friend, Eldridge, at her apartment for some time, but she soon went back to work. Shortly after her husband's death, she debuted in her first "talkie", *Ladies Love Brutes* (1930) at Paramount, which co-starred friend Fredric March.

While her career picked up, her private life remained difficult. After working on several more movies, she suffered delayed shock over her husband's death and had a nervous breakdown. During the months of her illness, she was attended to by Dr. Franklyn Thorpe, whom she married on June 29, 1931.

In May 1932, the Thorpes purchased a yacht and sailed to Hawaii. Astor was expecting a baby in August, but gave birth in June in Honolulu. The child, a daughter, was named Marylyn Hauoli Thorpe: her first name combined her parents' names and her middle name is Hawaiian.

When they returned to Southern California, Astor freelanced and gained the pivotal role of Barbara Willis in MGM's *Red Dust* (1932) with Clark Gable and Jean Harlow. In late 1932 though, Astor signed a featured player contract with Warner Bros. Meanwhile, besides spending lavishly, her parents invested in the stock market, which turned out in many instances to be unprofitable. They still lived in Moorcrest, Astor had dubbed it a "white elephant", and she refused to maintain the house. She had to turn to the Motion Picture Relief Fund in 1933 to pay her bills.

In 1933, she appeared as the female lead, Hilda Lake, the niece of the murder victims, in *The Kennel Murder Case*, co-starring with William Powell playing detective Philo Vance. Film critic William K. Everson pronounced it a "masterpiece" in the August 1984 issue of *Films in Review*. Unhappy with her marriage, she took a break from movie making in 1933 and went to New York by herself. While there, enjoying a whirlwind social life, she met the playwright George Kaufman and they had an affair, which she documented in her diary.

Scandals

A legal battle drew press attention on Astor in 1936. Dr. Franklyn Thorpe divorced Astor in 1935 and a custody battle resulted over their four-year-old daughter, Marylyn. Thorpe threatened to use Astor's diary in the proceedings, which told of her affairs with many celebrities, including George S. Kaufman. The diary was never formally offered as evidence during the trial, but Thorpe and his lawyers constantly referred to it, and its notoriety grew. Astor admitted that the diary existed and that she had documented her affair with Kaufman, but maintained that many of the parts that had been referred to had been forgeries, following the theft of the diary from her desk. The diary was deemed inadmissible as a mutilated document, and a judge ordered it be sealed and impounded. Astor claimed it was then destroyed, with her permission.

Astor had just begun work on *Dodsworth* as news of the diary became public. Producer Samuel Goldwyn was urged to fire her, as her contract had a morality clause, but Goldwyn refused and the movie went on to be a hit.

Career continues

Ultimately, the scandals caused no harm to Astor's career, which was actually revitalized because of the custody fight and the huge amount of publicity it generated; *Dodsworth* (1936), with Walter Huston, was released to rave reviews, and the public's acceptance assured the studios that she was still a viable commercial property.



The Hurricane (1937)

In 1937, she returned to the stage in well-received productions of Noel Coward's *Tonight at 8:30*, *The Astonished Heart*, and *Still Life*. She also began performing regularly on radio. Some of her best movies were still to come, including *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1937), John Ford's *The Hurricane* (1937), *Midnight* (1939) and *Brigham Young* (1940).

In John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), Astor was cast in her best known role as scheming temptress Brigid O'Shaughnessy. The film also starred Humphrey Bogart, with Peter Lorre and Sydney Greenstreet.

Another noteworthy performance was her Oscar-winning role as Sandra Kovak, the selfish, self-centered concert pianist, who willingly gives up her child, in *The Great Lie* (1941). George Brent played her intermittent love interest, but the film's star was Bette Davis. Davis wanted Astor cast in the role after watching her screen test and seeing her play Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1. She then recruited Astor to collaborate with her on rewriting the script, which Davis felt was mediocre and needed work to make it more interesting. Astor further followed Davis's advice and sported a brazenly bobbed hairdo for the role.

The soundtrack of the movie during the scenes where she plays the concerto, with violent hand movements on the piano keyboard, was actually dubbed by pianist Max Rabinovitch. Davis deliberately stepped back to allow Astor to shine in her key scenes. As a result of her performance, Astor won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, thanking Bette Davis and Tchaikovsky in her acceptance speech. Astor and Davis became good friends.

Astor was not propelled into the upper echelon of movie stars by these successes, however. She always declined offers of starring in her own right. Not wanting the responsibility of top billing and having to "carry the picture," she preferred the security of being a featured player.

In 1942 she was reunited with Humphrey Bogart and Sydney Greenstreet in John Huston's *Across the Pacific*. Though usually cast in dramatic or melodramatic roles, Astor showed a flair for comedy as The Princess Centimillia in the Preston Sturges film, *The Palm Beach Story* (1942) for Paramount.

In February 1943, Astor's father, Otto Langhanke, died in Cedars of Lebanon Hospital as a result of a heart attack complicated by influenza. His wife and daughter were both at his bedside.



in *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944)

That same year, Astor signed a seven-year contract with MGM, which turned out to be a regrettable mistake. She was kept busy playing what she considered mediocre mother roles. After *Meet Me In St. Louis* (1944), the studio allowed her to make her Broadway debut in *Many Happy Returns* (1945). The play was a miserable failure, but Astor received good reviews.

On loan-out to 20th Century Fox, she played a wealthy widow in *Claudia and David* (1946). She was also loaned to Paramount to play Fritz Haller in *Desert Fury* (1947) in which she played the tough owner of a saloon and casino in a small mining town.

Before Helen Langhanke died of a heart ailment in January 1947, Astor said she sat in the hospital room with her mother, who was delirious and did not know her, and listened quietly as Helen told her all about terrible, selfish Lucile. After her death, Astor said she spent countless hours copying her mother's diary so she could read it and was surprised to learn how much she was hated.

Back at MGM, Astor went on being cast in undistinguished, colorless mother roles. One exception was when she played a prostitute in the film noir *Act of Violence* (1948). The last straw came when she was cast as Marmee March in *Little Women* (1949). Astor found no redemption in playing what she considered another humdrum mother and became despondent. The studio wanted to renew her contract, promising to give her better roles, but she declined the offer.

Middle years

At the same time, Astor's drinking was getting much worse. She admitted to having a problem with alcohol as far back as the 1930s, but it had never interfered with her work schedule or performance. She hit bottom in 1949 and went into a sanitarium for alcoholics.

In 1951, she made a frantic call to her doctor and told him she had taken too many sleeping pills. She was taken to a hospital and the police reported that she had attempted suicide, this being her third overdose in two years, and the story made headline news. She maintained it had been an accident.

That same year, she joined Alcoholics Anonymous and converted to Roman Catholicism. She credited her recovery to a priest, Peter Ciklic, also a practicing psychologist, who encouraged her to write about her experiences as part of therapy. She also separated from her fourth husband, Thomas Wheelock (a stockbroker she had married on Christmas Day 1945), but did not actually divorce him until 1955.

In 1952, she was cast in the leading role of the stage play *The Time of the Cuckoo*, which was later made into the movie *Summertime* (1955), and subsequently toured with it. After the tour, Astor lived in New York for four years and worked in the theatre and on television.

Her TV debut was in *The Missing Years* (1954) for *Kraft Television Theatre*. She acted frequently in TV during the ensuing years and appeared on most of the big shows of the time, including *The United States Steel Hour*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Rawhide*, *Dr. Kildare*, *Burke's Law*, and *Ben Casey*. In 1954, she appeared in the episode "Fearful Hour" of the Gary Merrill NBC series *Justice* in the role of a desperately poor and aging film star who attempts suicide to avoid being exposed as a thief.

She also starred on Broadway in *The Starcross Story* (1954), another failure.

She returned to Southern California in 1956. She then went on a successful theatre tour of *Don Juan in Hell* directed by Agnes Moorehead and co-starring Ricardo Montalban.

Astor's memoir, *My Story: An Autobiography*, was published in 1959, becoming a sensation for its day and a bestseller. It was the result of Father Ciklic urging her to write. Though she spoke of her troubled personal life, her parents, her marriages, the scandals, her battle with alcoholism, and other things about her life, she did not mention the movie industry or her career in any detail. In 1971, another book was published, *A Life on Film*, where she discussed her career. It too became a bestseller. Astor also tried her hand at fiction, writing the novels *The Incredible Charley Carewe* (1960), *The Image of Kate* (1962), *The O'Connors* (1964), *Jahre und Tage* (1964) (a German translation of *The Image of Kate*), *Goodbye, Darling, be Happy* (1965), and *A Place Called Saturday* (1968).

She appeared in several movies during this time, including *A Stranger in My Arms* (1959). She made a comeback in *Return to Peyton Place* (1961) playing Roberta Carter, the domineering mother who insists

the "shocking" novel written by Allison Mackenzie should be banned from the school library, and received good reviews for her performance.

Later life

After taking a trip around the world in 1964, Astor was lured away from her Malibu home, where she was spending time gardening and working on her third novel, to make what she decided would be her final movie appearance.

When she was offered the small role as a key figure in the murder mystery *Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte*, starring her friend Bette Davis, Astor decided it would serve as her swan song in the movie business. After 109 movies during a career spanning 45 years, she turned in her Screen Actors Guild card and retired.

She later moved to Fountain Valley, California, where she lived near her son, Tono del Campo (from her third marriage to Mexican-born film editor Manuel del Campo) and his family, until 1971. That same year, suffering from a chronic heart condition, she then moved to a small cottage on the grounds of the Motion Picture & Television Country House, the industry's retirement facility in Woodland Hills, where she had her own private table when she chose to eat in the resident dining room.

In 1980, she appeared in the television documentary series *Hollywood: A Celebration of the American Silent Film*, produced by Kevin Brownlow, in which she discussed her roles during the silent film period.

Astor died on September 25, 1987, at age 81, of respiratory failure due to pulmonary emphysema while a patient in the hospital in the Motion Picture House complex. She is interred in Holy Cross Cemetery, Culver City.

Mary Astor has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6701 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood. She has been quoted as saying: "There are five stages in the life of an actor: Who's Mary Astor? Get me Mary Astor. Get me a Mary Astor type. Get me a young Mary Astor. Who's Mary Astor?"

Mary Brian

Mary Brian (February 17, 1906 – December 30, 2002) was an American actress and movie star who made the transition from 'silents' to 'talkies'.



Early life

She was born **Louise Byrdie Dantzler** in Corsicana, Texas, the daughter of Taurrence J. Dantzler (December 1869 – March 18, 1906) and Louise B. (August 12, 1876 – April 3, 1973). Her brother was Taurrence J. Dantzler, Jr. (August 9, 1903 – April 6, 1973).

Her father died when she was one month old and the family later moved to Dallas. In the early 1920s, they moved to Long Beach, California. She had intended becoming an illustrator but that was laid aside when at age 16 she was discovered in a local bathing beauty contest. One of the judges was famous motion picture star Esther Ralston (who was to play her mother in the upcoming *Peter Pan* and who became a lifelong friend).

She didn't win the \$25 prize in the contest but Ralston said, "you've got to give the little girl something." So, her prize was to be interviewed by director Herbert Brenon for a role in *Peter Pan*. Brenon was recovering from eye surgery, and she spoke with him in a dimly lit room. "He asked me a few questions, Is that your hair? Out of the blue, he said, I would like to make a test. Even to this day, I will never know why I was that lucky. They had made tests of every ingénue in the business for Wendy. He had decided he would go with an unknown. It would seem more like a fairy tale. It wouldn't seem right if the roles were to be taken by someone they (the audience) knew or was divorced. I got the part. They put me under contract." The studio renamed her Mary Brian.

Discovery

After her showing in the beauty contest, she was given an audition by Paramount Pictures and cast by director Herbert Brenon as Wendy Darling in his silent movie version of J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1924). There she starred with Betty Bronson and Esther Ralston, and the three of them stayed close for the rest of their lives. Ralston described both Bronson and Brian as 'very charming people'.

The studio, who created her stage name for the movie and said she was age 16 instead of 18, because the latter sounded too old for the role, then signed her to a long-term motion picture contract. Brian played Fancy Vanhern, daughter of Percy Marmont, in Brenon's *The Street of Forgotten Men* (1925), which had newcomer Louise Brooks in an un-credited debut role as a moll.

Career rise

Brian was dubbed "The Sweetest Girl in Pictures." On loan-out to MGM, she played a college belle, Mary Abbott, opposite William Haines and Jack Pickford in *Brown of Harvard* (1926). She was named one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars in 1926, along with Mary Astor, Dolores Costello, Joan Crawford, Dolores del Río, Janet Gaynor, and Fay Wray.

During her years at Paramount, Brian appeared in more than 40 movies as the juvenile lead, the ingenue or co-star. She worked with Brenon again in 1926 when she played Isabel in P. C. Wren's *Beau Geste* starring Ronald Colman. That same year she made *Behind the Front* and *Harold Teen*. In 1928, she played ingenue Alice Deane in *Forgotten Faces* opposite Clive Brook, her sacrificing father, with Olga Baclanova as her vixen mother and William Powell as Froggy. Like many of Brian's Paramount movies, *Forgotten Faces*, which was a big box-office hit, did not survive and is presumed lost for all time.

Successful transition to “Talkies”



Mary Brian with Gary Cooper in *The Virginian* (1929)



Mary Brian with James Hall in *Manhattan Tower* (1932)

Her first talkie was *Varsity* (1928), which was filmed with part-sound and talking sequences, opposite Buddy Rogers. After successfully making the transition to sound, she co-starred with Gary Cooper, Walter Huston and Richard Arlen in one of the earliest Western talkies, *The Virginian* (1929), her first all-talkie feature. In it, she played a spirited frontier heroine, schoolmarm Molly Stark Wood, who was the love interest of the Virginian (Cooper).

Brian co-starred in several hits during the 1930s, including her role as Gwen Cavendish in George Cukor's comedy *The Royal Family of Broadway* (1930) with Ina Claire and Fredric March, as herself in Paramount's all-star revue *Paramount on Parade* (1930), as Peggy Grant in Lewis Milestone's comedy *The Front Page* (1931) with Adolphe Menjou and Pat O'Brien.

After her contract with Paramount ended in 1932, Brian freelanced. That same year, she appeared on the vaudeville stage at New York's Palace Theatre. Also in the same year, she starred in *Manhattan Tower*.

Other movie roles include Murial Ross, aka Murial Rossi, in *Shadows of Sing Sing* (1933), in which she received top billing, Gloria Van Dayham in *College Rhythm* (1934), Yvette Lamartine in *Charlie Chan in Paris* (1935), Hope Wolfinger, W. C. Fields's daughter, in *Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1935), Sally

Barnaby in *Spendthrift* (1936) opposite Henry Fonda, and Doris in *Navy Blues* (1937), in which she received top billing.

In 1936, she went to England and made three movies, including *The Amazing Quest of Ernest Bliss* in which she starred opposite Cary Grant, to whom she became engaged at one stage.

Her final film of the 1930s was *Affairs of Cappy Ricks*.

Later career



Mary Brian with Ann Baker in *Meet Corliss Archer*

Brian was absent from the screen from 1937 to 1943, and appeared in only a handful of films thereafter. Her last performance on the silver screen was in *Dragnet* (1947), a B-movie in which she played Anne Hogan opposite Henry Wilcoxon. Over the course of 22 years, Brian had appeared in more than 79 movies.

She toured in the stage comedy *Mary Had a Little...* in the 1940s. During World War II, she entertained servicemen in the South Pacific and in Europe. She spent Christmas of 1944 with the soldiers fighting the Battle of the Bulge.

During the 1950s, Brian had something of a career in television, most notably playing the title character's mother in *Meet Corliss Archer* (1954).

She also dedicated a lot of time to portrait painting in her retirement years.

Personal life

Though she was engaged numerous times and was linked romantically to numerous Hollywood men, including Cary Grant and notorious womaniser Jack Pickford, Brian had only two husbands: magazine illustrator Jon Whitcomb (for six weeks, beginning May 4, 1941) and film editor George Tomasini (from 1947 until his death in 1964). After retiring from the screen for good, she devoted herself to her husband's career; Tomasini worked as film editor for Hitchcock on the classics *Rear Window* (1954) and *Psycho* (1960).

She died of heart failure at age 96 in Del Mar, California. She is interred in the Eternal Love Section, Lot 4134, Space 2, Forest Lawn – Hollywood Hills Cemetery, Los Angeles, overlooking Burbank.

Mary Brian has a star for her contribution to motion pictures on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1559 Vine Street in Hollywood.

Mary Miles Minter

Mary Miles Minter (April 1, 1902 – August 4, 1984) was an American film actress of the silent film era.



Mary Miles Minter circa 1917.

Early life and rise to stardom

Born **Juliet Reilly** in Shreveport, Louisiana, Minter was the daughter of Broadway actress Charlotte Shelby. At the age of five, she accompanied older sister Margaret on an audition only because no baby sitter was available, was noticed by the director and given her first part. After this she was frequently employed, widely noted for both her talent and visual appeal. In 1912, to avoid child labour laws in Chicago while her 10 year-old daughter was appearing in a play, Shelby obtained the birth certificate of a cousin and changed Juliet's name to Mary Miles Minter. She made her first feature film in 1915 at the age of 13, after which her career steadily grew.

Minter specialised in playing demure young women. With her photogenic "registration", even features, "periwinkle blue eyes" and curly hair, she emulated and later rivaled Mary Pickford.

Her first film for director William Desmond Taylor was *Anne of Green Gables* in 1919. The picture was well-received and Taylor actively promoted Minter as a star. A romantic relationship developed between them, which she later described as "a beautiful white flame." However, according to Minter (who had grown up fatherless), Taylor had reservations from the outset and later curtailed the romance, citing the thirty-year difference in their ages.

Scandal

In 1922, Taylor was murdered in his home. In a 1970 interview during which she described Taylor as her "mate," Minter recalled how she broke down and sobbed when she was allowed to view (and touch) the director's body in a morgue.

The ensuing scandal, coming in the wake of the Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle murder trial, was the subject of widespread media speculation and embellishment. Newspapers reported that coded love letters written by Minter had been found in his bungalow after his death (these were later shown to have been written three years earlier, in 1919). Minter was at the height of her success, having starred in more than 50 films and sensationalistic newspaper revelations of the twenty-year-old film star's association with a forty-nine-year-old murdered director caused rolling scandals.

There were several suspects (including her mother Charlotte Shelby) in the long investigation of Taylor's murder. In 1937, Minter publicly announced to the *Los Angeles Examiner* newspaper, "Now I demand that I either be prosecuted for the murder committed fifteen years ago, or exonerated completely. If the District Attorney has any evidence, he should prosecute. If not, then I should be exonerated... Shadows have been cast upon my reputation".

Later life

In late 1922, several months following Taylor's death, Minter became romantically involved for a time with then-Los Angeles news correspondent and film critic Louis Sherwin, who had at one time been married to actress Maude Fealy. Minter made four more films for Paramount, with her last film, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, being released in 1923. When the studio did not renew her contract, she received many other offers but declined them all, saying she had never been happy as an actress. In 1925, she sued her mother for an accounting of the money Shelby had received for her during her screen career. The case was settled out of court, with the settlement being signed by Minter and Shelby at the American Consulate in Paris, France, on January 24, 1927.

Minter commented she was content to live without her Hollywood career. She reconciled fully with her mother and proclaimed her love for Taylor throughout her long life. Minter had invested in Los Angeles real estate and seems to have lived in relative comfort and prosperity, although she was later the victim of several robberies during the 1970s and early 1980s. Police described her as a frail old woman and people were often shocked to learn she had once been a famous movie star. She died in 1984 from a stroke in Santa Monica.

For her contributions to the motion picture industry, Mary Miles Minter has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1724 Vine Street.

Film legacy

By 1999, all prints of her film *Anne of Green Gables* were believed to have been lost. A print of her 1919 film, *The Ghost of Rosy Taylor* surfaced in New Zealand in the 1990s. This film depicted her as an orphaned French girl buffeted from job to job and escaping from a workhouse prison. Other known surviving films include *Youth's Endearing Charm* (1916), *A Dream or Two Ago* (1916), *Innocence of Lizette* (1916), *The Eyes of Julia Deep* (1918), *Nurse Marjorie* (1920), *A Cumberland Romance* (1920) and *The Little Clown* (1921).

Mary Philbin

Mary Philbin (July 16, 1903 – May 7, 1993) was a notable film actress of the silent film era. Philbin is probably best remembered for playing the roles of Christine Daaé in the 1925 film *The Phantom of the Opera* opposite screen legend Lon Chaney and Dea in *The Man Who Laughs*. Both of these roles cast her as the beauty in a Beauty and the Beast-type story.



Mini Biography

Mary Philbin's life should be a lesson to domineering parents. Mary was born on July 16, 1903, in Chicago, Illinois, to John Philbin and his first wife and namesake, Mary. The child was regarded as a little beauty from an early age and her mother was exceedingly proud of her and loved to show her off. However, unlike her gregarious mother (who many regarded as controlling and domineering, to the point of imprinting her strict religious beliefs on the child), Mary took after her shy, quiet and reserved father, whom she adored. Many of her contemporaries remarked how she didn't seem to belong to the current age; her personality was a throwback to the 19th century with her mannerisms and religious, quiet and very gentle nature. Being an only child, Mary grew up quite spoiled by her mother. Her father would take her often to see the plays at local theaters and even, on rare occasion, to see an opera at the Chicago Opera House. She fell in love with the stage immediately and, once home, would re-enact what she saw to her dolls--performing the leading heroine roles. She decided at an early age that she wanted a career in the theater. She took up classical dancing (ballet and waltz) and was quite adept at playing the pipe organ and piano (in her later years she kept her family's pipe organ close at hand), although much to her chagrin, she could not sing. However, she did not train in an acting school and this would ultimately impact on her later career.



Mary's early life was relatively uneventful; her mother's strong nature created friction between her parents and she became even more reserved and quite shy in public when meeting new people. The only real friend she had at that age (who would be her lifelong friend and even colleague in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925)) was Carla Laemmle (aka Rebecca Laemmle), the daughter of Joseph Laemmle, brother of Universal Studios mogul Carl Laemmle. Through her friend's uncle Mary became interested in films and put her stage career on hold. Upon seeing her first "Nickelodeon", she was bitten by the film bug and eagerly awaited any new ones that came out. She was particularly fond of the films of Erich von Stroheim, so much so that at the age of 16, when she heard that the director was making his new film *Blind Husbands* (1919) and a contest was set up to search for talent for the film, Mary tried to sign up. At first she could not find the right photograph worthy of submission, but her mother had taken a picture and submitted it and was allowed to join the contest. The contest was held in Chicago at the Elks Club and was sponsored by her church, with Von Stroheim himself as the judge. The Teutonic director was smitten with her beauty and her eagerness to behave and speak well, and gave her the leading role in one of his films. When finding out she was to move to Los Angeles to make the film, Mary at first had reservations and (as always) consulted her parents. Her parents refused until they found out their old family friends, the Laemmles, were moving out to Los Angeles as well, and they gave consent for Mary to go but only with her parents as her chaperones (due to their fear that the "sheiks" of Los Angeles would corrupt Mary's moral character).



Once in Los Angeles, Mary was under watch all the time by her parents (in particular her mother) and, when working, by her new boss, Carl Laemmle. When arriving at the studio, she found out that she had been replaced in the leading role in "Blind Husbands". Mary was deeply hurt at the time and felt cheated, and was considering going home had it not been for her friend Rebecca (whom was now known as Carla) who recommended her to her uncle, the owner of Universal City, Carl Laemmle, and the man in charge of production, Irving Thalberg. Although Carl Laemmle had met Mary some time earlier and always regarded her as an "angelic, sweet, quiet" young lady, he was none too impressed with her at the time to consider her for a contract, owing mostly to her moralistic and reserved disposition. Thalberg held the same reservations about her. However, after being persuaded by Mary's family and Carla, Carl caved and gave 17-year-old Mary her first big part: "Talitby Millicuddy", the leading lady, in the melodrama *The Blazing Trail* (1921), directed by Robert Thornby. Mary caught on in films very quickly and was considered by the public, initially at least, in the same league as her bigger contemporaries – Mary Pickford, Florence Lawrence, Mae Marsh and Lillian Gish, one of those "child-woman" actresses particularly noted for her subtle but extraordinary ethereal Irish beauty.

After the moderate success of "*The Blazing Trail*" she was cast in *Danger Ahead* (1921) in the role of Tressie Harlow; the one-reel comedy *Twelve Hours to Live* (1921); the western *Red Courage* (1921) as Eliza Fay, and *Sure Fire* (1921) in an extra part (her earliest known surviving film); and *False Kisses* (1921) as Mary. In all, she made six films in 1921. After seeing her work in "*False Kisses*" and in particular "*Danger Ahead*"; Erich von Stroheim cast Mary for his next film, which would become the most expensive (to that date) production ever for Universal City (the costs rising up to a million dollars) – the part of the crippled girl (an extra part) in *Foolish Wives* (1922). Mary can be seen in the film as the little girl on crutches with her back turned, and you only quickly get a darkened glimpse of her face through her curly ringlets. Although her role in the film was just a bit part, Mary relished being under Von Stroheim's tutelage and it was from him, as she always said, she learned about "true" acting in comparison to stage acting. It has always been said of Mary Philbin that when the director was really good (such as von Stroheim, Paul Leni, William Beaudine), people noticed she could be equally as good an actress as her colleagues. However, in the hands less talented directors (such as Rupert Julian', – who would partly direct her later in *Merry-Go-Round* (1923) and "*The Phantom of the Opera*"--her lack of acting training became a real handicap for her (this is clearly evident in some of her later films).



Mary began to get more notice from Carl Laemmle and Irving Thalberg, after Erich von Stroheim's high recommendation of her (and of course the public's approval), and after a minor film, *The Trooper* (1922)_ (v), she was given the role of "Ruth" in *Human Hearts* (1922). Mary began to get even further

recognition and it was around this time that her face always was featured on movie magazines as the 'Cover' Girl. But Mary's personal life was darkened by her father's divorce and remarriage to Alice Mead. Mary was shattered by the event, and as a result became even closer to her mother (her biggest mistake), but nevertheless was very loving to her new stepmother and continued to adore her father.

Mary made two more films before she received her first big break as the heroine "Agnes Urban", in von Stroheim's "The Merry-Go-Round" in 1923. The casting for this film was impeccable and many of its stars would later repeat many films with Mary afterward – in particular her leading man, Norman Kerry. He always had a crush on Mary and flirted with her many times on the set, although von Stroheim, Mary's mother and father (who always were on the set with her; her stepmother stayed at home) and even Mary herself kept him from getting too carried away. Mary said in her later years how deep down she always had a great crush on Norman Kerry and considered him "a very handsome, dashing man". Everything was going well in the production until it came to a standstill for the most unusual and even hilarious reason. Erich von Stroheim was known to be a perfectionist in his work, so much so that in the plot of this film (set in the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the time of 'Emperor Franz Josef') he insisted that some of the actors wear underwear embroidered with the Imperial Austrian Royal Family insignia – infuriating Carl Laemmle. After an intense argument with Laemmle the wildly extravagant director was dropped from the picture. The cast was stunned and the two most affected were Wallace Beery (who was originally cast as Agnes' father) and Mary Philbin. Wallace, infuriated with Carl Laemmle's decision walked out, as did many others--even Mary considered it. To clean up the mess quickly, Carl hired Universal actor Rupert Julian to direct (who previously had directed and starred in *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin* (1918) with Lon Chaney). Mary, at first, refused until Carl insisted that Julian would be just as good a director as von Stroheim. Not having met or worked with Julian before, she decided to stay and Cesare Gravina (a favorite actor of von Stroheim) was re-cast in Beery's role. However, it became clearly evident that Julian was a novice compared to von Stroheim, although he reportedly considered himself equal to, if not better than, von Stroheim in directorial skills. Much of the original footage was cut or re-filmed upon its release, "The Merry-Go-Round" launched Mary as an "official" Hollywood star.



Although not as popular as her contemporaries, Mary graced many more magazine covers and was the feature girl for various products – even the Victrola Recording Company. During this time, Mary met the love of her life, Universal Studio executive/producer Paul Kohner – through the Laemmles. Paul Kohner was only a year older than Mary and born in Teplitz-Schoenau, Austria-Hungary (now Teplice, Czech Republic). They were immediately smitten with each other – but due to Mary's parents' religion (Roman Catholicism) and the fact that Paul was a Jew – they kept their relationship, in the early years, secret as much as possible. They exchanged love letters to each other (which both of them kept till their deaths).

Mary's film career took off with "Where Is This West?"; "The Age of Desire"; "The Temple of Venus"; "The Thrill Chaser"; among others with Paul Kohner sometimes as the producer (affording her more time to be with him, under the protection from her parents observance). But it wasn't until 1924, after she made good in the role of Marianne in *The Rose of Paris* (1924) that Mary was to be cast in her next, most famous and best-remembered film role of her entire career.

In 1924, Carl Laemmle was searching among the elite list of Hollywood starlets (among those listed were Lillian Gish, Madge Bellamy, Betty Bronson, Patsy Ruth Miller, Mildred Davis) for the role of the young Swedish soprano Christine Daaé in the film adaption of Gaston Leroux's novella "Le Fantôme de l'Opéra" (*The Phantom of the Opera*) starring in the leading role of Erik (the Opera Ghost/Phantom of the Opera) was one of Hollywood's best actors – Lon Chaney, fresh from his success in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and, much to the concern of the cast and crew, the director hired for the picture was the temper-mental Rupert Julian. Julian remembered Mary from "The Merry-Go-Round" (he also remembered Norman Kerry and hired him for role of Viscount Raoul de Chagny). Mary was cast in the key role of Christine, the chance of a lifetime. But the production was one of the most difficult for the cast to endure. Although Mary was working alongside of many of her former colleagues and friends (Norman Kerry, Cesare Gravina, John St. Polis, and Carla Laemmle), she had never met Lon Chaney personally before and, in keeping with her nature, was initially very shy and nervous around him.



During the filming Chaney and Julian exchanged heated arguments. Charles Van Enger, the main cameraman for the film, commented on how they "just hated each other" and how Julian was obsessed with Mary; adjusting her clothes, wigs, even the padding on her legs and chest. Mary put up with it – because of not only was her mother on the set most of the time, but Julian's wife Elsie Wilson was an old friend of Mary's. Upon seeing Julian's conduct- Elsie took over Mary's wardrobe and makeup for the film. On the Phantom set Mary seldom worked with Chaney alone, most of the time it was under Julian's supervision – but due to Chaney and his arguments – Chaney would direct his own scenes including several scenes with Mary. Her big test with Chaney came for the climactic unmasking scene – there was a shot of Mary on the floor (Chaney not in view) screaming after her character "Christine"

unmasks the Phantom and is supposed to cry. Julian had gone through several takes of the scene with Mary; although this was not to Mary's fault – as Mary could cry at will and did not need the use of glycerin or onions (which was used for making "cold crying" in films at that time, or causing one to cry on cue), but all takes failed to satisfy Julian. This angered the cast and crew and Julian called it a day and they shut down early. But Lon Chaney remained behind and asked Mary and the crew to stay and reshoot the scene themselves. Given Chaney's clout, they all agreed.

Mary set herself up for the scene – with Charles van Enger rolling the film (ordered not to stop no matter what happens or get involved – by Chaney) and Chaney just off-camera preparing for the scene. What Mary did not expect was Lon Chaney turning on her and the barrage of insults he launched at her. Mary was deeply hurt, but too proud to cry and was on the verge of leaving to report him to Carl Laemmle. Then Chaney rose his hand to strike her and Mary fell back screaming, remembering "the wild rage in his eyes", her hand to her face and then the tears flowed. Once it was caught on film – Chaney stopped and then began to comfort Mary and told her what he was really up to and he really meant none of those terrible things. It was then that Mary respected Chaney and grew to even adore him as much as she did Erich Von Stroheim, so much so, Chaney would always be on the set when Julian was directing Mary in future scenes, even if he was not in it. The Phantom of the Opera (1925) was a box-office hit and the studio's biggest money maker of the decade, launching not only Chaney to stardom but Mary as well. Mary attended the premiere with her father and he stated he was so proud of his daughter. After that producers/directors clamored for Mary to be in their films. Her next big role was the dual part of Stella Marris/Unity Blake in a remake of Mary Pickford's "Stella Marris". The film was received with moderate success with Mary being complimented on her ability to change from the beautiful Stella into the hideous outcast Unity Blake so well that many didn't recognize her. During this time, Mary and Paul were still seeing each other and their relationship became so serious Paul proposed marriage to Mary in May, 1926. Ecstatic, Mary accepted but they still had to keep their engagement secret for a while – till she felt it was safe to tell her family. During the time, Mary was filming "The Man who Laughs" in the role of the blind girl, Dea. Behind the scenes was Paul, acting as production supervisor/interpreter for Conrad Veidt (who was cast in the leading role of Gwynplaine) to the crew, since at the time he spoke no English.



On opening night, the film was hailed as a box-office success and Mary was praised for her role as Dea. It was then that Mary announced her engagement to Paul. But her family was outraged at the news and called a meeting to meet Paul – foreshadowing what was to come, and the worst personal tragedy of Mary's life. At the meeting, Mary's parents and her step-mother asked Paul many questions and everything was going reasonably well – until Mary's father came to the subject of religion and Paul admitted then he was a staunch Jew. Although Mary's step-mother approved of Paul and her father liked him (Paul was a quiet but respectable man), Mary's mother would have none of it and convinced her ex-husband that he would only convince Mary to convert to Judaism and soon a heated fight started up between Mary's parents and Paul. Mary was in tears during this and insisted that, although she wanted to marry Paul, she would never abandon her faith and Paul understood that and had no intention of even converting her. But the pleas were futile; Mary was given an ultimatum: Marry Paul and she would be disowned. Mary was always close to her family, no matter what the trouble was, but this was one time where Mary seriously considered defying her family. But in the end, she gave Paul back the ring and told him she could not marry him, but that she still loved him. Paul was devastated and Mary so much so that she would never marry.

At the dawn of talkies, Mary's film career nose-dived along with her personal life. Because of the inadequacy of early recording equipment – Mary's "lovely, girlie voice" recorded as high pitched and squeaky. She did re-film her most famous role in "The Phantom of the Opera" with Norman Kerry (intercut with footage of the 1924/5 version with Chaney, as Chaney was working on "Thunder" at the time and was now working for MGM). In retrospect, all of her post-Phantom films were mediocre. She received good notices in D.W. Griffith's otherwise pathetic Drums of Love (1928). Her final film (a talkie) was After the Fog (1929) in the role of Faith Barker. Mary decided to abandon her film career and took up a life of self-enforced celibacy, becoming a virtual recluse in her father's home. Mary virtually vanished off the face of the earth and Hollywood forgot her. But it wasn't until the 1960s, that it was discovered that Mary was still alive, living at the time in the very same home she had in the 1920's (her parents and step-mother had deceased). It was remarked at how youthful and beautiful she still looked even though she was in her 60's and how her voice still had that youthful girlish quality. She had been a faithful member of her parents' church and only went out to visit friends and family, shop, and go to church. During that time, she admitted that she refused interviews and photo shoots, although she gladly replied to her fans and even sent them autographs. But around the late 1970s – Mary began experiencing the first symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease. In 1988, Mary made her first public appearance since 1931 at a memorial service for Rudolph Valentino.

Another huge blow came when it was announced Paul Kohner passed away. When Mary was told Paul had kept the letters she had sent him, tucked away in the top drawer of his desk locked away from his family – Mary began to cry and then revealed the letters Paul had sent to her and even a few recent ones after the "family incident". After that Mary's memory lapses grew worse, and her old friend Carla Laemmle came to help her. At her insistence – Mary made two more public appearances – the first at the opening night of Andrew Lloyd Webber's stage extravaganza "The Phantom of the Opera" in downtown Los Angeles at the Ahamasohn Theatre, starring Michael Crawford. And the second to help promote Philip Riley's "The Phantom of the Opera." After that – Mary was never seen in public again. On May 7, 1993 it was announced that Mary had died of complications from pneumonia. The original Christine Daae was dead at age 91.

Trade Mark

Her role in the 1924/5/9/30 silent film version of "The Phantom of the Opera" starring Lon Chaney

Trivia

Didn't make any appearances after her film career, except at Rudolph Valentino's memorial and at the Los Angeles premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" starring Michael Crawford.

According to film historian Scott MacQueen, Mary was engaged in the late 1920s to Paul Kohner, an associate of the Laemmle "crew" and later assistant producer of Philbin movies such as *The Man Who Laughs* (1928). Mary broke off the engagement at the request of her parents, as she was Irish Catholic and Paul was a Czech Jew. While Paul went on to enjoy a successful marriage and career as a Hollywood agent, Mary was out of pictures within a few years. Sadly, she never married and spent much of her life looking after her parents, living with them in a house on Fairfax Avenue in Hollywood that Mary had bought with her film earnings. However, they never forgot each other. Shortly after Paul's death in 1988, workers cleaning out his office at his agency found Mary's love letters close at hand in his desk, more than 60 years, later. Similarly, Philbin sobbed at the news of Kohner's death in a 1989 interview.

WAMPAS Baby Star of 1922.

Studied classical dancing as a young girl before she was discovered.

Although she never married, due to the fact she lost the love of her life, Paul Kohner; she did admit in her later years to having crushes on some of her colleagues – namely Norman Kerry and Rudolph Valentino. She also admitted that she adored Lon Chaney (her co-star in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925)) and Erich von Stroheim.

Although she couldn't sing – much to her chagrin – she could play the piano and pipe organ with expertise. In fact, her favorite hobbies were acting, dancing, and music (which was her personal favorite).

Of Irish lineage from both her parents

Originally – she intended to become a stage actress.

She was a very religious person in real life, and after her career ended – she never stopped attending the church she was raised in.

Career

Born in Chicago, Illinois into a middle-class Irish American Catholic family, she began her acting career after winning a beauty contest sponsored by Universal Pictures.

Mary Philbin made her screen debut in 1921 and during the 1920s she became a highly successful film actress and starred in a number of high profile films, most notably in D. W. Griffith's 1928 film *Drums of Love*.

In 1922 Philbin was awarded at the first annual WAMPAS Baby Stars awards, a promotional campaign sponsored by the Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers in the United States, which honored thirteen young women each year whom they believed to be on the threshold of movie stardom.



Like so many publicly acclaimed silent film actors and actresses however, Philbin was unable to continue a successful acting career during the talkie era of the early 1930s.

Philbin played a few parts during the early talkie era and most notably dubbed her own voice when *The Phantom of the Opera* was given sound and rereleased.

Philbin retired from the screen in the early 1930s and devoted her life to caring for her aging parents. She was engaged in 1927 to Universal Studio executive, Paul Kohner; but due to her parents dissuasion from the union (as she was Catholic and he was a staunch Czech Jew), she called off the engagement.

She never married and rarely made public appearances. One rare public appearance by Philbin occurred in her later years at the Los Angeles opening of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Mary Philbin died of pneumonia, aged 89, in Huntington Beach, California in 1993 and was buried at the Calvary Cemetery in Los Angeles, California.

Mary Pickford

Mary Pickford (April 8, 1892 – May 29, 1979) was a Canadian-born motion picture actress, co-founder of the film studio United Artists and one of the original 36 founders of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Known as "America's Sweetheart," "Little Mary" and "The girl with the curls," she was one of the Canadian pioneers in early Hollywood and a significant figure in the development of film acting.



Portrait photograph, 1914

Because her international fame was triggered by moving images, she is a watershed figure in the history of modern celebrity. And as one of silent film's most important performers and producers, her contract demands were central to shaping the Hollywood industry. In consideration of her contributions to American cinema, the American Film Institute named Pickford 24th among the greatest female stars of all time.

Early life

Mary Pickford was born **Gladys Marie Smith** in Toronto, Ontario. Her father, John Charles Smith, was the son of English Methodist immigrants, and worked a variety of odd jobs. Her mother, Charlotte Hennessy, was Irish Catholic. Mary had two younger siblings, Jack and Lottie Pickford, who would also become actors. To please the relatives, Pickford's mother baptized her in both the Methodist and Catholic churches (and used the opportunity to change her middle name to "Mary"). She was raised Roman Catholic after her alcoholic father left his family in 1895. He died three years later of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Hennessy, who had worked as a seamstress throughout the separation, began taking in boarders. Through one of these lodgers, the seven-year-old Pickford won a big part at Toronto's Princess Theatre in a stock company production of *The Silver King*. She subsequently acted in many melodramas with the Valentine Company in Toronto, capped by the starring role of Little Eva in their production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the most popular play of the 19th century.

Career

Early years



Mary Pickford, 1914

By the early 1900s, acting had become a family enterprise. Pickford, her mother and two younger siblings toured the United States by rail in third-rate companies and plays. After six impoverished years, Pickford allowed one more summer to land a leading role on Broadway, planning to quit acting if she failed. In 1906 *Mary*, *Lottie* and *Jack* supported the great Irish American singer Chauncey Olcott on Broadway in the play *Edmund Burke*. Mary finally landed a supporting role in a 1907 Broadway play, *The Warrens of Virginia*. The play was written by William C. deMille, whose brother, the then-unknown Cecil B. DeMille, also appeared in the cast. David Belasco, the producer of the play, insisted that Gladys Smith assume the stage name **Mary Pickford**. After completing the Broadway run and touring the play, however, Pickford was once again out of work.

On April 19, 1909, the Biograph Company director D. W. Griffith screen-tested her at the company's New York studio for a role in the nickelodeon film *Pippa Passes*. The role went to someone else but Griffith was immediately taken with Pickford. She quickly grasped that movie acting was simpler than the stylized stage acting of the day.

Most Biograph actors earned \$5 a day but, after Pickford's single day in the studio, Griffith agreed to pay her \$10 a day against a guarantee of \$40 a week. Pickford, like all actors at Biograph, played both bit parts and leading roles, playing mothers, ingenues, spurned women, spitfires, slaves, native Americans, and a prostitute. As Pickford said of her success at Biograph: "I played scrubwomen and secretaries and women of all nationalities... I decided that if I could get into as many pictures as possible, I'd become known, and there would be a demand for my work." Pickford appeared in 51 films in 1909 — almost one a week. She also introduced her friend Florence La Badie to D. W. Griffith, which launched La Badie's successful film acting career.

In January 1910, Pickford traveled with a Biograph crew to Los Angeles. Many other companies wintered on the West Coast, escaping the weak light and short days that hampered winter shooting in the East. Pickford added to her 1909 Biographs (*Sweet and Twenty*, *They Would Elope*, and *To Save Her*

Soul, to name a few) with films from California. Actors were not listed in the credits in Griffith's company. Audiences nonetheless noticed and identified Pickford within weeks of her first film appearance. Exhibitors in turn capitalized on her popularity by advertising on sandwich boards that a film featuring "The Girl with the Golden Curls," "Blondilocks" or "The Biograph Girl" was inside. Pickford left Biograph in December 1910 and spent 1911 starring in films at Carl Laemmle's Independent Moving Pictures Company (IMP). IMP was absorbed into Universal Pictures in 1912, along with Majestic. Unhappy with their creative standards, she returned to work with Griffith in 1912. Some of her best performances were in films such as *Friends*, *The Mender of Nets*, *Just Like a Woman*, and *The Female of the Species*. That year Pickford also introduced Dorothy and Lillian Gish (both friends from her days touring melodrama) to Griffith.¹¹⁵ Both became major silent stars, in comedy and tragedy respectively.

Pickford made her last Biograph picture, *The New York Hat*, in late 1912 and returned to Broadway in the David Belasco production of *A Good Little Devil*. The experience was the major turning point in her career. Pickford, who had always hoped to conquer the Broadway stage, discovered how deeply she missed film acting.



Mary Pickford, 1916

In 1913, she decided to work exclusively in film. In 1912, Adolph Zukor had formed Famous Players in Famous Plays – later Famous Players-Lasky and then Paramount Pictures – one of the first American feature film companies. Pickford left the stage to join his roster of stars. Zukor believed film's potential lay in recording theatrical players in replicas of their most famous stage roles and productions. Zukor first filmed Pickford in a silent version of *A Good Little Devil*. The film, produced in 1913, showed the play's Broadway actors reciting every line of dialogue, resulting in a stiff film that Pickford later called "one of the worst I ever made...it was deadly." Zukor agreed; he held the film back from distribution for a year.

Pickford's work in material written for the camera by that time had attracted a strong following. Comedy-dramas like *In the Bishop's Carriage* (1913), *Caprice* (1913), and especially *Hearts Adrift* (1914) made her irresistible to moviegoers. *Hearts Adrift* was so popular that Pickford asked for the first of her many publicized pay raises based on the profits and reviews. The film also marked the first time Pickford's name was put above the title on movie marquees. *Tess of the Storm Country* was released five

weeks later. Brownlow observes that the movie “sent her career into orbit and made her the most popular actress in America, if not the world.”

Her appeal was summed up two years later by the February 1916 issue of *Photoplay* as “luminous tenderness in a steel band of gutter ferocity”.¹²⁶ Only Charlie Chaplin—who reportedly slightly surpassed Pickford's popularity in 1916—had a similarly spellbinding pull with critics and the audience. Each enjoyed a level of fame far exceeding that of other actors.

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Pickford was believed to be the most famous woman in the world, or, as a silent-film journalist described her, “the best known woman who has ever lived, the woman who was known to more people and loved by more people than any other woman that has been in all history.” Pickford's closest female rival at this time at the box office and with the public was 31-year-old Marguerite Clark. She also came from stage acting and had a girlish/whimsical charm to which audiences responded.

Stardom



Mary Pickford, 1920

Throughout her career, Pickford starred in 52 features. In 1916, Pickford signed a new contract with Zukor that granted her full authority over production of the films in which she starred, and a record-breaking salary of \$500 a week. Occasionally, she played a child, in films like *The Poor Little Rich Girl* (1917), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1917), and *Daddy-Long-Legs* (1919). Pickford's fans were devoted to these “Little Girl” roles, but they were not typical of her career.

In August 1918, Pickford's contract expired and when refusing Zukor's terms for a renewal, she was offered \$250,000 to leave the motion picture business. Pickford turned him down and went to First National Pictures, which agreed to her terms.

In 1919, Pickford — along with D.W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, and Douglas Fairbanks — formed the independent film production company United Artists. Through United Artists, Pickford continued to produce and perform in her own movies; she could also distribute them the way she chose.

In 1920, Pickford's film *Pollyanna* grossed around \$1,100,000. The following year, Pickford's film *Little Lord Fauntleroy* would also be a success, and in 1923, *Rosita* grossed over \$1,000,000 as well. In this

period, Pickford also made *Sparrows* (1926), which blended the Dickensian with newly minted German expressionist style, and the romantic comedy *My Best Girl* (1927).



A lobby card for the film *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, 1921

The arrival of sound was her undoing. Pickford appears to have underestimated the value of adding sound to movies. She said, "Adding sound to movies would be like putting lipstick on the Venus de Milo". She played a reckless socialite in *Coquette* (1929), a role where she no longer had her famous ringlets, but rather a 1920s bob; Pickford had cut her hair in the wake of her mother's death in 1928. Fans were shocked at the transformation. Pickford's hair had become a symbol of female virtue, and cutting it was front-page news in *The New York Times* and other papers. *Coquette* was a success and won her an Academy Award for Best Actress, but the public failed to respond to her in the more sophisticated roles.

Like most movie stars of the silent era, Pickford found her career fading as talkies became more popular among audiences. Her next film, *The Taming of The Shrew*, was a disaster at the box office. In her late thirties, Pickford was unable to play the children, teenage spitfires and feisty young women so adored by her fans, nor could she play the soignée heroines of early sound.

In 1933, Pickford underwent a Technicolor screen test for an animated/live action film version of *Alice in Wonderland*, but Walt Disney discarded the project when Paramount released its own version of the book. Only one Technicolor "still" of her screen test still exists.

Pickford retired from acting in 1933. She continued to produce films for others, including *Sleep, My Love* (1948) with Claudette Colbert and *Love Happy* (1949) with the Marx Brothers.

The film industry



Mary Pickford giving President Herbert Hoover a ticket for a film industry benefit for the unemployed, 1931

Pickford used her stature in the movie industry to promote a variety of causes. During World War I, she promoted the sale of Liberty Bonds, through an exhausting series of fund-raising speeches that kicked off in Washington, D.C., where she sold bonds alongside Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Theda Bara, and Marie Dressler. Five days later she spoke on Wall Street to an estimated 50,000 people. Though Canadian-born, she was a powerful symbol of Americana, kissing the American flag for cameras and auctioning one of her world-famous curls for \$15,000. In a single speech in Chicago she sold an estimated five million dollars' worth of bonds. She was christened the U.S. Navy's official "Little Sister"; the Army named two cannons after her and made her an honorary colonel.

At the end of World War I, Pickford conceived of the Motion Picture Relief Fund, an organization to help financially needy actors. Leftover funds from her work selling Liberty Bonds were put toward its creation, and in 1921, the Motion Picture Relief Fund (MPRF) was officially incorporated, with Joseph Schenck voted its first president and Mary Pickford as its vice president. In 1932, Pickford spearheaded the "Payroll Pledge Program," a payroll-deduction plan for studio workers who gave one half of one percent of their earnings to the MPRF. As a result, in 1940 the Fund was able to purchase the land and build the Motion Picture Country House and Hospital.

But Pickford's most profound influence (beyond her acting) was to help reshape the film industry itself. When she entered features, Hollywood believed that the movies' future lay in reproducing Broadway plays for a mass audience. Pickford, who entered feature film with two Broadway credits but a far greater following among fans of nickelodeon flickers, became the world's most popular actress in a matter of months. In response to her popularity, Hollywood rethought its vision of features as "canned theatre," and focused instead on actors and material that were uniquely suited to film, not stage performances.

An astute businesswoman, Pickford became her own producer within three years of her start in features. According to her Foundation, "she oversaw every aspect of the making of her films, from hiring talent and crew to overseeing the script, the shooting, the editing, to the final release and promotion of each project." Pickford first demanded (and received) these powers in 1916, when she was under contract to Adolph Zukor's Famous Players In Famous Plays (later Paramount). He also acquiesced to her refusal to participate in block-booking, the widespread practice of forcing an exhibitor to show a bad film of the studio's choosing in order to also show a Pickford film. In 1916, Pickford's films were distributed, singly, through a special distribution unit called Artcraft.



Mary Pickford War Funds bungalow, 1943

In 1919, she increased her power by co-founding United Artists (UA) with Charlie Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, and her soon-to-be husband, Douglas Fairbanks. Before UA's creation, Hollywood studios were vertically integrated, not only producing films but forming chains of theaters. Distributors (also part of the studios) then arranged for company productions to be shown in the company's movie venues. Filmmakers relied on the studios for bookings; in return they put up with what many considered creative interference. United Artists broke from this tradition. It was solely a distribution company, offering

independent film producers access to its own screens as well as the rental of temporarily unbooked cinemas owned by other companies. Pickford and Fairbanks produced and shot their films after 1920 at the jointly owned Pickford-Fairbanks studio on Santa Monica Boulevard. The producers who signed with UA were true independents, producing, creating and controlling their work to an unprecedented degree. As a co-founder, as well as the producer and star of her own films, Pickford became the most powerful woman who has ever worked in Hollywood. By 1930, Pickford's career as an actress had greatly faded.

When she retired from acting in 1933, Pickford continued to produce films for United Artists, and she and Chaplin remained partners in the company for decades. Chaplin left the company in 1955, and Pickford followed suit in 1956, selling her remaining shares for three million dollars.

Personal life



Mary Pickford, 1921

Pickford was married three times. She married Owen Moore (1886–1939), an Irish-born silent film actor, on January 7, 1911. It is believed she became pregnant by Moore in the early 1910s and had a miscarriage or an abortion. Some accounts suggest this led to her inability to have children.¹²⁵ The couple had numerous marital problems, notably Moore's alcoholism, insecurity about living in the shadow of Pickford's fame, and bouts of domestic violence. The failure of her pregnancy may have exacerbated Moore's drinking problem. The couple lived apart for several years.

Pickford became secretly involved in a relationship with Douglas Fairbanks. They toured the US together in 1918 to promote Liberty Bond sales for the World War I effort. Pickford divorced Moore on March 2, 1920, and married Fairbanks on March 28 of the same year. They went to Europe for their honeymoon; fans in London caused a riot trying to get to her. A similar incident occurred in Paris. The couple's triumphant return to Hollywood was witnessed by vast crowds who turned out to hail them at railway stations across the United States.

The Mark of Zorro (1920) and a series of other swashbucklers gave the popular Fairbanks a more romantic, heroic image. Pickford continued to epitomize the virtuous but fiery girl next door. Even at private parties people instinctively stood up when Pickford entered a room; she and her husband were often referred to as "Hollywood royalty." Their international reputations were broad. Foreign heads of

state and dignitaries who visited the White House often asked if they could also visit Pickfair, the couple's mansion in Beverly Hills.

Dinners at Pickfair included a number of notable guests. Charlie Chaplin, Fairbanks' best friend, was often present. Other guests included George Bernard Shaw, Albert Einstein, Elinor Glyn, Helen Keller, H. G. Wells, Lord Mountbatten, Fritz Kreisler, Amelia Earhart, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Noel Coward, Max Reinhardt, Baron Nishi, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Austen Chamberlain, Sir Harry Lauder, and the Indian spiritual teacher Meher Baba. The public nature of Pickford's second marriage strained it to the breaking point. Both she and Fairbanks had little time off from producing and acting in their films. They were also constantly on display as America's unofficial ambassadors to the world, leading parades, cutting ribbons, and making speeches.

When their film careers both began to founder at the end of the silent era Fairbanks' restless nature prompted him to overseas travel (something which Pickford did not enjoy). When Fairbanks' romance with Sylvia, Lady Ashley became public in the early 1930s he and Pickford separated. They divorced January 10, 1936. Fairbanks' son by his first wife, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., claimed that his father and Pickford long regretted their inability to reconcile.

On June 24, 1937, Pickford married her third and last husband, actor and band leader Charles 'Buddy' Rogers. They adopted two children: Roxanne (born 1944, adopted 1944) and Ronald Charles (born 1937, adopted 1943, a.k.a. Ron Pickford Rogers). As a PBS *American Experience* documentary noted, Pickford's relationship with her children was tense. She criticized their physical imperfections, including Ronnie's small stature and Roxanne's crooked teeth. Both children later said that their mother was too self-absorbed to provide real maternal love. In 2003, Ronnie recalled that "Things didn't work out that much, you know. But I'll never forget her. I think that she was a good woman."

Later years



Mary Pickford in *Star Night at the Cocoanut Grove* (1934), her only film appearance in Technicolor

After retiring from the screen, Pickford developed alcoholism, the addiction that had afflicted her father. Other alcoholics in the family included her first husband Owen Moore, her mother Charlotte, and her younger siblings Lottie and Jack. Charlotte died of breast cancer in March 1928 after several operations. Within a few years, Lottie and Jack died of alcohol-related causes. These deaths, her divorce from Fairbanks, and the end of silent films left Pickford deeply depressed. Her relationship to her adopted children, Roxanne and Ronald, was turbulent at best. Pickford gradually became a recluse, remaining almost entirely at Pickfair, allowing visits only from Lillian Gish, her stepson Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and a few select others. In the mid-1960s, she often received visitors only by telephone, speaking to them from her bedroom. Buddy Rogers often gave guests tours of Pickfair, including views of a genuine western bar Pickford had bought for Douglas Fairbanks, and a portrait of Pickford in the drawing room.

Painted at the height of her fame, it emphasizes her girlish beauty and spun-gold curls. A print of this image now hangs in the Library of Congress.

In addition to her Oscar as best actress for *Coquette* (1929), Mary Pickford received an Academy Honorary Award for a lifetime of achievements in 1976. The Academy sent a TV crew to her house to record her short statement of thanks. Facing the end of her days, Pickford petitioned the Canadian government to restore her Canadian citizenship, thinking it had been lost when she married Fairbanks in 1920. It was never lost and she became a dual Canadian-American citizen.

Death

Pickford died from a cerebral hemorrhage on May 29, 1979, and was buried in the Garden of Memory of the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. Buried alongside her in the Pickford private family plot are her mother Charlotte, her siblings Lottie and Jack Pickford, and the family of Elizabeth Watson, Charlotte's sister, who had helped raise Mary in Toronto.

Legacy



Pickford Center for Motion Picture Study in Hollywood, California

The Pickford Center for Motion Picture Study at 1313 Vine Street in Hollywood, constructed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, opened in 1948 as a radio and television studio facility. The Mary Pickford Theater at the Library of Congress is named in her honour. Mary Pickford Auditorium at Claremont McKenna College is named in her honor.

There is a first-run movie theatre in Cathedral City, California, called The Mary Pickford Theatre. The theater is a grand one with several screens and is built in the shape of a Spanish Cathedral, complete with bell tower and three-story lobby. The lobby contains a historic display with original artifacts belonging to Ms. Pickford and Buddy Rogers, her last husband. Among them are a rare and spectacular beaded gown she wore in the film "Dorothy Vernon at Haddon Hall" (1924) designed by Mitchell Leisen, her special Oscar and jewelry box.

The 1980 stage musical *The Biograph Girl* about the silent film era features the character of Pickford. In 2007, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences sued the estate of the deceased Buddy Rogers' second wife, Beverly Rogers, in order to stop the public sale of one of Pickford's Oscars.

A bust and historical plaque marks her birthplace in Toronto, now the site of the Hospital for Sick Children. The plaque was unveiled by her husband Buddy Rogers in 1973. The bust by artist Eino Gira was added ten years later. The family home had been demolished in 1943, and many of the bricks delivered to Pickford in California. Proceeds from the sale of the property were donated by Pickford to

build a bungalow in East York, Ontario, then a suburb of Toronto. The bungalow was the first prize in a lottery in Toronto to benefit war charities, and Pickford herself unveiled the home on May 26, 1943.

She received a posthumous star on Canada's Walk of Fame in Toronto in 1999. In 2006, along with fellow deceased Canadian stars Fay Wray, Lorne Greene and John Candy, Pickford was featured on a Canadian postage stamp. From January 2011 until July 2011, the Toronto International Film Festival is exhibiting a collection of Mary Pickford memorabilia in the Canadian Film Gallery of the TIFF Bell LightBox building. In February 2011, the Spadina Museum, a museum dedicated to the 1920s and 1930s era in Toronto, will stage performances of 'Sweetheart: The Mary Pickford Story.' The play is a one-woman musical based on the life and career of Pickford, and will use Pickford movies along with live performance.

Max Linder

Max Linder (December 16, 1883 – October 31, 1925) was an influential French pioneer of silent film.



Birth and early career

Born **Gabriel-Maximilien Leuvielle** in Saint-Loubès, Gironde, France to a Catholic wine-growing family, he grew up with a passion for the theatre and as a young man joined a theatre troupe touring the country. While working in Paris on the theatre stage and in music halls, Leuvielle became fascinated with motion pictures and in 1905 took a job with Pathé Frères that saw him become a comedic actor, director, screenwriter, as well as a producer under the stage name, Max Linder. Linder was the younger brother of celebrated French rugby player Maurice Leuvielle (b. June 28, 1881 in Saint-Loubès).

Film

Max Linder created what was probably the first identifiable motion-picture character who appeared in successive situation comedies. Linder made more than one hundred short films portraying "Max," a wealthy and dapper man-about-town frequently in hot water because of his penchant for beautiful women and the good life. By 1911, he was directing his own films as well as writing the script, and the universality of silent films brought Linder fame and fortune throughout Europe, making him the highest paid entertainer of the day. Interestingly, he gave Maurice Chevalier his start in movies, but the silent medium did not suit Chevalier, who stuck to the stage until the all-singing all-dancing features came in, many years later.



World War I brought a temporary end to Linder's career in film. Physically unfit for combat duty, he worked as a dispatch driver during the war until he was shot through the lung, and seriously wounded. Initially, it was reported by one newspaper that he had been killed, however Linder actually phoned the offending publishers, leading them to run the headline "Max Linder Not Killed"

United States

In 1916, the most popular comedian in the world was Charlie Chaplin. When Chaplin left his employer, the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company, for more money and independence, Essanay tried to replace him with Max Linder, whose pantomime skills were equally accomplished. Linder came to the United States to work for Essanay, but his first few American-made "Max" films didn't make the same impression as the Chaplin shorts. The financially troubled studio may have been counting on Linder to restore its flagging fortunes; in any case Essanay could no longer afford to sustain the series, and cancelled production of the remaining films on his contract.

Linder returned to France in 1917 but two years later made another attempt at filmmaking in Hollywood. Once more he failed to establish himself in American productions; discouraged, he went back to his homeland. After having made several hundred short films, he all but gave up on the business, appearing in only two more films during 1923 and 1924 including "*Au Secours!*" (Help!) for director Abel Gance.

Depression and suicide

As a consequence of his war service, Linder suffered from continuing health problems, including bouts of severe depression. In 1923, he married a 17-year old Jane Peters with whom he had a daughter named Maud Max Linder (also known as Josette). The emotional problems besetting Linder evidenced themselves when he and his wife made a suicide pact. In early 1924 they attempted suicide at a hotel in Vienna, Austria. They were found and revived, the incident being covered up by the physician reporting it as an accidental overdose of barbituates. However, in Paris on October 31, 1925 Linder and his wife were successful in taking their own lives. They drank Veronal, injected morphine and cut open the veins in their arms. The suicide was inspired by the movie *Quo Vadis*.

Legacy

After Max Linder's death, Chaplin dedicated one of his films: "For the unique Max, the great master – his disciple Charles Chaplin". In the ensuing years, Linder was relegated to little more than a footnote in film history until 1963 when a Max Linder compilation film titled *Laugh with Max Linder* was released, and in 1983 his daughter made a documentary film titled *The Man in the Silk Hat*. It was screened out of competition at the 1983 Cannes Film Festival. In his honor, *Lycée Max Linder*, a public school in the city of Libourne in the Gironde département near his birthplace was given his name. Max Linder was buried at the Catholique cimetière de Saint-Loubès.

In popular media

Linder is referenced in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* where the owner of a cinema in Nazi occupied Paris in 1944, Shosanna Dreyfus, says that she will be having a Max Linder festival. The relative merits of Linder and Chaplin are then discussed by the German soldier, Frederick Zoller, who argues that Linder is superior to Chaplin while also admitting that Linder never made anything as good as *The Kid*.

May Allison

May Allison (June 14, 1890 – March 27, 1989) was an American stage and film actress whose greatest success was achieved in the early part of the 20th century in the medium of silent film.



Mini Biography

In many ways, the simplest thing we can say about May Allison is that she perfectly encapsulates the spirit and parameters of the silent era of film. Her trajectory will not seem unfamiliar to anyone who has taken an interest in discovering the stars of cinema's early years. Unlike many of her peers, she seemed to sense the changes on the horizon as technology enabled sound to enter the pictures and called it quits while she was ahead. In this way a legacy was born.

May was born on June 14, 1890, five years before the first motion picture projection to a mass, paying audience; many of her peers weren't born until a few years later. Her place of birth was Rising Fawn, Georgia, and by the time she was born she had four older siblings. Her father, John Simon (Sam) was a doctor and her mother, Nannie Virginia (Wise), had her hands full raising five children.

By all accounts May's childhood was fairly typical; she went to school and played with her siblings and friends. But the itch to perform started when she was young, and at the age of 14, she found herself in New York making her debut on Broadway. The play was called Apartment 12-K, and evidently, she did a good job indeed. She was discovered while on those legendary stages of New York and soon found herself in Los Angeles as a new territory was being born and carved out of the hills: Hollywood.

The lovely, blonde and elegant-looking May, even at her young age, was considered even the ingénue. She began with small roles in films that made other leading ladies stars, among them Theda Bara in *A Fool There Was* in 1915. But May didn't remain in the backseat for long. Also in 1915, she was chosen to play the lead opposite Harold Lockwood in *David Harum*, a romantic comedy that quickly made headlines as a hugely successful film. More importantly for May, the public loved the onscreen chemistry between Harold and May, and that could only mean one thing: that the two were destined to costar together for years to come (and make their bosses a lot of money).



Before Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant, long before Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks or Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant, there were May Allison and Harold Lockwood, who arguably go down in history as the first romantic comedy “couple.” They never attempted an off-screen romance, but this didn’t stop audiences from falling in love with what they saw on the silver screen. May and Harold wowed 1917 Harold Lockwood Kromo Gravure Trading Card – No Border Type 1917 May Allison Kromo Gravure Trading Card – No Borders Type audiences and honed their comedic craft over a period of years as they made around twenty five films together – most of them during the first World War, when there was nothing better to fuel the collective need for escapism than to go to that democratic medium of the movies to watch a couple bicker, laugh and love.

Among the highlights of this illustrious era for May are the following films: *The House of a Thousand Scandals*, *Pardoned* and *The Tragic Circle* (1915), *The Other Side of the Door*, *The Secret Wire*, *The Gamble* and *The Come-Back* (1916), *The Promise* and *The Hidden Children* (1917), and *The Winning of Beatrice* and *The Return of Mary* (1918). These golden years for May ended abruptly when, in 1918, Harold tragically died prematurely. He was one of the many millions of victims of the Spanish Influenza that ravaged the world in 1918 and 1919, taking no mercy on young and old, sick and healthy. The war, and the proverbial party, were over.



May bounced back, making many films in 1919, including: *Peggy Does Her Darndest*, *Castles in the Air*, *Almost Married*, *The Uplifters* and *Fair and Warmer*. However, her career never fully recovered from the loss of her significant onscreen other. During these years, as we know, movies were churned out by the dozen, and there were plenty of roles to go around, especially for known stars who were established and had box office pull. May made film after film throughout the twenties, but this was a new era and other stars were beginning to rise higher and brighter; for every lovable ingénue there was now a flapper, a vixen, a tramp with a heart of gold. The roaring twenties brought with them a taste for burlesque, exotic lifestyles, and dark glamour.

May certainly had her charisma and ability to transform, but her ability to be deeply seductive was somewhat compromised by her well known history as Harold’s lady, the spunky woman who could generate a laugh on a dime. Some of the films from her last era of gracing the silver screen include: *The Cheater and Held in Trust* (1920), *The Last Card* (1921), *The Woman Who Fooled Herself* (1922), *The Broad Road* (1923), *Youth For Sale* (1924), *Wreckage* (1925), *Men of Steel* and *The City* (1926), and *Her Indiscretion* (1927).

Throughout the twenties her personal life was also fairly turbulent; she’d married actor and writer Robert Ellis in 1920 but the marriage only lasted three years. Her next marriage was to the editor of then emerging industry magazine *Photoplay*, James Quirk. The marriage lasted until 1932, five years after May’s last film, 1927’s *The Telephone Girl*, which costarred Madge Bellamy and Warner Baxter, both big stars in their own right.

May married again, to Carl Norton Osborne. The third one was evidently a charm, they stayed together for over forty years; Carl died in 1982. May bounced back and married a colonel, J.L. Stephenson, but they soon divorced. May had several homes and a fairly lavish lifestyle; she spent a lot of time, toward the end, in her home in Bermuda, where she often attended the Cleveland Symphony as a special guest.

Death

May Allison died on March 27, 1989 at the incredible age of 99, and was buried on Ohio, not too far from her Georgian roots.

Life and career

Allison was born in Rising Fawn, Georgia, the youngest of five children born to Dr. John Simon (Sam) Allison and Nannie Virginia (Wise) Allison.

Violet eyed, Allison made her Broadway stage debut in the 1914 production of *Apartment 12-K* before settling in Hollywood, California in the early days of motion pictures. Allison's screen debut was as an ingenue in the 1915 star-making Theda Bara vehicle *A Fool There Was*. When Allison was cast that same year opposite actor Harold Lockwood in the Allan Dwan directed romantic film *David Harum*, audiences quickly became enamored of the onscreen duo and the two began a hugely successful onscreen film collaboration. Possibly the first such publicly celebrated "romantic duo" of the silver-screen, the two actors were never romantically involved off-screen. The pair starred in approximately twenty-five highly successful features together during the World War I era.

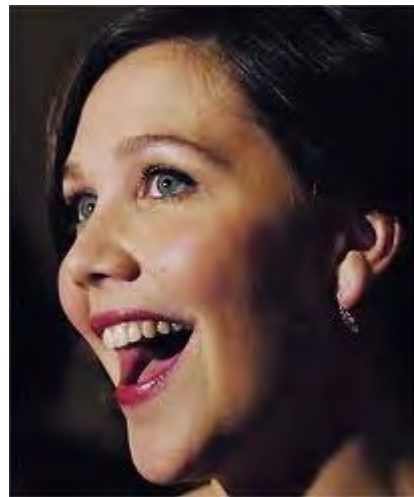
Allison and Lockwood's highly popular film romances ended, however, when in 1918 Lockwood died at the age of 31 after contracting Spanish influenza, a deadly epidemic that swept the world from 1918 through 1919 killing 50 to 100 million people globally. Allison's career then faltered markedly without her popular leading male co-star.

Allison continued to act in films throughout the 1920s, although she never received the same amount of public acclaim as when she starred opposite Harold Lockwood. Her last film before retiring was 1927's *The Telephone Girl* opposite Madge Bellamy and Warner Baxter.

In 1920, Allison married writer and actor Robert Ellis. The couple divorced in 1923. Allison then married *Photoplay* magazine editor James Quirk, a union that lasted until 1932. Allison's third marriage, to Carl Norton Osborne, lasted over forty years until his death in 1982. In her later years, May Allison spent much of her time at her vacation home in Tucker's Town, Bermuda and was a Patron of the Cleveland Symphony. She died of respiratory failure in Bratenahl, Ohio in 1989 at the age of 98 and laid to rest at the Gates Mills South Cemetery in Gates Mills, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Merna Kennedy

Merna Kennedy (September 7, 1908 – December 20, 1944) was an American actress of the late silent era.



Short career

Kennedy (born as **Maude Kahler**) was best-known during her brief career for her role opposite Charlie Chaplin in the silent film *The Circus* (1928).



Kennedy was brought to the attention of Chaplin by her friend Lita Grey, who became Chaplin's second wife in 1924. A dancer, she had muscular legs which helped her gain the role of the circus bareback

rider. Kennedy continued acting after *The Circus*, starring in early sound films, but retired in 1934, when she married choreographer/director Busby Berkeley.



Their marriage broke up a year later, and Kennedy died of a heart attack in 1944, aged 36.

Mildred Davis

Mildred Hillary Davis (February 22, 1901 – August 18, 1969) was an American actress who appeared in many of Harold Lloyd's classic silent comedies and eventually became his wife.



Early life and career

Davis was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and educated at the "Friends School" there. After several years spent studying, she traveled to Los Angeles in the hopes of securing a role in a film. After appearing in several small roles, she caught the attention of Hal Roach, who pointed her out to comedian Harold Lloyd. Lloyd was looking for a leading lady to replace Bebe Daniels, and cast Davis in his comedy short *From Hand to Mouth* in 1919. It would be the first of fifteen films they would star in together.



On Saturday, February 10, 1923, she married Harold Lloyd. After their marriage Lloyd announced that Davis would not appear in any more motion pictures. After much persuasion on Davis' part she received Lloyd's consent for her return to the screen in *Too Many Crooks*, which Lloyd produced through his production company.

Personal life and death

Her brother was actor Jack Davis of *Our Gang*, and later a prominent Beverly Hills physician. She and Harold Lloyd had three children including Harold Lloyd Jr. Davis was very active in Beverly Hills, and as hostess at the Lloyds' estate, Greenacres, where she particularly enjoyed rose gardening.

Although the Lloyd marriage was held up to the public as ideal, there were problems with Lloyd's workaholicism and infidelities. Despite this, the couple remained very close for their entire life together. In later life she suffered with bouts of alcoholism and depression, but found comfort in her strong friendships with actresses Marion Davies and Colleen Moore. She also developed a long lasting friendship with Lloyd's assistant Roy Brooks, who lived with them at Greenacres for over forty years.

Davis died from a coronary following a series of strokes in Santa Monica, California in 1969.

Mildred Harris

Mildred Harris (November 29, 1901 – July 20, 1944) was an American film actress. Harris began her career in the film industry as a popular child actress at age eleven. At the age of fifteen, she was cast as a harem girl in D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916). She appeared as a leading lady through the 1920s but her career slowed with the advent of the "talkies". She was critically praised for *No, No Nanette* in 1930, had a few bit parts in the early 1940s, and made her last appearance in the posthumously released *Having A Wonderful Crime* of 1945.



Harris has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6307 Hollywood Blvd. in Los Angeles, California. In 1992, she was portrayed by Milla Jovovich in the biographical film *Chaplin*.

Career

Born in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Harris made her first screen appearance at the age of eleven in the 1912 Francis Ford and Thomas H. Ince-directed Western short *The Post Telegrapher*. She followed the film with various juvenile roles, often appearing opposite child actor Paul Willis. In 1914, she was hired by The Oz Film Manufacturing Company to portray Fluff in *The Magic Cloak of Oz* and Button-Bright in *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz*. In 1916, at the age of 15, she appeared as a harem girl in Griffith's epic *Intolerance*.



Harris in *Fool's Paradise* (1921) with John Davidson and Conrad Nagel

In the 1920s, Harris graduated to leading lady roles opposite leading men such as Conrad Nagel, Milton Sills, Lionel Barrymore, Rod La Rocque and the Moore brothers, Owen and Tom. She appeared in

Frank Capra's 1928 silent drama *The Power of the Press* with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Jobyna Ralston.

She found the transition to the "talkies" difficult and her career slowed dramatically. She performed in vaudeville and burlesque, and, at one point, toured with comedian Phil Silvers. She was critically praised for her performance in the 1930 film adaptation of the Broadway musical *No, No Nanette*. In the 1936 Three Stooges comedy *Movie Maniacs*, she portrayed a temperamental and demanding film starlet who, while receiving a pedicure, is startled by stooge Curly Howard striking a match on the sole of her foot.

Harris continued to work in film in the early 1940s, largely through the kindness of her former director, Cecil B. DeMille, who cast her in bit parts in 1942's *Reap the Wild Wind*, and 1944's *The Story of Dr. Wassell*. Her last film appearance was in the posthumously released 1945 film *Having A Wonderful Crime*.

Personal life



Sixteen-year-old Harris met actor Charlie Chaplin in mid-1918, dated, and came to believe she was pregnant by him. They married on October 23, 1918, in Los Angeles, California. The couple quarreled about her contract with Louis B. Mayer and her career. Chaplin felt she was not his intellectual equal, and, when their child died in July 1919 after three days of life, they separated in the autumn of 1919. Chaplin moved to the Los Angeles Athletic Club. Harris tried to keep appearances up, believing a happy marriage was possible, but in 1920 she filed for divorce based on mental cruelty. Chaplin accused her of infidelity, and, though he would not name her lover publicly, Alla Nazimova was suspected. Harris denied rumors Chaplin had been physically violent, and divorce was granted in November 1920 with Harris receiving \$100,000 in settlement and some community property.

Following the divorce, Harris had a highly publicized relationship of less than a year's duration with the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII).

In 1924, Harris married Everett Terrence McGovern. The union lasted until November 26, 1929, when Harris filed for divorce in Los Angeles, California, on grounds of desertion. The couple had one child, Everett Terrence McGovern, Jr., in 1925. In 1934, she married William P. Fleckenstein in Asheville, North Carolina. The couple remained married until Harris' unexpected death in 1944 of pneumonia. She was laid to rest at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles, California.

Nancy Carroll

Nancy Carroll (November 19, 1903 – August 6, 1965) was an American actress.



Career

She was christened **Ann Veronica Lahiff** in New York City. Of Irish parentage, she and her sister once performed a dancing act in a local contest of amateur talent. This led her to a stage career and then to the screen. She began her acting career in Broadway musicals. She became a successful actress in "talkies" because her musical background enabled her to play in the movie musicals of the 1930s. Her film debut was in *Ladies Must Dress* in 1927.



In 1928 she made eight films. One of them, *Easy Come, Easy Go*, co-starring Richard Dix, made her a star. In 1930 she was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress for *The Devil's Holiday*. Among her other films are *Laughter* (1930), *Paramount on Parade* (1930), *Hot Saturday* (1932) with Cary Grant and Randolph Scott, *The Kiss Before the Mirror* (1933) directed by James Whale, and *Broken Lullaby* aka *The Man I Killed* (1932) directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

Under contract to Paramount Pictures, Carroll often balked at the roles being offered to her and earned a reputation as a recalcitrant and uncooperative actress. In spite of her ability to successfully tackle light comedies, tearful melodramas, and even musicals, and as well as garnering considerable praise by the critics and public (she received the most fan mail of any star in the early 1930s), she was released by the studio. In the mid-1930s under a four-film contract with Columbia Pictures, she made four rather insignificant films and was no longer an A-list actress.

Later years

Carroll retired from films in 1938, returned to the stage, and starred in the early television series *The Aldrich Family* in 1950. In the following year, she guest starred in the television version of *The Egg and I*, starring her daughter, Patricia Kirkland.

Death

On August 6, 1965, she was found dead after failing to arrive at the theater for a performance. The cause of her death was an aneurysm. She was 61 years old.

For her contributions to the motion picture industry, Nancy Carroll has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1719 Vine Street.

Nita Naldi

Nita Naldi (November 13, 1894 – February 17, 1961) was an American silent film actress. She was usually cast in the role of the "femme fatale"/"vamp", a persona first popularized by actress Theda Bara.



Early life

Born **Mary Dooley** in New York City into a working class Irish family in 1894, the daughter of Julia (Cronin) and Patrick Dooley. She was named for her great aunt, Mary Nonna Dunphy, who founded Academy of the Holy Angels in Fort Lee, New Jersey, which young Mary Dooley attended in 1910. Her father left the family in 1910, and her mother died in 1915. Left with the care of two teenage siblings Naldi began to seek work. She took odd jobs including artist modeling and cloak model. Eventually she entered vaudeville with her brother Frank. By 1918 she debuted on Broadway as a chorus girl at the Winter Garden in "The Passing Show of 1918".

This led to more stage jobs and soon Naldi found herself in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1919. At this time she changed her name to *Nita Naldi*. Naldi was a homage to a childhood friend Florence Rinaldi. She continued working on Broadway and after a well received performance in "The Bonehead" was offered a stint with well known producer William A. Brady. Brady cast her in his play "Opportunity" in 1920.

Film career

Naldi was asked to perform in a short film with Scottish comedian Johnny Dooley (no relation). Naldi quit after realizing he had romantic intentions with another woman. She was then offered a role in "A Divorce of Convenience" with Owen Moore. She had small roles in several independent films before being engaged for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with John Barrymore. The role would give Naldi prestige. Barrymore and Naldi were friends for many years, with Barrymore lovingly calling her the *Dumb Duse*.



Naldi was selected by author Vicente Blasco Ibáñez for the role of Dona Sol in his film *Blood and Sand*. Naldi was signed with Famous Players-Lasky for the role. It was her first pairing with screen idol Rudolph Valentino and the film was a major success. It gave Naldi the image of a vamp which would follow her for the rest of her life. Naldi and Valentino were never romantic, and she would be one of the few to befriend his wife Natacha Rambova though that friendship would sour when the Valentinos divorced.

During this time, she posed for famous pin-up artist Alberto Vargas, who painted Naldi topless next to the bust of an imp.

While Valentino went on his one-man strike (preventing him from appearing in film) Naldi took on several Famous Players-Lasky roles with growing importance including *The Ten Commandments* (1923), directed by Cecil B. DeMille. When Valentino returned and fixed his contract woes she joined him for his final Famous Players-Lasky film, the now lost *A Sainted Devil* (1924). Naldi would leave the company as well soon after.

In 1924 the Valentinos and Naldi traveled to France to research for their film *The Hooded Falcon*. The film was never made but after returning to California they did make *Cobra*. Neither film was well received and *Cobra* would be the last time Naldi and Valentino starred together.

The Valentinos marriage was ending around this time. After Valentino signed a contract with United Artists, he banned Rambova from the set. She was given her own film as a consolation. Naldi starred in Rambova's production *What Price Beauty?*. The film suffered distribution problems and was barely noted at the time. It is noteworthy for being actress Myrna Loy's first screen appearance.

After finishing the Dorothy Gish film *Clothes Make the Pirate*, Naldi left for France for a short vacation. She married J. Searle Barclay during this time. Despite rumors she had retired, Naldi began work on several films, including Alfred Hitchcock's second directorial effort, 1926's *The Mountain Eagle*. She is often credited, mistakenly, as appearing in Hitchcock's *The Pleasure Garden*.



She made two films in France and one in Italy before retiring. Despite an acceptable voice, Naldi never made a talkie.

Later life

Naldi filed bankruptcy in 1932. She went back to the stage with "Queer People" and "The Firebird" in 1933. The press had been critical of her weight since 1924, but reviews were especially harsh this time. So harsh that Naldi filed suit against one paper in 1934 for \$500,000. The suit was dismissed in 1938.

In 1942 Naldi was considered for "For Whom the Bell Tolls" but did not receive the part. She never made another film. That same year she began appearing in a revue in New York with Mae Murray reciting the 1897 poem "A Fool There Was" in full kitsch.

In 1952 she had a notable role in the play *In Any Language*, co-starring the legendary stage actress Uta Hagen. In 1956 she coached Carol Channing how to vamp, for Channing's new musical "Vamp!". Channing would be nominated for Best Actress in a Musical for that role.

Naldi spent her final years in New York City. She died of a heart attack in her apartment just short of her 66th birthday, and was buried in the family plot at Calvary Cemetery in Woodside, Queens County, New York, United States.

For her contribution to the film industry, Nita Naldi was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6316 Hollywood Blvd.

Personal life

In 1923, after the success of *Blood and Sand*, Naldi was named as a party in the divorce of then 54-year-old millionaire J. Searle Barclay from his wife of 16 years. Barclay and Naldi had met in 1919 during her stage days and had lived together with her sister in New York since 1920. The pair would marry in 1927 on a visit to France. Naldi returned to the United States in 1931, alone, and filed bankruptcy soon after. Naldi did not speak of Barclay until after his death in 1945. He died penniless.

Despite rumors, Naldi claimed to have never been romantic with either Valentino or Barrymore. In 1956 she was rumored to be engaged to a Park Avenue man named Larry Hall, but no union took place. Naldi never had any children.

Norma Shearer

Edith Norma Shearer (August 10, 1902 – June 12, 1983) was a Canadian-American actress. Shearer was one of the most popular actresses in North America from the mid-1920s through the 1930s. Her early films cast her as the girl-next-door but for most of the Pre-Code film era beginning with the 1930 film *The Divorcee*, for which she won an Oscar for Best Actress, she played sexually liberated women in sophisticated contemporary comedies. Later she appeared in historical and period films.



Norma Shearer in 1927

Unlike many of her MGM contemporaries, Shearer's fame declined steeply after retirement. By the time of her death in 1983, she was largely remembered at best for her "noble" roles in *The Women*, *Marie Antoinette*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Shearer's legacy began to be re-evaluated in the 1990s with the publication of two biographies and the TCM and VHS release of her films, many of them unseen since the implementation of the Production Code some sixty years before. Focus shifted to her pre-Code "divorcee" persona and Shearer was rediscovered as "the exemplar of sophisticated woman-hood... exploring love and sex with an honesty that would be considered frank by modern standards".

Simultaneously, Shearer's ten-year collaboration with portrait photographer George Hurrell and her lasting contribution to fashion through the designs of Adrian were also recognized.

Shearer is widely celebrated by some as one of cinema's feminist pioneers: "*the first American film actress to make it chic and acceptable to be single and not a virgin on screen*". In March 2008, two of her most famous pre-code films, *The Divorcee* and *A Free Soul*, were released on DVD.

Early life

Shearer's childhood was spent in Montreal and was one of privilege due to the success of her father's construction business. However, the marriage between her parents was not a happy one. Andrew Shearer was prone to manic depression and "moved like a shadow or a ghost around the house," while (her mother) Edith Shearer was attractive, flamboyant and stylish, prompting gossip that she was a heroin addict and unfaithful to her husband. Neither rumor was ever proven, but Edith proved to be bored with her marriage very early on and focused her energy on Norma, who she decided would one day become a famous concert pianist.

Shearer was interested in music as well, but after seeing a vaudeville show for her ninth birthday, announced her intention to become an actress. Edith offered support but, as Shearer entered adolescence, became secretly fearful that her daughter's physical flaws would jeopardize her chances. Fortunately, Shearer herself "had no illusions about the image I saw in the mirror." She acknowledged her "dumpy figure, with shoulders too broad, legs too sturdy, hands too blunt", and was also acutely aware of her small eyes that appeared crossed due to a cast in her right eye. But by her own admission, she was "ferociously ambitious, even as a young girl" and planned to overcome her deficiencies through careful camouflage, sheer determination and charm.

The childhood and adolescence that Shearer once described as "a pleasant dream" ended in 1918, when her older sister, Athole, suffered her first serious mental breakdown and her father's company collapsed. Forced to move into a small, dreary house in a "modest" Montreal suburb, the sudden plunge into poverty only strengthened Shearer's determined attitude: "At an early age, I formed a philosophy about failure. Perhaps an endeavor, like my father's business, could fail, but that didn't mean Father had failed."

Edith Shearer thought otherwise. Within weeks, she had left her husband and moved into a cheap boarding house with her two daughters. A few months later, encouraged by her brother, who believed his niece should try her luck in "the picture business", then operating largely on the East Coast, Edith sold her daughter's piano and bought three train tickets for New York. Also in her pocket was a letter of introduction for Norma, acquired from a local theatre owner, to Florenz Ziegfeld, who was currently preparing a new season of his famous Follies.

Career

Early Career

In January 1920, the three Shearer women arrived in New York, each of them dressed up for the occasion. "I had my hair in little curls," Shearer remembered, "and I felt very ambitious and proud." Her heart sank, however, when she saw their rented apartment: "There was one double bed, a cot with no mattress and a stove with one gas jet. The communal bathroom was at the end of a long dimly lit hallway. Athole and I took turns sleeping with mother in the bed, but sleep was impossible anyway—the elevated trains rattled right past our window every few minutes."

The introduction to Ziegfeld proved equally disastrous. He turned Shearer down flat, reportedly calling her a "dog", and criticized her crossed eyes and stubby legs. She continued doing the rounds with her determination undimmed: "I learned that Universal Pictures was looking for eight pretty girls to serve as extras. Athole and I showed up and found fifty girls ahead of us. An assistant casting director walked up and down looking us over. He passed up the first three and picked the fourth. The fifth and sixth were unattractive, but the seventh would do, and so on, down the line until seven had been selected—and he was still some ten feet ahead of us. I did some quick thinking. I coughed loudly and, when the man looked in the direction of the cough, I stood on my tiptoes and smiled right at him. Recognizing the awkward ruse to which I'd resorted, he laughed openly and walked over to me and said, 'You win, Sis. You're Number Eight.'"

Other extra parts followed, including one in *Way Down East*, helmed by director, D. W. Griffith. Taking advantage of a break in filming and standing shrewdly near a powerful arc light, Shearer introduced herself to Griffith and began to confide her hopes for stardom. "The Master looked down at me, studied my upturned face in the glare of the arc, and shook his eagle head. Eyes no good, he said. A cast in one

and far too blue; blue eyes always looked blank in close-up. You'll never make it, he declared, and turned solemnly away."

Still undeterred, Shearer risked some of her savings on a consultation with Dr. William Bates, a pioneer in the treatment of incorrectly aligned eyes and defective vision. He wrote out a series of muscle-strengthening exercises that, after many years of daily practice, would successfully conceal Norma's cast for long periods of time on the screen. She spent hours in front of the mirror, exercising her eyes and striking poses that concealed or improved the physical flaws opined by Ziegfeld or Griffith. At night, she sat in the galleries of Broadway theatres, studying the entrances of Ina Claire, Lynn Fontanne, and Katharine Cornell.

In desperate need of money, Shearer resorted to some modeling work, which proved successful. On the modeling career, she commented: "I could smile at a cake of laundry soap as if it were dinner at the Ritz. I posed with a strand of imitation pearls. I posed in dust-cap and house dress with a famous mop, for dental paste and for soft drink, holding my mouth in a whistling pose until it all but froze that way." She became the new model for Springfield Tires, was bestowed with the title "Miss Lotta Miles" and depicted seated inside the rim of a tire, smiling down at traffic from a large floodlit billboard. Years later, MGM rival Joan Crawford would disparagingly refer to Shearer as "Miss Lotta Miles".

Finally, a year after her arrival in New York, she received a break in film: fourth billing in a B-movie titled *The Stealers* (1921). More silent films followed, which brought her to the attention of producer Hal Roach, out from Hollywood searching for new talent. Early in 1923, after a successful meeting, Roach made Shearer an offer on behalf of Louis B. Mayer Pictures, run by mogul Louis B. Mayer. After three years of hardship, she found herself signing a contract for \$250 a week for six months, with options for renewal and a test for a leading role in a major film called *The Wanters*.

Hollywood

Shearer left New York in the spring of 1923. Accompanied by her mother, she felt "dangerously sure of herself" as her train neared Los Angeles. Still not welcomed an hour after her arrival, she realized that there would be no star treatment from her new studio. Dispirited, she allowed Edith to hail them a taxi.

The next morning, Shearer went to the Mayer Company on Mission Road to meet with the Vice-President, Irving Thalberg. Shearer was momentarily thrown by their confused introduction, but soon found herself "impressed by his air of dispassionate strength, his calm self-possession and the almost black, impenetrable eyes set in a pale olive face."

The actress

Shearer was less impressed, however, with her first screen test: "The custom then was to use flat lighting—to throw a great deal of light from all directions, in order to kill all shadows that might be caused by wrinkles or blemishes. But the strong lights placed on either side of my face made my blue eyes look almost white, and by nearly eliminating my nose, made me seem cross-eyed. The result was hideous."

The day after the test had been screened to Mayer and Thalberg, cameraman Ernest Palmer found Shearer frantic and trembling in the hallway. Speaking with her, he was struck by her "fierce, almost raging disappointment" and, after viewing the test himself, agreed that she had been "poorly handled." Under Palmer's own supervision, a second test was made and judged a success by the studio brass. The lead in *The Wanters* seemed hers, until the film's director objected, finding her "unphotogenic". Again, Shearer was to be disappointed, relegated to a minor role.

She accepted her next role in *Pleasure Mad*, knowing "it was well understood that if I didn't deliver in this picture, I was through." After only a few days of shooting, things were not looking good. Shearer was struggling. Finally, the film's director complained to Mayer that he could get nothing out of the young actress, and when summoned to Mayer's office, she fully expected the axe to fall: "But to my surprise, Mr. Mayer's manner was paternal. 'There seems to be a problem,' he said, 'tell me about it.' I told him that the director had shouted at me and frightened me. Nobody had warned me that Mayer was a better actor than any of us, and I was unprepared for what happened next. He staged an alarming outburst, screaming at me, calling me a fool and a coward, accusing me of throwing away my career because I couldn't get on with a director. It worked. I became tearful, but obstinate. 'I'll show you!' I said to him. 'You'll see!' Delighted, Mayer resumed the paternal act. 'That's what I wanted to hear,' he said, smiling." Returning to the set, Shearer plunged into an emotional scene. "I took that scene lock, stock, and barrel, fur, fins and feathers," she remembered, earning her the respect of her director and her studio. As a reward, Thalberg cast her in six films in eight months.

It was an apprenticeship that would serve Shearer well. By the time Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was formed in 1924 and she was cast in the studio's first official production, *He Who Gets Slapped*, she had become one of MGM's biggest box-office attractions. In 1925, she signed a new contract paying her \$1,000 a week, rising to \$5,000 over the next five years. Soon after, she bought a house for herself and Edith, right under the Hollywood Sign, at 2004 Vine Street.

Irving Thalberg



Shearer alongside Irving Thalberg, outside the White House in 1929

Having become a star, Shearer's new challenge was to remain one. There were many other talented actresses at the studio and she realized she would have to fight hard to stay ahead of the pack. Seeing that sensational newcomer Greta Garbo was one of a kind, she went to Thalberg and "demanded recognition as one of another kind". It was just one of the many visits she paid to his office, always to plead for better material, better parts. Thalberg would listen patiently, then invariably advise Norma to keep toeing the line, that MGM knew best, and that the movies she complained about had made her a popular actress. Occasionally Shearer would burst into tears, but this seemed to make "no more impression than rain on a raincoat."

Privately, Thalberg was very impressed by Shearer. In a story conference, when her name was suggested to him for the part of a girl threatened with rape, Thalberg shook his head and, with a wry smile, said: "She looks too well able to take care of herself."

Shearer, for her part, found herself increasingly attracted to her boss. "Something was understood between us, an indefinite feeling that neither of us could analyse." Thalberg's appeal was not primarily sexual. What attracted Shearer was his commanding presence and steely grace; the impression he gave that wherever he sat was always the head of the table. In spite of his youth, Thalberg became a father figure to the 23-year-old actress.

At the end of a working day in July 1925, Shearer received a phone call from Irving's secretary, asking if she would like to accompany Thalberg to the premiere of Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*. That night, she and Thalberg made their first appearance as a couple. A few weeks later, Shearer went to Montreal to visit her father. While there, she had a reunion with an old school friend, who remembered: "At the end of lunch, over coffee, Norma leant in across the table. 'I'm madly in love', she whispered. 'Who with?' I asked. 'With Irving Thalberg,' she replied, smiling. I asked how Thalberg felt. 'I hope to marry him,' Norma said, and then, with the flash of the assurance I remembered so well, 'I believe I will.'"

"It is impossible to get anything major accomplished without stepping on some toes. Enemies are inevitable when one is a 'doer'." — Norma Shearer

Over the next two years, both Shearer and Irving would see other people, but Hollywood insiders knew it was something of a charade – she was just waiting for him to propose. Louise Brooks remembered: "I held a dinner party sometime in 1926. All the place cards at the dinner table were books. In front of Thalberg's place was Dreiser's *Genius* and in front of Norma's place I put *The Difficulty of Getting Married*. It was so funny because Irving walked right in and saw *Genius* and sat right down, but Norma kept walking around. She wouldn't sit down in front of *The Difficulty of Getting Married* – no way!"

By 1927, Shearer had made a total of thirteen silent films for MGM. Each had been produced for under \$200,000 and had, without fail, been a substantial box office hit, often making a \$200,000+ profit for the studio. She was rewarded for this consistent success by being cast in Ernst Lubitsch's *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg*, her first prestige production, with a budget of over \$1,000,000. While she was finishing *The Student Prince*, Shearer received a call summoning her to Thalberg's office. She entered to find Thalberg sitting at his desk before a tray of diamond engagement rings. He granted her the option to choose her own ring; she picked out the biggest. After weeks of rumors, provoked by wearing the ring, it was announced in August 1927 that the couple was to wed. On September 29, 1927, they were married in the Hollywood wedding of the year. Shearer had two children with Thalberg, Irving Junior (1930–1988) and Katherine (1935–2006). Before they were married Shearer converted to Judaism so that she could marry Thalberg.

Early talkies

One week after the Thalberg marriage, *The Jazz Singer* was released. The first feature-length motion picture with sound, it effectively changed the cinematic landscape overnight and signaled the end of the silent motion picture era. It also spelled the end of many silent careers, and Shearer was determined hers would not be one of them. Her brother, Douglas Shearer, was instrumental in the development of sound at MGM, and every care was taken to prepare her for the microphone.

Her first talkie, *The Trial of Mary Dugan* (1929), turned out to be a tremendous success. Shearer's "medium pitched, fluent, flexible Canadian accent, not quite American but not at all foreign" was critically applauded, and thereafter widely imitated by other actresses, nervous about succeeding in talkies. Despite the popularity of her subsequent early talking films, *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* and *Their*

Own Desire (both 1929), Shearer feared the public would soon tire of her "good girl" image, and took the advice of friend and co-star Ramón Novarro to visit an unknown photographer named George Hurrell. There she took a series of sensual portraits which convinced her husband that she could play the lead in MGM's racy new film, *The Divorcee* (1930).

Pre-Code

Shearer won an Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in *The Divorcee*, and a series of highly successful pre-Code films followed, including *Let Us Be Gay* (1930), *Strangers May Kiss* (1931), *A Free Soul* (1931), *Private Lives* (1931) and *Riptide* (1934). All of these were box-office hits, placing Shearer in competition with Joan Crawford and Greta Garbo as MGM's top actress through the remainder of the decade.

Shearer's marriage to Thalberg gave her a degree of power in Hollywood that was resented by rivals such as Crawford, who complained that Shearer would always be offered the best roles and best conditions: "How can I compete with Norma when she's sleeping with the boss."

Shearer mixed pre-Code films with period dramas and theatrical adaptations. *Smilin' Through* (1932), which co-starred Fredric March, was one of the most successful films of its year. An adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's four hour experimental *Strange Interlude* (1932), which also starred Clark Gable, was critically panned but managed to turn a profit at the box office.

The Queen of MGM



Shearer as Marie Antoinette in *Marie Antoinette* (1938)

The enforcement of the Production Code in 1934 forced Shearer to drop her celebrated "free soul" image and move exclusively into period dramas and "prestige" pictures. Of these, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1934) would prove her most successful at the box office, making a profit of \$668,000. In that movie, she played the part made famous by Katharine Cornell. Shearer also took on another play popularized by Cornell in *Romeo and Juliet* (1936) (her first film of the 30's to lose money) and *Marie Antoinette* (1938) (a budget of almost \$2,500,000 was too great for the studio to expect a profit), though their elaborate sets and costumes helped make the films immensely popular with audiences.

Shearer was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Actress on six occasions, winning only for her role in *The Divorcee* in 1930. She was nominated the same year for *Their Own Desire*, for *A Free Soul* in 1931, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* in 1934, *Romeo and Juliet* in 1936, and *Marie Antoinette* in 1938. Marion Davies later recalled that Shearer came to a party at San Simeon in her Marie Antoinette costume, which required removing the door so she could enter, and four chairs so she could sit at the table.

In 1939, she attempted an unusual role in the dark comedy *Idiot's Delight*, adapted from the 1936 Robert E. Sherwood play. It was the last of Shearer's three films with Clark Gable, after *A Free Soul* (1931) and

Strange Interlude (1932). *The Women* (1939) followed, with an entirely female cast of more than 130 speaking roles.

Shearer was also one of the many actresses considered for the role of Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind* (1939). However, Shearer expressed no interest, joking, "Scarlett is a thankless role. The one I'd really like to play is Rhett (Butler)!"

Critics praised the suspenseful atmosphere in her next film, *Escape* (1940), where she played the lover of a Nazi general who helps an American free his mother from a concentration camp. With increasing interest in the war in Europe, the film performed well at the box office, but Shearer made errors in judgment, passing up roles in the highly successful films *Now, Voyager* and *Mrs. Miniver*, in order to star in *We Were Dancing* and *Her Cardboard Lover* (1942), which both failed at the box office. In 1942, Shearer unofficially retired from acting.

Retirement and death

After Thalberg's death, Shearer retained a lawyer to ensure that Thalberg's percentages of films he had worked on were still paid to his estate, which was contested by MGM, even though Thalberg's estate was worth around three million dollars. When she took the story to gossip columnist Louella Parsons, the studio was forced to give in and granted all the profits from MGM movies made and released from 1924 to 1938, meaning the estate eventually received over \$1.5 million in percentage payments. Nevertheless, Shearer's contract was renewed for six films at \$150,000 each. During this time she embarked on romances with the then married actor George Raft, Mickey Rooney, and James Stewart.

Following her retirement in 1942, she married Martin Arrougé (March 23, 1914 – August 8, 1999), a former ski instructor twelve years her junior. Although often attending public events in her later life, Shearer withdrew from the glamor side of Hollywood and preferred anonymity, with her secretary stating in 1960: "Miss Shearer does not want any publicity. She doesn't talk to anyone. But I can tell you that she has refused many requests to appear in motion pictures and TV shows." They were still married at the time of her death on June 12, 1983 (from pneumonia and Alzheimer's disease) at 80 years old, although in her declining years she repeatedly called Martin "Irving". She spent her last days at the Motion Picture Country Home in Woodland Hills, California.

Legacy

Shearer has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6636 Hollywood Boulevard. She is entombed in the Great Mausoleum at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California, in a crypt marked **Norma Shearer Arrouge**, along with her first husband Irving Thalberg. Her friend Jean Harlow is in the crypt next door. Thalberg's crypt was engraved "My Sweetheart Forever" by Shearer.

On June 30, 2008, Canada Post issued a postage stamp in its "Canadians in Hollywood" series to honour Norma Shearer, along with others for Raymond Burr, Marie Dressler, and Chief Dan George.

Norma Talmadge

Norma Talmadge (May 2, 1894 – December 24, 1957) was an American actress and film producer of the silent era. A major box office draw for more than a decade, her career reached a peak in the early 1920s, when she ranked among the most popular idols of the American screen.



Norma Talmadge in *New York Nights* (1929)

Her most famous film was *Smilin' Through* (1922), but she also scored artistic triumphs teamed with director Frank Borzage in *Secrets* (1924) and *The Lady* (1925). Her younger sisters Constance Talmadge and Natalie Talmadge were also movie stars. Talmadge married millionaire and film producer Joseph Schenck and they successfully created their own production company. After reaching fame in the film studios on the East Coast, she moved to Hollywood in 1922.

A specialist in melodrama, Talmadge was one of the most elegant and glamorous film stars of the roaring twenties. By the end of the silent film period her popularity with audiences had waned. After her two talkies proved disappointing at the box office, she retired a very wealthy woman. She is little remembered, yet in her day she was hugely popular and the epitome of stardom.

Early life

According to the birth certificate, Talmadge was born on May 2, 1894 in Jersey City, New Jersey, although it has been widely believed she was born in Niagara Falls, New York. After achieving stardom, she admitted that she and her mother provided the more scenic setting of Niagara Falls to fan magazines to be more romantic. Talmadge was the eldest daughter of Fred Talmadge, a chronic unemployed alcoholic, and Margaret "Peg" Talmadge, a witty and indomitable woman. Talmadge's childhood was marked by poverty. One Christmas morning Fred Talmadge left the house to buy food and never came back, leaving his wife to raise their three little daughters. Peg took in laundry, sold cosmetics, taught painting classes, and rented out rooms, raising her daughters in Brooklyn, New York.

After telling her mother about a fellow classmate from Erasmus Hall High School who modeled for popular, illustrated song slides (which were often shown before the feature in movie theaters so that the audience could sing along), Mrs. Talmadge decided to locate the photographer and arranged an interview for her daughter, who, after an initial rejection, was hired soon after. When they went to the theater to see her "debut", Peg resolved to get her into motion pictures. Mrs. Talmadge pushed all three of her daughters to become actresses, encouraging them relentlessly to make money and invest it, though none of the sisters were really interested in being movie stars.

Career

Early films



Norma Talmadge, c. early 1920s

Talmadge was the eldest and the most beautiful among the three daughters and the first pushed by the mother to look for a career as a film actress. Mother and daughter traveled to the Vitagraph Studios in Flatbush, New York, just a streetcar ride from her home. They managed to get past the studio gates and in to see the casting director, who promptly threw them out. However, scenario editor Breta Breuil, attracted by Talmadge's beauty, arranged a small part for her as a young girl who is kissed under a photographer's cloth in *The Household Pest* (1909).

Thanks to Breuil's continued patronage, between 1911 and 1912, Talmadge played bit parts in over 100 films. She eventually earned a spot in the stock company at \$25 per week and got a steady stream of work. Her first role as a contract actress was 1911's *Neighboring Kingdom*, with comedian John Bunny. Her first real success came with the first original screen version of *A Tale of Two Cities* (1911), a three hour epic released in weekly one-reel segments in which she played the small role of Mimi, a seamstress who accompanies Sidney Carton to the guillotine. With help from the studio's major star, Maurice Costello, the star of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Talmadge's acting improved and she continued to play everything from leads to extras, gaining experience and public exposure in a variety of characters—from a colored mammy to a clumsy waitress to a reckless young modern, she began attracting both public and critical notice. By 1913 she was Vitagraph's most promising young actress. That same year she was assigned to Van Dyke Brooke's acting unit, and throughout 1913 and 1914 appeared in more films playing frequently with Antonio Moreno as her leading man.

In 1915, Talmadge got her big break, starring in Vitagraph's prestigious feature film *The Battle Cry of Peace*, an anti-German propagandist drama. But ambitious Peg saw that her daughter's potential could

carry them further, and got a two-year contract with National Pictures Company for eight features and \$400 per week. Talmadge's last film for Vitagraph was *The Crown Prince's Double*, and in the summer of 1915 she left Vitagraph. In the five years she had been with Vitagraph, she made over 250 films.

In August the Talmadges left for California where Norma's first role was in *Captivating Mary Carstairs*. The whole enterprise was a fiasco; the sets and costumes were cheap and the studio itself lacked adequate backing. The film was a flop, and the small new studio shut down after the release of *Mary Carstairs*. The demise of National Pictures Company left the family stranded in California after only one picture. Deciding it was smarter to aim high, they went to the Triangle Film Corporation, where D.W. Griffith was supervising productions. On the strength of *The Battle Cry*, Talmadge got a contract with Griffith's Fine Arts Company. For eight months, she starred in seven features for Triangle, including the comedy *The Social Secretary* (1916), a comedy written by Anita Loos and directed by John Emerson, that gave her an opportunity to disguise her beauty as a girl trying to avoid the unwelcome attentions of her male employers.

Norma Talmadge Film Corporation

When the contract ran out the Talmadges returned to New York. At a party, Talmadge met Broadway and film producer Joseph M. Schenck, a wealthy exhibitor who wanted to produce his own films. Immediately taken by Talmadge both personally and professionally, Schenck proposed marriage and a production studio. Two months later on October 20, 1916 they were married. Talmadge called her much older husband, "Daddy." He supervised, controlled and nurtured her career in alliance with her mother.

In 1917, the couple formed the Norma Talmadge Film Corporation, which became a lucrative enterprise. Schenck vowed he would make his wife the greatest star of all, and one to be remembered always. The best stories, most opulent costumes, grandest sets, talented casts and distinguished directors, along with spectacular publicity, would be hers. Before long, women around the world wanted to be the romantic Norma Talmadge and flocked to her extravagant movies filmed on the East Coast. Schenck soon had a stable of stars operating in his studio in New York, with the Norma Talmadge Film Corporation making dramas on the ground floor, the Constance Talmadge Film Corporation making sophisticated comedies on the second floor, and the Comic unit with Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle on the top floor, with Natalie Talmadge acting as secretary and taking occasional small roles in her sisters' films. Arbuckle brought in his nephew Al St. John and vaudeville star Buster Keaton. When Schenck decided it was financially advantageous to rent Arbuckle to Paramount Pictures for feature films, Keaton took over the comedy unit and soon married Natalie, bringing him more thoroughly into the Talmadge family fold, at least for a time.

Talmadge's first film for her studio, the now lost *Panthea*, (1917) was directed by Allan Dwan with assistants Erich von Stroheim and Arthur Rossen. The film was a dramatic tour de force for her in a story set in Russia, of a woman who sacrifices herself to help her husband. The film was a hit, turning Talmadge into a sensation and established her as a first rate dramatic actress.

Talmadge's acting ability improved rapidly during this period. She made between four and six films a year in New York between 1917 and 1921. Under Schenck's personal supervision other films followed, including *Poppy* (1917) in which, she was paired with Eugene O'Brien. The teaming was such a hit they made ten more films together, including *The Moth*, and *The Secret of the Storm Country*, a sequel to *Tess of the Storm Country* (1914), starring Mary Pickford. In 1918 she reteamed with Sidney Franklin who directed *The Safety Curtain*, *Her Only Way*, *Forbidden City*, *The Heart of Wetona*, and 1919's *The Probation Wife*. These films have an intimate feel, with small-scale settings and familiar actors appearing from one film to the next; even Talmadge's personal jewelry and pets can be recognized. An advantage of the East Coast locale was access to the country's best high fashion designers, such as

Madame Francis and Lucile. Eventually, Talmadge began writing a regular monthly fashion advice column for *Photoplay* magazine.

Hollywood films

Throughout the 1920s Talmadge continued to triumph in films such as 1920's *Yes or No*, *The Branded Woman*, *Passion Flower* (1921 *The Sign on the Door* (1921). The next year she had her biggest hit, *Smilin' Through* (1922) directed by Sidney Franklin. One of the greatest screen romances of the silent film era, it was remade twice, in 1932 with Norma Shearer and in 1941 with Jeanette MacDonald. This would be the most popular film of her entire career.

After *Smilin' Through*, Schenck closed the New York studios and Norma and Constance moved to Hollywood to join Keaton and Natalie, who had preceded them. Talmadge's Hollywood films were different from her New York films. Bigger and glossier, they were fewer but more varied, often with period or exotic settings. She teamed with cinematographer Tony Gaudio and some of Hollywood's finest costume designers for a more glamorous image. She also worked with top-flight directors such as Frank Lloyd, Clarence Brown, and Frank Borzage. Though her films were uneven, she did the finest work of her career during this period. With help from films directed by first husband Joseph M. Schenck, Talmadge became one of the most highly paid actresses of the 1920s.

In 1923, a poll of picture exhibitors named Norma Talmadge the number one box office star. She was earning \$10,000 a week, and receiving as many as 3,000 letters weekly from her fans. Her film *Secrets*, (1924), directed by Frank Borzage marked the pinnacle of her career giving her best performance and receiving the best reviews. In 1924, Joseph Schenck had moved over to head United Artists, but Talmadge still had a distribution contract with First National. She continued to make successful films such as *The Lady* (1925) directed by Frank Borzage and the romantic comedy *Kiki* (1926) directed by Clarence Brown, remade later by Mary Pickford as a sound film in 1931.

In 1927, Norma Talmadge started a famous Hollywood tradition when she accidentally stepped into wet concrete in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater.

Career decline

Talmadge's last film for First National was *Camille* (1926), a film adaptation of an Alexandre Dumas, fils novel later remade by Greta Garbo. During the filming of *Camille*, Talmadge fell in love with leading man Gilbert Roland. She asked Schenck for a divorce, but he was not ready to grant it. Despite his personal feelings, he was not going to break up a moneymaking team, and continued casting Roland in Talmadge's next three films released by United Artists. Talmadge and Schenck separated, though he continued producing her films. He was now president of the prestigious but theater-poor United Artists Corporation, and the rest of Talmadge's films were released for that company. UA's distribution problems, however, began to erode her popularity. Her first films for this studio, *The Dove* (1927) and *The Woman Disputed* (1928) were box-office failures and ended up being her last silent movies. (The latter film was shown before a highly appreciative audience at the 2010 San Francisco Silent Film Festival.)

By the time *Woman Disputed* (1928) was released, the talking film revolution had begun, and Talmadge began taking voice lessons in preparation. She worked diligently with voice coaches for over a year so she could make her sound debut. Her first talkie, *New York Nights* (1929), showed that she could speak and act acceptably in talkies. While her performance was good, the film was not. Talmadge next took on the role of Madame Du Barry in the 1930 film *DuBarry, Woman of Passion*. In spite of the elaborate

sets by William Cameron Menzies, incompetent direction and Talmadge's inexperience at a role requiring very demanding vocal acting, the film was a failure.

Talmadge's sister Constance sent her a telegram with this advice: "Quit pressing your luck, baby. The critics can't knock those trust funds Mama set up for us". As time passed, it was increasingly clear that the public was no longer interested in its old favorites, and Talmadge was seen as an icon of the past. Talmadge had been increasingly bored with filmmaking before the talkie challenge came along, and this setback seems to have discouraged her from further attempts.

She still had two more films on her United Artists contract. Samuel Goldwyn announced he had bought *The Greeks Had a Word for It* for her in late 1930, and she reportedly did some stage rehearsals for it in New York, but within a few months, she asked to be released from her contract and she never again appeared on screen.

Retirement

Once leaving the movie world, Norma Talmadge rid herself of all the duties and responsibilities of stardom. She sweetly told eager fans who were pressing her for an autograph as she left a restaurant, "Get away, dears. I don't need you anymore and you dont need me."

Some time before late 1932, Talmadge decided against marrying Gilbert Roland, as he was twelve years her junior and she feared he would eventually leave her. Mother Peg fell ill in 1931, and died in September 1933. In late 1932, Talmadge began seeing her ex-husband Joseph Schenck's poker friend, comedian George Jessel. In April 1934, Schenck, from whom she had been separated for seven years, finally granted Talmadge her divorce and nine days later, she married George Jessel. Schenck continued to do what he could for Norma and her sisters, acting as a financial adviser and guiding her business affairs.

Talmadge's last professional works consisted of appearances on Jessel's radio program, which was sagging in its ratings. The program soon ended, and the marriage did not last; the couple divorced in 1939. Schenck's business acumen and her mother's watchful ambition for her daughters had resulted in a huge fortune for Talmadge, and she never wanted for money. Restless since the end of her filmmaking days, Talmadge traveled, often shuttling between her houses, entertaining, and visiting with her sisters. In 1946, she married Dr. Carvel James, a Beverly Hills physician.

Later years and death

In her later years, Talmadge, who had never been comfortable with the burdens of public celebrity, became reclusive. Increasingly crippled by painful arthritis and reportedly to be dependent on painkilling drugs, she moved to the warm climate of Las Vegas, Nevada for her final years. In 1956, she was voted by her peers as one of the top five female stars of the pre-1925 era, but was too ill to travel to Rochester, New York to accept her award.

After suffering a series of strokes in 1957, Talmadge died of pneumonia on Christmas Eve of that year. At the time of her death, her estate was valued at more than USD\$1,000,000. For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Norma Talmadge has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1500 Vine Street. She is interred, along with Constance and Natalie in their own niche in the Abbey of the Psalms. The crypts are in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, Hollywood, CA.

Film characters modeled on Talmadge

A New York Times article from March 14, 2010 says that Talmadge "is misremembered, having inspired two unfair caricatures that have lived on in a pair of popular films. In *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), she is parodied as Lina Lamont... More malignantly, Billy Wilder used Norma Talmadge as the obvious if unacknowledged source of Norma Desmond, the grotesque, predatory silent movie queen of his 1950 film *Sunset Boulevard*."

Olive Borden

Olive Borden (July 14, 1906 – October 1, 1947) was an American actress in silent and early talkies. Nicknamed "The Joy Girl", Borden was known for her jet-black hair and overall beauty.



Early life

Olive Borden was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1906. Her birth name was often reported erroneously as Sybil Tinkle until the 1990s when it was discovered that another woman with the same name had been confused with Borden. Borden's father died when she was a baby and she was raised by her mother, Sibbie, in Norfolk and Baltimore, Maryland where she also attended Catholic boarding schools. She was a distant relative of Lizzie Borden. As a teenager, she persuaded her mother to take her to Hollywood to pursue a career in show business. To support themselves they opened a candy store and Olive worked as a telephone operator.



Career

Borden began her career as one of the Sennett Bathing Beauties in 1922 and was soon appearing as a vamp in Hal Roach comedy shorts. Producer Paul Bern chose her for a role in his film *The Dressmaker In Paris*. She was signed by Fox after being named a WAMPAS Baby Star in 1925 (along with cousin Natalie Joyce). Borden quickly became one of their most popular and highest paid stars earning a salary of \$1,500 a week. She had starring roles in 11 films at Fox including *3 Bad Men* and *Fig Leaves* both costarring her then-boyfriend George O'Brien. During this time she worked with some directors who would go on to achieve major fame, including John Ford, Howard Hawks and Leo McCarey.

When Fox cut her salary in 1927, she walked out on her contract. By this point she was a major star but she found it difficult to make the transition from silent films to "talkies". She worked to get rid of her Southern accent but could not overcome her reputation as being difficult. She was still in demand as an actress and continued to work for Columbia and RKO. Borden cut her trademark hair into a short bob and turned herself into a modern flapper. She made several movies in the early 1930s but her career stalled. Her last screen credit came in 1934 in the film *Chloe, Love Is Calling You*. She moved to New York where she had a brief stage career and made a living on the vaudeville circuit. By the late 1930s she had filed for bankruptcy and took a job at Macy's department store.

Personal life

Borden had two failed marriages. She married a stockbroker named Theodore Spector in March 1931. He was arrested for bigamy in 1932 when it was discovered he had married Borden before divorcing his first wife. The marriage was annulled. She married her second husband, electrician John Moeller, in 1934. That marriage ended in divorce seven years later.

From 1926 until 1930 she had been romantically involved with actor George O'Brien and the press reported they were engaged. She also dated director Marshall Neilan, producer Paul Bern, and had a long affair with Arthur Benline, Lieutenant Commander in the Navy Construction Battalion. For most of her life Borden lived with her mother, Sibbie.

Later years and death

In 1942, Borden joined the WAC where she has received an army citation for bravery in turning over an enemy ammunition truck. Her Army career ended after she was hospitalized in Walter Reed medical center with a severe foot injury. After her honorable discharge she attempted an unsuccessful comeback in films. She was now struggling with alcoholism and numerous health problems. Borden's final years were spent in the skid row section of Los Angeles scrubbing floors at the Sunshine Mission, a home for destitute women.

Borden died on October 1, 1947 from a stomach ailment and pneumonia at the age of 41. The only possession she had when she died was a signed photo of herself. She was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California. Her mother Sibbie was interred in the grave next to her.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Olive Borden has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6801 Hollywood Blvd. She was one of the first eight stars chosen to receive a star in 1958. Her name was drawn randomly from hundreds of nominees.

Olive Thomas

Olive Thomas (October 20, 1894 – September 10, 1920) was an American silent film actress and model. She is best remembered for her marriage to Jack Pickford and her death.



Early life

Thomas was born Oliva R. Duffy, though sometimes she claimed her birth name was Oliveretta Elaine Duffy. She was born into a working class Irish American family in the Pittsburgh-area steel town of Charleroi, Pennsylvania. Her father, James Duffy, a steelworker, died in 1906. She was forced to leave school at age 15 to help support her mother and two younger brothers, James and Williams. She sold gingham at Joseph Horne's department store for \$2.75 per week. In April 1911, aged 16, she married Bernard Krugh Thomas in McKees Rocks, a small mill town. During the two-year marriage, she reportedly worked as a clerk in Kaufmann's department store in Pittsburgh. After her divorce, she went to stay with a family member in New York City, where she found work in a Harlem department store.

In 1914, after answering a newspaper ad, she won "The Most Beautiful Girl in New York City", a contest run by the celebrated commercial artist Howard Chandler Christy. She then modeled for artist Harrison Fisher and eventually landed on the cover of *Saturday Evening Post*.

Rise to stardom



On a 1916 Midnight Frolic poster

Fisher wrote a letter of recommendation to Flo Ziegfeld resulting in Thomas being hired by the Ziegfeld Follies. However, Thomas later disputed this, claiming she walked right up and asked for the job. She subsequently performed in the much more risqué Midnight Frolic, a show staged after hours in the roof garden of the New Amsterdam Theatre. Unlike in the Follies, the women in the Midnight Frolic maintained a strict decorum on stage no matter how skimpy the costumes. The performers were clad only in balloons, allowing the virtually all male audience the opportunity to burst the balloons with their cigars. Thomas's reputation may be the reason the Pickford family later rejected her. However, the rest of society did not frown on these performers. Former stage performers who took on similar arrangements included Céleste Mogador, who became the Duchess of Chibrillon, Liane de Pougy, who became Princess Ghika, and Sarah Bernhardt, who became a legendary actress.

The Midnight Frolic was primarily a show for famous male patrons with plenty of money to bestow on the young and beautiful female performers. Before long, the attractive Thomas was the center of attention of the in-crowd associated with Condé Nast. She soon found herself being pursued by a number of very wealthy and powerful men. She received expensive gifts from her admirers, with rumors that the German Ambassador had given her a \$10,000 string of pearls.

Film career



1920 Alberto Vargas painting of Thomas

As part of her sudden fame, she posed nude for Peruvian artist Alberto Vargas, and signed with International Film Company as the leading lady in the Harry Fox movies. Thomas went on to appear in more than twenty Hollywood films over the next four years. She made her debut under her married name, "Olive Thomas", in the film *A Girl Like That*. Thomas then appeared in her final short of *Beatrice Fairfax*. In October 1916, Thomas moved to Triangle Pictures where she worked with Thomas Ince. Shortly after, news broke of her engagement to Jack Pickford, whom she had actually married a year prior. Of her marriage, Thomas said, "I didn't want people to say that I'm succeeding because of the Pickford name." During her time with Triangle, Thomas was referred to as "The Triangle Star".

In December 1918, Thomas was persuaded by Myron Selznick to sign with Selznick Pictures Company. She hoped for more serious roles, believing that with her husband signed to the same company, she would have more influence. She soon became the first Selznick star and created the image of the "baby vamp". In 1920, Thomas once again played a teenager in the Frances Marion movie *The Flapper*. In a time when actors were defined by the type of role they played, Thomas felt she had no film type, saying, "But I want to create a certain role, you see Mary is the kid in pictures; Norma does drama; Constance is

the flippant, flighty wife; Dorothy the hoyden; Nazimova is exotic and steeped in mystery, my Jack does boys, while I--I--why don't you see, I am just nothing at all!"

Thomas was one of the first actresses to be described by the term flapper, along with Clara Bow, Louise Brooks, and Joan Crawford. She would go on to play the flapper roles in her final films including *A Youthful Folly*, and her final film *Everybody's Sweetheart*. The formula proved successful and by the time of her death, Thomas was making \$3,000 a week.

Personal life



Autographed photo of Olive Thomas, circa 1916

Thomas was always close to her mother, speaking of her desire to see her on her death bed. Her mother remarried to Harry VanKirk giving Thomas a half sister, Harriet Duffy, born in 1914. She had two brothers: James Duffy (born 1896) and William Duffy (born 1899). She helped James set up an electrical shop while William was in the Marines. Later, William worked as a cameraman. By the time of her death, both brothers were employed with Selznick Productions.

Thomas was known for her partying and wild ways which was also increased after marrying Pickford. Alcohol began playing a large role in Thomas' life (alcoholism ran in the Pickford family), fueling most of the drama with her husband and possibly car crashes as well. She had three automobile accidents in two years, one seriously injuring a 9 year old. She eventually hired a chauffeur.

Thomas met actor Jack Pickford, brother of one of the most powerful silent stars Mary Pickford, at a beach cafe on the Santa Monica Pier. Pickford was known for his wild partying and together the pair were a lot of trouble. Screenwriter Frances Marion remarked, "...I had seen her often at the Pickford home, for she was engaged to Mary's brother, Jack. Two innocent-looking children, they were the gayest, wildest brats who ever stirred the stardust on Broadway. Both were talented, but they were much more interested in playing the roulette of life than in concentrating on their careers."



Thomas photographed at an unknown date.

Thomas eloped with Pickford on October 25, 1916 in New Jersey. None of their family was present, with only actor Thomas Meighan as their witness. The couple would never have children of their own, and in 1920, they adopted her then six year old nephew when his mother died.

By most accounts, she was the love of Pickford's life, the marriage was stormy and filled with highly-charged conflict, followed by lavish making up through the exchange of expensive gifts. In a March 1920 issue of *Motion Picture* magazine, Thomas said of the drama-fueled relationship, "He's always sending me something and then I send him something back. You see, we have to bridge the distance in some way. At first I just couldn't get used to the idea of living this way, but I suppose one gets used to anything, given time. When we were together we used to use up the time fighting over things. I'd say, 'You were out with this person or that person,' and he'd come back at me in the same way, and we'd have a lively time of it, but we're over that now. We know that we can't sit home by the fireside ALL the time just because we cannot be together."

Pickford's family did not always approve of Thomas though most of the family did attend her funeral. In Mary Pickford's 1955 autobiography *Sunshine and Shadow*, she wrote, "I regret to say that none of us approved of the marriage at that time. Mother thought Jack was too young, and Lottie and I felt that Olive, being in musical comedy, belonged to an alien world. Ollie had all the rich, eligible men of the social world at her feet. She had been deluged with proposals from her own world of the theater as well. Which was not at all surprising. The beauty of Olive Thomas is legendary. The girl had the loveliest violet-blue eyes I have ever seen. They were fringed with long dark lashes that seemed darker because of the delicate translucent pallor of her skin. I could understand why Florenz Ziegfeld never forgave Jack for taking her away from the Follies. She and Jack were madly in love with one another but I always thought of them as a couple of children playing together..."

Death

For many years, the Pickfords had intended to vacation together. Both Pickford and Thomas were constantly traveling and had little time to spend together. With their marriage on the rocks, the couple decided to take a second honeymoon. In August 1920, the pair headed for Paris, France, hoping to combine a vacation with some film preparations.

On the night of September 5, 1920, the Pickfords went out for a night of entertainment and partying at the famous bistros in the Montparnasse Quarter of Paris. Returning to their room in the Hotel Ritz around 3:00 a.m., Pickford either fell asleep or was outside the room for a final round of drugs. It was rumored that Thomas may have taken cocaine that night though it was never proven. An intoxicated and tired Thomas accidentally ingested a large dose of a mercury bichloride liquid solution, which had been

prescribed for her husband's chronic syphilis. Being liquid it was supposed to be applied topically, not ingested.

She had either thought the flask contained drinking water or sleeping pills; accounts vary. The label was in French which may have added to the confusion. She screamed, "Oh, my God!", and Pickford ran to pick her up in his arms. However, it was too late, she had already ingested a lethal dose. She was taken to the American Hospital in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, where Pickford, together with her former in-law Owen Moore, remained at her side until she succumbed to the poison a few days later. Soon after her death, rumors began that she tried to commit suicide or had been murdered. A police investigation followed as well as an autopsy, and Thomas' death was ruled accidental.

Pickford gave his account of that night to *The Los Angeles Examiner* on September 13, 1920:

"...We arrived back at the Ritz hotel at about 3 o'clock in the morning. I had already booked airplane seats for London. We were going Sunday morning. Both of us were tired out. We both had been drinking a little. I insisted that we had better not pack then, but rather get up early before our trip and do it then. I went to bed immediately. She fussed around and wrote a note to her mother. ... She was in the bathroom.

Suddenly she shrieked: 'My God.' I jumped out of bed, rushed toward her and caught her in my arms. She cried to me to find out what was in the bottle. I picked it up and read: 'Poison.' It was a toilet solution and the label was in French. I realized what she had done and sent for the doctor. Meanwhile, I forced her to drink water in order to make her vomit. She screamed, 'O, my God, I'm poisoned.' I forced the whites of eggs down her throat, hoping to offset the poison. The doctor came. He pumped her stomach three times while I held Olive. Nine o'clock in the morning I got her to the Neuilly Hospital, where Doctors Choate and Wharton took charge of her. They told me she had swallowed bichloride of mercury in an alcoholic solution, which is ten times worse than tablets. She didn't want to die. She took the poison by mistake. We both loved each other since the day we married. The fact that we were separated months at a time made no difference in our affection for each other. She even was conscious enough the day before she died to ask the nurse to come to America with her until she had fully recovered, having no thought she would die. She kept continually calling for me. I was beside her day and night until her death. The physicians held out hope for her until the last moment, until they found her kidneys paralyzed. Then they lost hope. But the doctors told me she had fought harder than any patient they ever had. She held onto her life as only one case in fifty. She seemed stronger the last two days. She was conscious, and said she would get better and go home to her mother. 'It's all a mistake, darling Jack,' she said. But I knew she was dying. She was kept alive only by hypodermic injections during the last twelve hours. I was the last one she recognized. I watched her eyes glaze and realized she was dying. I asked her how she was feeling and she answered: 'Pretty weak, but I'll be all right in a little while, don't worry, darling.' Those were her last words. I held her in my arms and she died an hour later. Owen Moore was at her bedside. All stories and rumors of wild parties and cocaine and domestic fights since we left New York are untrue...

Funeral and legacy



The mausoleum of Olive Thomas Pickford

Pickford brought her body back to the United States. Several accounts state Pickford tried to commit suicide en route but was talked out of it. According to Mary Pickford's autobiography, "Jack crossed the ocean with Ollie's body. It wasn't until several years later that he confessed to Mother how one night during the voyage back he put on his trousers and jacket over his pajamas, went up on deck, and was climbing over the rail when something inside him said: 'You can't do this to your mother and sisters. It would be a cowardly act. You must live and face the future.'"

On September 29, 1920, an Episcopalian funeral service was held at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in New York for Thomas. According to the *New York Times* a police escort was needed and the entire church was jammed. Several women fainted at the ceremony and several men had their hats crushed in the rush to view the coffin. Thomas was interred in Woodlawn Cemetery, The Bronx, New York. Her effects were later sold off for her estate on November 20, 1920. The sale netted \$26,931 with Mabel Normand and Lewis Selznick buying several items.

In popular culture

Thomas' ghost is said to haunt the New Amsterdam Theatre in New York City.

In 2004, with funding from Timeline Films, and with the help of Hugh Hefner and his film preservation organization, Sarah J. Baker premiered her documentary on Olive Thomas' life titled *Olive Thomas: Everybody's Sweetheart*.

In 2007, McFarland Publishing Company released a biography entitled *Olive Thomas: The Life and Death of a Silent Film Beauty*, written by Michelle Vogel.

A musical entitled *Ghostlight* about the life of Olive Thomas was written by Matthew Martin and Tim Realbuto. *Ghostlight* opened in New York City at the Signature Theatre on September 26th, 2011 and was presented by the New York Musical Theatre Festival. It starred Drama Desk Award winner Rachel York as Billie Burke, Tony nominee Michael Hayden as Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., Tony Award winner Daisy Eagan as Molly Cook, Kimberly Faye Greenberg as Fanny Brice, Matt Leisy as Jack Pickford and newcomer Rachael Fogle in the leading role of Olive Thomas.

Patsy Ruth Miller

Patsy Ruth Miller (January 17, 1904 – July 16, 1995) was an American film actress.



Career

Patsy Ruth Miller was a leading actress in over 70 Hollywood silent and early talking films. She began her career at age 16 as a supporting actress in the Rudolph Valentino vehicle *Camille* (1921) after she was discovered by star Alla Nazimova during a family vacation to Hollywood. Though she was adequate for her roles, Miller was never considered a major star. Her most famous role was that of the gypsy Esmerelda, played opposite Lon Chaney's hunchback in the classic *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923). She retired from films in 1931, and went on to become a script writer for radio shows and a short story writer. Her short stories garnered her three O. Henry awards. Miller also penned a novel, "The Flanagan Girl" (1939), and the libretto for a Broadway musical biography of Tchaikovsky, "Music in My Heart".

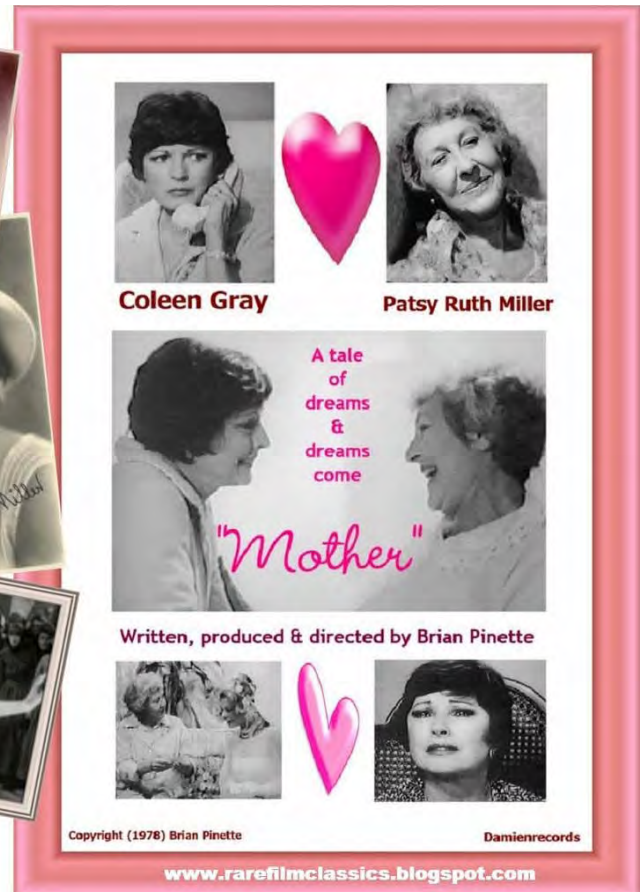
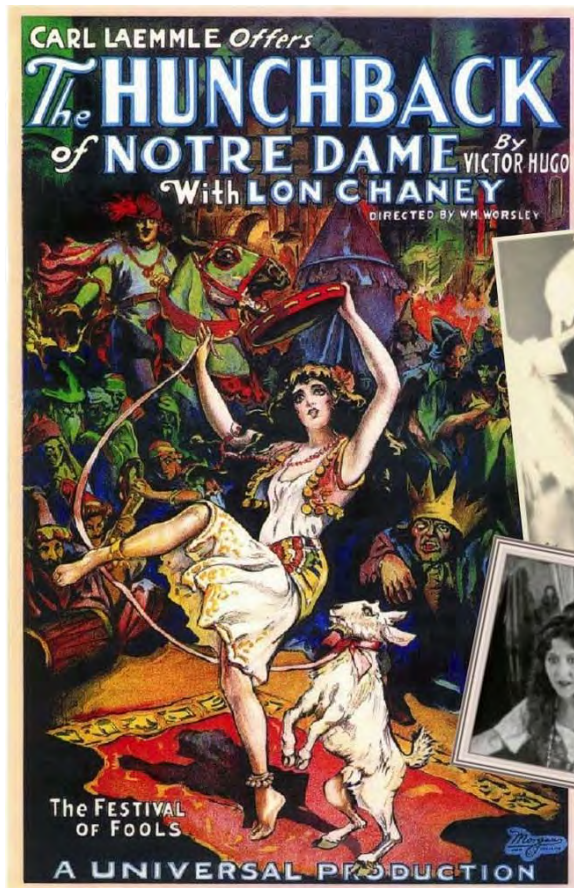
After being discovered by the actress Alla Nazimova at a Hollywood party, Patsy Ruth Miller got her first break with a small role in *Camille*, which starred Rudolph Valentino. Her roles gradually improved, and she was chosen as a WAMPAS Baby Star in 1922.

In 1923, she was acclaimed for her performance Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* opposite Lon Chaney, Sr..

In the later part of the decade Miller appeared chiefly in light romantic comedies, opposite such actors as Clive Brook and Edward Everett Horton. Among her film credits in the late 1920s are *Broken Hearts of Hollywood* (1926), *A Hero for a Night* (1927), *Hot Heels* (1928), and *The Aviator* (1929).

She retired from films in 1931. She made a cameo appearance in the 1951 film, *Quebec*, which starred John Barrymore Jr., and stated in her autobiography that she had participated as a joke. She came out of retirement to do the film *Mother* in 1978.

She later achieved recognition as a writer. She won three O. Henry Awards for her short stories, wrote a novel, radio scripts, and plays. She also performed for a brief time on Broadway.



Personal life

Miller was married three times, the first two ended in divorce. Her first husband was film director Tay Garnett and the second was screenwriter John Lee Mahin. Her third husband, businessman E.S. Deans, died in 1986. The frequent news about her love life once earned Miller the sobriquet *the most engaged girl in Hollywood*.

Patsy Ruth Miller died at her home in Palm Desert, California in 1995, aged 91.

Paul Robeson

Paul Leroy Robeson (April 9, 1898 – January 23, 1976) was an American concert singer (bass), recording artist, actor, athlete, scholar who was an advocate for the Civil Rights Movement in the first half of the twentieth century. He gained international attention for his work in the arts and he merged his artistic career with political activism to speak out for the equality of minorities and the rights of workers throughout the world. His affiliation with the Soviet Union and criticism of the lack of progress in civil rights in the United States at the outset of the Cold War and during the age of McCarthyism brought scrutiny, conflict and retribution from the American government and led to his public persona becoming diminished, him becoming economically blacklisted, and him being eschewed by the Civil Rights Movement in the second half of the twentieth century. He endured through the end of McCarthyism and was briefly returned to the artistic spotlight, but the events in the 1950s had taken a physical and mental toll on him and he lived out the last years of his life privately.



Robeson won a scholarship to Rutgers College and there he was an All-American football player, and valedictorian of his class. He further advanced his education attending Columbia Law School, while playing professionally in the National Football League and singing and acting in off-campus productions. He graduated from law school and had a brief stint working as a lawyer before focusing his career on the arts. He made extended singing tours of the United States and Europe, made nine films, and became an international star of stage, screen, radio and film.

He was the first major concert star to popularize the performance of Negro spirituals and was the first black actor to portray Shakespeare's *Othello* with an otherwise all-white cast. As his artistic career progressed, he increasingly became a more out-spoken political artist. His promulgated political beliefs, with respect to American policy, caught the attention of the FBI, the CIA and the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), and also brought public condemnation in the United States.

In 1950, his passport was revoked under the McCarran Act over his work in the anti-imperialism movement, his criticism of United States civil rights policies, and his affiliation with members of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA). Though internationally acclaimed, he was blacklisted in the United States from performing on stage, screen, radio and television and as a result, his income suffered because he was not able to travel overseas. His right to travel was restored in 1958, but his already faltering health broke down under controversial circumstances in 1963.

Early life

Early days

Paul Robeson was born in Princeton, New Jersey in 1898, to Reverend William Drew Robeson and Maria Louisa Bustill. He had three brothers, William Drew Jr. (born 1881), Reeve (born c. 1887), and Benjamin (born c. 1893), and one sister, Marian (born c. 1895). Maria was from a prominent, black, Quaker family of mixed ancestry: African, Anglo-American, and Lenape. William was born a slave but escaped from a plantation in North Carolina when he was in his teens. William then served in an honorable, yet not formally inducted, capacity with the Union Army during the American Civil War. Post-bellum, he earned a degree from Lincoln University and became a minister of Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church in Princeton in 1881.

In 1900, an indeterminate disagreement between William and a commission composed of white, financial supporters of Witherspoon arose with apparent racial undertones, which were prevalent at the time in Princeton. William, who was well respected and had the support of his entirely black congregation, resigned under pressure from the commission in 1901. The loss of William's ministry forced him to work odd jobs at meager pay. Three years later when Paul was six years old, Louisa, who was nearly blind from cataracts, tragically died in a house fire. Eventually, William was financially incapable of providing a house for himself and his two sons still living with him, Ben and Paul, so they took up residence in the attic of a store in Westfield, New Jersey.

A few years later in 1910, William found stability in the parsonage as Reverend of the St. Thomas A. M. E. Zion where Robeson, a regular attendant, would occasionally fill in for his father when he was momentarily called away. In 1912, Robeson attended the non-segregated Somerville High School, where he performed in Julius Caesar, Othello, sang in the chorus, and excelled in football, basketball, baseball and track. His athletic dominance sometimes occasioned racial taunts by opponents, which he discreetly ignored. Throughout his upbringing, William continually stressed the importance of Robeson's studies, and in 1915, he won a statewide academic contest that awarded him a full scholarship to Rutgers. Robeson then headed for Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island to work as a waiter at a beach resort for the wealthy, where he befriended Fritz Pollard.

Rutgers University



Robeson (far left) was Rutgers Class of 1919 and one of four students selected into Cap and Skull

In the fall of 1915, Robeson became the third African American student ever enrolled at Rutgers, and the only one at the time. Although Robeson was determined to excel at his studies, he tried out for the Rutgers Scarlet Knights football team that fall. During tryouts, the players tested his resolve to make the team by engaging in unwarranted, and excessive play that was somewhat precipitated by racism. In an ensuing practice, Robeson used his superior size and strength to physically exact retribution against the other players. Witnessing Robeson's brutal tactics, the coach, Foster Sanford, decided Robeson had conquered the tribulation and announced that he had made the team.

Robeson then joined the college debate team, and also became involved with, although he refrained from joining, the Glee Club, as membership required attending all-white mixers. Undeterred, he sang on-campus at informal gatherings and off-campus in minor gigs to earn spending money. In his sophomore year of football, he was, in a stinging insult, benched, for the first and last time, when a *Southern* team refused to play a team that fielded a Negro. About this time, he began his membership with the Rutgers basketball, the track and field, and the baseball team. After a standout junior year of football, William fell grievously ill. Consequently, Robeson took sole responsibility to care for him as he shuttled between Rutgers and Sommerville. Three days after his father's death, he somberly expounded on the incongruity of African Americans fighting and dying to protect America, yet were not afforded the same opportunities as whites.

His college career would close out with him having won four yearly oratorical contests and numerous varsity letters in football, baseball, basketball, and track and field. His play as an end in football resulted in him being named a first-team All-American in both his junior and senior year, with Walter Camp considering him the greatest defensive end of all time. Academically, he was accepted into Phi Beta Kappa and into Cap and Skull, Rutgers' honor society. Due to the high opinion his classmates had of him and his future, they elected him the 1919 class valedictorian. In his valedictorian speech entitled *The New Idealism*, he exhorted his classmates to work for equality for all Americans. That day, The Daily Targum published a poem honoring his achievements at Rutgers.

Columbia Law School

Robeson moved to Bedford–Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and entered New York University School of Law in the fall of 1919. To financially support himself, he became an assistant football coach for Pollard at Lincoln University, where he joined the African-American fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi.. Uncomfortable with the immaturity of the students at NYU, he transferred to Columbia Law School in February 1920 and moved to Harlem and. At about this time, Robeson began dating Eslanda "Essie" Goode, a histological chemist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. At the behest of the producer of *Simon the Cyrenian*, he gave his theatrical debut as Simon in the play at the Harlem YMCA that summer. After a year of courtship, Essie and Robeson married on August 17, 1921.

Robeson was recruited by Pollard to play for the Akron Pros for the 1921 NFL season, while he maintained his status as a full-time student. In the spring, he post-postponed some of his law studies to portray Jim in *Taboo* by Mary Hoyt Wiborg. Robeson then sang in the production of *Shuffle Along* before abandoning it to take part in the British tour of *Taboo* in the summer. The play, renamed *Voodoo*, was adapted by director Mrs. Patrick Campbell to give greater prominence to his acclaimed singing. After the play's run, he befriended Lawrence Brown before returning to the United States and continuing his law studies whilst playing for the Milwaukee Badgers for the 1922 NFL season. Robeson ended his playing relationship with football after 1922, and a few months later, he graduated from Columbia, although he was not enthusiastic about becoming a lawyer.

Theatrical ascension and ideological transformation (1923–1939)

Harlem renaissance (1923-1928)

Robeson started working for the law firm of Stotesbury and Miner in New York City where he established himself as a competent lawyer, but when a white secretary refused to take dictation from him because he was a "nigger", he resigned in protest.

He was acclaimed for his 1924 Provincetown Playhouse performance in the title role of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. Charles Sidney Gilpin had premiered the role in 1920. He also gained recognition for his starring performance in the premier production of O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* (1924). He portrayed the husband of an abusive white woman (played by Mary Blair). Resenting him, she destroys his promising career as a lawyer. The interracial marriage was controversial for many members of both black and white audiences. He next played Crown in the stage version of DuBose Heyward's novel *Porgy*.

In the 1920s, he found fame as an actor and singing star of both stage and radio with his bass voice and commanding presence. His voice could descend as low as C below the bass clef. He and his accompanist and arranger Lawrence Brown were the first to bring spirituals to the concert stage; their association lasted through four decades.

He had reconnected with the accompanist and arranger Lawrence Brown in 1924, and they rapidly established a successful musical partnership. He later credited Brown for guiding him "...to the beauty of my own folk music and to the music of all other Peoples so like our own."

Lawrence Brown had previously worked with the gospel singer Roland Hayes, and he had an extensive repertoire of African-American folk songs. His partnership with Robeson helped bring these works to much wider attention both in the US and abroad. Robeson became a hugely popular concert draw in New York City, and Essie acted as his agent and manager. Carl Sandburg distinguished between Robeson's interpretation of spirituals and that of Roland Hayes, saying that "Hayes imitates white culture... Robeson is the real thing...."

Robeson's earliest film was *Body and Soul* (1925), a silent American race film directed by Oscar Micheaux. Robeson played both a conniving preacher, and his twin brother. Disapproving of seeing a preacher as a negative character, the New York Motion Pictures Commission ordered Micheaux to reduce that part.

Robeson was broadcast in performance on New York radio, usually performing Negro spirituals; on June 7, 1927 he was a featured performer on the *Edison Hour*.

They had one son, Paul Robeson, Jr., born November 2, 1927.

British stage (1928-1934)

Robeson played the role of Joe in the London production of the American musical *Show Boat*, by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. His rendition of "Ol' Man River" is widely considered the definitive version of the song. While *Show Boat* was immensely popular with audiences, black US theater reviewers were less than impressed. *Show Boat* was the Theatre Royal's biggest money maker up to that point, running for 350 performances. The acclaim the musical received brought a royal audience, principally King George and Queen Mary, albeit on a night Robeson thought, remorsefully, he was off pitch. At the invitation of a group of Labour MPs, he had lunch at the

House of Commons, perhaps the first actor to do so. After the musical ended its long run, the Robesons stayed on in London, renting a house at Hampstead. In spring 1929 Robeson and Lawrence Brown went on a tour of Europe, performing in Vienna, Prague and Budapest, before returning to London for a concert at the Albert Hall.

In a 1929 entry in his diary, Robeson expressed the thought that his career and marriage were part of a "higher plan", writing: "God watches over me and guides me. He's with me and let's me fight my own battles and hopes I'll win."

Robeson became interested in the folk music of the world; his standard repertoire after the 1920s included songs in Chinese, Russian, Yiddish and German.

In May 1930, Robeson starred in the title role in William Shakespeare's *Othello* in London, the first black actor to play the role in Britain since Ira Aldridge. The production met with mixed reviews which pointed out Robeson's "highly civilized quality grand style." The play introduced Robeson to Peggy Ashcroft, portraying Desdemona, and they promptly began a series of trysts that would last for decades.

Robeson's second film was the experimental *Borderline*. Shot in Switzerland in 1930 by a trio of *avant garde* artists known as the Pool Group, and co-starring Essie, the film chronicles race relations in a small European village.

Concurrently, Robeson met a group of unemployed miners, who had taken part in a hunger march from South Wales. After taking them for their first meal in days, he decided to help their cause. He visited the Rhondda Valley and the Talygarn Miners' Rest Home, and performed for miners and their families in Cardiff, Neath and Aberdare. In Cardiff, he often stayed with his uncle by marriage, Aaron Albert Mossell, a black Communist active in Pan-Africanism.

Nevertheless, in an interview with W. R. Titterton in 1930, Robeson believed he should be apolitical and "ultimately accountable only to himself and his art; the prophet and the warrior are by definition at odds with the artist." In 1933, he returned briefly to the US where he reprised his title role in Dudley Murphy's film version of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. The American version of *The Emperor Jones* was censored to leave out a dramatic scene featuring Robeson killing a white prison guard who had ordered his character to beat a fellow prisoner who had been caught escaping. In 1934, he performed in Caernarfon to benefit the victims of a major disaster at Gresford Colliery, where 264 miners had died.



Paul Robeson House, a School of Oriental and African Studies hall of residence opened in 1998.

Enrolled in phonetics and Swahili at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London in 1934, Robeson also studied other languages there and independently while in London, including Igbo, Yoruba, Zulu, Chinese, Russian and Hindi.

Living in London, Robeson became increasingly cognizant of African history and culture in England. During the 1930s he met with African students in London, who urged him to travel to the Soviet Union. Paul and Essie were named honorary members of the West African Students' Union in London, where they became good friends with future national presidents Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta. In essays such as "I want to be African", Robeson wrote of his desire to embrace his heritage. He compared the issues of peoples in the colonial possessions of Western Europe and African Americans. Robeson's experiences during the 1930s caused him to alter how he felt about the relationship between art and activism. His African studies, contacts in the anti-imperialism movement, and half-decade association with British socialists led him to visit the Soviet Union. He did not make any public declaration of support for socialism, saying: "In England they call me a 'Communist' because of my views, but I'm certainly not a member of the Communist Party."

Essie soon learned that her husband was involved in extramarital affairs but she tolerated them in order to maintain their marriage. She also had her own extramarital affairs. Robeson felt that Essie was instrumental to his success both as his manager and his intellectual partner. Essie's diaries and their shared correspondence demonstrated that at times there was anger and recrimination on both sides of their partnership. Despite his ambivalence at times about marriage, he knew that divorcing Essie would hurt his stature in the black community.

In the 1930s, the couple began legal proceedings toward divorce when Robeson fell in love with Yolanda Jackson, a British woman, but the relationship ended abruptly. Essie and Robeson stayed together, continuing an open marriage until Essie died on December 23, 1965.

Robeson and his wife visited the Soviet Union in December 1934 on a invitation from Sergei Eisenstein. At a stopover in Nazi Germany, they felt, depending on sources, at the very least a palpable sense of physical danger because of racism. In the Soviet Union, Robeson was welcomed by members of the artistic community, including Eisenstein, who became a close friend. Robeson met with African Americans who had migrated to the USSR. He found the USSR free of racism and racial segregation. He spoke of the transparency of his race he felt there and the "joy and happiness and friendliness, this utter absence of any embarrassment over a 'race question' is all the more keenly felt by me because of the day I spent in Berlin on the way here, and that was a day of horror—in an atmosphere of hatred, fear and suspicion." Robeson declared that African American spiritual music resonated to Russian folk traditions.

European stage (1935-1939)

He first became an international box office movie star with a British film, *Sanders of the River* (1935). However, he was so disappointed by the final cut of the movie, a stereotypical portrayal of Africa under imperialist rule, that he became more politically conscious of his roles. He was the first black actor to have characters that expressed both dignity and pride in African heritage. He played the role of Toussaint L'Ouverture in the 1936 play *Black Majesty* by C.L.R. James, alongside the actor Robert Adams. He had long wanted to play the role, but the production closed after two weeks. (Adams went on to co-star in two of Robeson's films, *Song of Freedom* and *King Solomon's Mines*, and founded the Negro Repertory Arts Theater.) Robeson was one of the first actors of any race to demand (and receive) final cut approval on a film *Song of Freedom* (1936).

The 1936 Universal Pictures film *Show Boat* was a box office hit for Robeson. It is the most frequently shown of all his films, in particular his performance of the main song "Ol' Man River". He was also King Umbopa in the 1937 version of *King Solomon's Mines*. In films such as *Jericho* and *Proud Valley*, he portrayed strong black American male leading roles without the subservience typical of roles for blacks at the time. In 1938, Robeson appeared in a well-received two-month run of Herbert Marshall's

Plant in the Sun. The play dealt with sit-down strikes and union organizing in the US, and was produced by the Unity Theatre. From 1938 onwards, he altered the lyrics of Ol' Man River, to transform it to a song of black defiance and perseverance.

Commenting in 1935 on the execution of several counter-revolutionaries, Robeson said: "From what I have already seen of the workings of the Soviet Government, I can only say that anybody who lifts his hand against it ought to be shot!" Robeson admired the 1936 Soviet Constitution, which banned, de jure, racial discrimination.

Robeson believed the Spanish Civil War was a struggle between a popularly elected government that sought peace and freedom, the Republicans, and the fascists that sought to enslave the masses through tyranny, the Nationalists. Robeson's view of the Soviet Union was enhanced by its assistance to the Republicans. In 1937, Robeson from Moscow to London to attend a rally in support of Spanish refugees and he used his performance to advocate the Republican cause. In his performance, he changed the lyrics of "Old Man River" from "I'm tired of livin' and scared of dyin'" to "I must keep fightin' until I'm dyin'." By December 1937 Robeson had addressed four rallies for the Republican cause and had denounced fascist Italy's attack on Ethiopia.

His business agent was concerned about the implications of him becoming politically involved. However, Robeson had decided that contemporary events were paramount and trumped commercialism. No longer would he appear in "decadent Hollywood films", he stated, but instead would portray "the life, hopes and aspirations of the struggling people from which I come." Visiting Spain in 1938, Robeson met with the American men and women of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade on the battlefields. Back in Europe, he raised funds for the Spanish Republic, and to aid returning wounded Lincoln veterans in need of medical care. Throughout his life he cited the struggle against fascism in Spain as an essential part of shaping his transformation into a political artist and activist, writing in his autobiography that Spain was "the turning point of my life." Robeson recorded a message to the Republicans, which would become his epitaph:

The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice. I had no alternative. The history of the capitalist era is characterized by the degradation of my people: despoiled of their lands, their culture destroyed, ... denied equal protection under law, and deprived their rightful place in the respect of their fellows. Not through blind faith or coercion but conscious of my course, I take my place with you.

In 1938, he performed for an audience of 7,000 at the Welsh International Brigades National Memorial in Mountain Ash, to commemorate the 33 men from Wales killed while fighting on the side of the Republicans. And These staged performances for the miners, coupled with impromptu visits to the miners' pits and seeing their working conditions, had a profound influence on his political development. Robeson soon befriended the miners and because of advocacy of the theirs, and others, labor strife, he became a popular cultural figure in Wales.

Height of fame and World War II (1940–1945)

After his return from Europe after the outbreak of World War II, Robeson quickly became a national celebrity once again when he performed *Ballad for Americans*, an American patriotic cantata with lyrics by John La Touche and music by Earl Robinson. Originally titled *The Ballad for Uncle Sam*, it was written for a Works Progress Administration theatre project called *Sing for Your Supper*. In 1940, Robeson appeared in *The Proud Valley*, playing a black laborer who arrives in the Rhondda and wins the hearts of the local people. The film won good reviews. He sang *Ballad for Americans* at The Hollywood Bowl to the largest sold-out crowd in its history. The Beverly Wilshire was the only hotel in Los

Angeles willing to accommodate Robeson, at the then exorbitant rate of \$100 per night and only if he would register under an assumed name. He complied with the requirements, but then arranged to spend two hours every afternoon sitting in the lobby, where he could easily be recognized. When asked why, he responded, "To ensure that the next time Black singers and actors come through, they'll have a place to stay." During that period, Collier's magazine named him both "favorite male Negro singer" and "America's no. 1 entertainer."

Robeson co-founded with Max Yergan the International Committee on African Affairs in 1937 (from 1941, the Council on African Affairs, CAA). The CAA provided information about Africa across the US, particularly to African-Americans. During World War II, it functioned as a coalition including a variety of activists from varying leftist backgrounds. Its most successful campaign was probably that for South African famine relief in 1946. Under the weight of internal disputes, government repression, and financial hardships, the CAA disbanded in 1955.

When Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war, Robeson was among the first performers to give benefit concerts on behalf of the American war effort, making him one of the top American actors and singers of that era.



Paul Robeson as painted by Betsy Graves Reyneau, in the collection of the National Archives and Records Administration

In February 1942, Robeson was approached by the sculptor Isamu Noguchi to join a panel of prominent non-Asians testifying before Congress to the loyalty of Japanese Americans, in order to avert mass removal. Robeson volunteered but the panel idea was dropped once Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.

In 1942 Robeson performed in the Frontier Films production of *Native Land*. A combination of a documentary format and staged reenactments, the film depicted the struggle of trade unions against anti-union corporations. It was based on the La Follette Committee's investigation of the repression of labor organizing. The FBI labeled it "...obviously a Communist project."

In 1942 when he was studying Chinese, the FBI stole one of his Chinese notebooks and had it translated to ascertain whether or not it contained an encoded message related to his involvement, if any, with the CPUSA.

In 1942, in Hollywood, Robeson participated in the anthology film *Tales of Manhattan*. His segment depicted black people's living conditions under the sharecropping system. Robeson was dissatisfied, calling it "very offensive to my people. It makes the Negro childlike and innocent and is in the old

plantation hallelujah shouter tradition". He attempted to remove the film from distribution by buying up all prints proved far too expensive. Robeson held a press conference, announcing that he would no longer act in Hollywood films because of the demeaning roles available to black actors and would gladly join others in picketing the film. During this period, Robeson also turned down roles in *Moby Dick*, *Gone With The Wind*, *Song of the South* and *Porgy and Bess*.

Robeson performed "Ballad" on the CBS radio network in 1943, accompanied by chorus and orchestra. Bing Crosby made a commercially successful recording of the piece, but the song is closely associated with Robeson, standing at the pinnacle of his music and radio career prior to the Cold War.

Robeson remained attentive to Nisei concerns. In a 1943 speech, he praised "the workers from Mexico and from the east--Japan and the Philippines--whose labor has helped make the west and the southwest a fruitful land."

In winter 1943, Robeson traveled to Boston where he called for a full investigation into the recent rash of anti-Semitic acts of vandalism against a Jewish cemetery and a synagogue. The following month he spoke at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, at 12th Annual *Herald Tribune* Forum, on the participation of African Americans in the fight against the Axis powers. In December, 1943, Robeson addressed an annual meeting of Major League Baseball club owners, demanding they admit black players to major league baseball, helping to pave the way for the color barrier to be broken.

In 1946, he opposed a move by the Canadian government to deport thousands of Japanese Canadians. Robeson accepted honorary life membership of the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy and gave a concert in Salt Lake City, then home to the Japanese American Citizens League.



Paul Robeson with Uta Hagen in the Theatre Guild production of *Othello* (1943-4).

The Broadway Othello

Robeson reprised the role of Othello in New York in 1943 under the direction of Margaret Webster, and toured the US with it until 1945. As of 2011, his run of *Othello* is the longest of any Shakespeare play on Broadway, running for 296 performances. Uta Hagen played Desdemona, and José Ferrer played Iago. For his portrayal, Robeson received a Donaldson Award (forerunner of the Tony Award), as well

as the Gold Medal for the best diction in the American theater, which had only been awarded nine times since its inception in 1924. The eighteen-disc 78 RPM record album made by Columbia Masterworks from this production was the longest spoken word album made until then, and the first two-hour album ever made of a Shakespeare play. It was later released on LP and years later on CD.

The play had its Broadway run at the Shubert Theatre, and Robeson was the first African American to play the role with a white supporting cast on the Broadway stage. At the opening night performance, the audience gave the cast a twenty-minute standing ovation, for ten curtain calls. Despite his popularity, Robeson was not permitted to dine at Sardi's, a once-segregated restaurant located just across the street from the Theatre. Robeson toured with *Othello* in the US and Canada until 1945 and continued to perform solo excerpts from the play at his concert performances for the remainder of his career.

Civil rights activism and post war politics (1945–1948)

During World War II, Robeson's support for the Allied War effort had made him the world's most famous African-American and his previous statements and advocacy for socialism had been ignored by both the media and the white establishment. The start of the Cold war led to a social climate in which most civil rights and anti-imperialist groups in the United States were considered "Communist affiliated." Many of Robeson's closest friends and associates including Benjamin Davis, Howard Fast and William L. Patterson, were CPUSA members.

In 1945, Robeson was awarded the Spingarn medal by the NAACP for his "distinguished achievements in the theatre and concert stage as well as his active concern for the rights of the common man for every race, color, religion and nationality."

In July 1946, as Chairman of the Council on African Affairs, he telegraphed President Truman on the lynching of four African Americans in Georgia, demanding that the federal government "take steps to apprehend and punish the perpetrators ... and to halt the rising tide of lynch law.

In September of that year, Robeson spoke at a large rally against lynching, at Madison Square Garden.

Also that September, Robeson headed a protest at the Lincoln Memorial, for the American Crusade Against Lynching.

Following the rally, he led a delegation to the White House to present a legislative and educational program to Truman aimed at ending mob violence; demanding that those that are lynching be prosecuted and calling on Congress to enact a federal anti-lynching law. He then warned Truman that if the government did not do something to end lynching, "the Negroes will". Truman refused the request to issue a formal public statement against lynching, stating that it was not "the right time." Robeson also gave a radio address, calling on all Americans of all races to demand that Congress pass civil rights legislation.

On October 7, 1946, Robeson testified before the Tenney Committee that he was not a Communist Party member. He was never identified as an official member of any Communist organization.

In 1947 Robeson met with leaders of the NAACP to form a coalition to coordinate anti-lynching efforts with the Civil Rights Congress, an organization close to the Communist Party of the United States of America, regarded as "subversive and communist" by the Truman administration.

Robeson sang and spoke in 1948 at an event organized by the Los Angeles Civil Rights Congress and labor unions to launch a campaign against job discrimination, for passage of the federal Fair

Employment Practices Act also known as Executive Order 8802, anti-lynching and anti-poll tax legislation, and citizens' action to defeat the county loyalty oath climate.

Robeson again sought an appointment with Truman to confer on anti-poll tax, anti-lynching and fair employment legislation, but repeated requests were rejected.

In 1948, Robeson was very active as co-chairman of the presidential campaign to elect Progressive Party candidate Henry A. Wallace, who had served as Vice-President under Franklin D. Roosevelt. Wallace was running on an anti-lynching, pro-civil rights platform and had attracted a diverse group of voters including Communists, liberals and trade unionists. On the campaign trail in June of that year, Robeson went to the deep south, including Georgia, where he sang before "overflow audiences... in Negro churches in Atlanta and Macon." At the party's convention in Philadelphia, Robeson joined forces with the delegates from the Nisei for Wallace. The Progressive Party went on record in favor of evacuation claims for former camp residents, repeal of discriminatory laws against Japanese aliens, plus equal immigration and naturalization rights. During the campaign, Robeson organized a fund-raising concert tour in Hawaii under the auspices of the Longshoreman's Union.

Robeson's belief that the labor movement and trade unionism were crucial to the civil rights of oppressed people of all races became central to his political beliefs. Many unions during the 1940s and 1950s were still characterized by segregation. Robeson's close friend, the union activist Revels Cayton, pressed for "black caucuses" in each union, with Robeson's encouragement and involvement. Historian Mark Naison described Robeson's involvement with the labor movement as being "One of the least known, but most significant dimensions of his political activism. Domestically and internationally, Robeson enjoyed long friendships with various unions for his devotion to their causes.

Robeson also supported "Camp Wo-Chi-Ca" (Workers' Children's Camp) in New Jersey, an interracial summer camp for working class children established by the International Workers Order. Robeson would visit the camp every summer from 1940 to 1949, singing playing baseball with the children and developing an extensive musical program. In summer of 1949, Robeson also visited the largely Jewish Camp Kinderland in New York.

Robeson opposed anti-communist legislation. In 1948, he opposed a bill calling for registration of Communist Party members and appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Questioned about his affiliation with the Communist Party, he refused to answer, stating "Some of the most brilliant and distinguished Americans are about to go to jail for the failure to answer that question, and I am going to join them, if necessary." (The bill was ultimately defeated in the Senate.) In 1949, he spoke in favor of the liberty of twelve Communists (including his long-time friend Benjamin Davis, Jr.) convicted under the Smith Act, which criminalized various left- and right-wing activities as seditious.

Controversies and international travels (1949)

Following a successful US and Caribbean tour during late 1948, Robeson took a Christmas break at the family home in Enfield, Connecticut, planning to join accompanist Lawrence Brown in the spring of 1949 for scheduled US concert dates. He soon was learned that the performances were canceled by booking agents at the behest of the FBI. For the first time in his professional life, Robeson was without a US concert audience and his recordings were banned from radio and stores. Robeson had also become the target of conservative journalists Walter Winchell and Hedda Hopper. With the United States government, and media, pressuring the entertainment industry into blacklisting him, in 1949 Robeson had to go overseas to work. As a precondition to the renewal of his passport, he complied with a request from the State Department to sign a waiver to not make any "political or charitable appearances while on

tour." Under continual heavy surveillance by the CIA, he traveled to several European countries and the Soviet Union.

Under heavy and daily surveillance by both the FBI and the CIA and publicly condemned for his beliefs.

The Paris Peace Congress

As an authorized speaker for the Coordinating Committee of the Colonial Peoples of London, in April 1949, Robeson attended the Paris congress of the World Peace Council, sponsored by the Soviet Union. There he sang Joe Hill and spoke extemporaneously about why he thought the progressives in America did not want war. The widely publicized speech caused extreme controversy in the United States when it was misquoted by the Associated Press. Numerous biographers and historians concur that this one single event signaled the start of Robeson's status as an "enemy" of the United States government and the end of his popularity with mainstream America during the Cold War. A direct translation from the French transcripts of the live audio is as follows,

"We in America do not forget that it was the backs of white workers from Europe and on the backs of millions of Blacks that the wealth of America was built. And we are resolved to share it equally. We reject any hysterical raving that urges us to make war on anyone. Our will to fight for peace is strong. We shall not make war upon the Soviet Union. We oppose those who wish to support imperialism Germany and to establish fascism in Greece. We wish peace with Franco's Spain despite her fascism. We shall support peace and friendship among all nations, with Soviet Russia and the People's Republics.
"

What came over the wires to news agencies via the AP in the United States was as follows,

"We colonial peoples have contributed to the building of the United States and are determined to share its wealth. We denounce the policy of the United States government which is similar to Hitler and Goebbels. We want peace and liberty and will combat for them along with the Soviet Union and the Democracies of Eastern Europe, China and Indonesia. It is unthinkable that American Negroes would go to war on behalf of those who have oppressed us for generations against the Soviet Union which in one generation has lifted our people to full human dignity. "

The AP had prefabricated Robeson's speech and put it on the wires just as he was starting his speech. The misquote was very similar in structure to previous Robeson speeches and his questioning at the Mundt-Nixon Bill hearings with the difference being that at the hearing Robeson had claimed to be only speaking for himself. The reaction by the press in the United States was nearly universal, and sometimes vitriolic, condemnation.

At the urging of the State Department to make a formal statement, NAACP leaders dissociated themselves from Robeson. Roy Wilkins stated that regardless of the number of lynchings that were occurring or would occur, Black America would always serve in the armed forces. The black-owned *Chicago Defender* was one of the few American newspapers willing to question accuracy of the AP bulletin, while the progressive *National Guardian* and the Communist *Daily Worker* printed quotes of Robeson's speech verbatim.

Robeson is often criticized for accepting the Stalin Peace Prize, eulogizing Stalin, and continuing to support the Soviet Union and not formally denouncing the regime, despite conflicting accounts that show his awareness of state-sponsored intimidation and murder.

USSR and Itzik Feffer

In June, he arrived in the Soviet Union, where he participated in celebrating Alexander Pushkin's 150th anniversary. Robeson was disturbed as to why he could not find his Jewish friends, including Solomon Mikhoels, an actor and director, and Itzik Feffer, a Yiddish poet. As Robeson persisted, the NKVD brought Feffer to Robeson. Feffer told him that the room was bugged and that Solomon Mikhoels had been murdered. Feffer also communicated that his own life was in danger. At an ensuing concert in Tchaikovsky Hall on June 14, Robeson publicly paid tribute to Feffer and the late Mikhoels, singing the Vilna Partisan song "Zog Nit Keynmol" in Yiddish.

Back in the United States, Robeson stated that he did not encounter any persecution of Jews and other political prisoners, stating that he "met Jewish people all over the place... I heard no word about it". Robeson's rationale for ignoring their plight was to deny the right wing of the United States any moral high ground. Herbert Hill, former labor director of the NAACP, commented on the reputed event fifty years later stating "just think what it would have meant if he had denounced this evil while in the Soviet Union and instead he comes back and he lies, he lies again and again and he knows better."

This subsequent controversy over Robeson's remarks in Paris caused the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) to investigate Robeson. HUAC sought Jackie Robinson's testimony on the subject. Robinson was reluctant to testify to HUAC on these matters, in part because of Robeson's prior advocacy on behalf of integration in professional baseball. In July 1949, Robinson eventually agreed to testify before HUAC, fearing that declining to do so might negatively and permanently damage his career. His testimony was a major media event, with Robinson's carefully worded statement appearing on the front page of *The New York Times* the following day. While Robeson declined to comment on Robinson personally: "I am not going to permit the issue to boil down to a personal feud between me and Jackie. To do that, would be to do exactly what the other group wants us to do." Not long after, Robeson's name was struck from the roster of the 1917 and 1918 college All-America football teams.

Civil Rights Congress and Trotskyists

In January 1949, Robeson led a conference of delegates to march on the White House, again demanding government action against lynching; Truman refused to see them. Robeson spoke at the "Bill of Rights Conference", in New York, sponsored by CRC, again calling for an end to segregation and lynching. The 1,200 delegates issued a statement which said, in part, "We declare that Robeson does, indeed, speak for us, not only in his fight for full democratic rights, but also in his fight for peace." Robeson also spoke at a mass meeting of 1,500 sponsored by the Civil Rights Congress in support of the Trenton Six. At a Bill of Rights Conference in New York in July 1949, Robeson denounced a motion, which called for the freeing of nineteen members of the Socialist Workers Party convicted in 1941, calling the imprisoned Trotskyists- who were at odds with the Soviet leadership-"the allies of Fascism who want to destroy the new democracies of the world...let's not get confused, they are the enemies of the working class. Would you give civil rights to the Ku Klux Klan?" "t was not Robeson's finest hour." On August 4, 1949 Robeson also led a picket line in front of White House, called by United Public Workers of America to protest racist hiring practices at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, challenging Truman to make good on his civil rights promises and enforce the Fair Employment Practices Act.

Peekskill Riots

In 1949, a popular concert by Robeson in Peekskill, New York, to benefit the Civil Rights Congress resulted in the Peekskill Riots caused by anti-Communist and anti-civil rights members of local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion chapters and also by local residents. The concert, organized as a benefit for the Civil Rights Congress, was scheduled to take place on August 27 in Lakeland Acres, just north of Peekskill. Before Robeson arrived, a mob of locals attacked concert-goers with baseball bats and rocks. Thirteen people were seriously injured before the police intervened. The concert was postponed until September 4.

The rescheduled event, on September 4, 1949, was attended by 20,000 people and went off without incident but, after the concert, a violent mob, caught on film by the press, chanting "Go back to Russia you white Niggers" and "Dirty Kikes", threw rocks through the windshields of cars and buses. Standing off the angry mob of rioters, some of the concertgoers, and union members, along with writer Howard Fast and others assembled a non-violent line of resistance, locked arms, and sang the song "We Shall Not Be Moved." Some people were reportedly dragged from their vehicles and beaten. Over 140 people were injured and numerous vehicles were severely damaged as police stood by. Following the riots, more than 300 Robeson supporters went to Albany to voice their indignation to Governor Thomas Dewey, who refused to meet with them, blaming "Communists for provoking the violence." Twenty-seven plaintiffs filed a civil suit against Westchester County and two veterans groups. The charges were dismissed three years later. Paul Robeson called the actions of the New York state troopers, who were caught on film beating concert goers, including World War I veteran and first decorated Black aviator, Eugene Bullard, as "Fascist storm troopers who will knock down and club anyone who disagrees with them"

Blacklisting and Communist associations (1950–1958)

In March 1950, NBC canceled Robeson's scheduled appearance on former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's television program, *Today with Mrs. Roosevelt*. A spokesman for NBC declared that, depending on sources, Robeson's appearance had not been approved by NBC headquarters, or Robeson would "never appear on NBC." Press releases of the Civil Rights Congress objected that "censorship of Mr. Robeson's appearance on TV is a crude attempt to silence the outstanding spokesman for the Negro people in their fight for civil and human rights basic democratic rights are under attack under the smoke-screen of anti-Communism." Protesters picketed NBC offices and protests arrived from numerous public figures, organizations and others.

Passport confiscated

In 1950, the State Department denied Robeson a passport and issued a "stop notice" at all ports, effectively confining him within the United States. Robeson was not allowed to travel to Canada or Mexico, countries that US citizens could visit without a passport. Far from seeking to revoke his US citizenship and deport him, the FBI and state department records indicate that the US government believed that a blacklisted existence inside the United States borders would offer Robeson less freedom of expression than his presence internationally would. When Robeson and his lawyers met with officials at the State Department on August 23, 1950 and asked why it was "detrimental to the interests of the United States Government" for him to travel abroad, they were told that "his frequent criticism of the treatment of blacks in the United States should not be aired in foreign countries"—it was a "family affair." When Robeson inquired about being re-issued a passport, the State Department declined, citing Robeson's refusal to sign a statement guaranteeing "not to give any speeches while outside the U.S."

In a symbolic act of defiance against the travel ban, labor unions in the US and Canada organized a concert at the International Peace Arch on the border between Washington state and the Canadian province of British Columbia on May 18, 1952. Paul Robeson stood on the back of a flat bed truck on the American side of the U.S.-Canada border and performed a concert for a crowd on the Canadian side, variously estimated at between 20,000 and 40,000 people. Robeson returned to perform a second concert at the Peace Arch in 1953, and over the next two years two further concerts were scheduled. In this period, with the encouragement of his friend the Welsh politician Aneurin Bevan, Robeson recorded a number of radio concerts for supporters in Wales. In 1956, Robeson left the United States for the first time since the travel ban was imposed, performing concerts in two Canadian cities, Sudbury and Toronto, in March of that year. The travel ban ended in 1958 when Robeson's passport was returned to him after eight years of protracted legal struggles and defeats.

Although unable to travel outside the United States, Robeson continued to be politically active. He presented to the United Nations in New York on December 17, 1951 an anti-lynching petition, "We Charge Genocide". It was also presented to a UN delegation in Paris. The document asserted that the US federal government, by its failure to act against lynching in the United States, was "guilty of genocide" under Article II of the UN Genocide Convention.

"Paul Robeson – the Lost Shepherd"

In 1951 an article titled "Paul Robeson – the Lost Shepherd" was published in *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP, under the pseudonym "Robert Alan", described as "a well known New York journalist", although Paul Jr. suspected it was authored by Earl Brown. J. Edgar Hoover and the United States State Department arranged for the article to be printed and distributed in Africa. which included the following instructions in countering Robeson's reputation:

"USIE in the Gold Coast, and I suspect everywhere else in Africa, badly needs a through-going, sympathetic and regretful but straight talking treatment of the whole Robeson episode...there's no way the Communists score on us more easily and more effectively out here, than on the US. Negro problem in general, and on the Robeson case in particular. And, answering the latter, we go a long way toward answering the former."

Another article by Wilkins, called "Stalin's Greatest Defeat", denounced Robeson as well as the Communist Party of the US in terms consistent with the FBI's information. Wilkins threatened to cancel a charter of an NAACP youth group in 1952 if they did not cancel their planned Robeson concert.

Stalin Peace Prize

In 1952, Robeson was awarded the International Stalin Prize by the Soviet Union. Being unable to travel to Moscow, Robeson received the award in New York. In April 1953, shortly after Stalin's death, Robeson penned *To You Beloved Comrade*, praising Stalin as being dedicated to peace and a guidance to the world: "Through his deep humanity, by his wise understanding, he leaves us a rich and monumental heritage." After Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalinism at the 1956 Party Congress, Robeson became silent on Stalin, though he continued to praise the Soviet Union. He felt that criticism by him of the Soviet Union would only serve to shore up reactionary elements in the U.S. Robeson opinion on the Soviet Union prevented an easing of his passport restrictions and allowing him back into the mainstream of both, the entertainment industry and the civil rights movement. In his opinion, the existence of the USSR was the guarantee of political balance in the world.

Congressional hearings

In 1956, Robeson was called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities after he refused to sign an affidavit affirming that he was not a Communist. In response to questions concerning his alleged party membership, Robeson insisted that the Communist Party was a legal party and invited its members to join him in the voting booth before he invoked the Fifth Amendment and refused to respond. Robeson refused to discuss Joseph Stalin, calling it "a question for the Soviet Union", instead lambasting committee members on civil rights issues and the enslavement and exploitation of blacks throughout American history. Asked why he had not remained in the Soviet Union, he replied that "because my father was a slave and my people died to build this country, and I am going to stay here, and have a part of it just like you and no fascist minded people will drive me from it! Is that clear?"

Campaigns were simultaneously launched in the US and UK to protest the passport ban. In the UK, *The National Paul Robeson Committee* was formed, sponsored by Members of Parliament as well as writers, scholars, actors, lawyers, trade union leaders and others. The Committee began a "Let Paul Robeson Sing" mass petition, which gathered signatures from tens of thousands of supporters. Over the next four years, many prominent figures in Britain argued for the restoration of Robeson's right to travel. The group held a conference and concert at St Pancras Town Hall, London headed by Cedric Belfrage, on May 26, 1957 with Robeson singing direct from New York over a telephone connection.

In 1956, Robeson, along with close friend W. E. B. Du Bois, compared the anti-Stalinist revolution in Hungary to the "same sort of people who overthrew the Spanish Republican Government" and supported the Soviet invasion and suppression of the revolt.

In 1957, Robeson was invited by Welsh miners to be the honored guest at the annual Eisteddfod Music Festival. An appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States to restitute his confiscated passport had been rejected, but through the newly completed trans-Atlantic telephone hook-up between New York and Porthcawl, Wales, Robeson was able to sing to the 5,000 gathered there as he had earlier in the year to London. Journalist Gil Noble called the concert "perhaps the most emotional and moving in Robeson's long concert career."

Because of the controversy surrounding him, Paul Robeson's recordings and films lost mainstream distribution and he was universally condemned in the mainstream U.S press. During the height of the Cold War it became increasingly difficult in the United States to hear Robeson sing on commercial radio, buy his music or to see any of his films, including *Show Boat*.

In the United States very little newsreel footage of Robeson now exists, including in the Library of Congress, as the majority of US newsreel footage has been either destroyed or has the sound erased.

Due to Robeson's lengthy and extensive blacklisting during the 1950s, his long career and achievements are difficult to find in most American mainstream interpretations of history, including in-depth books on sports history, entertainment, civil rights and black history. In the United States very little media footage of Robeson now exists, even in the Library of Congress, as the majority of US newsreel footage has been either destroyed or had the sound erased.

The 1950 volume, *College Football Hall of Fame*, labeled "the most complete record on college football", omits Robeson, identifying only a ten-man team. Due to his blacklisting within the mainstream media, the concert stage, theater, radio, film and the civil rights movement, Robeson became an outcast, very nearly a nonperson."

Later when his left-wing activism became controversial, accusations that he was a "'godless' Communist" were not accepted by his black churchgoing audiences, who felt he "personified the spirituals in his music". He never expressed "even the remotest allegiance to 'materialistic atheism'".

Later years (1958–1976)

Comeback

Robeson's autobiography, *Here I Stand*, was published by a British publishing company in 1958. As part of his "comeback", he gave two sold-out recitals that month in Carnegie Hall, which were released on LP and later on CD. Also that year, Robeson's 60th birthday was celebrated in several US cities and twenty-seven countries across the world. After the US Supreme Court ruled, in *Kent v. Dulles*, that the Secretary of State could not consider a person's political beliefs when responding to passport request, Robeson's passport was restored in May 1958 and Robeson left for London not long after.

Tours of Britain and the USSR

Robeson and Essie began traveling extensively, using London as their base of operations. During this period Robeson was under constant surveillance by the CIA, MI6 and the State Department. In the United Kingdom, Robeson found himself deluged with professional offers. His numerous appearances included a formal concert at the Albert Hall and a book autographing party at Selfridges.

In August, 1959 he left for Moscow where he received a tumultuous reception and needed a police escort at the airport. A crowd of eighteen thousand people filled the Lenin Stadium (Khabarovsk) to capacity on August 17, 1959 where Robeson sang classic Russian songs along with his standards. Robeson and Essie then flew to Crimea to spend time at Yalta resting, working with a documentary film crew and spending time with Nikita Khrushchev. Robeson also visited Young Pioneer camp Artek before returning to the UK.

On October 11, 1959 Robeson took part in a historic service at St.Paul's Cathedral, being the first black performer to sing there. Four thousand people attended the evensong performance with hundreds overflowing onto the streets. Robeson had then planned to leave for India as a guest of Nehru but was prevented by the weather. The US State Department had circulated negative literature about him through the media in India; one censored CIA memo suggested that Robeson's appearance could be used to thwart the desegregation of a swimming pool.

In 1960, Robeson made his only appearance on a television variety series, as host, in *The Paul Robeson Show*.

On a trip to Moscow, Robeson started to develop bouts of dizziness and the beginning of heart problems. His trip to India was definitively canceled, and he was hospitalized for two months while Essie was diagnosed with operable cancer.

Robeson recovered and returned to the UK to fulfill his engagements. In 1958, he visited the National Eisteddfod in Ebbw Vale as the guest of the local MP Aneurin Bevan, revisited his ties to the black community in Cardiff's Butetown and gave performances throughout Europe. During his run at the Royal Shakespeare Company playing Othello in Tony Richardson's 1959 production at Stratford-upon-Avon, he befriended actor Andrew Faulds whose family he was staying with in the nearby village of Shotton while performing. Robeson inspired him to take up a career in politics after admonishing him for being apolitical. The production of Othello was geared towards Robeson's health concerns but gave him a lucrative seven month run and chance to participate in an updated version of the play directed by

Tony Richardson. In 1960, in what would prove to be Paul Robeson's final concert performance in Great Britain, he sang with the Welsh Male Voice Choir, Côr Meibion Cwmbach, to raise money for the *Movement for Colonial Freedom* at the Royal Festival Hall.

He received an honorary doctorate from Humboldt University in 1960 among other awards.

Tour of Australia and New Zealand

Robeson engaged in a tour of Australia, and New Zealand in October to November 1960. He appeared at the Sydney Opera House, still under construction, and sang *Ol Man River* and *'Joe Hill*. and sang to, and advocated, striking workers in Wellington and accepted membership in their union. Visiting rural community centers and presented with indigenous art including a painting by Australian artist Albert Namatjira,

He used the tour to speak in defense of the Māori and Australian Aborigines peoples. Through the aboriginal activist Faith Bandler, Robeson viewed a film made in the 1950s about the aborigines in Warburton, Western Australia. Bandler remembered, "The tears started streaming down his face; but when the film showed thirsty children waiting for water, sorrow turned to anger." At a press conference in Sydney the next day he lambasted the Australian government proclaiming, "There's no such thing as a 'backward' human being, there is only a society which says they are backward. The indigenous people of Australia are my brothers and sisters." Robeson also met Lloyd L. Davis, a longtime aboriginal activist and lawyer. Davis felt Robeson's presence greatly assisted the aboriginal struggle for equality and recalled his arrival in Perth on the last leg of his tour,

"...when he spotted a group of local aborigines shyly hanging back, he instantly headed for them, moving through the crowd like a full back. When he reached them, he literally gathered the nearest half dozen in his great arms, and when he moved toward his waiting transport, the aborigines moved with him. Davies heard one of the little girls say, almost in wonder, 'Mum, he likes us.'"

"riter and broadcaster Phillip Adams recalled, Robeson's tour was like 'a second coming' to 'aspiring young lefties' in Australia." During this tour for the first time news-sources of diverse political views reported that he was responding to questions at press conferences with "anger and bitterness." Some headlines included *The Herald* printing, "Would Back Russia in a War" and "Robeson Bitterly Critical of the U.S.", with the *Telegraph* stating "I Wish He Was Still Bosambo." In Auckland he told the press he was only "here to sing" and then declared himself a "rigid Marxist.". He expressed concern about the mistreatment of the *Māoris* and said, "I want to learn Māori songs and as much as I can of the Māori language." and "...the people of the lands of Socialism want peace dearly," The nine week tour would prove to be the final concert tour of his forty year career.

Health breakdown (1961–1965)

Back in London, he began to plan his return to the US to participate in the Civil Rights Movement, stopping off in Africa, China and Cuba along the way. Essie argued to stay in London, fearing that he'd be "killed" if he returned to the US and "unable to make any money" due to harassment by the US government. Robeson disagreed and made his own travel arrangements, stopping off in Moscow in March 1961.

In spring of 1961, Robeson again traveled to the Soviet Union, his last visit there. During an uncharacteristically wild party in his Moscow hotel room, he locked himself in his bedroom and attempted suicide by cutting his wrists. Three days later, while under Soviet medical care, he told his son that he felt extreme paranoia, thought that the walls of the room were moving and, overcome by a powerful sense of emptiness and depression, tried to take his own life.

Robeson stayed at the Barvikha Sanatorium until September 1961, when he left Moscow for London. There his depression re-emerged, and after another period of recuperation in Moscow, he returned to London. Three days after arriving back he became suicidal and suffered a panic attack while passing the Soviet Embassy. He was admitted to The Priory hospital, where he underwent electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and was given heavy doses of drugs for nearly two years, with no accompanying psychotherapy.

During his treatment at the Priory, Robeson was being monitored by the British MI5. Both US and British intelligence services were well aware of Robeson's suicidal state of mind. An FBI memo described Robeson's debilitated condition, remarking that his "death would be much publicized" and would be used for Communist propaganda, making continued surveillance imperative. Numerous memos also advised that Robeson should be denied a passport renewal which would ostensibly jeopardize his fragile health and the recovery process he was engaged in overseas.

In August 1963, disturbed about his treatment, friends had him transferred to the Busch Clinic in East Berlin. Given psychotherapy and less medication, his physicians found him still "completely without initiative" and they expressed "doubt and anger" about the "high level of barbiturates and ECT" that had been administered in London. He rapidly improved, though his doctor stressed that "what little is left of Paul's health must be quietly conserved."

By 1965, he was forced into permanent retirement. He spent his final years in Philadelphia, unapologetic about his political views and career.

Withdrawal from public life



The Robeson House, Philadelphia

In 1963, Robeson eventually returned to the United States and for the remainder of his life lived in quiet seclusion. He had intended to assume a role in the civil rights movement, making a few major public appearances before falling seriously ill during a tour, nearly dying from double pneumonia and a kidney blockage in 1965. He first lived in Harlem with his wife. After Essie died of cancer in December 1965, Robeson moved in with his son's family in an Upper West Side apartment in New York City and in 1968, he finally settled at his sister's home in Philadelphia.

In these years Robeson was honored by accolades and celebrations, both in the US and internationally, including public arenas that had previously shunned him.

During the 1960s radical black activists such as Malcolm X and members of SNCC referenced and praised Robeson's controversial stances.

On January 15, 1965, Robeson gave the eulogy at the Harlem funeral of Lorraine Hansberry recalling her work at Freedomways and her contributions to civil rights. Malcolm X was one of those who attended the funeral. The two men did not meet on that occasion, but Malcolm X, who admired Robeson, subsequently approached Paul Jr. about arranging a meeting. (According to Ossie Davis, he was also approached by Malcolm X's intermediaries in hopes of meeting Robeson.) Robeson agreed, but Malcolm X was assassinated before the meeting could be arranged.

Following Hansberry's funeral, Robeson was also contacted by both Bayard Rustin and James L. Farmer, Jr. about the possibility of becoming involved with the mainstream of the Civil Rights movement. Due to Rustin's past anti-Communist stances, Robeson declined to meet with him. Robeson eventually met with Farmer but was asked to denounce Communism and the Soviet Union in order to assume a place in the mainstream, Robeson adamantly declined.

Living at his sister Marian's home Robeson saw few visitors aside from very close friends and gave few statements apart from a few messages to support current civil rights and international movements, feeling that his record "spoke for itself". Though due to his ailing health, he withdrew from the public to lead a quiet life, close friends and family have disputed the rumors in the mainstream press that he was "broken" and "disillusioned". In her book *Paul Robeson's Last Days in Philadelphia*, Charlotte Turner Bell, a local music teacher and Robeson friend chronicled the time she spent accompanying Robeson on the piano each Sunday and of his life in retirement.

In 1968, in honor of Paul Robeson's 70th birthday, celebrations were held in in East Germany, at the Royal Festival Hall in London, and in Moscow. The black commission of the CPUSA celebration remarked that "the white power structure has generated a conspiracy of silence around Paul Robeson. It wants to blot out all knowledge of this pioneering Black American warrior..."

Despite Robeson's lengthy theater career, Brooks Atkinson, *The New York Times* theater critic from 1925 to 1960, included just a one-sentence reference to Robeson in his 1970 book *Broadway*, advertised as "an history of American theater". Atkinson chronicles African-American performers, *Show Boat* and Eugene O'Neill, but only mentions Robeson briefly in context with *Othello*. In the early 1970s, *The New York Times* and *The New York Daily News* both ran extensive pieces on black actors who played Othello with no mention of Robeson.

Reevaluation of a fallen hero

In 1971, the Actor's Equity created the Paul Robeson award to recognize the principles by which he lived. A sold-out performance was held at Carnegie Hall to salute his 75th birthday in 1973. Birthday greetings arrived from several world-wide prominent officials or organizations. He was unable to attend because of illness, but a taped message from him was played which said in part, "Though I have not been able to be active for several years, I want you to know that I am the same Paul, dedicated as ever to the worldwide cause of humanity for freedom, peace and brotherhood."

Death

On January 23, 1976 in Philadelphia, following complications of a stroke, Robeson died, at the age of 77. He lay in state at Benta's Funeral Home in Harlem for two days as a "parade of humanity ...from the numbers runner on the corner to Gustaf VI Adolf, King of Sweden." paid their respect. On January 27, 1976, 2,500 people attended his funeral at Mother AME Zion Church in Harlem, where Robeson's

brother Ben had been pastor for 27 years. Thousands more, mostly African Americans, stood outside in the rain throughout the service, listening on the public address system as speakers, including Harry Belafonte, paid tribute. Bishop J. Clinton Hoggard performed the eulogy saying, "He was a Christian, he believed in God, which is why he is one who could sing the great hymns of the church, they come out of his soul." Robeson was cremated and his ashes interred in the Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale, New York with a grave marker that states, "The Artist Must Fight For Freedom Or Slavery. I Made My Choice. I Had No Alternative."

Public perspective of his death

Tributes occurred, and condolences came, from around the world. In an open session of Congress, the US House of Representatives immediately paid tribute to his life. Coretta Scott King remarked that she "deplored 'America's inexcusable treatment' of a man who had had 'the courage to point out her injustices.'" *The Amsterdam News* eulogized him as "Gulliver among the Lilliputians always be a challenge and a reproach to white and Black America."

"The white press, after decades of harassing Robeson, now tipped its hat to a 'great American,' paid its gingerly respect in editorials that ascribed the vituperation leveled at Robeson in his lifetime to the Bad Old Days of the Cold War, implied those days were forever gone, downplayed the racist component central to his persecution, and ignored the continuing inability of white America to tolerate a black maverick who refused to bend. The black press made no such mistakes. It had never, overall, been as hostile to Robeson as the white press, (though at some points in his career, nearly so)."

The black press universally celebrated Robeson.

Controversy surrounding his death

Paul Jr. believed that his father's health problems stemmed from attempts by CIA and MI5 to "neutralize" his father. He remembered that his father had such fears prior to his prostate operation. He said that three doctors treating Robeson in London and New York had been CIA contractors, and that his father's symptoms resulted from being "subjected to mind de-patterning under MKULTRA", a secret CIA program. Robeson's health breakdown was probably brought on by a combination of factors including extreme emotional and physical stress, bipolar depression, exhaustion and the beginning of circulatory and heart problems. "ven without an organic predisposition and accumulated pressures of government harassment he might have been susceptible to a breakdown".

Posthumous honors

Throughout 1976 memorials were held at Rutgers; The World Peace Council in Athens, Greece; Columbia University, New York City; Toronto; Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.; and by Actor's Equity in Los Angeles. On October 8, 1976, Artist's Tribute to the Life of Paul Robeson, was held at Carnegie Hall, as a benefit for the Paul Robeson Archive. Sidney Poitier proclaimed, "When Paul Robeson died, it marked the passing of a magnificent giant whose presence among us conferred nobility upon us all..." Beginning in 1978, Robeson's films were finally shown on American television, with *Show Boat* making its cable television debut in 1983. *Paul Robeson: Tribute to an Artist* won an Academy Award for best short documentary in 1980. In recent years, all of Robeson's films have appeared on Turner Classic Movies and American Movie Classics channels.

Rutgers University has named several of its facilities (at all three of its campuses) after Robeson. In 1995, he was named to the College Football Hall of Fame. The centenary of Robeson's birth was commemorated with scores of world-wide events, a Lifetime Achievement Grammy Award, a star on

the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and he was honored at SOAS through the Paul Robeson House. Years later, an English Heritage Blue Plaque was erected at his former home in Hampstead, and he was featured on a US postage stamp, the 27th stamp in the Black Heritage Series.. In 2006 a tribute to Robeson was held at the SOAS.

He was awarded honorary memberships in over half a dozen trade unions.

Legacy



The Robeson holdings in the archive of the Academy of the Arts of the [German Democratic Republic](#), 1981

Robeson was one of the first African American artist and activists. He was also one of the forerunners of the civil rights movement and the first black artist to refuse segregated audiences. On the international political scene, Robeson's legacy included influences on the African Independence movements and his work was cited by Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela and other post-colonialist, world leaders.

In the arts, James Earl Jones, Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte have cited his lead film roles as being the first to display dignity for black actors and pride in African heritage. His popularizing of Negro Spirituals has been cited and paid tribute to by singers including Sir Willard White. While film industry figures and historians have written of his groundbreaking work in cinema as the first major black actor unwilling to play stereotypes. When asked how many languages Robeson spoke, historian Sterling Stuckey answered, "Some claim twelve, others claim twenty; he certainly sang in a great many." Sports historian Francis C. Harris wrote that Robeson "...established a level of excellence as a scholar-athlete that few others, if any, have ever attained."

American Jews continue to celebrate his memory as an ally. The Welsh have maintained their loyalty to Robeson's support and in Cardiff in 2001, the exhibition *Let Paul Robeson Sing!* was unveiled.

He has spent much of his life safeguarding his father's legacy by founding *The Robeson Family Archives* and *The Paul Robeson Foundation*. Robeson was "not a religious man in any formalistic sense ... nonetheless an intensely spiritual one, convinced that some higher force watched over him."

Advocates of Robeson's legacy have restored his name to history books and sports records, honoring his memory with posthumous recognitions.

Robeson is one of only three people to have been given honorary membership in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the volunteers from the United States who served in the Spanish Civil War for the International Brigades.

Robeson had a long association with the International Brigades, which served in the Spanish Civil War.

In 1967, *The New York Times* also incorrectly said that during the 1950s (when he was without his passport), Robeson had chosen a "long exile in the Soviet Union...."

The first Paul Robeson Archive was established in East Berlin by a journalist for GDR radio in 1965 and are now located at the John F. Kennedy School in Berlin. The Robeson Family Archives existed, at least as late as 1995, deposited at Howard University. In 2010 Susan Robeson launched a project by Swansea University and the Welsh Assembly, to create an online learning resource in her grandfather's memory.

Pauline Frederick

Pauline Frederick (August 12, 1883, Boston, Massachusetts — September 19, 1938, Beverly Hills, California) was a leading Broadway actress who later became known for her motion picture work.



Early years

Pauline Frederick was born **Beatrice Pauline Libby** in 1883. “My birthday is – or rather was, for I have had my last – August 12,” she later stated in an interview in *Motion Picture Magazine* (December 1918). “On that date, according to records, I joined the other little beans in Boston. I had four nationalities from which to choose my temperament – first my good old United States; second my mother’s ancestors, who were Scotch; and third, my father’s who were French and English. Such a combination I realized beforehand would be essential to the making of a picture star and acted accordingly.” she was an established stage actor when she made her first film in 1915. She made her last film in 1937. The following year, she died of complications from asthma and was cremated.

Career

As a girl she was fascinated with show business, and determined early to place her goals in the direction of the theater. She reminisced in an interview in *Motion Picture Magazine* (December 1918)

As a child there were several things besides some well-known young medicines that I disliked to take, and one of these was a dare. When one of my playmates, whose favorite pastime was running off to the theater whenever we could save money enough to buy tickets and reproducing what we had seen on an elaborate home scale, said: ‘Polly, I dare you to go on the real stage,’ of course I just had to go. I had been studying singing, and succeeded in persuading the manager of a vaudeville house in Boston to hear a couple of my songs. “I’ll put you on for a week,” the manager agreed, “and pay you fifty dollars.”

That was the first money she earned, and to Pauline, it seemed like a fortune. “My chums were there in full force that night waiting to see ‘Polly take her dare,’ and for their sakes I had to be brave about it, though I can remember to this day how I quaked inwardly when I stepped out on the stage and saw the hundreds of eyes turned toward me. I thought each eye was saying: ‘She never did this before,’ and in companion I was answering: ‘No, she never did.’ Well, I managed to get through my three songs some way or another, and after that it wasn’t so bad. That first week gave me the courage to go further and, of course, further meant New York.”



In 1908 Pauline was in a serious automobile wreck. It was later discovered that this wreck impaired her ability to have children.

A well-known stage star, Frederick was already in her 30s when she began making films. She specialized in playing commanding and authoritative women throughout her film career. Her stunning beauty stayed with her as she aged into her best remembered roles—sacrificing mothers and 40-something women having a last fling at youth and romance. She was able to make a successful transition to "talkies" in 1929, and was cast as Joan Crawford's mother in *This Modern Age* (1931).

Frederick generally played an angry matriarch. Frederick never shyed away from parts that often other actresses of the time feared, often due to the role being controversial or out of character.

Frederick has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7000 Hollywood Boulevard. Many of Frederick's silent films such as *The Eternal City* (1915) are now considered lost films. Others survive in fragile condition in sole remaining prints in archives. One example that survives and is readily available on home video is *Smouldering Fires* (1925) that showcase her talents as a dramatic actress.

More of her work is available in the talkie era such as *This Modern Age* with Joan Crawford, the excellent whodunnit *The Phantom of Crestwood* (1932) and the color film *Ramona* (1936). Crawford idolized Frederick and based a lot of her persona on the veteran actress.

Personal life

Pauline Frederick married 5 times:

- Frank Mills Andrews (1909 – 1913)
- Willard Mack (1917-1919)
- Dr. C.A. Rutherford (1922 – ?)
- Hugh C. Leighton (1930 – ?)
- Col. Joseph A. Marmon (January 1934 – December 1934) (his death)

She also had a two-year affair with Clark Gable in the 1920s when Gable was a struggling young actor.

She gave birth to a baby girl on May 21, 1905

Overview

For 21 years, Pauline Frederick Robbins, was the "Voice of the United Nations" and correspondent for NBC; earlier she covered the UN. for ABC, later becoming the foreign affairs commentator for National Public Radio. In 1939, she made her first network broadcast; in 1945 she made her first overseas broadcast from China and in 1948, she completed her first network television broadcast from the national Political Conventions in 1948.

Pauline Frederick Robbins has been the first on many occasions: She became the first woman to moderate a Presidential debate; the first woman to be awarded the Paul White Award for her contributions to broadcast journalism and the first woman to receive the Peabody and the DuPont Awards for news broadcasting. She was the first woman to be elected President of the UN. Correspondents Association.

She has been honored as one of the "Ten Most Admired Women". She has received honorary doctorates from 23 colleges and universities.

Pauline Frederick Robbins opened the doors in many ways for women in journalism. In books dealing with the history of journalism, Pauline Frederick Robbins's name is always noted as the premiere individual who made it possible for women to be taken seriously as news broadcasters. She has been and continues to be the heroine of women and men who are dedicated to accurate and powerful journalism.

Pearl White

Pearl Fay White (March 4, 1889 – August 4, 1938) was an American film actress, the so-called "Stunt Queen" of silent films, most notably in *The Perils of Pauline*.



Pearl White, c. 1916

Early life

White was born in New Jersey and lived on a farm with her four brothers and sisters. Her parents, Edgar and Inez White, moved to Springfield, Missouri, where she grew up with an interest in the theater. She began performing with the Diemer Theater Company, located on Commercial Street, while in her second year of high school. In 1907, at age 18, she went on the road with the Trousedale Stock Company, working evening shows while keeping her day job to help support her family. She was soon able to join the company full time, touring through the American Midwest. That year she married fellow actor Victor Sutherland, but they soon separated and eventually divorced.

White played minor roles for several years, when she was spotted by the Powers Film Company in New York. She claimed she had also performed in Cuba for a time under the name Miss Mazee, singing American songs in a dance hall. Her travels as a singer took her to South America, where she performed in casinos and dance halls. In 1910, White had trouble with her throat, and her voice began to fail from the nightly theatrical performances. She made her debut in films that year, starring in a series of one-reel dramas and comedies for the Powers Film Company in the Bronx, New York.

Career rise

In 1910, White was offered a role by Pathé Frères in *The Girl From Arizona*, the French company's first American film produced at their new studio in Bound Brook, New Jersey. She then worked at Lubin Studios and several other of the independents, until the Crystal Film Company in Manhattan gave her top billing in a number of short films.

In 1914, Pathé director Louis J. Gasnier offered her the starring role in *The Perils of Pauline*, a film based on a story by playwright Charles W. Goddard. The film was one where "Pauline" was the central character in a story involving considerable action, which the athletic Pearl White proved ideally suited for. *The Perils of Pauline* consisted of twenty episodes. A box-office success, the movie made White a major celebrity, and she was soon earning the then astronomical sum of \$3,000 a week. She followed this with an even bigger box-office winner, *The Exploits of Elaine*.



Pictures, August 1922



Terreur, 1924



The grave of Pearl White.

Flying airplanes, racing cars, swimming across rivers, and doing other similar feats, White made four more successful serials on the same theme. She did much of her own stunt work and she suffered injuries that would force her to use a stunt double in her later films.

Personal life and later years

Pearl White was a wealthy young woman when in 1919 she met and married World War I veteran Major Wallace McCutcheon, Jr. (1880–1928), an actor, director, and cinematographer. However, the marriage failed and they divorced in 1921. Two years later, White made her last American film.

Influenced by the French friends from Pathé Studios, White was drawn to the artistic gathering in the Montparnasse Quarter of Paris. While living there, she made her last film for her friend, Belgian-born director Edward José, who had directed her in several serials. Silent films could be made in any country, and as White was a recognizable star worldwide, she was offered many roles in France. Instead, she chose to perform on stage in a Montmartre production "*Tu Perds la Boule*" (You Lost the Ball). In 1925 she accepted an offer to star with comedian Max Wall in the "London Review" at the Lyceum Theatre in London.

White's childhood poverty made her frugal with money. A shrewd businesswoman, she invested in a successful Parisian nightclub, a Biarritz resort hotel/casino, plus a profitable stable of thoroughbred race horses. Living in a fashionable town house in the exclusive Parisian suburb of Passy, she also owned a villa in Rambouillet. She became involved with Theodore Cossika, a Greek businessman who shared her love of travel. Together they purchased a home near Cairo, Egypt, and White travelled with him throughout the Middle East and the Orient. White then returned to France. She made just one more film, *Terror* (1924).

She starred in several popular stage reviews at the Montmartre Music Hall in Paris, and was in a London revue with George Carney. She then retired from performing.

Alcoholism and death

Over the years, White's alcohol use had increased, possibly in response to the chronic pain of injuries from her film stunts. She had to be hospitalized in 1933, which led to an addiction to the drugs used to ease her suffering. Her last years were spent in an alcoholic haze, and she died of cirrhosis at age 49 on August 4, 1938 in the American Hospital in the Paris suburb of Neuilly, France. She was buried in the Cimetière de Passy.

Legacy

Pearl White's place in film history is important in both the evolution of cinema genres and the role of women. *The Perils of Pauline* is only known to exist in a reduced nine-reel version released in Europe in 1916, but *The Exploits of Elaine* survives and was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry. All of her films were made at East Coast studios, and it is believed White never visited Hollywood, which would nevertheless honor her contributions with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The 1947 Paramount Pictures film *The Perils of Pauline*, starring Betty Hutton, was a fictionalized biography of Pearl White.

Phyllis Haver

Phyllis Haver (January 6, 1899 – November 19, 1960) was an American actress of the silent film era.

Early life

She was born **Phyllis Haver** in Douglass, Kansas. When she was young, her family moved to Los Angeles, California, then a city of less than half a million people. Haver attended Los Angeles Polytechnic High. After graduating, she played piano to accompany the new silent films in local theaters.

Career

Haver auditioned for comedy producer Mack Sennett on a whim. Sennett hired her as one of his original Sennett Bathing Beauties. Within a few years, she appeared as a leading lady in two-reelers for Sennett Studios.



At the Sennett Studios, Haver played the part of Roxie Hart in the first film adaptation of *Chicago* in 1927, opposite Hungarian film actor Victor Varconi. One reviewer called her performance "astoundingly fine", and added that Haver "makes this combination of tragedy and comedy a most entertaining piece of work."

She performed in the 1928 comedy film *The Battle of the Sexes*, directed by D. W. Griffith. The next year, she appeared with Lon Chaney, Sr. in his last silent film, *Thunder*.



Haver retired from the industry with two 'sound' films to her credit.

Personal life

She married millionaire William Seeman with a service performed by New York Mayor James J. Walker at the home of Rube Goldberg, the cartoonist. The couple divorced in 1945.

Death

Haver retired in Sharon, Connecticut. She died at age 61 from an overdose of barbiturates in 1960, a suspected suicide. Haver left no survivors.

Pola Negri

Pola Negri (3 January 1897 – 1 August 1987) was a Polish stage and film actress who achieved worldwide fame for her tragedienne and *femme fatale* roles from the 1910s through the 1940s during the Golden Era of Hollywood film. She was the first European film star to be invited to Hollywood, and became a great American star. She also started several important women's fashion trends. She is known for being one of the most popular stars of the silent film era, and her varied career included work as an actress in silent and talking films, theater, and vaudeville; as a singer and recording artist; as an author; and as a ballerina.



Early life

Negri was born **Barbara Apolonia Chałupiec** according to her birth record and autobiography in Lipno, Vistula Land, Russian Empire (present-day Poland). She was the youngest of three children, but because the first two died young, she grew up as an only child. Her mother, whose maiden name was Eleonora Kielczewska, was reportedly impoverished Polish royalty, and her father, Jerzy Chałupiec, was a Slovak immigrant tinsmith. After Chałupiec's father was arrested by the Russians for revolutionary activities and sent to Siberia, she and her mother moved to Warsaw, where they lived in extreme poverty.

Chałupiec was accepted into the Imperial Ballet of Warsaw, and began training in the ballet academy. The Academy's patron and ballet enthusiast was Tsar Nicholas II. The Academy produced such world famous ballerinas as *Pawlowa*, *Tamara Karsawina*, and *Matilda Krzesinska*. Chałupiec's first dance performance was in the chorus of baby swans in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, and she worked her way up to a solo role in the Saint-Léon ballet *Coppélia*. A bout with tuberculosis forced her to stop dancing. Chałupiec was sent to a sanatorium to recover, and during that time, she adopted the pseudonym *Pola Negri*, after the Italian novelist and poetess Ada Negri, with *Pola* being short for *Apolonia*.

Polish theatre and film career

After Negri returned from her stay at the sanatorium, she successfully auditioned for the Warsaw Imperial Academy of Dramatic Arts. Alongside her formal schooling at the Academy, she also took private classes outside with renowned Polish stage actress and professor Honorata Leszczynska. She made her theatrical debut before her graduation at The Small Theatre in Warszawa on October 2, 1912. Her performance received much acclaim, and she continued to perform there while finishing her studies at the Academy. She graduated in 1914. Her graduating performance was as Hedwig in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, which resulted in offers to join a number of the prominent theatres in Warsaw. By the end of World War I, Negri had established herself as a popular stage actress. She made an appearance in the Grand Theatre (in *Sumurun*), as well as in Small Theatre (Aleksander Fredro's *Śluby panieńskie*) and at the Summer Theatre in the Saxon Garden, a popular summer vari  t   theatre.

Negri debuted in film in 1914 in *Slave to her Senses* (*Niewolnica zmys  w*). She also appeared in a variety of films made by the Warsaw film industry, including *Room No. 13* (*Pok  j Nr. 13*), *His Last Gesture* (*Jego Ostatni Czyn*), *Students* (*Studenci*), and *The Wife* (*  zona*). Negri gained much popularity during her short screen career in Warsaw, acting alongside many of the most renowned Polish film artists of the time, including J  zef W  grzyn, W  ladys  aw Grabowski, J  zef Galewski, and Kazimierz Junosza-Ste  powski.

Ernst Lubitsch and German silent film career

In 1917, Negri's popularity provided her with an opportunity to move to Berlin, Germany, to appear as the dancing girl in a German revival of Max Reinhardt's theatre production of *Sumurun*. In this production, she met Ernst Lubitsch, who at the time was producing comedies for the German Film studio UFA. Negri was first signed with Saturn Films, making six films with them, including *Wenn das Herz in Ha   ergl  ht* (If the Heart Burns With Hate, 1917). After this, she signed to UFA's roster; some of the films that she made with UFA include *Mania* (1918), *Der Gelbe Schein* (The Yellow Ticket, also 1918), and *Komtesse Doddy* (1919).

In 1918, Lubitsch convinced UFA to let him create a large-scale film with Negri as the main character. The result was *Die Augen der Mumie Ma* (The Eyes of the Mummy Ma, 1918), which was a popular success and led to a series of Lubitsch/Negri collaborations, each larger in scale than the previous film. The next was *Carmen* (1918, reissued in the United States in 1921 as *Gypsy Blood*), which was followed by *Madame Dubarry* (1919, released in the United States as *Passion*). *Madame DuBarry* became a huge international success, and managed to bring down the American embargo on German films and launch a demand for German films that briefly threatened to dislodge Hollywood's dominance in the international film market. Negri and Lubitsch made three German films together after this, *Sumurun* (aka *One Arabian Night*, 1920), *Die Bergkatze* (aka *The Mountain Cat* or *The Wildcat*, 1921), and *Die Flamme* (The Flame, 1922), and UFA employed Negri for films with other directors, including *Vendetta* (1920) and *Sappho* (1921), many of which were purchased by American distributors and shown in the United States.

Hollywood responded to this new threat by buying out key German talent, beginning with the procurement of the services of Lubitsch and Negri. Lubitsch was the first director to be brought to Hollywood, with Mary Pickford calling for his services in her costume film *Rosita* (1923). Paramount Pictures mogul Jesse Lasky saw the premiere of *Madame DuBarry* in Berlin in 1919, and Paramount invited Negri to come to Hollywood in 1921. She signed a contract with Paramount and arrived in New York in a flurry of publicity on September 12, 1922. This ended up making Negri the first ever

Continental star to be imported into Hollywood, setting a precedent for imported European stars that would go on to include Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Ingrid Bergman, Sophia Loren, and many others.

Paramount period



Pola Negri and Rod La Rocque in a publicity portrait for *Forbidden Paradise* (1924)

Negri ended up becoming one of the most popular Hollywood actresses of the era, and certainly the richest woman of the film industry at the time, living in a mansion in Los Angeles modeled after the White House. While in Hollywood, she started several ladies' fashion trends, some of which are still fashion staples today, including red painted toenails, fur boots, and turbans. Negri was a favorite photography subject of the famous Hollywood portrait photographer Eugene Robert Richee, and many of her best-known photographs were taken during this period.

Negri's first two Paramount films were *Bella Donna* (1923) and *The Cheat* (1923), both of which were directed by George Fitzmaurice and were remakes of Paramount films from 1915. Negri's first spectacle film was the Herbert Brenon-directed *The Spanish Dancer* (1923), which was based on the Victor Hugo novel *Don César de Bazan*. The initial screenplay was intended as a vehicle for Rudolph Valentino before he left the Paramount lot, and was reworked for Negri. *Rosita*, Lubitsch's film with Mary Pickford, was released the same year, and also happened to be based on *Don César de Bazan*. According to the book *Paramount Pictures and the People Who Made Them*, "Critics had a field day comparing the two. The general opinion was that the Pickford film was more polished, but the Negri film was more entertaining."

Initially Paramount utilized Negri as a mysterious European *femme fatale* and as a clotheshorse as they did with their other major actress Gloria Swanson, and staged an ongoing feud between the two actresses which actor Charlie Chaplin remembered in his autobiography as "a mélange of cooked-up jealousies and quarrels." Negri was concerned that Paramount was mishandling her career and image, and arranged for her former director Ernst Lubitsch to direct her in the critically acclaimed *Forbidden Paradise* (1924). It would be the last time the two worked together in any film. By 1925, Negri's on-screen continental opulence was starting to wear thin with some segments of the American audience, a situation which was parodied in the Mal St. Clair-directed comedy *A Woman of the World* (1925), which Negri starred in.



Pola Negri with Warner Baxter in a publicity still for *Three Sinners* (1928)

Paramount then began to cast Negri in international peasant roles in films such as the Mauritz Stiller-directed and Erich Pommer-produced *Hotel Imperial* (1927) in an apparent effort to give her a more down-to-earth, relatable image. Although *Hotel Imperial* reportedly fared well at the box office, her next film *Barbed Wire* (1927) and a number of her subsequent films performed poorly in the United States due to the poor publicity surrounding her behavior at her former lover Rudolph Valentino's New York funeral and her rebound marriage to Georgian prince Serge Mdivani, although internationally her films continued to fare well.

In 1928, Negri made her last film for Paramount Pictures, *The Woman From Moscow*, opposite actor Norman Kerry. Negri claims in her autobiography that she opted not to renew her contract with Paramount, choosing instead to retire from films and live as a wife and expectant mother in the Château de Rueil-Séraincourt in Vigny, France, which she owned at the time. That same year, she wrote a short volume featuring her reflections on art and film entitled *La Vie et Le Rêve au Cinéma* (Life and Dreams in the Movies).

Later career



Negri in a publicity portrait from *Hi Diddle Diddle* (1943)

Negri's initial 1928 retirement turned out to be short-lived. Negri miscarried her baby, and eventually learned that her husband was gambling her fortune away on speculative business ventures, straining their relationship. She went back into pictures when an independent production company offered her work in a British film production that was to be distributed by Gaumont-British. Initially the film was to

be a filmed version of George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, and Shaw even offered to alter the play to suit the film. When the rights proved to be too expensive, the company settled on an original story and hired German *kammerspielfilm* director Paul Czinner to direct. The resulting film, *The Way Of Lost Souls* (also known as *The Woman He Scorned*), was released in 1929; it would be Negri's final silent film.

Negri returned to Hollywood in 1931 to begin filming her first talking film, *A Woman Commands* (1932). The film itself was poorly received, but Negri sang the song "Paradise" in the film, and the song became a sizable hit and for many years was considered to be a standard. The song was covered by many other performers, including Russ Columbo and Louis Prima and Keely Smith. Negri went on a successful vaudeville tour to promote the song. She was employed in the leading role of the touring theatre production *A Trip To Pressburg*, which premiered at the Shubert Theater in New York. However, she collapsed after the final curtain at the production's stop at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania due to gall bladder inflammation and was unable to complete the tour.

Negri returned to France to appear in *Fanatisme* (Fanaticism, 1934), an historical costume film about Napoleón III. The film was directed by the directorial team of Tony Lekain and Gaston Ravel and released by Pathé. It was her only French film. After this, actor-director Willi Forst brought Negri to Germany appear in the film *Mazurka* (1935). *Mazurka* gained much popularity in Germany and abroad, and became one of Adolf Hitler's favorite films, a fact that gave birth to a rumor in 1937 about Negri having had an affair with Hitler. There was no truth to the rumor. Pola sued a French magazine, *Pour Vous*, that had circulated the libelous rumor and won her case. *Mazurka* was remade (almost shot-for-shot) in the U.S. as a Kay Francis picture, *Confession*.



Negri and Martha Scott in a publicity still from *Hi Diddle Diddle* (1943)

After the success of *Mazurka*, Negri's former studio, the now-Joseph Goebbels controlled UFA, signed Negri to a new contract. Negri lived in France while working for UFA, making five films with them: *Moskau-Shanghai* (Moscow-Shanghai, 1936), *Madame Bovary* (1937), *Tango Notturmo* (1937), *Die Fromme Lüge* (The Secret Lie, 1938), and *Die Nacht der Entscheidung* (The Night of Decision, 1939).

After the Nazis took over France, Negri found the oppression of the regime too much to bear, and fled back to America. She sailed to New York from Lisbon, Portugal, and initially lived by selling off her jewelry collection. Negri was hired in a supporting role as the temperamental opera singer Genya Smetana for the 1943 comedy *Hi Diddle Diddle*. After the success of this film, Negri was offered numerous roles which were essentially rehashes of her role in *Hi Diddle Diddle*, all of which she turned down. In 1944, Negri was engaged by booking agent Miles Ingalls for a nationwide vaudeville tour. According to her autobiography, she also appeared in a Boston supper club engagement in 1945 for a repertoire centered around the song "Paradise", and soon after decided to retire from the entertainment business altogether.

Personal life

Negri's first marriage was with Count Eugeniusz Dambski, and would prove to be short lived. Negri married Dambski in St Mary's Assumption Church in Sosnowiec in November 5, 1919, thus becoming Countessa Apolonia Dambska-Challupiec. After a long separation period, Negri and Dambski were divorced on 1922. During their separation period, Negri met industrialist Wolfgang George Schleber, whom she called "Petronius" after the main character in *Quo Vadis*. Negri would be Schleber's mistress for most of the remainder of her stay in Germany.

After Negri began working in the United States, she began making headlines and gossip columns with a string of celebrity love affairs with stars such as Charlie Chaplin, Rod La Rocque, and Rudolph Valentino. Negri had met Chaplin while in Germany, and what began as a platonic relationship there became a well-publicized affair and marriage speculation which received the headline, "The Queen of Tragedy To Wed The King of Comedy". The relationship soured, and Negri became involved for a time with actor Rod La Rocque, who also appeared opposite her in *Forbidden Paradise* (1924).

Negri then met Rudolph Valentino at a costume party held by Marion Davies and William Randolph Hearst at the San Simeon estate, and was Valentino's lover until his death in 1926. Negri caused a media sensation at this New York funeral in August 24, 1926, at which she "fainted" several times, and, according to actor Ben Lyon, arranged for a large floral arrangement, which spelled out "P-O-L-A", to be placed on Valentino's coffin. The press dismissed her actions as a publicity stunt. At the time of his death and for the remainder of her life, Negri would state that Valentino was the love of her life.

Negri followed this with her second marriage, this one to Georgian prince Serge Mdivani, which caused public opinion in the United States to sour against her because it happened so quickly after Rudolph Valentino's death. Negri and Mdivani were married on May 14, 1927 (less than nine months after Valentino's death), and were divorced on April 2, 1931.

While residing at the Ambassador Hotel in New York in April 1932, Negri was romantically involved with Russ Columbo and performed with him in the George Jessel Variety Revue at The Schubert Theatre. After the premier of Negri's film *A Woman Commands* in Hollywood, Russ Columbo performed Negri's signature song "Paradise" with his orchestra, and dedicated the song to Negri. Columbo also recorded and released the song as a 78 rpm single that year with slightly altered lyrics, and the single became a huge sensation with audiences across the country.

Negri was close friends with actresses Mae Murray and Marion Davies, and in fact was sister-in-law to Murray for a time, who was married to David Mdivani, brother to Negri's husband Serge Mdivani. Davies allowed Negri to live in her bungalow when Negri initially emigrated back to California in the 1940s.

Retirement and later years

After Negri retired from films, she became close friends with Margaret West, an oil heiress and vaudeville actress she had originally met in the 1930s. The two became housemates, and moved from Los Angeles to San Antonio, Texas, in 1957. Negri would live with West until the latter's death in 1963. Negri became a naturalized citizen of the United States on January 12, 1951.

In 1948, director Billy Wilder approached Negri to appear as Norma Desmond in the film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), after Mae Murray, Mae West, and Mary Pickford declined the role. Negri also declined the role because she felt that the screenplay was not ready and that Montgomery Clift, who was slated to play the Joe Gillis character at the time, was not a good choice for the character. The role of Joe

Gillis eventually went to William Holden, and Gloria Swanson, Negri's former "rival" at Paramount, accepted the Norma Desmond role.

Negri came out of retirement once to appear in the Walt Disney film *The Moon-Spinners* (1964), which starred Hayley Mills and Eli Wallach. Negri's appearance in the film as eccentric jewel collector Madame Habib was shot over the course of two weeks. During the time that Negri was filming *The Moon-Spinners* in London, she made a sensation by appearing before the London press at her hotel in the company of a feisty cheetah on a steel chain leash.

After West's death, Negri moved out of the home she had shared with West into a townhome located at 7707 Broadway in San Antonio. She spent the remainder of her years there, largely out of the public eye. In 1964, Negri received an honorary award from the German film industry for her film work, followed by a Hemis-Film award in San Antonio in 1968. In 1970 she published her autobiography, *Memoirs of a Star*, which was published by Doubleday.

Negri made an appearance at The Museum of Modern Art on April 30, 1970, for a screening event in her honor, which featured her film *A Woman of the World* (1925) and selections from her films. Negri was also guest of honor at a 1972 screening of *Carmen* held at the Witte Museum in San Antonio.

In 1975, director Vincente Minnelli approached Negri to appear as the Contessa Sanziani in his film *A Matter of Time*, but Negri was unable to accept the part due to poor health. The role ended up going to Ingrid Bergman instead.

In 1978, Billy Wilder directed the film *Fedora*; although Negri does not appear in the film, the title character is based largely on her.

Negri's final high-profile coverage in her lifetime was for a "Where Are They Now?" feature on silent film stars, which appeared in *Life* magazine in 1980.

Death and legacy



Pola Negri's stars in the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Hollywood, California, and in Poland's Walk of Fame in Łódź, Poland.

Pola Negri died on 1 August 1987, at the age of 90. Her death was caused by pneumonia, however she was also suffering from a brain tumor (for which she had refused treatment). At her wake at the Porter Loring Funeral Home in San Antonio, her body was placed on view wearing a yellow golden chiffon dress with a golden turban to match. Negri's death received extensive coverage in her hometown newspapers *San Antonio Light*, and *San Antonio Express-News*, and in publications such as *Los Angeles Times* *New York Times*, and *Variety* magazine.

Negri was interred in Calvary Cemetery, East Los Angeles next to her mother, Eleonora. Since she had no children, she left most of her estate to St. Mary's University in Texas, including several rare prints of her films. In addition, a generous portion of her estate was given to the Polish nuns of the Seraphic Order; a large black and white portrait hangs in the small chapel next to Poland's patron, Our Lady of Częstochowa, in San Antonio, Texas.

Pola Negri donated her collection of memorabilia to St. Mary's University in San Antonio, who also set up a scholarship in her name. The Polish Film Festival of Los Angeles remembers Negri with a Pola Negri Award given to outstanding film artists, and the Pola Negri Museum in Lipno gives a Polita award for outstanding artist achievement.

Pola Negri has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her contribution to Motion Pictures at 6933 Hollywood Boulevard. She was the 11th star in Hollywood history to place her hand and foot prints in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. She has also received, along with Roman Polanski, a star in Poland's Walk of Fame in Łódź. The Polish post office issued a Stamp honoring Negri in 1996.



Signature and prints of Pola Negri's hands and feet in front of Grauman's Chinese Theater, Hollywood, USA

In 2006, a feature-length documentary about Negri's life, directed by Mariusz Kotowski and entitled *Pola Negri: Life is a Dream in Cinema*, premiered at the Seventh Annual Polish Film Festival of Los Angeles. The documentary is notable for its in-depth interviews with film stars Hayley Mills and Eli Wallach, who were starring actress and supporting actor respectively in the Walt Disney film *The Moon-Spinners* (1964), Pola Negri's final film. *Pola Negri: Life is a Dream in Cinema* has played at Pola Negri retrospective screenings in The United States and Europe, most notably at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and La Cinémathèque Française in Paris. Kotowski also authored a Polish-language biography of Pola Negri entitled *Pola Negri: Legenda Hollywood* (English title: *Pola Negri: Hollywood Legend*), which was released in Poland on February 24, 2011, and produced a 3-DVD compilation of early Pola Negri films entitled *Pola Negri, The Iconic Collection: The Early Years* (2011).

Ramón Novarro

Ramón Novarro (February 6, 1899 – October 30, 1968) was a Mexican leading man actor in Hollywood in the early 20th century. He was the next male "Sex Symbol" after the death of Rudolph Valentino. Novarro was the victim of a violent extortion attempt which resulted in his death.



Ramon Novarro in 1934

Early life

Navarro was born **José Ramón Gil Samaniego** on February 6, 1899 in Durango, Mexico to Dr. Mariano N. Samaniego. He moved with his family to Los Angeles, California, to escape the Mexican Revolution in 1913.

Allan Ellenberger, Novarro's biographer, writes:

...the Samaniegos were an influential and well-respected family in Mexico. Many Samaniegos had prominent positions the affairs of state and were held in high esteem by the president. Ramon's grandfather, Mariano Samaniego, was a well-known physician in Juarez. Known as a charitable and outgoing man, he was once an interim governor for the State of Chihuahua and was the first city councilman of El Paso, Texas...

Ramon's father, Dr. Mariano N. Samaniego, was born in Juarez and attended high school in Las Cruces, New Mexico. After receiving his degree in dentistry at the University of Pennsylvania, he moved to Durango, Mexico, and began a flourishing dental practice. In 1891 he married Leonor Gavilan, the beautiful daughter of a prosperous landowner. The Gavilans were a mixture of Spanish and Aztec blood, and according to local legend, they were descended from Guerrero, a prince of Montezuma.

The family estate was called the "Garden of Eden". Thirteen children were born there: Emilio; Guadalupe; Rosa; Ramon; Leonor; Mariano; Luz; Antonio; a stillborn child; Carmen; Angel and Eduardo.

At the time of the revolution in Mexico the family moved from Durango to Mexico City and then back to Durango. Ramon's three sisters, Guadalupe, Rosa, and Leonor became nuns.

Career

A second cousin of the Mexican actresses Dolores del Río and Andrea Palma, he entered films in 1917 in bit parts; and he supplemented his income by working as a singing waiter. His friends, the actor and director Rex Ingram and his wife, the actress Alice Terry, began to promote him as a rival to Rudolph Valentino, and Ingram suggested he change his name to "Novarro." From 1923, he began to play more prominent roles. His role in *Scaramouche* (1923) brought him his first major success.

In 1925, he achieved his greatest success in *Ben-Hur*, his revealing costumes causing a sensation, and was elevated into the Hollywood elite. As with many stars, Novarro engaged Sylvia of Hollywood as a therapist (although in her tell-all book, Sylvia erroneously claimed Novarro slept in a coffin). With Valentino's death in 1926, Novarro became the screen's leading Latin actor, though ranked behind his MGM stablemate, John Gilbert, as a model lover. He was popular as a swashbuckler in action roles and was considered one of the great romantic lead actors of his day. Novarro appeared with Norma Shearer in *The Student Prince in Old Heidelberg* (1927) and with Joan Crawford in *Across to Singapore* (1928). He made his first talking film, starring as a singing French soldier, in *Devil-May-Care* (1929). He also starred with the French actress Renée Adorée in *The Pagan* (1929). Novarro starred with Greta Garbo in *Mata Hari* (1932) and was a qualified success opposite Myrna Loy in *The Barbarian* (1933).



with Lupe Vélez in *Laughing Boy* (1934)

When Novarro's contract with MGM Studios expired in 1935, the studio did not renew it. He continued to act sporadically, appearing in films for Republic Pictures, a Mexican religious drama, and a French comedy. In the 1940s, he had several small roles in American films, including John Huston's *We Were Strangers* (1949) starring Jennifer Jones and John Garfield. In 1958, he was considered for a role in a television series, *The Green Peacock* with Howard Duff and Ida Lupino after the demise of their CBS sitcom *Mr. Adams and Eve*. The project, however, never materialized. A Broadway tryout was aborted in the 1960s; but Novarro kept busy on television, appearing in NBC's *The High Chaparral* as late as 1968.

At the peak of his success in the late 1920s and early 1930s, he was earning more than \$100,000 per film. He invested some of his income in real estate, and his Hollywood Hills residence is one of the more renowned designs (1927) by architect Lloyd Wright. After his career ended, he was still able to maintain a comfortable lifestyle.

Personal life

Novarro had been troubled all his life as a result of his conflicting views over his Roman Catholic religion and his homosexuality, and his life-long struggle with alcoholism is often traced to these issues. MGM mogul Louis B. Mayer reportedly tried to coerce Novarro into a "lavender marriage", which he refused. He was a friend of adventurer and author Richard Halliburton, also a celebrity in the closet, and was romantically involved with journalist Herbert Howe, who was also his publicist during the late 1920s.

Death

Novarro was murdered on October 30, 1968, by two brothers, Paul and Tom Ferguson (aged 22 and 17, respectively), whom he had hired from an agency to come to his Laurel Canyon home for sex. According to the prosecution in the murder case, the two young men believed that a large sum of money was hidden in Novarro's house. The prosecution accused them of torturing Novarro for several hours to force him to reveal where the nonexistent money was hidden. They left with a mere 20 dollars they took from his bathrobe pocket before fleeing the scene. Novarro allegedly died as a result of asphyxiation, choking to death on his own blood after being brutally beaten. The two brothers were later caught and sentenced to long prison terms but were quickly released on probation. Both were later rearrested for unrelated crimes, for which they served longer terms than for their murder conviction.

Ramón Novarro is buried in Calvary Cemetery, in Los Angeles. Ramón Novarro's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is at 6350 Hollywood Boulevard.

In popular culture

Novarro's murder served as the influence for the short story by Charles Bukowski, *The Murder of Ramon Vasquez*, and the song by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, "Tango," recorded by Peggy Lee on her *Mirrors* album.

In late 2005, the Wings Theatre in New York City staged the world premiere of *Through a Naked Lens* by George Barthel. The play combined fact and fiction to depict Novarro's rise to fame and a relationship with Hollywood journalist Herbert Howe.

Novarro's relationship with Herbert Howe is discussed in two biographies: Allan R. Ellenberger's *Ramón Novarro* and André Soares's *Beyond Paradise: The Life of Ramón Novarro*. A recounting of Novarro's murder can be found in Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon*.

Renée Adorée

Renée Adorée (September 30, 1898 – October 5, 1933) was a French actress who had appeared in Hollywood silent movies during the 1920s.



Early life

Born **Jeanne de la Fonte** in Lille, she was the daughter of circus artists and by age five was performing with her parents. In her teens, she began acting in minor stage productions and toured Europe with her troupe. She was performing in Russia when World War I broke out and fled to London.

Career rise

From London she went to New York City, where she continued to work in the theatre until the opportunity arose to work in the motion picture business.



Suzette (Renée Adorée) makes the tedious hours of the wounded Sir Nicholas Thormonde ([Lew Cody](#)) seem less monotonous. A scene from [Elinor Glyn](#)'s production *Man and Maid* for [Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer](#), 1925

In 1920, given the exotic name Renée Adorée (French for "reborn" and "adored," both in the feminine form) by the studio, she appeared in her first motion picture. While in New York City on New Year's Eve 1921 she met Tom Moore (1883–1955). Fifteen years her senior, Tom Moore and his brothers were very successful Hollywood actors. Six weeks after their meeting, on February 12, 1921, Adorée married Moore at his home in Beverly Hills, California. The marriage did not last, and in 1925, Adorée married again, this time to Sherman Gill.

Despite her petite stature, Adorée's sensuous beauty and penetrating eyes made her a compelling presence on the black and white screen. She is most famous for her role as "Melisande" in the melodramatic romance and war epic *The Big Parade* (1925), which became one of MGM's all-time biggest hits and a film that historians rank as one of the best of the silent film era. Co-starring John Gilbert, *The Big Parade* is still shown on television and is available on video. In *The Mating Call* a 1928 film produced by Howard Hughes, Adorée had a very brief nude skinny-dipping scene that caused a significant commotion at the time.

Successful “Talkies” transition

With the advent of sound in film, Adorée was one of the fortunate actors whose voices met the film industry's new needs. She would star opposite Lon Chaney and her former brother-in-law Owen Moore, make three more films with John Gilbert, and appear in four films with another leading Hollywood actor Ramon Novarro.

Tuberculosis and untimely death

By the end of 1930, she had appeared in forty-five films, the last four of them talkies. That year she was diagnosed with tuberculosis, Adorée lived only a few years longer. Adorée went against her physician's advice by finishing her final film, *Call of the Flesh*, with Ramon Novarro. At its completion, she was rushed to a sanitarium in Prescott, Arizona, where she lay flat on her back for two years in an effort to regain her physical health. In April of 1933, she left the sanitarium. At this point it was thought she had recovered sufficiently to resume her screen career, but she swiftly weakened and her health declined day by day. She was moved from her modest home in the Tujunga Hills to the Sunland health resort in September 1933.

Death

She died there, a few days after her 35th birthday, on October 5, 1933 in Tujunga, California. She is interred in the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, Hollywood, California.

Adorée left an estate valued at \$2,429. The only heir was her mother, who lived in England. No will was found.

For contributions to the motion picture industry, Adorée was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1611 Hollywood Boulevard.

Richard Arlen

Richard Arlen (September 1, 1899 – March 28, 1976) was an American actor.



from *Wings* (1927)

Biography

Born **Sylvanus Richard Van Mattimore** in St. Paul, Minnesota, he attended the University of Pennsylvania. He served as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps during World War I. His first job after the war was with St. Paul's Athletic Club. Then he went to the oilfields of Texas and Oklahoma and then found work as a tool boy, a messenger and sporting editor of a newspaper before going to Los Angeles to star in films but no producer wanted him. He was a delivery boy for a film laboratory when the motor cycle he was riding landed him a broken leg outside the Paramount Pictures lot. A sympathetic film director gave him his start as an extra. He appeared at first in silent films before making the transition to talkies. His first important film role was in *Vengeance of the Deep* (1923).

He took time out from his Hollywood career to teach as a United States Army Air Forces flight instructor in World War II.

Arlen is best known for his role as a pilot in the Academy Award-winning *Wings* (1927) with Clara Bow, Charles 'Buddy' Rogers, Gary Cooper, El Brendel, and his first wife, Jobyna Ralston, whom he married in 1927. He is one of the more famous residents of the celebrity enclave, Toluca Lake, California.

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Richard Arlen has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6753 Hollywood Blvd.

On his death from emphysema in 1976, Richard Arlen was buried in the Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City, California.

Richard Barthelmess

Richard Semler "Dick" Barthelmess (May 9, 1895 – August 17, 1963) was an Oscar-nominated silent film star.



Richard Barthelmess with Lillian Gish in D.W. Griffith's production of *Way Down East* (1920).

Early life

Barthelmess was educated at Hudson River Military Academy at Nyack and Trinity College at Hartford, Connecticut. His father died when he was a baby and his mother, Caroline Harris, was a stage actress, so he worked in theatres in his early days, between schooling, doing "walk-ons". This led to acting in college, doing amateur productions. Russian actress Alla Nazimova, a friend of the family, had been taught English by Barthelmess's mother.

Nazimova in return convinced Barthelmess to try acting professionally and he made his first film appearance in 1916 in the serial *Gloria's Romance* as an extra. At this time he also appeared as a supporting player in several films starring Marguerite Clark. His next role, in *War Brides* opposite Alla Nazimova, attracted the attention of legendary director D. W. Griffith, who offered him several important roles, finally casting him opposite Lillian Gish in *Broken Blossoms* (1919) and *Way Down East* (1920).



Lillian Gish and Richard Barthelmess in *Broken Blossoms*

He soon became one of Hollywood's highest paid performers, starring in such classics as *The Patent Leather Kid* (1927) and *The Noose* (1928); he was nominated for Best Actor at the first Academy Awards for his performance in both these films, and he won a Special Citation for producing *The Patent Leather Kid*. He founded his own production company, Inspiration Film Company, together with Charles Duell and Henry King. One of their films, *Tol'able David* (1921), in which Barthelmess starred as a teenage mailman who finds courage, was a major success.

With the advent of the sound era, Barthelmess' fortunes changed. He made several films in the new medium, most notably *Son of the Gods* (1930), *The Dawn Patrol* (1930), *The Last Flight* (1931), and *The Cabin in the Cotton* (1932), *Central Airport* (1933), and a supporting role as Rita Hayworth's character's husband in *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939).

Post-acting career

However, he failed to maintain the stardom of his silent film days and gradually left entertainment. He enlisted in the United States Navy Reserve during World War II, served as a lieutenant commander, and never returned to film, preferring instead to live off his investments.

Death

Barthelmess died of cancer in 1963, aged 68, and was interred at the Ferncliff Cemetery and Mausoleum in Hartsdale, New York.

Family

He and first wife, stage and screen star Mary Hay, had one daughter Mary Barthelmess.

Other

Barthelmess was one of the founders of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

For his contribution as an actor, Richard Barthelmess was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Richard Dix

Richard Dix (July 18, 1893 – September 20, 1949) was an American motion picture actor who achieved popularity in both silent and sound film. His standard on-screen image was that of the rugged and stalwart hero.



Richard Dix as featured on the poster for Redskin (1929), his final silent film.

Early life

Born **Ernst Carlton Brimmer** on July 18, 1893, in St. Paul, Minnesota. There he was educated, and at the desires of his father, studied to be a surgeon. His obvious acting talent in his school dramatic club led him to leading roles in most of the school plays. At 6' 0" and 180 pounds, Dix excelled in sports, especially football and baseball. These skills would serve him well in the vigorous film roles he would go on to play. After a year at the University of Minnesota he took a position at a bank, spending his evenings training for the stage. His professional start was with a local stock company, and this led to similar work in New York City. The death of his father left him with a mother and sister to support. He went to Los Angeles, became leading man for the Morosco Stock Company and his success there got him a contract with Paramount Pictures.

Career

After his move to Hollywood, where he began a career in Western movies. One of the few actors to successfully bridge the transition from silent films to talkies, Dix's best-remembered early role was in Cecil B. DeMille's silent version of *The Ten Commandments* (1923). He was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor in 1931 for his performance as Yancey Cravat in *Cimarron*, in which he shared top-billing with Irene Dunne. *Cimarron*, based on the popular novel by Edna Ferber, took the Best Picture award. Dix starred in another RKO adventure, *The Lost Squadron*.

A memorable role for Dix was in the 1935 British futuristic film *The Tunnel*. An original poster for this film was catalogued with an estimated value of between \$2000 – \$3000 by Heritage Auction Galleries in Dallas in the Summer of 2006. Dix starred in *The Great Jasper* and *Blind Alibi* in the late 1930s. His popular RKO Radio Pictures co-star in *Blind Alibi* was Ace the Wonder Dog. Dix's human co-stars were Whitney Bourne, Eduardo Ciannelli; the film was directed by Lew Landers.

In the 1940s he starred in *The Whistler*, the first of a series of eight "Whistler" films for Columbia Pictures. Dix retired from acting after making the seventh in the series, *The Thirteenth Hour*.

Hobbies

According to the July 1934 *Movies* magazine, on his ranch near Hollywood whose location he kept a close secret, Dix raised thousands of chickens and turkeys each year. He also had a collection of thousands of pipes, and a "collection" of 36 dogs, "Scotties and English setters". He also read at least five books a week.

Death

Richard Dix retired from films in 1947. He first married Winifred Coe on October 20, 1931, had a daughter, Martha Mary Ellen, then divorced in 1933. He then married Virginia Webster on June 29, 1934. They had twin boys, Richard Jr. and Robert Dix and an adopted daughter, Sara Sue.

After suffering a serious heart attack on 12 September 1949 while on a train from New York to Los Angeles Dix died of at age 56, on September 20, 1949. He was survived by four children from his two marriages, but sadly in 1953 his son, Richard Dix Jr., was killed in an accident at a logging camp near Ponderosa, California. Richard Dix Sr. was interred in Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

Richard Dix has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1610 Vine Street.

Ronald Colman

Ronald Charles Colman (9 February 1891 – 19 May 1958) was an English actor.



from the trailer for *Random Harvest* (1942)

Early years

He was born in Richmond, Surrey, England, the second son and fourth child of Charles Colman and his wife Marjory Read Fraser. His siblings included Eric, Edith, and Marjorie. He was educated at boarding school in Littlehampton, where he discovered he enjoyed acting. He intended to study engineering at Cambridge University, but his father's sudden death from pneumonia in 1907 made this financially impossible.

He became a well-known amateur actor, and was a member of the West Middlesex Dramatic Society in 1908-09. He made his first appearance on the professional stage in 1914.

After working as a clerk at the British Steamship Company in the City of London, he joined the London Scottish Regiment in 1909 and was among the first of Territorial Army to fight in World War I. During the war, he served with fellow actors Claude Rains, Herbert Marshall, Cedric Hardwicke and Basil Rathbone. On 31 October 1914 at the Battle of Messines Colman was seriously wounded by shrapnel in his ankle, which gave him a limp that he would attempt to hide throughout the rest of his acting career. He was invalided from the service in 1916.

Career

Theatre

He had sufficiently recovered to appear at the London Coliseum on 19 June 1916, as Rahmat Sheikh in *The Maharani of Arakan*, with Lena Ashwell; at the Playhouse in December that year as Stephen Weatherbee in Charles Goddard & Paul Dickey's play *The Misleading Lady*; at the Court Theatre in March 1917 he played Webber in *Partnership* and at that theatre the following year appeared in Eugène Brieux's play, adapted from the French, *Damaged Goods*; at the Ambassadors Theatre in February 1918 he played George Lubin in *The Little Brother*, and during 1918 toured as David Goldsmith in *The Bubble*.

In 1920, Colman went to America and toured with Robert Warwick in *The Dauntless Three*, and subsequently toured with Fay Bainter in *East is West*; at the Booth Theatre, New York, in January 1921 he played the Temple Priest in William Archer's play *The Green Goddess*, with George Arliss; at the 39th Street Theatre in August 1921 he appeared as Charles in *The Nightcap*; and in September 1922 he

made a great success as Alain Sergyll at the Empire Theatre (New York City) in the hit play *La Tendresse*.



Film

Ronald Colman had first appeared in films in England in 1917 and 1919 for Cecil Hepworth, and subsequently with the old Broadwest Film Company in *The Snow of the Desert*. While appearing on stage in New York in *La Tendresse*, Director Henry King saw him, and engaged him as the leading man in the 1923 film, *The White Sister*, opposite Lillian Gish, and was an immediate success. Thereafter Colman virtually abandoned the stage for film. He became a very popular silent film star in both romantic and adventure films, among them *The Dark Angel* (1925), *Stella Dallas* (1926), *Beau Geste* (1927), and *The Winning of Barbara Worth* (1926). His dark hair and eyes and his athletic and riding ability (he did most of his own stunts until late in his career) led reviewers to describe him as a "Valentino type". He was often cast in similar, exotic roles. Towards the end of the silents era, Colman was teamed with Hungarian actress Vilma Bánky under Samuel Goldwyn and the two were a popular movie team rivalling Greta Garbo and John Gilbert.



Although he was a huge success in silent films, he was unable to capitalize on one of his chief assets until the advent of the talking picture, "his beautifully modulated and cultured voice", also described as "a bewitching, finely-modulated, resonant voice". His first major talkie success was in 1930, when he was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for two roles — *Condemned* and *Bulldog Drummond*. He thereafter appeared in a number of notable films including *Raffles*, *The Masquerader*, *Clive of India*, *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1935, *Under Two Flags*, *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *Lost Horizon* in 1937, *If I Were King* in 1938, and *The Talk of the Town* in 1941. He won the Best Actor Oscar in 1948 for *A Double Life*. At the time of his death, Colman was contracted by MGM for the lead role in *Village of the Damned*. However, Colman died and the film became a British production starring George Sanders, who had married Colman's widow, Benita Hume.

Radio and television

Beginning in 1945, Colman made many guest appearances on *The Jack Benny Program* on radio, alongside his second wife, stage and screen actress Benita Hume. Their comedy work as Benny's next-door neighbors led to their own radio comedy *The Halls of Ivy* from 1950 to 1952, created by *Fibber McGee & Molly* mastermind Don Quinn, on which the Colmans played the literate, charming president of a middle American college and his former-actress wife. On the 27 September 1950 installment, the audience was treated to a surprise---Colman himself had written the script, poking a little fun at himself at the finish when he himself gave the episode's credits. *The Halls of Ivy* moved to television from 1954 to 1955.

Death

Ronald Colman died on 19 May 1958, aged 67, from acute emphysema in Santa Barbara, California, and was interred in the Santa Barbara Cemetery. He had a daughter, Juliet, by his second wife.

Awards and honors

He was nominated for four Academy awards: *Bulldog Drummond* (1929), *Condemned* (1930), *Random Harvest* (1942), and *A Double Life* (1947), for which he won the Academy Award for his role of "Anthony John," an actor playing "Othello" who comes to identify with the character. He also won the Golden Globe award for Best Actor in 1947 for his role in *A Double Life*. In 2002, Colman's Oscar statuette was sold at auction by Christie's for \$174,500.

Colman has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, one for motion pictures at 6801 Hollywood Blvd. and one for television at 1625 Vine Street.

Roscoe Arbuckle

Roscoe Conkling "Fatty" Arbuckle (March 24, 1887 – June 29, 1933) was an American silent film actor, comedian, director, and screenwriter. Starting at the Selig Polyscope Company he eventually moved to Keystone Studios where he worked with Mabel Normand and Harold Lloyd. He mentored Charlie Chaplin and discovered Buster Keaton and Bob Hope.



He was one of the most popular silent stars of the 1910s, and soon became one of the highest paid actors in Hollywood, signing a contract in 1921 with Paramount Pictures for an unprecedented \$1 million.

In September 1921, Arbuckle attended a party at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco during the Labor Day weekend. Bit player Virginia Rappe became drunk and ill at the party; she died four days later at a sanitarium known for performing abortions. Arbuckle was accused by a well-known madam of raping and accidentally killing Rappe. Arbuckle endured three widely publicized trials for manslaughter. His films were subsequently banned and he was publicly ostracized.

Though he was acquitted in the third trial and received a written apology from the jury, the trial's scandal has mostly overshadowed his legacy as a pioneering comedian. Though the ban on his films was lifted within less than a year, Arbuckle only worked sparingly through the 1920s. He died in his sleep of a heart attack, aged 46, in 1933.

Early life

Born in Smith Center, Kansas, one of nine children born to Mollie and William Goodrich Arbuckle. Roscoe Arbuckle weighed in excess of 13 lb (5.9 kg) at birth and as both parents had slim builds this resulted in his father not believing the child was his own offspring. This disbelief led him to name the child after a politician (and notorious philanderer) whom he despised, Republican senator Roscoe Conkling. The birth was traumatic for Mollie and resulted in chronic health problems which contributed to her death 12 years later.

Arbuckle had a "wonderful" singing voice and was extremely agile. At the age of eight his mother encouraged him to perform in theatres which he enjoyed until she died in 1899 when he was 12. His

father, who had always treated him harshly, now refused to support him and Arbuckle got work doing odd jobs in a hotel. Arbuckle was in the habit of singing while he worked and was overheard by a customer who was a professional singer. The customer invited him to perform in an amateur talent show. The show consisted of the audience judging acts by clapping or jeering with bad acts pulled off the stage by a shepherd's crook. Arbuckle sang, danced and did some clowning around but did not impress the audience. He saw the crook emerge from the wings and to avoid it somersaulted into the orchestra pit in obvious panic. The audience went wild and he not only won the competition but began a career in vaudeville.

Career

In 1904 Arbuckle was invited by Sid Grauman to sing in his new Unique Theater in San Francisco, which was the start of a long friendship between the two. He then joined the Pantages Theatre Group touring the West Coast of the United States and in 1906 joined the Orpheum Theater in Portland, Oregon owned by Leon Errol. Arbuckle became the main act and the group took their show on tour.

On August 6, 1908 he married Minta Durfee (1889–1975), the daughter of Charles Warren Durfee and Flora Adkins. Durfee starred in many early comedy films, often with Arbuckle. They reportedly made a strange couple as Minta was short and petite while Arbuckle was tall and very large. Arbuckle then joined the Morosco Burbank Stock vaudeville company and went on a tour of China and Japan returning in early 1909.

Arbuckle began his film career with the Selig Polyscope Company in July 1909 when he appeared in *Ben's Kid*. Arbuckle appeared sporadically in Selig one-reelers until 1913, moved briefly to Universal Pictures and became a star in producer-director Mack Sennett's *Keystone Cops* comedies. (However, according to the Motion Picture Studio Directory for 1919 and 1921, Arbuckle began his screen career with Keystone in 1913 as an extra for \$3 a day, working his way up through the acting ranks to become a lead player and director.) Although his large size was undoubtedly part of his comedic appeal Arbuckle was self-conscious about his weight and refused to use it to get "cheap" laughs. For example he would not allow himself to be stuck in a doorway or chair.

Arbuckle was a talented singer. After Enrico Caruso heard him sing he urged the comedian to "give up this nonsense you do for a living, with training you could become the second greatest singer in the world".

Screen comedian



Arbuckle's nephew Al St. John (right) with Buster Keaton and Arbuckle in *Out West* (1918)



Arbuckle's photo on the cover of the UK based *Pictures* motion picture magazine of the July 23, 1921 issue

Despite his massive physical size, Arbuckle was remarkably agile and acrobatic. Mack Sennett, when recounting his first meeting with Arbuckle, noted that he "skipped up the stairs as lightly as Fred Astaire"; and, "without warning went into a feather light step, clapped his hands and did a backward somersault as graceful as a girl tumbler". His comedies are noted as rollicking and fast-paced, have many chase scenes, and feature sight gags. Arbuckle was fond of the famous "pie in the face", a comedy cliché that has come to symbolize silent-film-era comedy itself. The earliest known use of this gag was in the June 1913 Keystone one-reeler *A Noise from the Deep*, starring Arbuckle and frequent screen partner Mabel Normand. (The first known "pie in the face" on-screen is in Ben Turpin's *Mr. Flip* in 1909. However, the oldest known *thrown* "pie in the face" is Normand's.)

In 1914, Paramount Pictures made the then-unheard of offer of \$1,000-a-day plus 25% of all profits and complete artistic control to make movies with Arbuckle and Normand. The movies were so lucrative and popular that in 1918 they offered Arbuckle a three-year, \$3 million contract (2010: \$43,057,003).

By 1916, Arbuckle's weight and heavy drinking were causing severe health problems and an infection he caught became a carbuncle on his leg so bad that amputation was considered. Although he recovered with his leg intact, he had lost 80 lb (36 kg)—managing to get his weight down to 266 lbs (120 kg)—and he had become addicted to morphine. This is reported to have been given to him by doctors to diminish the pains in his legs, as the danger of using morphine was not yet widely known.

Following his recovery, Arbuckle started his own film company, Comique, in partnership with Joseph Schenck. Although Comique produced some of the best short pictures of the silent era, in 1918 Arbuckle transferred his controlling interest in the company to Buster Keaton and accepted Paramount's \$3 million offer to make up to 18 feature films over three years.

Arbuckle disliked his screen nickname, which he had been given because of his substantial girth. "Fatty" had also been Arbuckle's nickname since school; "It was inevitable", he said. He weighed 185 lb (84 kg) when he was 12. Fans also called Roscoe "The Prince of Whales" and "The Balloonatic". However, the name *Fatty* identifies the character that Arbuckle portrayed on-screen (usually, a naive hayseed)—not Arbuckle himself. When Arbuckle portrayed a female, the character was named "Miss Fatty", as in the film *Miss Fatty's Seaside Lovers*. Arbuckle discouraged anyone from addressing him as "Fatty" off-screen and when they did so his usual response was "I've got a name, you know."

As mentor

Charlie Chaplin

After British actor Charlie Chaplin joined Keystone Studios in 1914, Arbuckle mentored him. Chaplin's most famous character, "the Tramp", was created after Chaplin adopted Arbuckle's trademark "balloon" baggy pants, boots and undersized hat.

Buster Keaton

Arbuckle gave Buster Keaton his first film-making work in the 1917 short, *The Butcher Boy*. They soon became screen partners, with a deadpan Buster soberly assisting the wacky Roscoe during his adventures. When Arbuckle was promoted to feature films, Keaton inherited Arbuckle's short-subject company *Comique*, which launched his own separate career as a comedy star. Their close friendship never wavered, even when Arbuckle was beset by tragedy, depression and his downfall. In his autobiography, Keaton described Arbuckle's playful nature and his love of practical jokes, including several elaborately constructed schemes which the two successfully played, at the expense of various Hollywood studio figures.

Bob Hope

Arbuckle also gave Bob Hope his break in show business. In 1927, Arbuckle allowed Hope to be the opening act in his comedy show in Cleveland. Roscoe then gave Hope the names and numbers of his friends in Hollywood, telling him to "go west".

The scandal

On September 5, 1921 Arbuckle took a break from his hectic film schedule and, despite suffering from second degree burns to both buttocks from an accident on set, drove to San Francisco with two friends, Lowell Sherman (an actor/director) and cameraman Fred Fischbach. The three checked into three rooms 1219 (Arbuckle & Fischbach), 1220 (empty) and 1221 (Sherman) at the St. Francis Hotel. They had rented 1220 as a party room and invited several women to the suite.

During the carousing, a 26-year-old aspiring actress named Virginia Rappe was found seriously ill in room 1219 and was examined by the hotel doctor, who concluded her symptoms were mostly caused by intoxication and gave her morphine to calm her. Rappe was not hospitalized until two days after the incident.

In fact, Virginia Rappe was already an ill woman. She suffered from chronic cystitis, a condition that flared up dramatically whenever she drank. Her heavy drinking habits and the poor quality of the era's bootleg alcohol could leave her in severe physical distress. She developed a reputation for over-imbibing at parties, then drunkenly tearing at her clothes from the resulting physical pain. But by the time of the St. Francis Hotel party, her reproductive health was a greater concern. She had undergone several abortions in the space of a few years, the quality of care she received for such procedures was probably substandard, and she was preparing to undergo another (or, more likely, had recently done so) as a result of a pregnancy by her boyfriend, director Henry Lehrman.

Author Andy Edmonds theorized that during the relatively innocent horseplay at the party, Arbuckle may have accidentally struck Rappe's midsection with his knee. If she had undergone a botched abortion

during the days immediately before, the blow might have been enough to badly damage her already compromised internal organs. This would also account for the statements that a delirious Rappe was alleged to have made later during the party, statements along the lines of, "Arbuckle did it," or "He hurt me," without implicating Arbuckle in any rape or violent attack on her.

At the hospital, Rappe's companion at the party, Bambina Maude Delmont, told Rappe's doctor that Arbuckle had raped her friend. The doctor examined Rappe but found no evidence. Rappe died one day after her hospitalization of peritonitis, caused by a ruptured bladder. Delmont then told police that Arbuckle raped Rappe, and the police concluded that the impact Arbuckle's overweight body had on Rappe eventually caused her bladder to rupture. Rappe's manager Al Semnacker (at a later press conference) accused Arbuckle of using a piece of ice to simulate sex with her, which led to the injuries. By the time the story was reported in newspapers, the object had evolved into being a Coca-Cola or champagne bottle, instead of a piece of ice. In fact, witnesses testified that Arbuckle rubbed the ice on Rappe's stomach to ease her abdominal pain. Arbuckle denied any wrongdoing. Delmont later made a statement incriminating Arbuckle to the police in an attempt to extort money from Arbuckle's attorneys.

Arbuckle's trial was a major media event; exaggerated and sensationalized stories in William Randolph Hearst's nationwide newspaper chain damaged his career. The story was fueled by yellow journalism, with the newspapers portraying him as a gross lecher who used his weight to overpower innocent girls. In reality, Arbuckle was a good natured man who was so shy with women that he was regarded by those who knew him as, "the most chaste man in pictures". Hearst was gratified by the Arbuckle scandal, and later said that it had "sold more newspapers than any event since the sinking of the RMS Lusitania." The resulting scandal destroyed Arbuckle's career and his personal life. Morality groups called for Arbuckle to be sentenced to death, and studio executives ordered Arbuckle's industry friends (whose careers they controlled) not to publicly speak up for him. Charlie Chaplin was in England at the time; Buster Keaton did make a public statement in support of Arbuckle; film actor William S. Hart, who had never worked with Arbuckle, made public statements which presumed that Arbuckle was guilty.



Roscoe Conkling Arbuckle (1887-1933)

The prosecutor, San Francisco District Attorney Matthew Brady, an intensely ambitious man who planned to run for governor, made public pronouncements of Arbuckle's guilt and pressured witnesses to make false statements. Brady at first used Delmont as his star witness during the indictment hearing. Although the judge threatened Brady with dismissal of the case, Brady refused to allow Delmont, the only witness accusing Arbuckle, to take the stand and testify. Delmont had a long criminal record with convictions for racketeering, bigamy, fraud, and extortion, and allegedly was making a living by luring men into compromising positions and capturing them in photographs, to be used as evidence in divorce proceedings. The defense had also obtained a letter from Delmont admitting to a plan to extort payment from Arbuckle. In view of Delmont's constantly changing story, her testimony would have ended any chance of going to trial. Ultimately, the judge found no evidence of rape. After hearing testimony from

one of the party guests, Zey Prevon, that Rappe told her "Roscoe hurt me" on her deathbed, the judge decided that Arbuckle could be charged with first-degree murder. Brady had originally planned to seek the death penalty. The charge was later reduced to manslaughter.

The first trial

Arbuckle was then arrested on the charges of manslaughter but arranged bail after nearly three weeks in jail. The first trial began on November 14, 1921 in the city courthouse in downtown San Francisco. At the beginning of the trial Arbuckle told his already-estranged wife, Minta Durfee, that he did not harm Rappe; she believed him and appeared regularly in the courtroom to support him. Public feeling was so negative that she was later shot at while entering the courthouse.

San Francisco District Attorney Matthew Brady served as the prosecutor. Brady's first witnesses during the trial included Betty Campbell, a model, who attended the September 5 party and testified that she saw Arbuckle with a smile on his face hours after the alleged rape occurred; Grace Hultson, a local nurse who testified it was very likely that Arbuckle did rape Rappe and bruise her body in the process; and Dr. Edward Heinrich, a local criminologist who claimed he found Arbuckle's fingerprints smeared with Rappe's blood on room 1219's bathroom door. Dr. Arthur Beardslee, the hotel doctor, testified that an external force seemed to have damaged the bladder. During cross-examination, Betty Campbell, however, revealed that Brady threatened to charge her with perjury if she did not testify against Arbuckle. Dr. Heinrich's claim to have found fingerprints was cast into doubt after Arbuckle's defense attorney, Gavin McNab, produced the St. Francis hotel maid, who testified that she had cleaned the room before the investigation even took place and did not find any blood on the bathroom door. Dr. Beardslee admitted that Rappe had never mentioned being assaulted while he was treating her. McNab was furthermore able to get Nurse Hultson to admit that the rupture of Rappe's bladder could very well have been a result of cancer, and that the bruises on her body could also have been a result of the heavy jewelry she was wearing that evening. During the defense stage of the trial, McNab called various pathology experts who testified that while Virginia Rappe's bladder had ruptured, there was evidence of chronic inflammation and no evidence of any pathological changes preceding the rupture; in other words, there was no external cause for the rupture.

Taking the witness stand as the defense's final witness, Arbuckle was simple, direct, and unflustered in both direct and cross examination. In his testimony, Arbuckle claimed that Rappe, whom he testified he had known for five or six years, came into the party room around midnight, and that some time afterward Mae Taub (daughter-in-law of Billy Sunday) asked him for a ride into town, so he went to his room (1219) to change his clothes and discovered Rappe vomiting in the toilet. Arbuckle then claimed Rappe told him she felt ill and asked to lie down, and that he carried her into the bedroom and asked a few of the party guests to help treat her. To calm Rappe down, they placed her in a bathtub of cool water. Arbuckle and Fischbach then took her to room 1227 and called the hotel manager and doctor. After the doctor declared Rappe was just drunk, Arbuckle then drove Taub to town. The courtroom spectators, most of whom were fans and supporters of Arbuckle, reportedly booed and jeered at Brady and most of the prosecution witnesses during the entire trial, and they also reportedly stood, cheered and applauded for Arbuckle after he testified.

The prosecution presented medical descriptions of Rappe's bladder as evidence that she had an illness. In his testimony, Arbuckle calmly denied he had any knowledge of Rappe's illness. During cross-examination, Brady aggressively grilled Arbuckle that he refused to call a doctor, and argued that he refused to do so because he knew of Rappe's illness and saw a perfect opportunity to kill her. After over two weeks of testimony with 60 prosecution and defense witnesses, including 18 doctors who testified

about Miss Rappe's illness, the defense rested. On December 4, 1921, the jury returned deadlocked after 44 straight hours of deliberation with a 10–2 not guilty verdict, and a mistrial was declared.

Members of the jury later revealed that one holdout named Helen Hubbard had announced to them in private that she would vote guilty "until hell freezes over" and that she refused to discuss the evidence, look at the exhibits, or read the trial transcripts. All others voted for acquittal until at the end one male juror joined Hubbard. Hubbard's husband was a lawyer who did business with the D.A.'s office. It was also revealed that Hubbard was a member of the first California Regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a feminist organization. According to American sociologist Gary Alan Fine, "Reaction to Arbuckle's arrest was linked to the gender politics of the early 1920s," and indeed Hubbard was referred to in the press as a representative of women's rights. The *Examiner* described her favorably as "a titian-haired Amazon combining the exact knowledge of a housewife and a firm belief in equal rights."

The second trial

The second trial began on January 11, 1922 with a different jury, but with the same legal defense and prosecution as well as the same presiding judge. The same evidence was presented, but this time one of the witnesses, Zey Prevon, testified that district attorney Brady had forced her to lie. Another witness who claimed Arbuckle had bribed him turned out to be an escaped prisoner charged with assaulting an eight-year-old girl, and who was looking for a sentence reduction. Heinsen took back his earlier testimony and testified that the case's fingerprint evidence was likely faked. Further, in contrast to the first trial, Rappe's history of promiscuity and heavy drinking was detailed. The second trial also discredited some major evidence such as the identification of Arbuckle's fingerprints on the hotel bedroom door. The defense was so convinced of an acquittal that Arbuckle was not called to testify. Arbuckle's lawyer, McNab, barely made a closing argument to the jury. However, the jury interpreted the refusal to let Arbuckle testify as a sign of guilt. After over 40 hours of deliberation, the jury returned on February 3, deadlocked with a 9–3 guilty verdict. Another mistrial was declared.

The third trial

By the time of the third trial, Arbuckle's films had been banned, and newspapers had been filled for the past seven months with stories of alleged Hollywood orgies, murder, and sexual perversion. Delmont was touring the country giving one-woman shows as "The woman who signed the murder charge against Arbuckle", and lecturing on the evils of Hollywood.



News story of the six minute not guilty verdict, 1922.

The third trial began on March 13, 1922, and this time the defense took no chances. McNab took an aggressive defense, completely tearing apart the prosecution's case. This time, Arbuckle again testified and maintained his denials in his heartfelt testimony about his version of the events at the hotel party. McNab also managed to get in still more evidence about Virginia Rappe's lurid past, and reviewed how the district attorney, Matthew Brady fell for the outlandish charges of Maude Delmont, whom McNab described in his long closing statement as "the complaining witness who never witnessed". Another hole in the prosecution's case was opened because Zey Pevron, a key witness, was out of the country and unable to testify. On April 12, the jury began deliberations and it took only six minutes to return a unanimous not guilty verdict—five of those minutes were spent writing a statement of apology, a public apology unprecedented in American justice. The jury statement as read by the jury foreman stated:

“Acquittal is not enough for Roscoe Arbuckle. We feel that a great injustice has been done to him... there was not the slightest proof adduced to connect him in any way with the commission of a crime. He was manly throughout the case and told a straightforward story which we all believe. We wish him success and hope that the American people will take the judgment of fourteen men and women that Roscoe Arbuckle is entirely innocent and free from all blame.”

Some experts later concluded that Rappe's bladder might also have ruptured as a result of an abortion she might have had a short time before the September 5, 1921 party. However, Rappe's organs had been destroyed and it was now impossible to test for pregnancy. Because alcohol was consumed at the party, Arbuckle was forced to plead guilty to one count of violating the Volstead Act, and had to pay a \$500 fine. At the time of his acquittal, Arbuckle owed \$700,000 in legal fees to his attorneys for the three criminal trials, and had lost his house and his cars to pay off some of the debt.

Although cleared of all criminal charges, the scandal and trials had greatly damaged his popularity among the general public, and Will H. Hays, who served as the head of the newly-formed Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) Hollywood censor board, cited Arbuckle as an example of the poor morals in Hollywood. On April 18, 1922, six days after Arbuckle's acquittal, Hays banned Roscoe Arbuckle from ever working in U.S. movies again. He had also requested that all showings and bookings of Arbuckle films be canceled, and exhibitors complied. In December of the same year, Hays elected to lift the ban, but Arbuckle was not able to secure work as an actor for a long time. Most exhibitors still declined to show Arbuckle's films, several of which now have no copies known to have survived intact. One of Arbuckle's feature-length films known to survive is *Leap Year*, which Paramount declined to release in the United States due to the scandal. It was eventually released in Europe.

Similar concurrent scandals

Though it was regarded as Hollywood's first major scandal, the Arbuckle case was one of four major Paramount-related scandals of the period. In 1920, Olive Thomas died after drinking a large quantity of medication meant for her husband (matinee idol Jack Pickford), which she had mistaken for water. In February 1922, the murder of director William Desmond Taylor effectively ended the careers of actresses Mary Miles Minter and former Arbuckle screen partner Mabel Normand. In 1923, actor/director Wallace Reid's drug addiction resulted in his death. In 1924, actor/writer/director Thomas H. Ince died mysteriously, aboard W. R. Hearst's yacht.

Aftermath

In November 1923, Arbuckle's estranged wife Minta Durfee filed for divorce, charging grounds of desertion. In January 1924, the divorce was granted on her part. They had been separated since 1921,

though Durfee always claimed he was the nicest man in the world, and that they were still friends. After a brief reconciliation, Durfee again filed for divorce, this time from Paris, in December 1924. Arbuckle married Doris Deane on May 16, 1925.

Arbuckle tried returning to filmmaking, but industry resistance to distributing his pictures continued to linger after his acquittal. He retreated into alcoholism. In the words of his first wife, "Roscoe only seemed to find solace and comfort in a bottle".

Buster Keaton attempted to help Arbuckle by giving him work on his films. Arbuckle wrote the story for a Keaton short called *Daydreams* (1922). Arbuckle allegedly co-directed scenes in Keaton's *Sherlock, Jr.* (1924), but it is unclear how much of this footage remained in the film's final cut.

In 1925, Carter Dehaven made the short *Character Studies*. Arbuckle appeared alongside Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Rudolph Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks, and Jackie Coogan.

William Goodrich pseudonym

Eventually, Arbuckle was given work as a film director under the alias **William Goodrich**. According to author David Yallop in *The Day the Laughter Stopped* (a biography of Arbuckle with special attention to the scandal and its aftermath), Arbuckle's father's full name was William Goodrich Arbuckle. A persistent but unsupported legend credited Keaton, an inveterate punster, with suggesting that Arbuckle become a director under the alias "Will B. Good". The pun being too obvious, Arbuckle adopted the more formal pseudonym "William Goodrich".

During the middle and late 1920s and early 1930s, Arbuckle directed a number of comedy shorts under the pseudonym for Educational Pictures, which featured lesser-known comics of the day. Louise Brooks, who played the ingenue in *Windy Riley Goes Hollywood* (1931), told Kevin Brownlow:

He made no attempt to direct this picture. He sat in his chair like a man dead. He had been very nice and sweetly dead ever since the scandal that ruined his career. But it was such an amazing thing for me to come in to make this broken-down picture, and to find my director was the great Roscoe Arbuckle. Oh, I thought he was magnificent in films. He was a wonderful dancer—a wonderful ballroom dancer, in his heyday. It was like floating in the arms of a huge doughnut—really delightful.

Second divorce

In 1929, Doris Deane sued for divorce in Los Angeles, charging desertion and cruelty. On June 21, 1931 Roscoe married Addie Oakley Dukes McPhail (later Addie Oakley Sheldon, 1905–2003) in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Brief comeback and death

In 1932 Arbuckle signed a contract with Warner Brothers to star under his own name in a series of two-reel comedies, to be filmed at the Vitaphone studios in Brooklyn. These six shorts constitute the only recordings of his voice. Silent-film comedian Al St. John (Arbuckle's nephew) and actors Lionel Stander and Shemp Howard appeared with Arbuckle. The films were very successful in America, although when Warner Brothers attempted to release the first one (*Hey, Pop!*) in the United Kingdom, the British Board of Film Censors cited the 10-year-old scandal and refused to grant an exhibition certificate.

Roscoe Arbuckle had finished filming the last of the two-reelers on June 28, 1933. The next day he was signed by Warner Brothers to make a feature-length film. He reportedly said, "This is the best day of my

life." He suffered a heart attack later that night and died in his sleep. He was 46. Arbuckle was cremated, and his ashes scattered in the Pacific Ocean.

Legacy

Many of Arbuckle's films, including the feature *Life of the Party*, survive only as worn prints with foreign-language inter-titles. Little or no effort was made to preserve original negatives and prints during Hollywood's first two decades. By the early 21st century some of Arbuckle's short subjects (particularly those co-starring Chaplin or Keaton) had been restored, released on DVD and even screened theatrically. Arbuckle's early influence on American slapstick comedy is widely cited.

In 2007 director Kevin Connor planned a film, *The Life of the Party*, based on Arbuckle's life. It was to star Chris Kattan and Preston Lacy. However the project was unable to find funding and was shelved in late 2008.

The 1975 James Ivory film *The Wild Party* has been repeatedly but incorrectly cited as a film dramatization of the Arbuckle/Rappe scandal. In fact it is loosely based on the 1920s poem by Joseph Moncure March. In this film, James Coco portrays a heavy-set silent-film comedian named Jolly Grimm whose career is on the skids, but who is desperately planning a comeback. Raquel Welch portrays his mistress, who ultimately goads him into shooting her. This film may have been inspired by misconceptions surrounding the Arbuckle scandal, yet it bears almost no resemblance to the documented facts of the case.

An episode of *Mathnet* featured the death of a silent film actor named Roscoe "Fatty" Tissue. When asked if he buried his fortune with him, secretary Lynne Thigpen declares, "there was nothing in the casket but Fatty Tissue."

Chris Farley had expressed interest in starring as Arbuckle in a biography film. This idea was suggested to him by comedy guru Del Close. Farley died before any details of the film had been worked out.

Fatty Arbuckle's is an American themed restaurant chain in the UK prominent during the 1980s named after Arbuckle.

In April and May 2006, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City mounted a 56-film, month-long retrospective of all of Arbuckle's known surviving work, running the entire series twice. Highlights included *The Rounders* (1914) with Charlie Chaplin and *Mabel and Fatty's Simple Life* (1915) with Mabel Normand.

Arbuckle is the subject of a novel entitled *I, Fatty* by author Jerry Stahl. *The Day the Laughter Stopped* by David Yallop and *Frame-Up! The Untold Story of Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle* by Andy Edmonds are other books on Arbuckle's life.

A scene of one of Fatty Arbuckle's silent films was featured in the HBO pilot episode of *Boardwalk Empire*. In the scene, Arbuckle is burying a bottle of alcohol and giving it a fake funeral.

In a dream sequence on the TV series *Wilfred*, a wine bottle is brought to a party as a gift. The main character, played by actor Elijah Wood, states that it was Fatty Arbuckle's favorite wine.

Rudolph Valentino

Rudolph Valentino (May 6, 1895 – August 23, 1926) was an Italian actor, and early pop icon. A sex symbol of the 1920s, Valentino was known as the "Latin Lover". He starred in several well-known silent films including *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *The Sheik*, *Blood and Sand*, *The Eagle* and *Son of the Sheik*. He had applied for American citizenship shortly before his death.



His sudden death at age 31 caused mass hysteria among his female fans, propelling him into icon status. Though his films are not as well known today, his name is still widely known.

Early life

Childhood

Valentino was born **Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina D'Antonguolla** in Castellaneta, Puglia, Kingdom of Italy, to a French mother, Marie Berthe Gabrielle Barbin (1856–1919), and an Italian father, Giovanni Antonio Giuseppe Fedele Guglielmi di Valentina D'Antonguolla, a veterinarian who died of malaria when Valentino was 11. He had an older brother, Alberto (1892–1981), a younger sister, Maria, and an older sister Beatrice who died in infancy.

As a child, Valentino was reportedly spoiled and troublesome. His mother coddled him while his father disapproved of his behavior. He did poorly in school, and was eventually enrolled in agricultural school where he received a degree.

After living in Paris in 1912, he soon returned to Italy. Unable to secure employment, he departed for the United States in 1913. He was processed at Ellis Island at age 18 on December 23, 1913.

New York

Arriving in New York City, Valentino soon ran out of money and spent a period of time on the streets. He eventually supported himself with odd jobs such as bussing tables in restaurants and gardening. Eventually, he found work as a taxi dancer at Maxim's. Among the other dancers at Maxim's were several displaced members of European nobility and there was a premium in demand for them.

Valentino eventually befriended Chilean heiress Blanca de Saulles who was unhappily married to prominent businessman John de Saulles, with whom she had a son. Whether Blanca and Valentino actually had a romantic relationship is unknown, but when the de Saulles couple divorced, Valentino took the stand to support Blanca de Saulles' claims of infidelity on her husband's part. Following the divorce, John de Saulles reportedly used his political connections to have Valentino arrested, along with a Mrs. Thyme, a known madam, on some unspecified vice charges. The evidence was flimsy at best and after a few days in jail, Valentino's bail was lowered from \$10,000 to \$1,500.

The trial and subsequent scandal was well publicized, following which Valentino could not find employment. Shortly after the trial, Blanca de Saulles fatally shot her ex-husband during a custody dispute over their son. Fearful of being called in as a witness in another sensational trial, Valentino left town, joining a traveling musical that led him to the West Coast.

Film career

Early bit parts

In 1917, Rudolph Valentino joined an operetta company that traveled to Utah where it disbanded. He then joined an Al Jolson production of *Robinson Crusoe Jr.*, travelling to Los Angeles. By fall, he was in San Francisco with a bit part in a theatrical production of *Nobody Home*. While in town, Valentino met actor Norman Kerry, who convinced him to try a career in cinema, still in the silent film era.

Valentino, with Kerry as a roommate, moved back to Los Angeles and took up residence at the Alexandria Hotel. He continued dancing, teaching dance and building up a following which included older female clientele who would let him borrow their luxury cars.

With his dancing success, Valentino found a room of his own on Sunset Boulevard and began actively seeking screen roles. His first part was as an extra in the film *Alimony*, moving on to small parts in several films. Despite his best efforts he was typically cast as a "heavy" (villain) or gangster. At the time, the major male star was Wallace Reid, with a fair complexion, light eyes, and an All American look, with Valentino the opposite, eventually supplanting Sessue Hayakawa as Hollywood's most popular "exotic" male lead.

By 1919, he had carved out a career in bit parts. It was a bit part as a "cabaret parasite" in the drama *Eyes of Youth* that caught the attention of screenwriter June Mathis, who thought he would be perfect for her next movie. He also appeared as second lead in *The Delicious Little Devil* (1919) with star Mae Murray.

Acting

Displeased with playing "heavies", Valentino briefly entertained the idea of returning to New York permanently. He returned for a visit in 1917, staying with friends in Greenwich Village, eventually settling in Bayside, Queens. It was here he met Paul Ivano, who would help his career greatly.

While traveling to Palm Springs, Florida to film *Stolen Moments*, Valentino read the novel *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez. Seeking out a trade paper, he discovered that Metro had bought the film rights to the story. In New York, he sought out Metro's Office, only to find June Mathis had been trying to find him. She cast him in the role of Julio Desnoyers. For director, Mathis had chosen Rex Ingram, with whom Valentino did not get along, leading Mathis to play the role of peacekeeper between the two.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse was released in 1921, becoming a commercial and critical success. It was one of the first films to make \$1,000,000 at the box office, as well as the sixth highest grossing silent film ever.



Valentino with the Arabian Stallion Jadaan. Publicity photo for *Son of the Sheik*, 1926

Metro Pictures seemed unwilling to acknowledge it had made a star. Most likely due to Rex Ingram's lack of faith in him, the studio refused to give him a raise beyond the \$350 a week he had made for *Four Horsemen*. For his follow up film, they forced him into a bit part in a B film called *Uncharted Seas*. It was on this film that Valentino met his second wife, Natacha Rambova.

Rambova, Mathis, Ivano, and Valentino began work on the Alla Nazimova film *Camille*. Valentino was cast in the role of Armand, Nazimova's love interest. The film, mostly under the control of Rambova and Nazimova, was considered too avant garde by critics and the public.

Valentino's final film for Metro was the Mathis-penned *The Conquering Power*. The film received critical acclaim and did well at the box office. After the film's release, Valentino made a trip to New York where he met with several French producers. Yearning for Europe, better pay, and more respect, Valentino returned and promptly quit Metro.

The Sheik



From *A Sainted Devil*

After quitting Metro, Valentino took up with Famous Players-Lasky, a studio known for films that were more commercially focused. Mathis soon joined him, angering both Ivano and Rambova.

Jesse Lasky intended to capitalize on the star power of Valentino, and cast him in a role that would solidify his reputation as the "Latin Lover". In *The Sheik*, Valentino played the starring role as Sheik Ahmed Ben Hassan. The film was a major success and would go on to define not only his career but his image and legacy. Valentino tried to distance the character from a stereotypical portrayal of an Arab man. Asked if Lady Diana (his love interest) would have fallen for a 'savage' in real life Valentino replied, "People are not savages because they have dark skins. The Arabian civilization is one of the oldest in the world...the Arabs are dignified and keen brained."

Famous Players produced four more feature length films over the next 15 months. His leading role in *Moran of the Lady Letty* was of a typical Douglas Fairbanks nature, however to capitalize on Valentino's bankability, his character was given a Spanish name and ancestry. The film received mixed reviews but was still a hit with audiences.

In November 1921, Valentino starred alongside Gloria Swanson in *Beyond the Rocks*. The film contained lavish sets and extravagant costumes, though *Photoplay* magazine said the film was "a little unreal and hectic". Released in 1922, the film was a critical disappointment. Years after its release, *Beyond the Rocks* was thought to be lost, save for a one minute portion. In 2002, the film was discovered by the Netherlands Film Museum. The restored version was released on DVD in 2006.

In 1922, Valentino began work on another Mathis-penned film, *Blood and Sand*. Co-starring Lila Lee and Nita Naldi, Valentino played the lead, bullfighter Juan Gallardo. Initially believing the film would be shot in Spain, Valentino was upset to learn that the studio planned on shooting on a Hollywood back lot. He was further irritated by changes in production, including a director of whom he did not approve.

After finishing the film, Valentino married Rambova, which led to a bigamy trial. The trial was a sensation and the pair was forced to have their marriage annulled and separated for a year. Despite the trial, the film was still a success, with critics calling it a masterpiece on par with *Broken Blossoms* and *Four Horsemen*. *Blood and Sand* went on to become one of the top four grossing movies of 1922, breaking attendance records, and grossing \$37,400 at the Rivoli Theatre alone. Valentino would consider this one of his best films.

During his forced break from Rambova, the pair began working (separately) on the Mathis-penned *The Young Rajah*. Only fragments of this film, recovered in 2005, still remain. The film did not live up to expectations and underperformed at the box office. Valentino felt he had underperformed in the film, being upset over his separation with Rambova. Missing Rambova, Valentino returned to New York after the release of *The Young Rajah*. They were spotted and followed by reporters constantly. During this time Valentino began to contemplate not returning to Famous Players, although Jesse Lasky already had his next picture, *The Spanish Cavalier*, in preparation. After speaking with Rambova and his lawyer Arthur Butler Graham, Valentino declared a 'One man Strike' against Famous Players.

Strike against Famous Players

Valentino's reasons for striking were financially based. At the time of his lawsuit against the studio, Valentino was earning \$1,250 per week, with an increase to \$3,000 after three years. This was \$7,000 per week less than what Mary Pickford made in 1916. He was also upset over the broken promise of filming *Blood and Sand* in Spain, and the failure to shoot the next proposed film in either Spain or at least New York. Valentino had hoped while filming in Europe he could see his family, whom he hadn't seen in ten years.

In September 1922, he refused to accept paychecks from Famous Players until the dispute was solved, although he owed them money he had spent to pay off Jean Acker. Angered, Famous Players in turn filed suit against him.

Valentino did not back down, and Famous Players realized how much they stood to lose. In trouble after shelving Rosco "Fatty" Arbuckle pictures, the studio tried to settle by upping his salary from \$1,250 to \$7,000 a week. Variety, erroneously, announced the salary increase as a 'new contract' before news of the lawsuit was released. Valentino refused the offer.

Valentino went on to claim that artistic control was more of an issue than the money. He wrote an open letter to Photoplay magazine, entitled "Open Letter to the American Public", where he argued his case, although the average American had trouble sympathizing, as most made \$2,000 a year. Famous Players made their own public statements deeming him more trouble than he was worth (the divorce, bigamy trials, debts) and that he was temperamental, almost diva-like. They claimed to have done all they could and that they had made him a real star.

Other studios began courting him. Joseph Schenck was interested in casting his wife, Norma Talmadge, opposite Valentino in a version of *Romeo and Juliet*. June Mathis had moved to Goldwyn Pictures where she was in charge of the *Ben-Hur* project, and interested in casting Valentino in the film. However, Famous Players exercised their option to extend his contract, preventing him from accepting any employment other than with the studio. By this point Valentino was around \$80,000 in debt. Valentino filed an appeal, a portion of which was granted. Although he was still not allowed to work as an actor, he could accept other types of employment.

Mineralava Dance Tour

In late 1922, Valentino met George Ullman, who would soon become Valentino's manager. Ullman previously had worked with Mineralava Beauty Clay Company, and convinced them that Valentino would be perfect as a spokesman with his legions of female fans.

The tour was a tremendous success with Valentino and Rambova performing in 88 cities in the United States and Canada. In addition to the tour, Valentino also sponsored Mineralava beauty products and judged Mineralava sponsored beauty contests. One beauty contest was filmed by a young David O. Selznick entitled *Rudolph Valentino and His 88 Beauties*.

Return to films

When Valentino returned to the United States, it was to an offer from Ritz-Carlton Pictures (working through Famous Players), which included \$7,500 a week, creative control, and filming in New York. Rambova negotiated a two picture deal with Famous Players and four pictures for Ritz Carlton. He accepted, turning down an offer to film an Italian production of *Quo Vadis* in Italy.

The first film under the new contract was *Monsieur Beaucaire*, wherein Valentino played the lead, Duke of Chartres. The film did poorly and American audiences found it 'effeminate'. The failure of the film, under Rambova's control, is often seen as proof of her controlling nature and would later cause her to be barred from Valentino sets. Valentino made one final movie for Famous Players. In 1924 he starred in *The Sainted Devil*, now one of his lost films. It had lavish costumes but apparently a weak story. It opened to strong sales but soon dropped off in attendance and ended up as another disappointment.

With his contract fulfilled, Valentino was released from Famous Players but still obligated to Ritz-Carlton for four films. Valentino's next film was a pet project entitled *The Hooded Falcon*. The production was beset with problems from the start, beginning with the script written by June Mathis.

The Valentinos were dissatisfied with Mathis' version and requested that it be rewritten. Mathis took it as a great insult and did not speak to Valentino for almost two years. While Rambova worked designing costumes and rewriting the script for *Falcon*, Valentino was persuaded to film *Cobra* with Nita Naldi. Valentino agreed only on condition that it not be released until after *The Hooded Falcon* debuted.

After filming *Cobra*, the cast of *The Hooded Falcon* sailed for France to be fitted for costumes. After three months, they headed back to the United States, where Valentino's new beard, which he had grown for the film, caused a sensation. The crew and cast headed for Hollywood to begin preparations for the film, but much of the budget was taken up during pre-production. Due to the Valentinos' lavish spending on costumes and sets, Ritz-Carlton terminated the deal with the couple, effectively ending Valentino's contract with Ritz-Carlton.

United Artists

During the filming of *Monsieur Beaucaire*, both Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks approached Valentino privately, due to his contract with Ritz Carlton, about joining with United Artists. Valentino's contract with United Artists provided \$10,000 a week for only three pictures a year, plus a percentage of his films. The contract excluded Rambova from production of his films and the film set. Valentino's acceptance of the terms caused a major rift in his marriage to Rambova. George Ullman, who had negotiated the contract with United Artists, offered Rambova \$30,000 to finance a film of her own. It became her one and only film, titled *What Price Beauty?* and starred Myrna Loy.

Valentino chose his first UA project, *The Eagle*. With the marriage under strain, Valentino began shooting and Rambova announced that she needed a "marital vacation". During the filming of *The Eagle*, rumors of an affair with co-star Vilma Bánky were reported and ultimately denied by both Bánky and Valentino. The film opened to positive reviews, but a moderate box office.

For the film's release, Valentino travelled to London, staying there and in France, spending money with abandon while his divorce took place. It would be some time before he made another film, *The Son of the Sheik*, despite his hatred of the sheik image. The film began shooting in February 1926, with Valentino given his choice of director, and pairing him again with Vilma Banky. The film used the authentic costumes he bought abroad and allowed him to play a dual role. Valentino was ill during production, but needed the money to pay his many debts. The film opened on July 8, 1926 to great fanfare. During the premiere, Valentino was reconciled with Mathis; the two had not spoken in almost two years.

Image

Dating back to the de Saulle trial in New York, during which his masculinity had been questioned in print, Valentino had been very sensitive with his public perception. Women loved him and thought him the epitome of romance. However, American men were less impressed, walking out of his movies in disgust. With the Fairbanks type being the epitome of manhood, Valentino was seen as a threat to the All American man. One man asked in a street interview what he thought of Valentino in 1922 replied, "Many men desire to be another Douglas Fairbanks. But Valentino? I wonder..." Women in the same interview found Valentino, "triumphantly seductive. Puts the love-making of the average husband or sweetheart into discard as tame, flat, and unimpassioned." Men may have wanted to act like Fairbanks, but they copied Valentino's look. A man with perfectly greased-back hair was called a "Vaselino".

Some journalists were still calling his masculinity into question, going on at length about his pomaded hair, his dandyish clothing, his treatment of women, his views on women, and whether he was

effeminate or not. Valentino hated these stories and was known to carry the clippings of the newspaper articles around with him and criticize them.

In July 1926, The *Chicago Tribune* reported that a vending machine dispensing pink talcum powder had appeared in an upscale hotel washroom. An editorial that followed used the story to protest the feminization of American men, and blamed the talcum powder on Valentino and his films. The piece infuriated Valentino and he challenged the writer to a boxing match since dueling was illegal.<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,722230,00.html> Neither challenge was answered. Shortly afterward, Valentino met with journalist H.L. Mencken for advice on how best to deal with the incident. Mencken advised Valentino to "let the dreadful farce roll along to exhaustion", but Valentino insisted the editorial was "infamous." Mencken found Valentino to be likable and gentlemanly and wrote sympathetically of him in an article published in the *Baltimore Sun* a week after Valentino's death:

It was not that trifling Chicago episode that was riding him; it was the whole grotesque futility of his life. Had he achieved, out of nothing, a vast and dizzy success? Then that success was hollow as well as vast—a colossal and preposterous nothing. Was he acclaimed by yelling multitudes? Then every time the multitudes yelled he felt himself blushing inside... The thing, at the start, must have only bewildered him, but in those last days, unless I am a worse psychologist than even the professors of psychology, it was revolting him. Worse, it was making him afraid... Here was a young man who was living daily the dream of millions of other men. Here was one who was catnip to women. Here was one who had wealth and fame. And here was one who was very unhappy.

After Valentino challenged the *Tribune's* anonymous writer to a boxing match, the *New York Evening Journal* boxing writer, Frank O'Neill, volunteered to fight in his place. Valentino won the bout which took place on the roof of New York's Ambassador Hotel.

Boxing heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey, who trained Valentino and other Hollywood notables of the era in the art of boxing, said of him "He was the most virile and masculine of men. The women were like flies to a honeypot. He could never shake them off, anywhere he went. What a lovely, lucky guy."

Other ventures

In 1923, Valentino published a book of poetry which entitled *Day Dreams*. He would later serialize events in various magazines. With *Liberty* magazine, he wrote a series entitled, "How You Can Keep Fit" in 1923. "My Life Story" was serialized in *Photoplay* during his dance tour. The March issue was one of the best selling ever for the magazine. He followed that with *My Private Diary*, serialized in *Movie Weekly* magazine. Most of the serials were later published as books after his death.

Valentino was fascinated with every part of movie-making. During production on a Mae Murray film he spent time studying the director's plans. He craved authenticity and wished to shoot on location, finally forming his own production company, *Rudolph Valentino Productions*, in 1925. Valentino, George Ullman, and Beatrice Ullman were the incorporators.

On May 14, 1923, while in New York City, Valentino made his only two vocal recordings for Brunswick Records; "Kashmiri Song" (*The Sheik*) and "El Relicario" (*Blood and Sand*). The recordings were not released until after Valentino's death by the Celebrity Recording Company; Brunswick did not release them because Valentino's English/Spanish pronunciation was subpar.

Valentino was one of the first in Hollywood to offer an award for artist accomplishments in films. The Academy Awards would later follow suit. In 1925, he gave out his one and only medal, to John Barrymore, for his performance in *Beau Brummel*. The award, named *The Rudolph Valentino Medal*,

required the agreement of Valentino, two judges and the votes of 75 critics. Everyone other than Valentino himself was eligible.

Personal life

In 1919, just before the rise of his career, Valentino impulsively married actress Jean Acker who was involved with actress Grace Darmond and Alla Nazimova. Acker got involved with Valentino in part to remove herself from the lesbian love triangle, quickly regretted the marriage, and locked Valentino out of their room on their wedding night. The couple separated soon after, the marriage never consummated. The couple remained legally married until 1921, when Acker sued Valentino for divorce, citing desertion. The divorce was granted with Acker receiving alimony. She and Valentino eventually renewed their friendship. The two remained friends until his death.

Valentino first met Winifred Shaughnessy, known by her stage name, Natacha Rambova, an American silent film costume and set designer, art director and protégée of Nazimova, on the set of *Uncharted Seas* in 1921. The two worked together on the Nazimova production of *Camille*, by which time they were romantically involved. They married on May 13, 1922, in Mexicali, Mexico, which resulted in Valentino's arrest for bigamy since he had not been divorced for a full year, as required by California law at the time. Days passed and his studio at the time, Famous Players-Lasky, refused to post bail. Eventually, a few friends were able to post the cash bail.

Having to wait the year or face the possibility of being arrested again, Rambova and Valentino lived in separate apartments in New York City, each with their own roommates. On March 14, 1923, they legally remarried.

Many of Valentino's friends disliked Rambova and found her controlling. During his relationship with her, he lost many friends and business associates, including June Mathis. Toward the end of their marriage, Rambova was banned from his sets by contract. Valentino and Rambova divorced in 1925. The end of the marriage was bitter, with Valentino bequeathing Rambova one dollar in his will.

From the time he died until the 1960s, Valentino's sexuality was not generally questioned. At least four books, particularly *Hollywood Babylon*, began to perpetuate that he may have been gay despite his marriage with Rambova. In fact, the marriages to Acker and Rambova, as well as the relationship with Pola Negri only serves to add to the suspicion that Valentino was gay and that these were "lavender marriages", as all have documented lesbian relationships. Such books gave rise to claims that Valentino had a relationship with Ramón Novarro, despite even Novarro stating they barely knew each other. *Hollywood Babylon* in particular spread the rumor that Valentino had given Novarro an art deco dildo as a gift, which was found stuffed in his throat at the time of his murder. No such gift ever existed. These books also gave rise to claims that he may have had relationships with both roommates Paul Ivano and Douglas Gerrad, as well as Norman Kerry, openly gay French actor Jacques Herbertot and André Daven. However, Ivano maintained that it was completely untrue and both he and Valentino were heterosexual. Biographers Emily Leider and Allan Ellenberger generally agree that he was most likely straight.

Further "evidence" that Valentino was gay are documents in the estate of the late author Samuel Steward indicating that Valentino was a sexual partner of his. However, evidence found in Steward's claim was subsequently found to be false, as Valentino was proven to have been in New York on the date Steward claimed a sexual encounter occurred in Ohio.

Shortly before his death, Valentino was dating actress Pola Negri. Upon his death, Negri made a scene at his funeral, claiming they had been engaged. Valentino had never confirmed the engagement claim.

Death and funeral



A mourner pictured with the body of Rudolph Valentino at the actor's funeral

On August 15, 1926, Valentino collapsed at the Hotel Ambassador in New York City, New York. He was hospitalized at the Polyclinic in New York and an examination showed him to be suffering from appendicitis and gastric ulcers which required an immediate operation. Despite surgery Valentino developed peritonitis. On August 18 his doctors gave an optimistic prognosis for Valentino and told the media that unless Valentino's condition changed for the worse there was no need for updates. However, on August 21 he was stricken with a severe pleuritis relapse that developed rapidly in his left lung due to the actor's weakened condition. The doctors realized that he was going to die, but, as was common at the time with terminal patients, decided to withhold the prognosis from the actor who believed that his condition would pass. During the early hours of August 23, Valentino was briefly conscious and chatted with his doctors about his future. He fell back into a coma and died a few hours later, at the age of 31.

An estimated 100,000 people lined the streets of New York City to pay their respects at his funeral, handled by the Frank Campbell Funeral Home. The event was a drama itself: Suicides of despondent fans were reported. Windows were smashed as fans tried to get in and an all day riot erupted on August 24. Over 100 Mounted officers and NYPD's Police Reserve was deployed to restore order. A phalanx of officers would line the streets for the remainder of the viewing. The drama inside would not be outdone. Polish Actress Pola Negri, claiming to be Valentino's fiancée, collapsed in hysterics while standing over the coffin, and Campbell's hired four actors to impersonate a Fascist Blackshirt honor guard, which claimed to have been sent by Benito Mussolini. It was later revealed as a planned publicity stunt. Media reports that the body on display in the main salon was not Valentino but a decoy were continually denied by Campbell.



Valentino's crypt

Valentino's funeral mass in New York was held at Saint Malachy's Roman Catholic Church, often called "The Actor's Chapel", as it is located on West 49th Street in the Broadway theater district, and has a long association with show business figures.

After the body was taken by train across the country, a second funeral was held on the West Coast, at the Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills. Valentino had no final burial arrangements and his friend June Mathis offered her crypt for him in what she thought would be a temporary solution. However, she died the following year and Valentino was placed in the adjoining crypt. The two are still

interred side by side in adjoining crypts at the Hollywood Memorial Park Cemetery (now the Hollywood Forever Cemetery) in Hollywood, California.

Estate

Valentino left his estate to his brother, sister, and Rambova's aunt Teresa Werner, who was left the share originally bequeathed to Rambova. His Beverly Hills mansion, Falcon Lair, was later owned by heiress Doris Duke. Duke died there in 1993. The home was later sold and underwent major renovations. The estate was bulldozed in 2006 and put back on the market.

Legacy

After his death many of his films were reissued to help pay his estate expenses. Many were reissued well into the 1930s, long after the demise of silent film. Several books were written including one by Rambova. Several songs, including "There's a New Star in Heaven Tonight" and one by his first wife Jean Acker, entitled "We will meet at the end of the trail", became best sellers. A photomontage print showed Valentino arriving in Heaven and being greeted by Enrico Caruso.

Over the years, a "woman in black" carrying a red rose has come to mourn at Valentino's grave, usually on the anniversary of his death. Several myths surround the woman, though it seems the first woman in black was actually a publicity stunt cooked up by press agent Russel Birdwell in 1928. Several copycats have followed over the years.

Valentino has been depicted frequently in literature, most notably in Mitzi Szereto's *Wicked: Sexy Tales of Legendary Lovers* and Jacob Appel's *After Valentino*.

Valentino's hometown of Castellaneta, Italy has created several services in his honor. A Museo Rodolfo Valentino was opened in his childhood home. A Fondazione Rodolfo Valentino was created to promote his life and his work. In 2009 a film school was also opened in his hometown, "Centro Studi Cine Club Rodolfo Valentino Castellaneta." At the centennial of his birth several events were held in his honor. From 1972 to 2006 an Italian acting award, "The Rudolph Valentino Award", was handed out every year. Several actors from all over the world received this award including Leonardo DiCaprio and Elizabeth Taylor.

In 2006, the Italians planned a one-off film festival to celebrate the opening of the Museo Rodolfo Valentino. In May 2010, the American Society held The Rudolph Valentino Film Festival in Los Angeles, California.

Films about Valentino

The life of Rudolph Valentino has been filmed a number of times for television and the big screen. One of these biopics is Ken Russell's 1977 film, *Valentino*, in which Valentino is portrayed by Rudolf Nureyev. The film itself is only loosely based on his life.

An earlier feature film about Valentino's life, also called *Valentino*, was released in 1951, starring Anthony Dexter as Valentino.

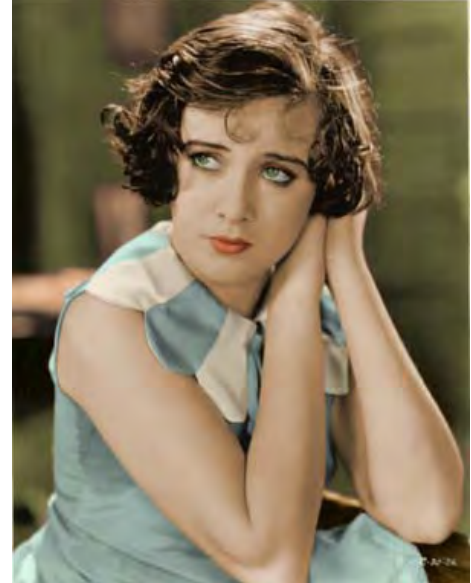
In 2003, Edoardo Ballerini premiered the short film *Good Night Valentino* at the Sundance Film Festival to critical acclaim. It is based on the transcripts of the conversation between Rudolph Valentino and H.L. Mencken.

In 2010, Italian film director Giuseppe Sansonna shot the documentary film, *The Sheik from Castellaneta*, on the cult of Valentino in Castellaneta, where he is still popular. The film shows the forms that Valentino's myth has taken in local popular culture.

In 2011 American full length silent film "Silent Life" (Vlad Kozlov, Isabella Rossellini, Monte Markham, Galina Jovovich), directed by Vlad Kozlov, is produced and will be premiered in December 2011 in Hollywood. The film is a story about the making of a Hollywood movie star, where his leading role turned out to be that of his own death.

Sally O'Neil

Sally O'Neil (October 23, 1908 – June 18, 1968) was an American film actress of the 1920s. She was born as **Virginia Louise Noonan**, one of 11 children born to a judge in Bayonne, New Jersey. One of her sisters was actress Molly O'Day.



Convent-educated, she started her career in vaudeville, billed as "Chotsie Noonan". Known for her petite and curly brown hair. She was paired along with Constance Bennett and Joan Crawford in the MGM film *Sally, Irene and Mary* (1925), directed by Edmund Goulding, which brought her instant, but short-lived, fame.

She was paired with Crawford again as a WAMPAS Baby Star in 1926. Her fame began to subside after "talkies" replaced silents; she also had a problem with stage fright which didn't help either. By the late 1930s, her film career was over, but she continued on stage and toured with the USO until the 1950s.

She died of pneumonia in Galesburg, Illinois, aged 59, in 1968.

Short Biography

Known in vaudeville under the delightful moniker Chotsie Noonan, saucy silent screen comedienne Sally O'Neil (born Virginia Louise Concepta Noonan) became a major star in her second film, *Sally, Irene and Mary* (1925). Constance Bennett and Joan Crawford filled out the title trio but it was O'Neil's naïve chorus girl who ran away with the notices. Pronounced MGM's answer to Paramount's Clara Bow, O'Neil was voted a 1926 WAMPAS Baby Star but soon found herself mired in tasteless ethnic comedies such as *The Callahans and the Murphys* (1927) and *Frisco Sally Levy* (1927), the latter, according to one reviewer, proving as subtle "as a policeman's nightstick."

In addition to her shaky screen vehicles, O'Neil suffered a severe case of stage fright. "So much depended on me doing well," she later explained. Her panic, however, was construed as temper tantrums and MGM dropped her option. She was rescued, most surprisingly, by D.W. Griffith, who cast her as a flapper in his one attempt at Lubitschian piquancy, *The Battle of the Sexes* (1928). The light touch was never a Griffith trademark, unfortunately, and the film was a distinct failure. Sound only tended to amplify O'Neil's nasal New Jersey accent and although well cast as Dion Boucicault's wistful Irish

colleen Kathleen Mavourneen (1930), she was really more Bayonne than County Cork. John Ford awarded her the leading role as the street urchin in *The Brat* (1931), a remake of the 1916 Alla Nazimova melodrama, which O'Neill herself had done on stage the previous year. Although the film wasn't much liked, she emerged with fine personal reviews and a new contract with Fox. Nothing much came out of that, and she quit in disgust after six idle months in favor a return to the stage.



In 1937, she turned up in the Irish-made *Kathleen*, a remake of her 1930 *Kathleen Mavourneen*, but Hollywood wags named the film "*Cinderella Auld Sod*" and O'Neil's screen career was over. In her later years, O'Neil appeared in summer stock, toured army hospitals with the USO and starred in a very successful 1951 Pasadena Playhouse production of Edith Wharton's *The Bunner Sisters*.



Retired to the small town of Galesburg, IL, the erstwhile flapper became a locally noted painter who enjoyed several gallery showings. She was the sister of film actress Molly O'Day.

Sessue Hayakawa

Sessue Hayakawa (June 10, 1889 – November 23, 1973) was a Japanese and American Issei (Japanese immigrant) actor who starred in American, Japanese, French, German, and British films. Hayakawa was the first and one of the few Asian actors to find stardom in the United States as well as Europe. Between the mid-1910s and the late 1920s, he was as well known as actors Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks. He was one of the highest paid stars of his time; making \$5,000 a week in 1915, and \$2 million a year via his own production company during the 1920s. He starred in over 80 movies and has two films in the U.S. National Film Registry. His international stardom transitioned both silent films and talkies.



Of his English-language films, Hayakawa is probably best known for his role as Colonel Saito in the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, for which he received a nomination for Academy Award Best Supporting Actor in 1957. He also appeared in the 1950 film *Three Came Home* and as the pirate leader in Disney's *Swiss Family Robinson* in 1960. In addition to his film acting career, Hayakawa was a theatre actor, film and theatre producer, film director, screenwriter, novelist, martial artist, and an ordained Zen master.

Early life

Hayakawa was born **Kintaro Hayakawa** (*Hayakawa Kintarō*) in Nanaura Village, of Chikura Town, of Minamibosō City, in Chiba Prefecture, Japan on June 10, 1889, the second eldest son of the provincial governor.

From early on Hayakawa was groomed for a career as a naval officer. However at the age of 17, he took a schoolmate's dare to swim to the bottom of a lagoon (he grew up in a shellfish diving community) and ruptured his eardrum. He had been studying at the Naval Academy in Etajima but his record of perfect health was now shattered and he failed the navy's rigorous physical. His formerly proud father was now ashamed and embarrassed of his son. Their relationship became strained.

The strained relationship drove the young Hayakawa to attempt seppuku (ritual suicide). One quiet night after dinner Hayakawa entered a garden shed on his parents' property, locked his favorite dog outside and spread a white sheet on the ground. To uphold his family's samurai tradition, Hayakawa stabbed himself in the abdomen more than 30 times. The dog's barking alerted Hayakawa's family and his father smashed through the shed door with an axe in time to save his son.

After he recovered from the suicide attempt Hayakawa enrolled in the University of Chicago to study political economics. His family had decided that if he could not be a naval officer, he would become a banker. He resided in the United States from 1911 until 1923 and again from 1925 until 1931.

Career beginnings



Sessue Hayakawa in ca. 1918

At the end of his second year of studies at the University of Chicago, Hayakawa decided to quit and return to Japan. He went to Los Angeles and waited for a transpacific steamship to arrive. During the interim, he wandered into the Japanese Theatre in Little Tokyo. He soon was fascinated with acting and performing plays. It was around this time he first assumed the name Sessue Hayakawa.

One of the productions Hayakawa performed in was called *The Typhoon*. Film producer Thomas Ince saw the production and offered to turn it into a silent movie using the original cast. Anxious to return to his studies at the University of Chicago, Hayakawa decided to try to dissuade Ince by requesting the absurdly high fee of \$500 a week. Ince agreed to pay it.

The Typhoon was filmed in 1914, and was an instant hit. Hayakawa made two more films with Ince, *The Wrath of the Gods* co-starring his new wife, Issei actress Tsuru Aoki, and *The Sacrifice*. With his rising stardom Hayakawa soon was offered a contract by Jesse L. Lasky. He signed on making him part of Famous Players-Lasky (now Paramount Pictures).

Stardom

Hayakawa's second film for Famous Players-Lasky was *The Cheat*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille. *The Cheat* co-starring Fannie Ward, was a huge success, making Hayakawa a romantic idol to the female movie-going public. With his popularity Hayakawa's salary soared to over \$5,000 a week in 1915. In 1917 he built his residence, a castle styled mansion, on the corner of Franklin Avenue and Argyle Street in Hollywood, which became a landmark until being torn down in 1956.

Following the success of *The Cheat* Hayakawa became a top leading man for romantic dramas in the 1910s and early 1920s. After these roles he switched to Westerns and Action films.



Sessue Hayakawa (left) with actress and wife Tsuru Aoki in a screen shot of the 1919 film *The Dragon Painter*.

After years of extensive typecasting at Famous Players, Hayakawa decided to form his own production company. He borrowed \$1 million from a former classmate at the University of Chicago and formed Haworth Pictures Corporation in 1918. Over the next three years he produced 23 films and netted \$2 million a year. Hayakawa controlled the content. He produced, starred in, directed, and contributed to the design, writing, and editing of the films. His films influenced the way the American public viewed Asians.

In 1918 Hayakawa personally chose the highly popular American serial actress Marin Sais to appear opposite him in a series of films, the first being the 1918 racial drama *The City of Dim Faces* followed by *His Birthright*, which also starred his wife. Hayakawa's collaboration with Sais ended with the 1919 film *Bonds of Honor*. He also appeared opposite Jane Novak in *The Temple of Dusk*, a Mutual Film Corporation production.

In 1919 Hayakawa made what is generally considered one of his best films, *The Dragon Painter*, appearing opposite his wife, actress Tsuru Aoki. During this period Hayakawa was at his Hollywood peak. He was one of the highest paid stars of the era, making \$2 million a year through his production company throughout the 1920s. His fame rivaled that of Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, and William S. Hart, and in many ways, he was a precursor to Rudolph Valentino.

Hayakawa's wealth and extravagance was legendary. He drove a gold plated Pierce-Arrow. He entertained lavishly in his 'Castle' which was known as the scene of some of Hollywood's wildest parties. Shortly before Prohibition took effect in 1920, he bought a carload of booze. Hayakawa once claimed that he owed his social success to his liquor supply. During this time, in the course of one night he gambled away \$1 million in Monte Carlo, shrugging off the loss while another Japanese gambler who lost a fortune committed suicide.

Stardom outside the United States

A bad business deal forced Hayakawa to leave Hollywood in 1921. The next 15 years saw him performing in New York, France, England and Japan. In 1924 he made *The Great Prince Chan* and *The Story of Su* in London.

In 1925 he wrote a novel, *The Bandit Prince*, and turned it into a short play. In 1930 he performed in *Samurai*, a one-act play written especially for him, for Great Britain's King George V and Queen Mary. He also became very popular in France thanks to the prevailing French fascination with anything Asian. In 1930 Hayakawa returned to Japan and produced a Japanese-language stage version of *The Three Musketeers*.

Later career

In the 1930s his career began to suffer from the rise of talkies, as well as a growing Anti-Japanese sentiment. Hollywood deemed his gifts unsuitable for the new talkies. Hayakawa's sound film debut came in 1931 in *Daughter of the Dragon*, starring opposite fellow Asian performer Anna May Wong.

In 1937 Hayakawa went to France to act in *Yoshiwara* and found himself trapped by the German occupation. He was separated from his family during this time.

Hayakawa made few movies during these years, but supported himself by selling watercolors. He joined the French Resistance and helped Allied flyers during the war. In 1949, Humphrey Bogart's production company tracked Hayakawa down and offered him a role in *Tokyo Joe*. Before issuing a work permit, the American Consulate investigated Hayakawa's activities during the war. They found that he had in no way contributed to the German war effort. Hayakawa followed *Tokyo Joe* with *Three Came Home*, in which he played real-life POW camp commander Lieutenant-Colonel Suga, before returning to France.

His post-war screen persona became fixed as the honorable villain, perhaps best exemplified in his role as Colonel Saito in the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, which won the 1957 Academy Award for Best Picture. Hayakawa was nominated for Best Supporting Actor but lost to Red Buttons. He was also nominated for a Golden Globe for the role. He called this role the highlight of his career.

After that film Hayakawa in essence retired from acting. Throughout the rest of his life he performed on a handful of television shows and a few movies. His final film appearance was in *The Daydreamer* in 1966.

Other works

Hayakawa had created his own production company in 1918. During that period he produced, directed, contributed to the design, writing, of editing his films. He wrote several plays, painted watercolors, performed martial arts, and invested wisely.

In 1961 he became a Zen master as well as a private acting coach. He wrote an autobiography, *Zen Showed Me the Way*. He appeared on the NBC interview program *Here's Hollywood*.

Acting style

During the height of his popularity critics of the day hailed Hayakawa's Zen-influenced acting style. Hayakawa sought to bring *muga*, or the "absence of doing," closely akin to the concept of less is more to his performances, in direct contrast to the then-popular studied poses and broad gestures. He was one of the first stars to do so, Mary Pickford being the other.

Racial barriers

Hayakawa was in a unique position due to his ethnicity and fame in the English world. Due to anti-miscegenation laws that existed at the time, Hayakawa would be unable to become a citizen or marry someone of another race. In 1930, the Production Code came into effect which forbade portrayals of miscegenation in film. This meant that unless Hayakawa played opposite an authentic Asian actress, he would not be able to portray a romance with her.

Throughout his career, the United States dealt with *yellow peril* which affected Americans perceptions of Asians. This left Hayakawa to constantly be typecast as a villain or forbidden lover and unable to play parts that would be given to fellow white actors such as Douglas Fairbanks.

Hayakawa can be seen as a precursor to Rudolph Valentino. Both were foreign born, both were typecast as exotic or forbidden lovers, and both were wildly popular during their time. Hayakawa also inadvertently helped Rudolph Valentino's rise to stardom. His contract with Famous Players expired in May 1918, but the studio still asked him to star in *The Sheik*. Hayakawa turned down the picture in favor of starting his own company, most likely not happy with another 'forbidden villain lover' role. With influence from June Mathis, the role went to the barely known Valentino, which turned him into an icon.

Reception in Japan

Hayakawa's early films were not popular in Japan most likely due to the fact that Hollywood played up his "Japaneseness" at a time that Japan was trying to become more American.

Some Japanese felt his American success represented turning his back on his nation. His later films were also not popular, because he was now ironically seen as 'too Americanized' during a time of 'Nationalism'.

Reception in United States

In more than 20 films for Famous Players, Hayakawa was typecast as either the villain or the exotic lover who in the end would turn his lover over to the *proper* man of her race.

This typecasting was the reason Hayakawa set up his own production company in 1918 around the height of his US fame. At that time he stated he wanted to be shown "as he really is and not as fiction paints him." As for his prior roles, he said, "They are false and give people a wrong idea of us."

Hayakawa desperately sought to show a more balanced and fair portrait of Asians. In 1949 he stated, "My one ambition is to play a hero." In his autobiography he observed, "All my life has been a journey. But my journey differs from the journeys of most men."

Personal life

On May 1, 1914 Hayakawa married fellow Japanese actress Tsuru Aoki. She would star in quite a few of his movies alongside him. She died in 1961 at which time Hayakawa moved back to Japan and became a Zen master.

In Europe the couple adopted western children and gave them Japanese names: a boy named Yukio and two girls, Yoshiko, an actress, and Fujiko, a dancer.

Hayakawa was known for his discipline and martial arts skills. While in University he played quarterback for the football team. He was once penalized for using jujitsu to bring down a rival player.

While filming *The Jaguar's Claws*, in the Mojave Desert, Hayakawa played a Mexican bandit, and the film required 500 cowboys as extras. On the first night of filming, the extras drank all night and well into the next day. No work was being done, so Hayakawa challenged the group to a fight. Two men stepped forward. Hayakawa said of the incident, "The first one struck out at me. I seized his arm and sent him flying on his face along the rough ground. The second attempted to grapple and I was forced to flip him over my head and let him fall on his neck. The fall knocked him unconscious." Hayakawa then disarmed yet another cowboy. The extras returned to work, amused by the way the small man manhandled the big bruising cowboys.

Death

Sessue Hayakawa retired from film in 1966. After his wife's death he returned to Japan where he became a Zen master and a drama coach. He died in Tokyo on November 23, 1973 from a cerebral thrombosis, complicated by pneumonia. He was buried in the Chokeiji Temple Cemetery in Toyama, Japan.

Legacy



His star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

To date Hayakawa is one of the few Asian men to obtain romantic icon status in the US. His work lives on in various forms. Many of his films are lost. However most of his later films including *The Geisha Boy*, *Tokyo Joe*, *Three Came Home*, and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* are available on DVD.

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Sessue Hayakawa was awarded a star on the legendary Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1645 Vine Street, in Hollywood, California.

In 1989 a musical based on his life, *Sessue*, played in Tokyo.

In September 2007 the Museum of Modern Art held a retrospective on Hayakawa's work titled: "*Sessue Hayakawa: East and West, When the Twain Met*"

Sue Carol

Sue Carol (October 30, 1906 – February 4, 1982) was an American actress and talent agent.

While at a social function in Los Angeles in 1927, a director offered her a part in a film. She took it and began playing minor parts. Carol's film career lasted from the late 1920s into the 1930s, and when it ended she became a talent agent; one of her clients was Alan Ladd to whom she was married from 1942 until his death in 1964.



Early life and career

Carol was born **Evelyn Lederer** in Chicago, Illinois to Caroline, a German Jewish immigrant, and Samuel Lederer, a Jewish immigrant from Austria. One of the WAMPAS Baby Stars, she performed in motion pictures from 1927 until 1937.

Among the movies in which she appeared are *Fox Movietone Follies of 1929* and *Girls Gone Wild* (1929). Her films were made in association with producer Cecil B. Demille and MGM.



After retiring from acting in the late 1930s, Carol established her own talent agency, the Sue Carol Agency.

Short Biography

Sue Carol Ladd was a movie star who quit to become a star-maker.

As Sue Carol, she was one of Hollywood's brightest stars from 1927 to 1935, inspiring Victor Young's popular song "Sweet Sue."

But it was her eye for talent as an agent that had a greater effect. She discovered a handsome young radio actor named Alan Ladd in 1939, later married him and helped build him into a superstar of the 1940s and '50s. Ladd died in 1964.

Born in Chicago as Evelyn Lederer, she lived for a time in Wisconsin before moving to California in the 1920s.

She was discovered by director Ted Reed when her high school class of 500 visited a movie set in 1926.

She was given a small part in the Fox Films movie "Slaves of Beauty" (1927). She later starred in a long series of movies, including "The Exalted Flapper," "The Air Circus" and "Soft Cushions."

It was while testing for a feature film at Warner Bros. that — after being criticized by the director for her "slowness" — she simply quit performing in front of cameras and became a behind-the-scenes developer of talent.

Personal life

As a young woman, Carol married Allen H. Keefer, a buyer for a Chicago stock yard firm, divorcing in early 1929. In July 1929, Carol became engaged to the actor Nick Stuart and the couple married in November.

In 1933 Carol was cleared in a case involving the disappearance of a baby from a Brooklyn, New York family. The family had complained that the baby had been taken for adoption in November 1932 by a woman who said she was acting in behalf of Carol.

She married actor Alan Ladd in 1942. They had a son and a daughter, and she was his manager until his death by an overdose of drugs and alcohol in 1964.

Trivia

She retired from acting to become an agent.

Interred with husband Alan Ladd at Forest Lawn (Glendale), Glendale, California, USA, in the Freedom Mausoleum, Sanctuary of Heritage.

Children with actor Alan Ladd: actor David Ladd and Alana Ladd.

Daughter with Nick Stuart – Carol Lee Stuart, born July 18, 1932.

She was awarded a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for Motion Pictures at 1639 North Vine Street in Hollywood, California.

Stepmother of Alan Ladd Jr.

Close friend and former classmate of Virginia Cherrill at Kemper Hall in Wisconsin.

Death

Carol died in 1982 in Los Angeles, California from a heart attack and is interred next to Alan Ladd in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Sue Carol has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1639 N. Vine Street.

Theda Bara

Theda Bara (July 29, 1885 – April 13, 1955), born **Theodosia Burr Goodman**, was an American silent film actress – one of the most popular of her era, and one of cinema's earliest sex symbols. Her *femme fatale* roles earned her the nickname "The Vamp" (short for vampire). The term "vamp" soon became a popular slang term for a sexually predatory woman. Bara, Valeska Suratt, and Musidora popularized the vamp persona in the early years of silent film and spawned imitators like Virginia Pearson, Rosemary Theby, Louise Glaum, Betty Blythe, Barbara LaMarr, Carmel Myers, Nita Naldi, and Pola Negri.



Birth

Theodosia Burr Goodman was born in the Avondale section of Cincinnati, Ohio. Her father was Bernard Goodman (1853–1936), a prosperous Jewish tailor born in Poland. Her mother, Pauline Louise de Coppett (1861–1957), was born in Switzerland. Bernard and Pauline married in 1882.

Theda's siblings were a boy, Marque (1888–1954) and a girl, Esther (1897–1965), who also became a film actress as Lori Bara and married Francis W. Getty of London in 1920.

The origin of Bara's stage name is disputed; *The Guinness Book of Movie Facts and Feats* says it came from director Frank Powell, who learned Theda had a relative named Barranger. In promoting the 1917 film "Cleopatra," Fox Studio publicists noted that the name was an anagram of "Arab death," and her press agents claimed inaccurately that she was "the daughter of an Arab sheik and a French woman, born in the Sahara."

In 1917 the Goodman family legally changed its surname to "Bara".

Education

Theda Bara attended Walnut Hills High School (1899–1903) and lived at 823 Hutchins Avenue. After attending the University of Cincinnati for two years, she worked in theater productions mainly but did explore other projects, moving to New York City in 1908. She made her Broadway debut in *The Devil* (1908).

Theda Bara resided in a villa-style home which served as the "honors villa" at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Demolition of the home began in July, 2011

Career



Bara in the title role as *Cleopatra* (1917)

Theda Bara made more than 40 films between 1914 and 1926, but complete prints of only six still exist. Most were produced by William Fox, beginning with *A Fool There Was* (1915) and ending with *The Lure of Ambition* (1919). The phenomenal success of *A Fool There Was* gave William Fox the money to found Fox Film Corporation, while the ensuing films ensured the studio's success.

At the height of her fame, Bara was making \$4,000 per week. She was one of the most popular movie stars, ranking behind only Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford. Bara's best-known roles were as the "vamp", although she attempted to avoid typecasting by playing wholesome heroines in films such as *Under Two Flags* and *Her Double Life*. She also appeared as Juliet in a version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Although Bara took her craft seriously, she was too successful as an exotic "wanton woman" to develop a more versatile career.

Most of Bara's early films were shot on the East Coast, primarily at the Fox Studios in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Bara lived with her family in New York City during this time. The rise of Hollywood as the center of the American film industry forced her to relocate to Los Angeles to film the epic *Cleopatra* (1917), which became one of Bara's biggest hits. No known prints of *Cleopatra* exist today, but numerous photographs of Bara in costume as the Queen of the Nile have survived.

Between 1915 and 1919, Bara was Fox studio's biggest star but, tired of being typecast as a vamp, she allowed her five-year contract with Fox to expire. Her final Fox film was *The Lure of Ambition* (1919). Her career suffered without Fox studio's support, and she did not make another film until *The Unchastened Woman* (1925) for Chadwick Pictures Corporation. Bara retired after making only one more film, the short comedy *Madame Mystery* (1926), made for Hal Roach, in which she parodied her vamp image.

About 1920, Bara had her portrait painted by the young Chicago portrait painter Theodore Lukits (1897–1992). The whereabouts of the portrait are unknown.

She was so impressed by his work that she encouraged him to move to Los Angeles where she could introduce him around. Lukits moved west in 1921 and developed a special relationship with Fox Studios, painting some of its stars, including Dolores Del Rio and selling works to Sol Wurtzel, who ran Fox's day to day operations. For the rest of his life Lukits credited his fortuitous meeting with Bara for some measure of his success in Hollywood.

Theda Bara has a higher percentage of lost films than any other actor with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. A 1937 fire at Fox's nitrate film storage vaults in New Jersey destroyed most of that studio's silent films. Out of her 40 films, only a few remain completely intact: *The Stain* (1914), *A Fool There Was* (1915), *East Lynne* (1916), *The Unchastened Woman* (1925), and 2 short comedies for Hal Roach. In addition to these, a few of her films remain in fragments including *Cleopatra* (just a few seconds of footage), a clip thought to be from *The Soul of Buddha*, and a few other unidentified clips featured in a French documentary, *Theda Bara et William Fox* (2001). Most of the clips can be seen in the documentary *The Woman with the Hungry Eyes* (2006).

Bara is also one of the most famous completely silent stars – she was never filmed in sound, lost or otherwise. She appeared on Cecil B. DeMille's *Lux Radio Theatre* in 1936 in a broadcast version of *The Thin Man* with William Powell and Myrna Loy. The broadcast was preserved and is available for purchase.

Sex symbol



Theda Bara in one of her famous risqué costumes, this one in *Cleopatra* (1917).

Bara is often cited as the first sex symbol of the movies. She was well known for wearing very revealing costumes in her films, which could still be considered risqué by today's standards, more than 90 years later. Such outfits were banned from Hollywood films after the Production Code started in 1930, and then was more strongly enforced in 1934.

It was popular at that time to promote an actress as mysterious, with an exotic background. The studios promoted Bara with a massive publicity campaign, billing her as the Egyptian-born daughter of a French actress and an Italian sculptor. They claimed she had spent her early years in the Sahara Desert under the shadow of the Sphinx, then moved to France to become a stage actress. (In fact, Bara had never been to Egypt or France). They called her the "Serpent of the Nile" and encouraged Bara to discuss mysticism and the occult in interviews. Some film historians point to this as the birth of two Hollywood phenomena: the studio publicity department and the press agent, which would later evolve into the public relations person.

At the height of Bara's fame, her vamp image was celebrated in popular songs of the day. The lyrics of "Red-Hot Hannah" state: "I know things that Theda Bara's just startin' to learn / Make my dresses from asbestos, I'm liable to burn...." The song, "Rebecca Came Back From Mecca", contains the lyrics "She's as bold as Theda Bara / Theda's bare but Becky's bare-er", The song "If I had a man like Valentino" contains the chorus lyric, "Theda Bara sure would die / She would never roll another eye".

Marriage and retirement

Bara married British-born American film director Charles Brabin (1883–1957) in 1921. They had no children.

It is claimed her husband did not consider it proper for his wife to have a career, and this is why she did not make many more appearances after her marriage – although by 1921, her popularity was already waning in any case.

In 1949, producer Buddy DeSylva and Columbia Pictures expressed interest in making a movie of Bara's life, starring Betty Hutton, but the project never materialized.

Death

Bara died of stomach cancer in 1955 in Los Angeles, California, and was interred as Theda Bara Brabin in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California. Her death certificate incorrectly listed her birthdate as July 22, 1892.

Legacy



Theda Bara has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and in 1994, she was honored with her image on a United States postage stamp designed by caricaturist Al Hirschfeld. In June 1996, two biographies appeared, Ron Genini's *Theda Bara: A Biography* (McFarland) and Eve Golden's *Vamp* (Emprise). In October 2005 TimeLine Films of Culver City premiered a film biography, *Theda Bara: The Woman With the Hungry Eyes*. A film by British video artist Georgina Starr titled *Theda* based around Bara's lost films premiered in London in November 2006.

Bara has also been the subject of several fictional works including "In Theda Bara's Tent" by Diana Altman, "The Director's Cut: A Theda Bara Mystery" by Christopher DiGrazia and the play "Theda Bara and the Frontier Rabbi" by Bob Johnston.

The Fort Lee Film Commission dedicated Main Street and Linwood Avenue in Fort Lee, New Jersey, as "Theda Bara Way" in May 2006 to honor Bara, who made many of her films at the Fox Studio on Linwood and Main.

Theda Bara's image has been the symbol of the Chicago International Film Festival. A stark, black and white close up of her eyes set as repeated frames in a strip of film serves as the logo for the nonprofit festival.

Thelma Todd

Thelma Alice Todd (July 29, 1906 – December 16, 1935) was an American actress. Appearing in about 120 pictures between 1926 and 1935, she is best remembered for her comedic roles in films like Marx Brothers' *Monkey Business* and *Horse Feathers*, a number of Charley Chase's short comedies, and co-starring with Buster Keaton and Jimmy Durante in *Speak Easily*. She also had roles in Wheeler and Woolsey farces, several Laurel and Hardy films, the last of which (*The Bohemian Girl*) featured her in a part that was truncated by her death.



Early life

Todd was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts to Jim and Bertha Todd, and was a bright student who achieved good academic results. She intended to become a school teacher. However, in her late teens, she began entering beauty pageants, winning the title of Miss Massachusetts in 1925. While representing her home state, she was spotted by a Hollywood talent scout and began her career in film.

Career



in *Corsair* (1931)

During the silent era, Todd appeared in numerous supporting roles that made full use of her beauty but gave her little chance to act. With the advent of the talkies, Todd was given opportunity to expand her roles when producer Hal Roach signed her to appear with such comedy stars as Harry Langdon, Charley Chase, and Laurel and Hardy. In 1931 she was given her own series, teaming with ZaSu Pitts

(pronounced "Zay-soo," also her character's name) for slapstick comedies. This was Roach's attempt to create a female version of Laurel and Hardy. When Pitts left Roach in 1933, she was replaced by Patsy Kelly. The Todd shorts often cast her as a working girl having all sorts of problems, and trying her best to remain poised and charming despite the embarrassing antics of her sidekick.

In 1931, Todd became romantically involved with director Roland West, and starred in his film *Corsair*.

Thelma Todd became highly regarded as a capable film comedian, and Roach loaned her out to other studios to play opposite Wheeler & Woolsey, Buster Keaton, Joe E. Brown, and the Marx Brothers. She also appeared successfully in such dramas as the original 1931 film version of *The Maltese Falcon* starring Ricardo Cortez as Sam Spade, in which she played Miles Archer's treacherous widow. During her career she appeared in 119 films although many of these were short films, and was sometimes publicized as "The Ice Cream Blonde."



In August 1934, she opened a successful cafe at Pacific Palisades, called Thelma Todd's Sidewalk Cafe, attracting a diverse clientele of Hollywood celebrities as well as many tourists.

Todd continued her short-subject series through 1935, and was featured in the full-length Laurel and Hardy comedy *The Bohemian Girl*. This was her last film; she died after completing all of her scenes, but most of them were re-shot. Producer Roach deleted all of Todd's dialogue and limited her appearance to one musical number.

Death

On the morning of Monday, December 16, 1935, Thelma Todd was found dead in her car inside the garage of Jewel Carmen, a former actress and former wife of Todd's lover and business partner, Roland West. Carmen's house was approximately a block from the topmost side of Todd's restaurant. Her death was determined to have been caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. Todd had a wide circle of friends and associates as well as a busy social life; police investigations revealed that she had spent the last night of her life at the Trocadero, a popular Hollywood restaurant, at a party hosted by entertainer Stanley Lupino and his actress daughter, Ida. At the restaurant, she had had a brief but unpleasant exchange with her ex-husband, Pat DeCicco. However, her friends stated that she was in good spirits, and were aware of nothing unusual in her life that could suggest a reason for committing suicide.

The detectives of the LAPD concluded at first that Todd's death was accidental, the result of her either warming up the car to drive it or using the heater to keep herself warm. Other evidence, however, pointed to foul play. The Grand Jury ruled her death as suicide. Since her body was cremated, a second, more thorough autopsy could not be carried out. It was believed that she was the target of extortion, but refused to pay. It is also possible that she was locked in the garage by her assailant after she started the car. Blood from a wound was found on her face and dress, leading some to believe that she was knocked unconscious and placed in the car so that she would succumb to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Todd's death certificate states her cause of death as accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. She was cremated; after her mother's death, her remains were placed in her mother's casket and buried in Bellevue Cemetery in her home town of Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Complicating matters, there was an apparent murder two years later involving Todd's ex-husband Pat DiCicco and another movie actor as the victim. According to E.J. Fleming's book *The Fixers* (about MGM's legendary "fixers" Eddie Mannix and Howard Strickling), Wallace Beery (one of MGM's top stars), gangster Pat DiCicco, and Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli (who was also DiCicco's cousin and eventual producer of the James Bond films) allegedly beat comedian and movie actor Ted Healy to death in the parking lot of the Trocadero nightclub on December 21, 1937. The book claims that Beery was sent to Europe by the studio for a few months, while a story was concocted that three college students had killed Healy. Immigration records confirm a four-month-long trip to Europe on Beery's part immediately after Healy's death, ending April 17, 1938. A pencil drawing of Beery survives that was done on a film set by Healy, an amateur artist as well as the organizer and original leader of the Three Stooges.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Thelma Todd has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6262 Hollywood Blvd.

Thomas Meighan

Thomas Meighan (April 9, 1879 – July 8, 1936) was an American actor of silent films and early talkies. He played several leading man roles opposite popular actresses of the day including Mary Pickford and Gloria Swanson. At one point he commanded \$10,000 a week.



Early life

Meighan was born to John and Mary Meighan in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His father was the president of Pittsburgh Facing Mills and his family was well off.

Meighan's parents encouraged him to go to college but he refused. At the age of 15 his father sent him to work shoveling coal which quickly changed his mind. He attended St. Mary's College studying pharmacology. After 3 years of study Meighan decided he wished to pursue acting.

Early theatre career

After dropping out of college in 1896 Meighan became a juvenile player in the Pittsburgh Stock Company headed by Henrietta Crosman. He was paid \$35 a week.

Meighan soon found success. He first appeared on Broadway in 1900. In 1904 Meighan appeared in "The Two Orphans". His breakthrough role came in 1908 appeared with William Collier Sr. in "The Dictator". which led to a leading role in "The College Widow" which had a successful run on Broadway for the 1907-1908 season. It was during this run he met his wife Frances Ring.

Despite his film career Meighan remained devoted to the theatre during his life.

Film career

In 1914 he abandoned theatre for the new movie industry; which was still in its infancy at the time. His first film was shot in London, titled "Dandy Donovan, the Gentleman Cracksmen". This film led to a

contract with Famous Players-Lasky. His first US film was in 1915, "The Fighting Hope". During the next 2 years Meighan's career would take off. In 1918 he made a propaganda film for World War I titled, "Norma Talmadge and Thomas Meighan in a Liberty Loan Appeal". He then played opposite Mary Pickford in *M'Liss*.



Stardom

In 1919 Meighan hit stardom. One of his best known films at the time was the 1919 *The Miracle Man* which featured Lon Chaney Sr... This film is now believed to be lost except for brief clips. This was followed with Cecil B. DeMille's *Male and Female* which starred him opposite Gloria Swanson and Lila Lee. Most of the cast returned for the 1920 film, *Why Change Your Wife?* which also co-starred Bebe Daniels.

His popularity continued through the Roaring Twenties with him starring in several pictures. In 1924 he played in, *The Alaskan* opposite Estelle Taylor and Anna May Wong. In 1927 Meighan starred in *The City Gone Wild* opposite Louise Brooks. His final silents, both produced by Howard Hughes in 1928, were *The Mating Call* which was critical of the KKK and *The Racket* which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture. Both were thought lost until rediscovered in private collections in 2006 and restored by University of Nevada, Las Vegas and shown on Turner Classic Movies.

Talkies

His first talkie was *The Argyle Case* (1928). Meighan was nearing 50 and feared his popularity might wane, and decided to go into real estate. It took until 1931 for him to return to the screen with *Young Sinners*. He would go on to make only four additional talkies until his illness sidelined him from acting. His last film was *Peck's Bad Boy* in 1934.

Personal life

Meighan commanded a salary of \$5,000 a week for much of his career. At one point it reached \$10,000 a week.

Marriage

Meighan met Frances Ring (July 4, 1882-January 15, 1951), an attractive stage actress, during his stint on Broadway. She was a sister of popular singer Blanche Ring. The pair became inseparable and soon married. They remained married until his death in 1936. Their happy marriage was considered a strong

one prompting one writer to remark, "Thomas Meighan and Rin Tin Tin were the only Hollywood stars who had never seen a divorce court". The couple had no children.

Hollywood scandals

Meighan was involved in some of the more scandalous moments of silent film history; albeit as a helping hand. On October 25, 1916 in New Jersey he was the sole witness to Jack Pickford and Olive Thomas' secretive wedding.

In March 1923, Douglas Gerrad, in need of help bailing his friend Rudolph Valentino out of jail for bigamy, called up a fellow Irishman named Dan O'Brien who happened to be with Meighan at the time. Meighan barely knew Valentino but put up a large chunk of the bail money, and with the help of June Mathis and George Melford, Valentino was eventually freed.

Florida

In the mid-1920s, Meighan became obsessed with Florida after talks with his realtor brother James E. Meighan. He bought property in Ocala, Florida in 1925. In 1927, he built a home in New Port Richey, Florida where he would spend his winters. He intended to shoot his film *We're All Gamblers* there, however, filming was moved to Miami.

The Meighans' hoped to draw other celebrities to the area. On July 1, 1926, The Meighan Theatre opened with a screening of Meighan's movie *The New Klondike*. Meighan himself was not present but sent a congratulatory telegram.

In 1930 sound was added to the theatre. Meighan himself appeared this time, pushing the button to start the sound. The theatre closed in 1934, a victim of the Depression. It reopened in 1938 under the name *The Newport Richey Theatre*. The theatre is still open as a community playhouse under the name *Richey Suncoast Theatre*.

Death

In 1934 Meighan was diagnosed with cancer. In 1935, he underwent surgery at the Doctors Hospital in Manhattan. He finally succumbed to cancer at 9:10pm on July 8, 1936, passing away at his home in Great Neck, New York. Many of his family were present.

Meighan was buried at Saint Mary's Cemetery in his hometown of Pittsburgh.



Legacy

Meighan was a large donater to various Catholic charities and the *Federation for the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies*. Many of his later films survive and have been released on DVD.

Tom Mix

Thomas Edwin "Tom" Mix (born **Thomas Hezekiah Mix**; January 6, 1880 – October 12, 1940) was an American film actor and the star of many early Western movies. He made a reported 336 films between 1910 and 1935, all but nine of which were silent features. He was Hollywood's first Western megastar and is noted as having helped define the genre for all cowboy actors who followed.



Early years

Mix was born into a relatively poor logging family in Mix Run, Pennsylvania, about 40 miles (60 km) north of State College, Pennsylvania. He spent his childhood growing up in nearby Dubois, Pennsylvania, learning to ride horses and working on the local farm owned by John Dubois, a lumber businessman. He had dreams of being in the circus and was rumored to have been caught by his parents practicing knife-throwing tricks against a wall, using his sister as an assistant.

In April 1898, during the Spanish-American War, he enlisted in the Army under the name Thomas E. (Edwin) Mix. His unit never went overseas, and Mix later failed to return for duty after an extended furlough when he married Grace I. Allin on July 18, 1902. Mix was listed as AWOL on November 4, 1902, but was never court-martialed nor apparently even discharged. His marriage to Allin was annulled after one year. In 1905, Mix married Kitty Jewel Perinne, but this marriage also ended within a year. He next married Olive Stokes on January 10, 1909, in Medora, SD.

In 1905, Mix rode in Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade led by Seth Bullock with a group of 50 horsemen, which included several former Rough Riders (years later, Hollywood publicity handouts would muddle this event to misleadingly imply that Mix had been a Rough Rider himself.) After working a variety of odd jobs in the Oklahoma Territory, Mix found employment at the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch, reportedly the largest ranching business in the United States and covering 101,000 acres (409 km²), hence its name. He stood out as a skilled horseman and expert shot, winning the 1909 national Riding and Rodeo Championship.

Mix often claimed to have attended the Virginia Military Institute and to have been the son of a cavalry officer. There is no basis for these claims.

Film career



Mix appeared opposite Victoria Forde in many westerns. They were married in 1918.

Selig Polyscope

Mix began his film career as a supporting cast member with the Selig Polyscope Company. His first shoot in 1910 at their studio in the Edendale district of Los Angeles (now known as Echo Park) was *Ranch Life in the Great Southwest*, in which he showed his skills as a cattle wrangler. The film was a success and Mix became an early motion picture star. Olive gave birth to their daughter Ruth on July 13, 1912. Mix performed in more than 100 films for Selig, many of which were filmed in Las Vegas, New Mexico. While with Selig he co-starred in several films with Victoria Forde, and they fell in love. He divorced Olive Stokes in 1917. By then, Selig Polyscope had encountered severe financial difficulties, and Tom Mix and Victoria Forde both subsequently signed with Fox Film Corporation, which had leased the Edendale studio. Mix and Forde married in 1918 and they had a daughter, Thomasina Mix (Tommie), in 1922.



Tom Mix in *Mr. Logan, U.S.A.*, c. 1919

Mixville

He went on to make more than 160 escapist matinee cowboy films throughout the 1920s. These featured action oriented scripts which contrasted with the documentary style of his work with Selig. Heroes and villains were sharply defined and a clean-cut cowboy always "saved the day." Millions of American children grew up watching his films on Saturday afternoons. His intelligent and handsome horse Tony also became a celebrity. Mix did his own stunts and was frequently injured.



Mix in Ireland in 1923.

Mix's salary at Fox reached \$7,500 a week. His performances weren't noted for their realism but for screen-friendly action stunts and horseback riding, attention-grabbing cowboy costumes and showmanship. At the Edendale lot Mix built a 12-acre (49,000 m²) shooting set called Mixville. Loaded with western props and furnishings, it has been described as a "complete frontier town, with a dusty street, hitching rails, a saloon, jail, bank, doctor's office, surveyor's office, and the simple frame houses typical of the early Western era." Near the back of the lot an Indian village of lodges was ringed by miniature plaster mountains which on screen were said to be "ferociously convincing." The set also included a simulated desert, large corral and a ranch house with no roof, to facilitate interior shots.

During 1929, Mix's last year in silent pictures, he worked for Film Booking Office of America (FBO), a small movie studio run by Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. and soon to be merged into Kennedy's RKO Radio Pictures. Mix was 49 and by most accounts he was ready to retire from the movies. That same year, Mix was a pallbearer at the funeral of Wyatt Earp (during which he reportedly wept).

1930s

Mix appeared with the Sells-Floto Circus in 1929, 1930 and 1931 at a reported weekly salary of \$20,000. He and Forde were divorced in 1931. Meanwhile, the Great Depression (along with the actor's free-spending ways and many wives) had reportedly wiped out most of his savings. In 1932, he married his fifth wife, Mabel Hubbard Ward. Universal Pictures approached him that year with an offer to do talkies which included script and cast approval. He did nine pictures for Universal, but because of injuries he received while filming, he was reluctant to continue with any more. Mix then appeared with the Sam B. Dill circus, which he reportedly bought two years later (1935).

Mix's last screen appearance was a 15-episode sound Mascot Pictures serial, *The Miracle Rider* (1935), receiving \$40,000 for four weeks of filming. Also that year, Texas governor James Allred named Mix an honorary Texas Ranger. Mix went back to circus performing, this time with his eldest daughter Ruth, who had appeared in some of his films. In 1938, Mix went to Europe on a promotional trip, while his daughter Ruth stayed behind to manage his circus, which soon failed. He later excluded her from his will. He had reportedly made over \$6,000,000 (approaching \$400 million in early 21st century, inflation-adjusted values) during his 26-year film career.

Radio

In 1933, Ralston-Purina obtained his permission to produce a Tom Mix radio series called *Tom Mix Ralston Straight Shooters* which, but for one year during World War II, was popular throughout most of the 1930s through the early 1950s. Mix never appeared on these broadcasts, and was instead played by radio actors: Artells Dickson (early 1930s), Jack Holden (from 1937), Russell Thorsen (early 1940s) and Joe "Curley" Bradley (from 1944). Others in the supporting cast included George Gobel, Harold Peary

and Willard Waterman. The Ralston company offered ads during the Tom Mix radio program for listeners to send in for a series of 12 special Ralston-Tom Mix Comic books available only by writing the Ralston Company by mail.

Death



Tom Mix memorial near the site of his death

On the afternoon of October 12, 1940, Mix was driving his 1937 Cord 812 Phaeton near Florence, Arizona, (between Tucson and Phoenix) on Arizona State Route 79. Mix had been visiting Pima County Sheriff Ed Nichols in Tucson, and had stopped at The Oracle Junction Inn, a popular gambling and drinking establishment, where he had called and spoken with his agent, when he came upon construction barriers at a bridge previously washed away by a flash flood. A work crew watched as he was unable to brake in time, and his car swerved twice then rolled into a gully, pinning his body beneath. A large polished aluminum suitcase containing a large sum of money, traveler's checks and jewels, which he had placed on the package shelf behind him flew forward and struck Mix in the back of the head, shattering his skull and breaking his neck. The 60-year-old actor was killed almost instantly. Eyewitnesses said Mix was traveling at 80 mph before the accident.

A small stone memorial marks the site of his death on State Route 79, and the nearby gully is named "Tom Mix Wash". The plaque on the marker bears the inscription: "In memory of Tom Mix whose spirit left his body on this spot and whose characterization and portrayals in life served to better fix memories of the old West in the minds of living men." Mix is interred in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

Legacy



Tom Mix was "the King of Cowboys" when Ronald Reagan and John Wayne were youngsters and the influence of his screen persona can be seen in their approach to portraying cowboys. When an injury caused football player John Wayne to drop out of USC, Tom Mix helped him get a job moving props in the back lot of Fox Studios.

By most accounts, Tom Mix made 336 movies throughout his career. As of 2007, only about 10% of these were reportedly available for viewing, although it was unclear how many of these films are now considered lost films.

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Tom Mix has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1708 Vine Street. His cowboy boot prints, palm prints and his famous horse Tony's hoof prints are at Grauman's Chinese Theatre at 6925 Hollywood Boulevard. In 1958 he was inducted posthumously into the Western Performers Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In 1959 a 'Monument To The Stars' was erected on Beverly Dr. (where it intersects with Olympic Blvd. and becomes Beverwil) in Beverly Hills. The memorial consists of a bronze-green spiral of sprocketed "camera film" above a multi-sided tower, embossed with full-length likenesses of early stars who appeared in famous silent movies. Those memorialized include Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Will Rogers, Conrad Nagel, Rudolph Valentino, Fred Niblo, Tom Mix, and Harold Lloyd. There is a Tom Mix museum in Dewey, Oklahoma and another in Mix Run, Pennsylvania. Between 1980 and 2004, 21 Tom Mix festivals were held during the month of September, most of them in DuBois, Pennsylvania.

Cultural references

By the 21st century, most people were more familiar with Tom Mix's name through the many cultural references which have echoed long after his death, rather than from having seen his films. Cereal boxtop premiums (radio premiums) from the 1940s relating to Mix are still traded by collectors. Mix was referred to in Conny Froboess' 1951 song "*Pack' die Badehose ein*" and in a 1953 Dinah Washington

song, "TV Is the Thing This Year" for EmArcy Records (signifying a change in technology from radio to television).

In the JD Salinger short story "The Laughing Man", the Chief is described as having "the most photogenic features of Buck Jones, Ken Maynard, and Tom Mix."

In 1967, Mix was featured with many other 20th century celebrities on the cover of The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

In Woody Allen's 1983 film *Zelig*, archival footage is shown of Mix attending a party at Hearst Castle near San Simeon, California.

Bruce Willis played Tom Mix in the 1988 Blake Edwards film *Sunset*, with James Garner as Wyatt Earp. The film was very loosely based on the fact that Earp and Mix knew each other when Earp was serving as a consultant during the silent film era.

In *The Beverly Hillbillies*, Jed Clampett's reason for going to Beverly Hills was to live in the same place as Tom Mix.

Daryl Ponicsan's novel *Tom Mix Died for Your Sins* (1975) evokes Mix's life and personality. Clifford Irving offered a pseudo-autobiographical version of Mix's early adulthood, drawing him as a brash young gringo who befriends and then joins up with the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa in the novel *Tom Mix and Pancho Villa* (1982).

In the 2008 movie *Changeling*, starring Angelina Jolie, the mysterious little boy claiming to be Walter Collins finally confesses to the police that the reason he ran away to Los Angeles was in hopes of meeting Tom Mix and his horse Tony.

James Horwitz's book *They Went Thataway* (1975) ends with Horwitz visiting Tom Mix Wash (where Mix died) and leaving his childhood cowboy boots at the foot of the monument.

A resurrected Tom Mix appeared in two of Philip José Farmer's *Riverworld* novels, *The Dark Design* (1977) and *The Magic Labyrinth* (1980) as a traveling companion of Jack London, along with a short story featured in the anthology *Riverworld and Other Stories* (1979).

In the "Mulcahy's War" episode of *M*A*S*H* Father Mulcahy used a Tom Mix pocket knife to perform an emergency tracheotomy (1976).

Philip K. Dick's sci-fi novel *The Penultimate Truth* features an underground bunker named 'the Tom Mix'.

In *Batman/Houdini: The Devil's Workshop* (1993), Tom Mix is a high profile figure in Gotham society, and takes up Houdini's offer of a free punch to the stomach.

In an episode of *Raw Toonage*, Bonkers D. Bobcat plays a cowboy character named "Trail Mix Bonkers", an obvious homage to Tom Mix, as well as a play on both his name and trail mix.

The menacing cowboy character in David Lynch's film *Mulholland Drive* contains oblique references to Mix.

The ghost of Tom Mix haunted a Hollywood couple in the supernatural thriller *The Ghosts of Edendale* (2004).

Ralston-Purina briefly revived its Tom Mix boxtop fan club during the 1980s, and in 2007 had Tom Mix pages on the company's website.

Tom Mix is mentioned as being a pall bearer and weeping at the funeral for Wyatt Earp at the beginning of the end credits for the 1993 George P. Cosmatos film *Tombstone*.

In the *Doctor Who* episode "The Gunfighters", the TARDIS lands at Tombstone, Arizona in 1881, where the Doctor says he doesn't understand why they want to dress like Tom Mix.

The United States Postal Service has commemorated Tom Mix on a first-class mail postage stamp.

In *Salt-Water Moon*, by Canadian playwright David French, Jacob describes watching "The Lucky Horseshoe", calling it "one of the best Tom ever made," and tries to seduce Mary when describing it.

Italian comic series Captain Miki was renamed by comics calligrapher Ferdi Sayışman as "Captain Tom Mix" (Yüzbaşı Tommiks) in the 70s, and comics are being published with this name till today.

In the series *Bewitched* in the episode "Serena's Youth Pill", Darin tries to convince young Larry Tate to drink the magic antidote by telling him it would help Larry grow up to be a cowboy like Tom Mix.

In the 2010 *Boardwalk Empire* episode "The Emerald City", Nucky Thompson's servant Eddie Kessler offers to frisk someone who's come to see him. Nucky chides him: "You're Tom Mix all of a sudden?"

Antonio Moreno

Antonio "Tony" Moreno (September 26, 1887 – February 15, 1967) was a notable Spanish-born American actor and film director of the silent film era and through the 1950s.



Biography

Born **Antonio Garrido Monteagudo** in Madrid, Spain, he emigrated to the United States at the age of fourteen and settled in Massachusetts, where he completed his education. After attending the Williston Seminary in Easthampton, Massachusetts, he became a stage actor in regional theater productions. In 1912, he moved to Hollywood, California and he was signed to Vitagraph Studios and began his career in bit parts and as a movie extra.

In 1914, Moreno began co-starring in a series of highly successful serials opposite the enormously publicly popular silent film actress Pearl White. These appearances helped to increase Moreno's popularity with the nation's nascent film-goers. By 1915, Antonio Moreno was a highly regarded matinee idol and appearing opposite such successful actors as Tyrone Power, Sr., Gloria Swanson, Blanche Sweet, Pola Negri and Dorothy Gish. Moreno was often typecast in his earliest films as the "Latin Lover", as were other actors of the era with Latin roots, such as Ramón Novarro and Rudolph Valentino.

By the early 1920s, Antonio Moreno joined film mogul Jesse Lasky's Famous Players and became one of the company's most highly paid performers. In 1926 Moreno starred opposite Swedish acting legend Greta Garbo in *The Temptress* and the following year followed up with a starring role in the enormous box-office hit Clara Bow vehicle *It*.

Moreno married American heiress Daisy Canfield Danziger, in 1923, and the couple moved to an estate known as Crestmount, now known as the Canfield-Moreno Estate. The union lasted ten years and ended shortly before Canfield Danziger was killed in an automobile accident on February 23, 1933.

With the advent of talkies in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Moreno's career began to falter, in part because of his heavy Spanish accent. While still acting in English language films, Moreno also began taking parts in Mexican films. During the early 1930s, Moreno directed several well-received Mexican films, among them is the 1932 drama *Santa*, which has been hailed by film critics as one of the best Mexican films of the era. By the mid-1930s, Antonio Moreno began rebuilding his faltering Hollywood career by taking notable roles as a character actor. By the mid-1940s and throughout the 1950s, Moreno

appeared in a number of well received roles, most notably, his 1954 role in the classic horror film *Creature from the Black Lagoon* and his 1955 role as Emilio Figueroa in film director John Ford's influential western epic *The Searchers* opposite John Wayne and Natalie Wood.

Moreno retired from film in the late 1950s and died of heart failure in Beverly Hills, California, in 1967, and was laid to rest in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park cemetery in Glendale, California. His film career spanned more than four decades.

In 1994, the Mexican magazine *Somos* published their list of "The 100 best movies of the cinema of Mexico" in its 100th edition and named the 1931 Moreno directed *Santa* its 67th choice.

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, Antonio Moreno was given a star on the legendary Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6651 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, California, USA.

Of note is that Moreno was the half-brother of Alfred Moreno Monteagudo, who took over management of the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel in the 1940s. Antonio Moreno is the granduncle of horror/fantasy author Nicholas Grabowsky, to which a related biography is slated for late 2009/early 2010 in conjunction with the release of the *Creature From the Black Lagoon* remake by Universal Pictures.

Vilma Bánky

Vilma Bánky (January 9, 1901 – March 18, 1991) was a Hungarian-born American silent film actress, although the early part of her acting career began in Budapest, spreading to France, Austria, and Germany. Bánky was best known for her roles in *The Eagle* and *The Son of the Sheik* with Rudolph Valentino and several romantic teamings with Ronald Colman.



Vilma Bánky in 1927

Early life

She was born **Vilma Koncsics** on January 9, 1901 to János Koncsics and Katalin Ulbert in Nagydorog, Austria-Hungary. Her father was a bureau chief under Franz Joseph's Austro-Hungarian Empire. Shortly after her birth, her father was transferred to Budapest, and the family relocated.

She had two siblings – an older brother, Gyula (who would later go on to work in Berlin as a writer and cinematographer), and a younger sister, Gisella. After graduation from secondary school, Bánky took courses to work as a stenographer, but was offered a role in a film. Acting had been her interest since she was a young girl.

Her first film appearance was in the now lost film, *Im Letzten Augenblick*, directed by Carl Boese in Germany in 1919. On a trip to Budapest in 1925, Hollywood film producer Samuel Goldwyn discovered and signed her to a contract. Both her mother and father were vehemently against Bánky's acting career as was her fiancé; nonetheless she left for the United States in March 1925, arriving to a great deal of fanfare.

Career

She was hailed as "The Hungarian Rhapsody" and was an immediate hit with American audiences. *The New York Times* remarked in its review of her first American film, *The Dark Angel*, that she "is a young person of rare beauty ... so exquisite that one is not in the least surprised that she is never forgotten by Hillary Trent" (the movie's leading male character who decides to allow his family and fiancée to

believe him dead rather than place what he perceives as the burden on them of a life caring for a blinded war veteran).



Vilma Bánky appeared opposite silent great Rudolph Valentino in *The Eagle* (1925) and *The Son of the Sheik* (1926) It is said that Valentino was fascinated by Vilma, and it was he who chose her as the first lady in the films and Ronald Colman in a series of love stories, including *The Dark Angel* and *The Winning of Barbara Worth*. It is commonly believed that her thick Hungarian accent cut her career short with the advent of sound; however, she began losing interest in films and wanted to settle down with Rod La Rocque and simply be his wife. By 1928, she had begun announcing her intention to retire in a few years.

Of her twenty four films, eight exist in their entirety (*Hotel Potemkin*, *Der Zirkuskönig*, *The Son of the Sheik*, *The Eagle*, *The Winning of Barbara Worth*, *The Night of Love*, *A Lady to Love*, and *The Rebel*), and three exist in fragments (*Tavaszi szerelem* in scattered bits, the first five reels of *The Magic Flame*, and an incomplete copy of *Two Lovers*).

Post-acting career

Her post Hollywood years were spent selling real estate with her husband and playing golf, her favorite sport. In 1981, Bánky established an educational fund called the Banky – La Rocque Foundation, which is still in operation.

Personal life and death

She married actor Rod La Rocque in 1927; they remained married until his death in 1969. They had no children.

Vilma Bánky died on March 18, 1991, from cardiopulmonary failure, aged 90, but notice of her death was not made public until the following year. Her ashes were scattered at sea where her husband's had been.

For her contribution to the motion picture industry, Vilma Bánky has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame located at 7021 Hollywood Blvd.

Viola Dana

Viola Dana (June 26, 1897 – July 3, 1987) was an American film actress who was successful during the era of silent movies.



Mini Biography

Viola Dana (real name Virginia Flugrath) was born in Brooklyn, NY, on June 26, 1897. She was the middle sister of three sisters (the other two were Edna Flugrath and Shirley Mason). She made her film debut in 1914 in *Molly the Drummer Boy* (1914). The following year she received top billing playing "Gladiola Bain" in *Gladiola* (1915). She was in top demand as evidenced by securing another lead in *The Innocence of Ruth* (1916). She continued to turn in great performances, particularly as Katie O'Doone in *Bred in Old Kentucky* (1926). Viola's final silver screen role was in 1929's *One Splendid Hour* (1929). The last the general public saw her was in a documentary about 'Buster Keaton' called "*Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*" (1987).

Viola died on July 3, 1987, at age 90.

Marriage

Jimmy Thomson (15 October 1930 – 30 March 1945)
(divorced)

Maurice 'Lefty' Flynn (20 June 1925 – 14 February 1929) (divorced)

John H. Collins (1915 – 23 October 1918) (his death)

Trivia

Sister of actresses Shirley Mason and Edna Flugrath.

Had a romantic relationship (1919-1920) with daredevil Hollywood pilot Ormer Locklear, who was married at the time. Locklear perished during a plane stunt that went wrong on August 2, 1920. She was present at the time of the incident.

Her first husband, director John H. Collins died during the influenza epidemic of 1918.

Career

Born **Virginia Flugrath**, Dana was a child star, appearing on the stage at the age of three. She read Shakespeare and particularly identified with the teenage *Juliet*. She enjoyed a long run at the Hudson Theater in New York City. A particular favorite of audiences was her performance in David Belasco's *Poor Little Rich Girl*, when she was 16. She went into vaudeville with Dustin Farnum in *The Little Rebel* and played a bit part in *The Model* by Augustus Thomas.

Dana entered films in 1910. Her first motion picture was made at a former Manhattan (New York) riding academy on West 61st Street. The stalls had been transformed to dressing rooms. Dana became a star with the Edison Company, working at their studio in the Bronx. She fell in love with Edison director John Hancock Collins (1889–1918) and they married in 1915. Dana's success in Collins's Edison features such as *Children of Eve* (1915) and *The Cossack Whip* (1916) encouraged producer B. A. Rolfe to offer the couple lucrative contracts with his company, Rolfe Photoplays, which released through Metro Pictures Corporation. Dana and Collins accepted Rolfe's offer in 1916 and made several important films for Rolfe/Metro, notably *The Girl Without A Soul* and *Blue Jeans* (both 1917). Rolfe closed his New York-area studio down in the face of the 1918 influenza epidemic and sent most of his personnel to California. Dana left before Collins, who was finishing work at the studio; however, Collins contracted influenza which rapidly turned into pneumonia and died in a New York hotel room on October 23, 1918.

Dana remained in California acting for Metro. In 1920, she became engaged to Ormer Locklear, a daring aviator and military veteran. Locklear died when his plane crashed on August 2, 1920 during a nighttime film shoot for a serial, *The Skywayman*, for Fox Studios. Locklear was the prototype for the Robert Redford movie, *The Great Waldo Pepper* (1975), and Dana was an honored guest at its premiere. Dana witnessed the 1920 crash. She would not fly again for 25 years.



Dana continued to act throughout the 1920s, but her popularity gradually waned. One of her last important roles was in Frank Capra's first film for Columbia Pictures, *That Certain Thing* (1928). She

retired from the screen in 1929. Her final screen credits are roles in *Two Sisters* (1929), *One Splendid Hour* (1929), and with her sister Leonie Flugrath, better known as Shirley Mason (years earlier she had appeared with her older sister, Edna Flugrath, in the 1923 film *The Social Code*), *The Show of Shows* (1929). By the time she made her final film appearance, she had appeared in over 100 films. More than 50 years after her retirement from the screen, she appeared in the documentary *Hollywood* (1980), discussing her career as a silent film star during the 1920s. Footage from the interview sessions was used in the 1987 documentary *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*.

Dana was married to Yale football star and actor Maurice "Lefty" Flynn from 1925 to 1929 and to golfer Jimmy Thomson from 1930 to 1945.

Dana died in 1987 from heart failure, aged 90. She is interred at Hollywood Forever Cemetery under her original name of Virginia Flugrath.

Dana has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her contribution to motion pictures. It is located at 6541 Hollywood Boulevard.

W. C. Fields

William Claude Dukenfield (January 29, 1880 – December 25, 1946), better known as **W. C. Fields**, was an American comedian, actor, juggler and writer. Fields was known for his comic persona as a misanthropic and hard-drinking egotist who remained a sympathetic character despite his snarling contempt for dogs, children and women.



The characterization he portrayed in films and on radio was so strong it became generally identified with Fields himself. It was maintained by the movie-studio publicity departments at Fields's studios (Paramount and Universal) and further established by Robert Lewis Taylor's 1949 biography *W.C. Fields, His Follies and Fortunes*. Beginning in 1973, with the publication of Fields's letters, photos, and personal notes in grandson Ronald Fields's book *W.C. Fields by Himself*, it has been shown that Fields was married (and subsequently estranged from his wife), and he financially supported their son and loved his grandchildren.

However, Madge Evans, a friend and actress, told a visitor in 1972 that Fields so deeply resented intrusions on his privacy by curious tourists walking up the driveway to his Los Angeles home that he would hide in the shrubs by his house and fire BB pellets at the trespassers' legs. Several years later Groucho Marx told a similar story on his live performance album, *An Evening with Groucho*.

Biography

Early years

Fields was born William Claude Dukenfield in Darby, Pennsylvania. His father, James L. Dukenfield, was from an English-Irish Catholic family that emigrated to America from Sheffield, England in 1854. James Dukenfield served in Company M of the 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment in the American Civil War and was wounded in 1863. Fields's mother, Kate Spangler Felton, 15 years younger than her husband, was a Protestant of German ancestry. The 1876 Philadelphia City Directory lists James Dukenfield as a clerk. After marrying, he worked as an independent produce merchant and a part-time hotel-keeper.

Claude Dukenfield (as he was known) worked at the Strawbridge and Clothier department store and in an oyster house, before he left home at age 18 (not 11, as many biographies have said). At age 15, he

had begun performing a juggling act at church and theater shows, and entered vaudeville as a "tramp juggler" using the name W. C. Fields. He soon was traveling as 'The Eccentric Juggler', and included amusing asides and increasing amounts of comedy into his act, becoming a headliner in North America and Europe. In 1906 he made his Broadway debut in a musical comedy, *The Ham Tree*.

Fields embellished stories of his youth, but his home seems to have been a reasonably happy one. His family supported his ambitions for the stage, and saw him off on the train for his first stage tour. His father visited him for two months in England, when Fields was performing there in music halls.

Fields was known among his friends as "Bill". Edgar Bergen also called him Bill in the radio shows (while Charlie McCarthy called him many names). Fields played himself in *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break*, and his 'niece' called him "Uncle Bill". In one scene he introduced himself: "I'm W.C., uh, Bill Fields." When he was portrayed in films as having a son, he often named the character "Claude", after his own son. He was sometimes billed in England as "Wm. C. Fields", due to "W.C." being the British slang for a water closet. His public use of initials was a commonplace formality of the era in which he grew up. "W.C. Fields" also fit more easily onto a marquee than "W.C. Dukenfield".

Personal life



Fields married a fellow vaudevillian, chorus girl Harriet "Hattie" Hughes, on April 8, 1900. Their son, William Claude Fields, Jr., was born on July 28, 1904. Although Fields was "an avowed atheist regarded all religions with the suspicion of a seasoned con man", he yielded to Hattie's wish to have their son baptized.

At the time Fields was away from Hattie on tour in England. By 1907, however, he and Hattie had separated; she had been pressing him to stop touring and settle down to a respectable trade, while he was unwilling to give up his own livelihood. Until his death, Fields continued to correspond with Hattie and voluntarily sent child-support payments.

He had another son, born on August 15, 1917, with girlfriend Bessie Poole, named William Rexford Fields Morris. Bessie was an established Ziegfeld Follies performer and met Fields while performing in New York City at the famous Amsterdam Theater. Her beauty and quick wit attracted Fields, who was the featured act from 1916 until 1922. She was killed in a bar fight several years later, leaving their son

to be raised in foster care, where he acquired the surname Morris by his foster-mother. Fields sent voluntary support to young Bill in care of his foster mother until he graduated from high school, when he sent \$300 as a gift.

Fields lived with Carlotta Monti (1907–1993) after they met in 1932, and they began a relationship that lasted until his death in 1946. Monti had small roles in a couple of Fields' films, and in 1971 wrote a biography, "*W.C. Fields and Me*", which was made into a motion picture at Universal Studios in 1976.

Fields and alcohol

Fields's screen character was often fond of alcohol, and this trait has become part of the Fields legend. In his younger days as a juggler, Fields himself never drank, because he didn't want to impair his functions while performing. The loneliness of his constant touring and traveling, however, compelled Fields to keep liquor on hand for fellow performers, so he could invite them to his dressing room for companionship and cocktails. Only then did Fields cultivate a fondness for alcohol.

Fields expressed his feelings to Gloria Jean (playing his niece) in *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break*: "I was in love with a beautiful blonde once, dear. She drove me to drink. That's the one thing I am indebted to her for." Equally memorable was a line in the 1940 film *My Little Chickadee*: "Once, on a trek through Afghanistan, we lost our corkscrew...and were forced to live on food and water for several days!" The oft-repeated anecdote that Fields once claimed he never drank water "because fish fornicate in it" is unsubstantiated.

On movie sets, Fields kept handy a vacuum flask of mixed martinis, which he referred to as his "pineapple juice". While filming *Tales of Manhattan*, a prankster switched the contents of the flask, filling it with actual pineapple juice. Upon discovering the prank, Fields was heard to yell, "Who put pineapple juice in my pineapple juice?!"

In 1936 Fields became gravely ill, his health worsened by his heavy drinking. Fields's film series came to a halt while he recovered; he made one last film for Paramount, *The Big Broadcast of 1938*. The comedian's troublesome behavior kept other producers away, and Fields was professionally idle until he made his debut on radio. By then Fields was very sick and suffering from delirium tremens.

On stage

Vaudeville

Fields started as a juggler in vaudeville, appearing in the makeup of a genteel "tramp" with a scruffy beard and shabby tuxedo. He juggled cigar boxes, hats, and a variety of other objects in what appears to have been a unique and fresh act, parts of which are reproduced in some of his films. Fields confined his act to pantomime so that he could play international theaters. Fields toured several continents and became a world-class juggler and an international star. He worked bits of juggling into many of his films. A good portion of his act is contained in *The Old Fashioned Way*.

Broadway

Back in America, Fields found that he could get more laughs by adding dialogue to his routines. His trademark mumbling patter and sarcastic asides were developed during this time. (According to the *A&E Biography* program about Fields (1994), when he was young his mother would sit with him on the front steps and mumble comments about the passersby.)

He soon starred on Broadway in Florenz Ziegfeld's *Ziegfeld Follies* revues. There he delighted audiences with a wild pool skit, complete with bizarrely shaped cues and a custom-built table used for a number of hilarious gags and surprising trick shots. His pool game is reproduced, at least in part, in some of his films, notably in *Six of a Kind* (1934).

He starred in multiple editions of the *Follies* and in the Broadway musical comedy *Poppy*, where he perfected his persona as a colorful small-time confidence man.

Films

Silent era

Fields starred in a couple of short comedies, filmed in New York in 1915. His stage commitments prevented him from doing more movie work until 1924. He reprised his *Poppy* role in a silent-film adaptation, retitled *Sally of the Sawdust* (1925) and directed by D.W. Griffith. Following this, he starred in *It's The Old Army Game* (1926) which featured his friend Louise Brooks, later to become a screen legend for her role in G.W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* in Germany. The film included a silent version of the porch sequence which would one day be expanded in the sound film *It's a Gift* (1934). Fields wore a scruffy-looking, clip-on mustache in virtually all of his silent films, discarding it only after his first sound feature film, *Her Majesty Love*, his only Warner Brothers production.

At Paramount

Fields made four short subjects for comedy pioneer Mack Sennett in 1932 and 1933, distributed through Paramount Pictures. During this period, Paramount began featuring Fields in full-length comedies, and by 1934 he was a major movie star. It was for one of the films of this period (*International House*) that outtakes of one scene (Fields, and two other actors) allegedly recorded the only moving image record of the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. This footage was later revealed to have been faked as a publicity stunt for the movie.

He often contributed to the scripts of his films, under unusual pseudonyms such as the seemingly prosaic "Charles Bogle", which appeared on most of his films in the 1930s; "Otis Criblecoblis", which contains an embedded homophone for "scribble"; and "Mahatma Kane Jeeves", a play on mahatma and on a phrase an aristocrat might use when about to leave the house: "My hat, my cane, Jeeves". In features such as *It's a Gift* and *Man on the Flying Trapeze*, he is reported to have written or improvised more or less all of his own dialogue and material, leaving story structure to other writers.

In his films, he often played hustlers such as carnival barkers and card sharps, spinning yarns and distracting his marks. He had an affection for unlikely names and many of his characters bore them. Some examples are:

"Larson E. Whipsnade" (*You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*);

"Egbert Sousé" (*The Bank Dick*);

"Ambrose Wolfinger" (*Man on the Flying Trapeze*); and,

"The Great McGonigle" (*The Old-Fashioned Way*).

The carnival fraud was not the only character Fields played. He was also fond of casting himself as the victim: a hapless householder constantly under the thumb of his shrewish wife and/or mother-in-law. His 1934 classic *It's a Gift* included his stage sketch of trying to escape his nagging family by sleeping

on the back porch, and being bedeviled by noisy neighbors and traveling salesmen. That film, along with films such as *You're Telling Me!* and *Man on the Flying Trapeze*, ended happily with a windfall profit that restored his standing in his screen families.

Although lacking formal education, he was well read and a lifelong admirer of author Charles Dickens, whose characters' unusual names inspired Fields to do likewise for his various characters. He achieved one of his career ambitions by playing the character Mr. Micawber, in MGM's *David Copperfield* in 1935. In 1936, Fields re-created his signature stage role in *Poppy* for Paramount Pictures.

Supporting players

Fields had a small cadre of supporting players that he employed in several films:

Kathleen Howard, as a nagging wife or antagonist.

Alison Skipworth, as his wife (although 16 years his senior), usually in a supportive role rather than the stereotypical nag.

Grady Sutton, typically as a country bumpkin type, as either a foil or an antagonist to Field's character.

Baby LeRoy, a pre-school child fond of playing pranks on Fields' characters.

Tammany Young, as a dim-witted, not intentionally harmful assistant; appeared in seven Fields films until his sudden death from heart failure in 1936.

Bill Wolfe, a gaunt looking character, usually a Fields foil.

Jan Duggan, an oldish woman (actually about Fields' age) who played small roles as a widow type. It was about her character that Fields said in *The Old Fashioned Way*, "She's all dressed up like a well-kept grave."

Franklin Pangborn, a fussy, ubiquitous character actor of the period who played in several Fields films, most memorably as J. Pinkerton Snoopington in *The Bank Dick*.

Elise Cavanna, whose on-screen interplay with Fields was compared (*The Art of W.C. Fields* 1967 by William K. Everson) to that between Groucho Marx and Margaret Dumont

At Universal

Fields's renewed popularity from his radio broadcasts with Bergen & McCarthy earned him a contract with Universal Pictures in 1939. His first feature for Universal, *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*, carried on the Fields-McCarthy rivalry. In 1940 Fields made *My Little Chickadee*, with Mae West, and *The Bank Dick*, perhaps his best-known film, in which he has the following exchange with bartender Shemp Howard:

Fields: "Was I in here last night, and did I spend a \$20 bill?"

Shemp: "Yeah."

Fields: "Oh boy, what a load that is off my mind... I thought I'd *lost* it!"

Fields often fought with studio producers, directors, and writers over the content of his films. He was determined to make a movie his way, with his own script and staging and his own choice of supporting players. Universal finally gave him the chance, and the resulting film, *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break*, (1941) is a masterpiece of absurd humor in which Fields appeared as himself, "The Great Man". Universal's singing star Gloria Jean played opposite Fields, and his old cronies Leon Errol and Franklin

Pangborn served as his comic foils. But the film Fields delivered was so surreal Universal recut and reshot parts of it and then quietly released both the film and Fields.

Sucker turned out to be his last starring film. By then he was much heavier and less mobile than he had been at the peak of his film career during 1934–1935, when he was reasonably fit and trim.

Fields completed a scene for the 20th Century Fox film *Tales of Manhattan*, (1942) in which he played an eccentric professor hired by Margaret Dumont to give a temperance lecture to a gathering of high society swells. This scene was cut from the film before release, supposedly due to running time. It was discovered in the vaults at Fox in the mid 1990s and was included in the video and DVD releases of the movie.

On radio

While Fields was inactive in films due to extended illness, he recorded a short speech for a radio broadcast. His familiar, snide drawl registered so well with listeners that he quickly became a popular guest on network radio shows. One of his funniest routines had him trading insults with Edgar Bergen's dummy Charlie McCarthy on *The Chase and Sanborn Hour*.

Fields would twit Charlie about his being made of wood:

Fields: "Tell me, Charles, is it true your father was a gate-leg table?"

McCarthy: "If it is, *your* father was *under* it!"

When Fields would refer to McCarthy as a "woodpecker's pin-up boy" or a "termite's flophouse," Charlie would fire back at Fields about his drinking:

McCarthy: "Is it true, Mr. Fields, that when you stood on the corner of Hollywood and Vine, 43 cars waited for your nose to change to green?"

Bergen: "Why, Bill, I thought you didn't like children."

Fields: "Oh, not at all, Edgar, I *love* children. I can remember when, with my own little unsteady legs, I toddled from room to room."

McCarthy: "When was that, last night?"

Thanks to radio, Fields reached an even wider audience than before, and he was soon in demand for films again.

Final years

Fields occasionally entertained guests at his home. Generally, Fields fraternized with other actors, directors, and writers who shared his fondness for good company and good liquor. John Barrymore, Gregory La Cava, and Gene Fowler were a few of his intimates. Anthony Quinn and his wife Katherine DeMille (daughter of Hollywood director Cecil B. DeMille) were visiting Fields one afternoon when the Quinns' two-year-old son, Christopher, drowned in Fields's lily pond. Fields was greatly distraught by this incident, and brooded about it for months.

In the 1994 *Biography* TV show, his 1941 co-star Gloria Jean described how she would visit his house from time to time, and they would talk. Gloria Jean found Fields to be kind and gentle in real life, and believed that Fields yearned for the kind of family he lacked when he was a child. The show also reported that Fields eventually reconciled with his long estranged wife and son, and enjoyed playing with his grandchildren.

With a presidential election looming in 1940, Fields toyed with the idea of lampooning political campaign speeches. He wrote to vice-presidential candidate Henry A. Wallace, intending to glean comedy material from Wallace's speeches, but when Wallace responded with a warm, personal fan letter to Fields, the comedian decided against skewering Wallace. Instead, Fields wrote a book entitled *Fields for President*, humorous essays in the form of a campaign speech. Dodd, Mead and Company published it in 1940 but declined to reprint it at the time. It did not sell well, mostly because people were confused as to whether it was meant to be taken seriously. Dodd, Mead and Company reprinted it in 1971 when Fields was seen as an anti-establishment figure. The 1940 edition includes illustrations by Otto Soglow; the 1971 reprint is illustrated with photographs of Fields.

Fields's film career slowed down considerably in the 1940s. His illnesses confined him to brief guest-star appearances in other people's films. An extended sequence in 20th Century Fox's *Tales of Manhattan* (1942) was cut from the original release of the film; it was later reinstated for some home video releases. He performed his famous billiard-table routine one more time on camera, for *Follow the Boys*, an all-star entertainment revue for the Armed Forces. (Despite the charitable nature of the movie, Fields was paid \$15,000 for his appearance, and he was never able to perform in person for the armed services.) In *Song Of The Open Road* (1944) Fields juggled for a few moments, remarking, "This used to be my racket". His last film, the musical revue *Sensations of 1945*, was released in late 1944.

He also guested occasionally on radio as late as 1946, often with Edgar Bergen, and just before his death that same year he recorded a spoken-word album, delivering his comic "Temperance Lecture" and "The Day I Drank A Glass Of Water" at Les Paul's studio, in which Paul had just installed his new multi-track recorder. The session was arranged by Paul's old Army pal Bill Morrow, a friend he had in common with Fields. Fields's vision had deteriorated so much that he read his lines from large-print cue cards. It was W. C. Fields's last performance.

Death

Fields spent his last weeks in a hospital, where a friend stopped by for a visit and caught Fields reading the Bible. When asked why, Fields replied, "I'm checking for loopholes." Fields died in 1946 (from an alcohol-related stomach hemorrhage) on the holiday he claimed to despise: Christmas Day. As documented in *W.C. Fields and Me* (the memoir of Carlotta Monti, published in 1971 and made into a 1976 film of the same name starring Rod Steiger), he died at Las Encinas Sanatorium, Pasadena, California, a bungalow-type sanitarium where, as he lay in bed dying, his longtime and final love, Carlotta Monti, went outside and turned the hose onto the roof, so as to allow Fields to hear for one last time his favorite sound—the sound of falling rain. According to the documentary *W.C. Fields Straight Up*, his death occurred in this way: he winked and smiled at a nurse, put a finger to his lips, and died. Fields was 66, and had been a patient for 22 months. His funeral took place on January 2, 1947, in Glendale, CA.

Fields was cremated and his ashes interred in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery, in Glendale, California. There have been stories that he wanted his grave marker to read either "On the whole, I would rather be in Philadelphia", his home town, or "All in all, I would rather be in Philadelphia", both of which are similar to a line he used in *My Little Chickadee*: "I'd like to see Paris before I die...Philadelphia would do!" In the same film, he made a point of referencing "Philadelphia cream cheese"; whether he knew of the actual J. L. Kraft Foods product is unknown. Given his fondness for words, maybe he just liked the sound of his own home town's name. This rumor has also morphed into "I would rather be *here* than in Philadelphia". The anecdote that Fields often remarked, "Philadelphia, wonderful town, spent a week there one night" is unsubstantiated. It is also said that Fields wanted "I'd rather be in Philadelphia" on his gravestone because of the old vaudeville joke among comedians, "I

would rather be dead than play Philadelphia". Whatever his actual wishes might have been, the interment marker for his ashes merely bears his stage name and the years of his birth and his death. The genesis of the line as originally phrased can be found in a 1925 article in *Vanity Fair* entitled "A Group of Artists Write Their Own Epitaphs." The mock-epitaph for Fields reads "Here Lies / W.C. Fields / I Would Rather Be Living in Philadelphia."

Unrealized film projects

W. C. Fields was the original choice for the title role in the 1939 version of *The Wizard of Oz*. One rumor was that he believed the role was too small. Another alleged that he was asking too much money: his asking price was \$100,000, while MGM offered \$75,000. However, his agent asserted that Fields rejected the role because he wanted to devote his time to writing *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*.

Fields also figured in an Orson Welles project. Welles's bosses at RKO Radio Pictures, after losing money on *Citizen Kane*, urged Welles to choose as his next film a subject with more commercial appeal. Welles considered an adaptation of Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* which would have starred Fields and John Barrymore, but Fields's schedule would not permit it. The project was permanently shelved, and Welles went on to adapt *The Magnificent Ambersons*.

During the early planning for his film *It's a Wonderful Life*, director Frank Capra considered Fields for the role of Uncle Billy, which eventually went to Thomas Mitchell.

Influence and legacy

According to Woody Allen (in a *New York Times* interview from January 30, 2000), W. C. Fields is one of only six "genuine comic geniuses" he recognized as such in movie history, along with Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Groucho and Harpo Marx, and Peter Sellers.

A W.C. Fields commemorative stamp was issued by the United States Postal Service on the occasion of the comedian's 100th birthday in January 1980.

Caricatures and imitations

Fields, with his bulbous red nose (partly as a result of rosacea, although his parents also had bulbous noses), rotund body and nasal, braying voice, has been imitated for decades in a wide variety of media. A few examples:

The comic strip *The Wizard of Id* by Johnny Hart and Brant Parker features an attorney called "Larsen E. Pettifogger", an obvious parody of Fields, named in allusion to Fields's character Larson E. Whipsnade from *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*.

Big Chief Wahoo was a newspaper strip drawn by Elmer Woggon and written by Allen Saunders that was later reprinted in comic books like *Famous Funnies*. It featured a W.C. Fields-like carpetbagging con artist and snake oil salesman named J. Mortimer Gusto, (a.k.a. "the Great Gusto"). According to Saunders, Fields was flattered. The feature gradually evolved into *Steve Roper and Mike Nomad*.

Frito-Lay's controversial Frito Bandito advertising mascot in the late 1960s was retired in favor of an animated Fields lookalike called "W.C. Fritos".

In addition to the above Fritos ads, Fields was mimicked and caricatured in a great many animated cartoons and commercials. They ranged from classic Looney Tunes shorts like *The Coo-Coo Nut Grove* (1936), *At Your Service, Madame* (1936) and *Little Blabbermouse* (1940), to Walt Disney's *Mickey's*

Polo Team (1936) and *Mother Goose Goes Hollywood* (1938). In the late '60s Warner Brothers again spoofed Fields's persona with their character Merlin the Magic Mouse, voiced by Larry Storch, and a TV ad for Cocoa Puffs cereal featured Sonny disguising himself as Fields, voiced by Chuck McCann.

Cartoonist Al Hirschfeld has portrayed Fields in caricature many times, including the book cover illustrations for *Drat!*, *A Flask of Fields* and *Godfrey Daniels!* – all edited by Richard J. Anobile.

The Firesign Theater's *How Can You Be in Two Places at Once When You're Not Anywhere at All* (Columbia CS-9884 — July 1969) includes a character "Bill" who speaks in fluent W.C. Field-ese.

The TV show *Gigglesnort Hotel* featured a puppet character named "W. C. Cornfield", which was an obvious caricature of Fields.

Fields was an easy target for impressionists and mimics. Ed McMahon aped Fields on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, and *Family Feud* host/*Match Game* panelist Richard Dawson frequently did imitations of Fields. Master impressionist Rich Little often imitated Fields on his TV series *The Kopykats*, and used a Fields characterization for the Ebenezer Scrooge character in his 1978 HBO special *Rich Little's Christmas Carol*, a one-man presentation of *A Christmas Carol*.

In Great Britain, comic Les Dawson's Fieldsian character Zebediah Twain was obviously an affectionate tribute. British comedian Benny Hill also mimicked Fields, reportedly one of his heroes, in sketches and musical numbers on *The Benny Hill Show*.

Fields was also caricatured in the Belgian comic strip *Lucky Luke* by Morris and René Goscinny, in the album *Western Circus* and the French animated film *La Ballade des Dalton* as Dr. Aldous Smith.

The character of Horatio K. Boomer on radio's *Fibber McGee & Molly*, voiced by Bill Thompson, was a vocal parody of Fields.

In other popular culture

Actor Michael Dunn did a brief impression of Fields in the film *No Way to Treat a Lady* (1968). Rod Steiger later impersonated him at length in the big screen biography *W.C. Fields and Me* in 1976.

Singer/songwriter duo Boyce & Hart included a song on their 1967 LP "Test Patterns" called "My Little Chickadee." The song features an impersonation of Fields in spoken interludes.

Fields, whose popularity enjoyed a renaissance in the late 1960s, is featured on the cover of the 1967 Beatles album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

The Firesign Theatre's 1968 album *Waiting for the Electrician or Someone Like Him* includes a sketch satirizing the hippie counterculture called "W.C. Fields Forever." Eric Idle's Beatles spoof, *The Rutles: All You Need Is Cash*, features an album cover parody of *Magical Mystery Tour* in which the song *Strawberry Fields Forever* is renamed "W.C. Fields Forever."

In the finale of the 1970s TV series *Gangsters*, writer Philip Martin appeared as "W.D. (White Devil) Fields", a ninja assassin who adopted the appearance and mannerisms of Fields in order to lull his opponents into a false sense of security. His first line in the series was "Birmingham, eh? On the whole I'd sooner be in Philadelphia." Martin was credited as "Larson E. Whipsnade". Fields also turns up as a wax figure brought to life by KAOS agents in a *Get Smart* episode titled *House of Max, Part II*, which first aired January 16, 1970.

On Sesame Street muppet performer Jerry Nelson used an impression of Fields for the voice of the inept magician The Amazing Mumford.

In the 1991 movie *The Rocketeer*, which was set in 1938, Bob Leeman played the part of W. C. Fields. In the 1982 ABC TV biopic *Mae West*, starring Ann Jillian, Fields was impersonated by comedy actor Chuck McCann.

While recovering from an assassination attempt, President Ronald Reagan reportedly said, "All things considered, I'd rather be in Philadelphia", which alluded to the site of the 1981 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Tournament's Final Four games held at the same time as Reagan's hospitalization.

"Filthy McNasty," the villainous bank robber from *The Bank Dick*, inspired jazz pianist Horace Silver's composition of the same name, introduced on his 1961 Blue Note LP *Doin' the Thing: The Horace Silver Quintet at the Village Gate*. According to Silver (quoted by Herb Wong in the liner notes for *The Best of Horace Silver*) the classic Fields film was playing on television while Silver was inspired to compose the tune.

Wallace Reid

Wallace Reid (April 15, 1891 – January 18, 1923) was an actor in silent film referred to as "the screen's most perfect lover".



Early life

Born **William Wallace Reid** in St. Louis, Missouri into a show business family, his mother Bertha Westbrook(1868-1939) was an actress and his father,James Halleck aka Hal Reid (actor) (1862–1920), worked successfully in a variety of theatrical jobs, travelling the country. As a boy, Wallace Reid was performing on stage at an early age but acting was put on hold while he obtained an education at Freehold Military School in Freehold Township, New Jersey. Reid actually graduated from Perkiomen Seminary in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania in 1909. A gifted all-around athlete, Reid participated in a number of sports while also following an interest in music, learning to play the piano, banjo, drums, and the violin. As a teenager, he spent time in Wyoming where he learned to be an outdoorsman.

Career

Reid was drawn to the burgeoning motion picture industry by his father, who would shift from the theatre to acting, writing, and directing films. In 1910, Reid appeared in his first film, *The Phoenix*, an adaptation of a Milton Nobles play filmed at Selig Polyscope Studios in Chicago. Reid used the script from a play his father had written and approached the very successful Vitagraph Studios hoping to be given the opportunity to direct. Instead, Vitagraph executives capitalized on his sex appeal and in addition to having him direct, they cast him in a major role. Although Reid's good looks and powerful physique made him the perfect "matinee idol," he was equally happy with roles behind the scenes and often worked as a writer, cameraman, and director.

Wallace Reid appeared in several films with his father and, as his career in film flourished, he was soon acting and directing with and for early film mogul Allan Dwan. In 1913, while at Universal Pictures, Reid met and married actress Dorothy Davenport (1895–1977). He was featured in both *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) both directed by D.W. Griffith, and starred opposite leading ladies

such as Florence Turner, Gloria Swanson, Lillian Gish, Elsie Ferguson, and Geraldine Farrar en route to becoming one of Hollywood's major heartthrobs.

Already involved with the creation of more than 100 motion picture shorts, Reid was signed by producer Jesse L. Lasky and would star in another sixty plus films for Lasky's Famous Players film company, later Paramount Pictures. Frequently paired with actress Ann Little, his action hero role as the dashing race car driver drew young girls and older women alike to theaters to see his daredevil auto thrillers such as *The Roaring Road* (1919), *Double Speed* (1920), *Excuse My Dust* (1920), and *Too Much Speed* (1921). One of his auto racing films, *Across the Continent* (1922), was chosen as the opening night film for San Francisco's Castro Theatre, which opened 22 June 1922.

Death

While on location in Oregon filming *The Valley of the Giants* (1919), Reid was injured in a train wreck and, in order to keep on filming he was prescribed morphine for his pain. Reid soon became addicted, but kept on working at a frantic pace in films that were growing more physically demanding and changing from 15–20 minutes in duration to as much as an hour. Reid's morphine addiction worsened at a time when drug rehabilitation programs were non-existent, and he died in a sanitarium while attempting recovery.

Wallace Reid was interred in the Holly Terrace portion of the Great Mausoleum at Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

Aftermath

His widow, Dorothy Davenport (billed as Mrs. Wallace Reid), co-produced and appeared in *Human Wreckage* (1923), making a national tour with the film to publicize the dangers of drug addiction. She and Reid had two children: a son, Wallace Reid, Jr., born in 1917; and a daughter, Betty Mummert, whom they adopted in 1922 at age three. Reid's widow never remarried.

Wallace Reid's contribution to the motion-picture industry has been recognized with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Will Rogers

William "Will" Penn Adair Rogers (November 4, 1879 – August 15, 1935) was an American cowboy, comedian, humorist, social commentator, vaudeville performer, film actor, and one of the world's best-known celebrities in the 1920s and 1930s.



Known as Oklahoma's favorite son, Rogers was born to a prominent Cherokee Nation family in Indian Territory (now part of Oklahoma). He traveled around the world three times, made 71 movies (50 silent films and 21 "talkies"), wrote more than 4,000 nationally-syndicated newspaper columns, and became a world-famous figure. By the mid-1930s, Rogers was adored by the American people. He was the leading political wit of the Progressive Era, and was the top-paid Hollywood movie star at the time. Rogers died in 1935 with aviator Wiley Post, when their small airplane crashed in Alaska.

His vaudeville rope act led to success in the Ziegfeld Follies, which in turn led to the first of his many movie contracts. His 1920s syndicated newspaper column and his radio appearances increased his visibility and popularity. Rogers crusaded for aviation expansion, and provided Americans with first-hand accounts of his world travels. His earthy anecdotes and folksy style allowed him to poke fun at gangsters, prohibition, politicians, government programs, and a host of other controversial topics in a way that was readily appreciated by a national audience, with no one offended. His aphorisms, couched in humorous terms, were widely quoted: "I am not a member of an organized political party. I am a Democrat."

Rogers even provided an epigram on his most famous epigram:

When I die, my epitaph, or whatever you call those signs on gravestones, is going to read: "I joked about every prominent man of my time, but I never met a man I didn't like." I am so proud of that, I can hardly wait to die so it can be carved.

Early years



The "White House on the Verdigris River", the home where Will Rogers was born, near Oologah, Oklahoma.

Will Rogers was born on the Dog Iron Ranch in Indian Territory, near present-day Oologah, Oklahoma. The house he was born in had been built in 1875 and was known as the "White House on the Verdigris River." His parents, Clement Vann Rogers (1839–1911) and Mary America Schrimsher (1838–1890), were both Cherokee, and Rogers himself was 9/32 (just over 1/4) Cherokee. Rogers quipped that his ancestors didn't come over on the *Mayflower* but they "met the boat." Mary Rogers was quarter-Cherokee and a hereditary member of the Paint Clan. She died when Will was 11, and his father remarried less than two years after her death.

Rogers was the youngest of eight children. He was named for the Cherokee leader Col. William Penn Adair. Only three of his siblings, sisters Sallie Clementine, Maude Ethel, and May (Mary), survived into adulthood.

His father, Clement, was a leader within Cherokee society. A Cherokee judge, he was a Confederate veteran and served as a delegate to the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention. Rogers County, Oklahoma is named in honor of Clement Rogers. He served several terms on the Cherokee Senate. Clement Rogers achieved financial success as a rancher and used his influence to help soften the negative effects of white acculturation on the tribe. Roach (1980) presents a sociological-psychological assessment of the relationship between Will and his father during the formative boyhood and teenage years. Clement had high expectations for his son and desired him to be more responsible and business-minded. Will was more easygoing and oriented toward the loving affection offered by his mother, Mary, rather than the harshness of his father. The personality clash increased after his mother's death, and young Will went from one venture to another with little success. Only after Will won acclaim in vaudeville did the rift begin to heal, but Clement's untimely death in 1911 precluded a full reconciliation.

Rogers was a good student and an avid reader of *The New York Times*, but he dropped out after the 10th grade. He later claimed he was a poor student, saying that he "studied the Fourth Reader for ten years." He was much more interested in cowboys and horses, and learned to rope and use a lariat.

First jobs

Rogers worked the Dog Iron Ranch for a few years. Near the end of 1901, he and a friend left home with aspirations to work as gauchos in Argentina. They arrived in Argentina in May 1902, and spent five months trying to make it as ranch owners in the pampas. Rogers and his partner lost all their money, and in his words, "I was ashamed to send home for more," so the two friends separated and Rogers sailed for South Africa. It is often claimed he took a job breaking in horses for the British Army, but the Boer War had ended three months earlier. Rogers actually got work at Piccione's ranch in Mooi River Station.

He began his show business career as a trick roper in "Texas Jack's Wild West Circus":

He (Texas Jack) had a little Wild West aggregation that visited the camps and did a tremendous business. I did some roping and riding, and Jack, who was one of the smartest showmen I ever knew, took a great interest in me. It was he who gave me the idea for my original stage act with my pony. I learned a lot about the show business from him. He could do a bum act with a rope that an ordinary man couldn't get away with, and make the audience think it was great, so I used to study him by the hour, and from him I learned the great secret of the show business—knowing when to get off. It's the fellow who knows when to quit that the audience wants more of.

Grateful for the guidance but anxious to move on, Rogers quit the circus and went to Australia. Texas Jack gave him a reference letter for the Wirth Brothers Circus there, and Rogers continued to perform as a rider and trick roper, and worked on his pony act. He returned to the United States in 1904, and began to try his roping skills on the American vaudeville circuits.

Vaudeville



Will Rogers, photograph taken before 1900

On a trip to New York City, Rogers was at Madison Square Garden when a wild steer broke out of the arena and began to climb into the viewing stands. Rogers quickly roped the steer to the delight of the crowd. The feat got front page attention from the newspapers, giving him valuable publicity and an audience eager to see more. William Hammerstein came to see his vaudeville act, and quickly signed Rogers to appear on the Victoria Roof—which was literally on a rooftop—with his pony. For the next decade, Rogers estimated he worked for fifty weeks a year at the Roof and at the city's myriad vaudeville theaters.

Rogers described these early years at the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Columbia Theater in New York City. "I got a job on Hammerstein's Roof at \$140 a week for myself, my horse, and the man who looked after it. I remained on the roof for eight weeks, always getting another two week extension when Willie Hammerstein would say to me after the Monday matinee, 'you're good for two weeks more'... Marty Shea, the booking agent for the Columbia, came to me and asked if I wanted to play burlesque. They

could use an extra attraction... I told him I would think about it, but 'Burlesque' sounded to me then as something funny." Shea and Sam A. Scribner, the general manager of the Columbia Amusement Company, approached Rogers a few days later; Shea told Scribner Rogers was getting \$150 and would take \$175. "'What's he carrying?' Scribner asked Shea. 'Himself, a horse, and a man'. answered Shea." Scribner replied "'Give him eight weeks at \$250'".

In 1908, Rogers married Betty Blake, and the couple had four children: Will Rogers, Jr. (Bill), Mary Amelia (Mary), James Blake (Jim), and Fred Stone. Bill became a World War II hero, played his father in two films, and became a member of Congress. Mary became a Broadway actress, and Jim was a newspaperman and rancher; Fred died of diphtheria at age two. The family lived in New York, but they managed to make it home to Oklahoma during the summers. In 1911, Rogers bought a 20-acre (8.1 ha) ranch near Claremore, Oklahoma, which he intended to use as his retirement home, for \$500 per acre.

In the fall of 1915, Rogers began to appear in Florenz Ziegfeld's *Midnight Frolic*. The variety revue began at midnight in the top-floor night club of Ziegfeld's New Amsterdam Theatre, and drew many influential—and regular—customers. By this time, Rogers had refined his act to a science. His monologues on the news of the day followed a similar routine every night. He appeared on stage in his cowboy outfit, nonchalantly twirling his lasso, and said, "Well, what shall I talk about? I ain't got anything funny to say. All I know is what I read in the papers." He then made jokes about what he had read in that day's newspapers. The line "All I know is what I read in the papers" is often incorrectly described as Rogers's most famous punch line, when it was in fact his opening line.

His run at the New Amsterdam ran on into 1916, and Rogers's obvious popularity led to an engagement on the more famous *Ziegfeld Follies*. At this stage Rogers' act was strictly physical, a display of daring riding and clever tricks with his lariat. He discovered that audiences identified the cowboy as the archetypical American — doubtless aided by Theodore Roosevelt's image as a cowboy. Rogers' cowboy showed an unfettered man free of institutional restraints, with no bureaucrats to order his life. When he came back to the United States and worked in Wild West shows, he noticed that audiences were just as fascinated by his frontier, Oklahoma twang. By 1916, a featured star in Ziegfeld's Follies on Broadway, he moved into satire by transforming the "Ropin' Fool" to the "Talkin' Fool". At one performance, with President Woodrow Wilson in the audience, he improvised a "roast" of presidential policies that had Wilson, and the entire audience, in stitches and proved his remarkable skill at off-the-cuff, witty commentary on current events. The rest of his career he built around that skill.

An editorial in *The New York Times* said that "Will Rogers in the Follies is carrying on the tradition of Aristophanes, and not unworthily." Rogers branched into silent films too, for Samuel Goldwyn's company Goldwyn Pictures. He made his first silent movie, *Laughing Bill Hyde*, filmed in Fort Lee, New Jersey, in 1918. Many early films were made near the major New York performing market, so Rogers could make the film, yet still rehearse and perform in the *Follies*. He eventually appeared in most of the *Follies*, from 1916 to 1925.

Movies

Hollywood discovered Rogers in 1918, as Samuel Goldwyn gave him the title role in *Laughing Bill Hyde*. A three-year contract with Goldwyn, at triple the Broadway salary, moved Rogers west. He bought a ranch in Santa Monica and set up his own production company. While Rogers enjoyed film acting, his appearances in silent movies suffered from the obvious restrictions of silence—not the strongest medium for him, having gained his fame as a commentator on stage. It helped somewhat that he wrote a good many of the title cards appearing in his films. In 1923, he began a one-year stint for Hal Roach and made 12 pictures. Among the films he made for Roach in 1924 were three directed by Rob Wagner: *Two Wagons Both Covered*, *Going to Congress* and *Our Congressman*. He made two other feature silents and a travelogue series in 1927, and did not return to the screen until his time in the 'talkies' began in 1929.

He made 48 silent movies, but with the arrival of sound in 1929 he became a top star in that medium. His first sound film, *They Had to See Paris* (1929), finally gave him the chance to exercise his verbal magic. He played a homespun farmer (*State Fair*) in 1933, an old-fashioned doctor (*Dr. Bull*) in 1933, a small town banker (*David Harum*) in 1934, and a rustic politician (*Judge Priest*) in 1934. He was also in *County Chairman* (1935), *Steamboat 'Round the Bend* (1935), and *In Old Kentucky* (1935). His favorite director was John Ford.

Rogers appeared in 21 feature films alongside such noted performers as Lew Ayres, Billie Burke, Richard Cromwell, Jane Darwell, Andy Devine, Janet Gaynor, Rochelle Hudson, Boris Karloff, Myrna Loy, Joel McCrea, Hattie McDaniel, Ray Milland, Maureen O'Sullivan, ZaSu Pitts, Dick Powell, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Mickey Rooney, and Peggy Wood. He was directed three times by John Ford. He appeared in three films with his friend Stepin Fetchit (aka Lincoln T. Perry): *David Harum* (1934), *Judge Priest* (1934) and *The County Chairman* (1935).

With his voice becoming increasingly familiar to audiences, he was able to basically play himself, without normal makeup, in each film, managing to ad-lib and even work in his familiar commentaries on politics at times. The clean moral tone of his films led to various public schools taking their classes, during the school day, to attend special showings of some of them. His most unusual role may have been in the first talking version of Mark Twain's novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. His popularity soared to new heights with films including *Young As You Feel*, *Judge Priest*, and *Life Begins at 40* with Richard Cromwell and Rochelle Hudson.

Newspapers and magazines

Rogers demonstrated multiple skills, and was an indefatigable worker. He toured the lecture circuit. The *New York Times* syndicated his weekly newspaper column, 1922-35. Going daily in 1926 his short "Will Rogers Says" reached forty million newspaper readers. He wrote frequently for the mass-circulation upscale magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, where Rogers advised Americans to embrace the frontier values of neighborliness and democracy on the domestic front while remaining clear of foreign entanglements. He took a strong, highly popular stand in favor of aviation, including a military air force of the sort his flying buddy, General Billy Mitchell, advocated.

Rogers began a weekly column, titled "Slipping the Lariat Over," at the end of 1922. He had already published a book of wisecracks and had begun a steady stream of humor books. Through the continuing series of columns for the McNaught Syndicate between 1922 and 1935, as well as in his personal

appearances and radio broadcasts, he won the loving admiration of the American people, poking jibes in witty ways at the issues of the day and prominent people—often politicians. He wrote from a non-partisan point of view and became a friend of presidents and a confidant of the great. Loved for his cool mind and warm heart, he was often considered the successor to such greats as Artemus Ward and Mark Twain. Rogers was not the first entertainer to use political humor before his audience. Others, such as Broadway comedian Raymond Hitchcock and Britain's Sir Harry Lauder, preceded him by several years. The legendary Bob Hope is the best known political humorist to follow Rogers's example.

Travel

From about 1925 to 1928, Rogers traveled the length and breadth of the United States in a "lecture tour". (He began his lectures by pointing out that "A humorist entertains, and a lecturer annoys.") During this time he became the first civilian to fly from coast to coast with pilots flying the mail in early air mail flights. The National Press Club dubbed him "Ambassador at Large of the United States." He visited Mexico City, along with Charles Lindbergh, as a guest of U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow. (Morrow's daughter Anne later married Lindbergh.) Rogers gave numerous after-dinner speeches, became a popular convention speaker, and gave dozens of benefits for victims of floods, droughts, or earthquakes.

He made a trip to the Orient in 1931 and to Central and South America the following year. In 1934, he made a globe-girdling tour and returned to play the lead in Eugene O'Neill's stage play *Ah, Wilderness!* He had tentatively agreed to go on loan from Fox to MGM to star in the 1935 movie version of the play; however, his concern over a fan's reaction to the 'facts-of-life' talk between his character and its son caused him to decline the role—and that freed up his schedule allowing him to fly with Wiley Post that summer.

Radio

Radio was the exciting new medium, and Rogers became a star there as well, recycling his newspaper pieces. From 1930 to 1935, he made radio broadcasts for the Gulf Oil Company. This weekly Sunday evening show, *The Gulf Headliners*, ranked among the top radio programs in the country. Since he easily rambled from one subject to another, reacting to his studio audience, he often lost track of the half-hour time limit in his earliest broadcasts, and was cut off in mid-sentence. To correct this, he brought in a wind-up alarm clock, and its on-air buzzing alerted him to begin wrapping up his comments. By 1935, his show was being announced as "Will Rogers and his famous Alarm Clock."

In January 1934, Rogers used a taboo word that led the NAACP to protest. He used the word "nigger" in a radio skit, referring to a song as a "nigger spiritual" Rogers had used the word in print in his syndicated newspaper columns on a few occasions, but this was evidently the first time he used it on the radio.

Politics



Seattle Mayor Charles L. Smith (left) with Will Rogers, circa 1935.

Rogers was a staunch Democrat, but he also supported Republican Calvin Coolidge. Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt was his favorite. Although he supported Roosevelt's New Deal, he could just as easily joke about it:

Lord, the money we do spend on Government and it's not one bit better than the government we got for one-third the money twenty years ago.

Rogers served as a goodwill ambassador to Mexico, and a brief stint as mayor of Beverly Hills. During the depths of the Great Depression, angered by Washington's inability to feed the people, he embarked on a cross country fund raising tour for the Red Cross.

Presidential campaign, 1928

Rogers thought all campaigning was bunk. To prove the point he mounted a mock campaign in 1928 for the presidency. His only vehicle was the pages of *Life*, a weekly humor magazine. Rogers ran as the "bunkless candidate" of the Anti-Bunk Party. His only campaign promise was that, if elected, he would resign. Every week, from Memorial Day through Election Day, Rogers caricatured the farcical humors of grave campaign politics. On election day he declared victory and resigned.

Asked what issues would motivate voters? Prohibition: "What's on your hip is bound to be on your mind" (July 26).

Asked if there should be presidential debates? Yes: "Joint debate--in any joint you name" (August 9).

How about appeals to the common man? Easy: "You can't make any commoner appeal than I can" (August 16).

What does the farmer need? Obvious: "He needs a punch in the jaw if he believes that either of the parties cares a damn about him after the election" (August 23).

Can voters be fooled? Darn tootin': "Of all the bunk handed out during a campaign the biggest one of all is to try and compliment the knowledge of the voter" (September 21).

What about a candidate's image? Ballyhoo: "I hope there is some sane people who will appreciate dignity and not showmanship in their choice for the presidency" (October 5).

What of ugly campaign rumors? Don't worry: "The things they whisper aren't as bad as what they say out loud" (October 12).

Philosophy and style

After Rogers gained recognition as a humorist-philosopher in vaudeville, he gained a national audience in acting and literary careers from 1915 to 1935. In these years, Rogers increasingly expressed the views of the "common man" in America. He downplayed academic credentials, noting, "Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects." Americans of all walks admired his individualism, his appreciation for democratic ideas, and his liberal philosophies on most issues. Moreover, Rogers extolled hard work and long hours of toil in order to succeed, and such expressions upheld theories of many Americans on how best to realize their own dreams of success. He symbolized the self-made man, the common man, who believed in America, in progress, in the American Dream of upward mobility, and whose humor never offended even those who were the targets of it.

America in the 1920s was disenchanted and alienated from the outside world. Rogers seemed to many an anchor of stability; his conventional home life and "old fashioned" morality reminded people of an innocent past. His newspaper column, which ran from 1922 to 1935, stressed both "old" morality and the belief that political problems were not as serious as they sounded. In his films, Rogers began by playing a simple cowboy; his characters evolved to explore the meaning of innocence in film. In his last movies, Rogers explores a society fracturing into competing classes from economic pressures. Throughout his career, Will Rogers was a link to a better, more comprehensible past.

In 1926, the high-circulation weekly magazine *The Saturday Evening Post* financed a European tour for Rogers in return for the publication of his articles. Rogers made whirlwind visits to numerous European capitals and met with both international figures and common people. His articles reflected a fear that Europeans would again go to war, and thus he recommended that the United States should assume an isolationist posture. He reasoned that for the moment American needs could best be served by concentrating on domestic questions and avoiding foreign entanglements. He commented:

America has a unique record. We never lost a war and we never won a conference in our lives. I believe that we could without any degree of egotism, single-handed lick any nation in the world. But we can't confer with Costa Rica and come home with our shirts on.

Rogers was famous for his use of language. He effectively utilized up-to-date slang and invented new words to fit his needs. He also made frequent use of puns and terms which closely linked him to the cowboy tradition, as well as speech patterns using a southern dialect.

Brown (1979) argues that Rogers held up a "magic mirror" that reflected iconic American values. Rogers was the archetypical "American Democrat" thanks to his knack of moving freely among all social classes, his stance above political parties, and his passion for fair play. He represented the "American Adam" with his independence and self-made record. Rogers furthermore represented the "American Prometheus" through his commitment to utilitarian methods and his ever-optimistic faith in future progress.

Quotes and one-liners

One of Will Rogers' most famous lines, "I have never yet met a man that I didnt like," was part of a longer quotation and in its original form was in reference to Leon Trotsky: "I bet you if I had met him and had a chat with him, I would have found him a very interesting and human fellow, for I never yet met a man that I didnt like. When you meet people, no matter what opinion you might have formed about them beforehand, why, after you meet them and see their angle and their personality, why, you can see a lot of good in all of them. Note that "didnt" was a spelling choice that Rogers used repeatedly.

"The average citizen knows only too well that it makes no difference to him which side wins. He realizes that the Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey have come to resemble each other so closely that it is practically impossible to tell them apart; both of them make the same braying noise, and neither of them ever says anything. The only perceptible difference is that the elephant is somewhat the larger of the two.

"Every guy just looks in his own pocket and then votes. And the funny part of it is that it's the last year of an administration that counts. can have three bad ones and then wind up with everybody having money in the fourth, and the incumbent will win so far he needn't even stay up to hear the returns. Conditions win elections, not speeches.

"I bet any Sunday could be made as popular at church as Easter is, if you made 'em fashion shows too. The audience is so busy looking at each other that the preacher might as well recite "Gunga Din".

"Be thankful we're not getting all the government we're paying for."

"Mother's Day, it's beautiful thought, but it's somebody's hurtin' conscience that thought of the idea. It was someone who had neglected their mother for years, and then they figured out: I got to do something about Momma. And knowing Momma was that easy, they figured, "we'll give her a day, and it will be all right with Momma." Give her a day, and then in return Momma gives you the other 364. See?

"One sure certainty about our Memorial Days is that as fast as the ranks from one war thin out, the ranks from another take their place. Prominent men may run out of Decoration Day speeches, but the world never runs out of wars. People talk peace, but men give up their life's work to war.

"Thanksgiving Day! In the days of our founders, they were willing to give thanks for mighty little, for mighty little was all they expected. ... Those old boys in the Fall of the year, if they could gather a few pumpkins, potatoes and some corn for the Winter, they was in a thanking mood. But if we can't gather in a new car, a new radio, a new tuxedo and some Government relief, we feel like the world is agin' us.

"Everything is changing. People are taking the comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke."

"Americans will feed anyone that's not close to them."

"Our foreign policy is an open book – a checkbook."

"I belong to no organized party, I'm a Democrat."

"Lettin' the cat out of the bag is a lot easier than puttin' it back in."

"People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing."

"The income tax has made more liars out of Americans than golf."

"If stupidity got us in this mess, why can't it get us out?"

"Everybody says this here thing we're involved in ain't a real war. Congress says it ain't a war. The President says it ain't a war. 'Course the guys over here getting shot at say it's the best damned imitation they ever saw."

"A senator got up today in Congress and called his fellow senators sons of wild jackasses. Now, if you think the senators were hot, imagine how the jackasses must feel."

"Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

"The only problem with Boy Scouts is, there aren't enough of them."

Aviation and death



Rogers standing on wing of seaplane, with Wiley Post standing in front of the propeller, August 1935

Rogers became an advocate for the aviation industry after noticing advancements in Europe and befriending Charles Lindbergh, the most famous aviator of the era. During his 1926 European trip he witnessed the European advances in commercial air service and compared them to the almost nonexistent facilities in the United States. Rogers' newspaper columns frequently emphasized the safety record, speed, and convenience of this means of transportation, and he helped shape public opinion on the subject.

In 1935 the famed aviator Wiley Post, an Oklahoman, became interested in surveying a mail-and-passenger air route from the West Coast to Russia. He attached a Lockheed Explorer wing to a Lockheed Orion fuselage, fitting floats for landing in the lakes of Alaska and Siberia. Rogers visited Post often at the airport in Burbank, California while he was modifying the aircraft, and asked Post to fly him through Alaska in search of new material for his newspaper column. When the floats Post had ordered did not arrive at Seattle in time, he used a set that was designed for a larger type, making the already nose-heavy hybrid aircraft still more nose-heavy. However, according to the research of Bryan Sterling, the floats were the correct type for the aircraft.

After making a test flight in July, Post and Rogers left Seattle in the Lockheed Orion-Explorer in early August and then made several stops in Alaska. While Post piloted the aircraft, Rogers wrote his columns on his typewriter. Before they left Fairbanks they signed and mailed a burgee belonging to the South Coast Corinthian Yacht Club. The signed burgee is on display at South Coast Corinthian Yacht Club in Marina del Rey, California. On August 15, they left Fairbanks, Alaska for Point Barrow. They were a few miles from Point Barrow when they became uncertain of their position in bad weather and landed in a lagoon to ask directions. On takeoff, the engine failed at low altitude, and the aircraft, uncontrollably nose-heavy at low speed, plunged into the lagoon, shearing off the right wing and ending inverted in the shallow water of the lagoon. Both men died instantly.



Will Rogers' tomb from the
Will Rogers Memorial in Claremore, Oklahoma



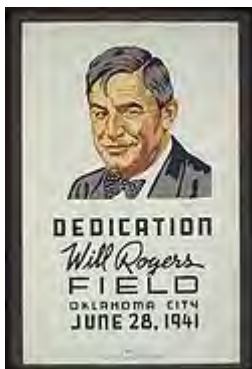
Stained glass window at Memorial
Depicting Will's the polymathic quality

Legacy

Oklahoma honors

One of Oklahoma's two statues in the National Statuary Hall Collection, housed in the United States Capitol, is of Rogers. The work was paid for by a state appropriation and was sculpted in clay by Jo Davidson, a close friend of Rogers whom he nicknamed the "headhunter" because Davidson was always looking for heads to sculpt, then cast in bronze in Brussels, Belgium. Dedicated on June 6, 1939 before a crowd of more than 2,000 people, the statue faces the floor entrance of the House of Representatives Chamber next to National Statuary Hall. The Architect of the Capitol, David Lynn, said there had never been such a large ceremony or crowd in the Capitol.

Oklahoma leaders asked Rogers to represent the state as one of their two statues in the Capitol, and Rogers agreed on the condition that his image would be placed facing the House Chamber, supposedly so he could "keep an eye on Congress." Of the statues in this part of the Capitol, the Rogers sculpture is the only one facing the Chamber entrance. According to guides at the Capitol, each President rubs the left shoe of the Rogers statue for good luck before entering the House Chamber to give the State of the Union Address.



WPA poster, 1941

Oklahoma has named many places and buildings for Rogers. His birthplace is located two miles east of Oologah, Oklahoma. The house was moved about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1.2 km) to its present location overlooking its original site when the Verdigris River valley was flooded to create Oologah Lake. The family tomb is at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum in nearby Claremore, which stands on the site purchased by Rogers in 1911 for his retirement home. In 1944, Rogers' body was moved from a holding vault in California to the tomb; his wife Betty was interred beside him later that year upon her death. A casting of the

Davidson sculpture that stands in National Statuary Hall, paid for by Davidson personally, resides at the museum. Both the birthplace and the museum are open to the public.

Will Rogers World Airport in Oklahoma City was named for him, as was the Will Rogers Turnpike, also known as the section of Interstate 44 between Tulsa and Joplin, Missouri. Near Vinita, Oklahoma, a statue of Rogers stands outside the west anchor of the McDonald's that spans both lanes of the interstate. A recent expansion and renovation of the Will Rogers World Airport includes a statue of Will Rogers on horseback in front of the terminal.

There are 13 public schools in Oklahoma named Will Rogers, including Will Rogers High School in Tulsa. The University of Oklahoma named the large Will Rogers Room in the student union for him, as did the Boy Scouts of America with the Will Rogers Council and the Will Rogers Scout Reservation near Cleveland.

In 1947, a college football bowl game was named in his honor, but the event folded after the first year.

California memorials



Will Roger's Star on the
Hollywood Walk of Fame
6401 Hollywood Blvd.



Will Rogers Monument
located at the western terminus
off Route 66

Rogers's home, stables, and polo fields are preserved today for public enjoyment as Will Rogers State Historic Park in Pacific Palisades. His widow, Betty, willed the property to the state of California upon her death in 1944, under the condition that polo be played on the field every year. Will Rogers Elementary School in Santa Monica is named for Rogers, as is Will Rogers Elementary School in Ventura. There are two Middle Schools named Will Rogers (one in Long Beach and the other in Fair Oaks). A United States Navy submarine USS *Will Rogers* is also named in his honor. A small park on Sunset Boulevard and Beverly Drive in Beverly Hills was named Will Rogers Memorial Park after him. Also, a beach in Malibu was named Will Rogers Beach.

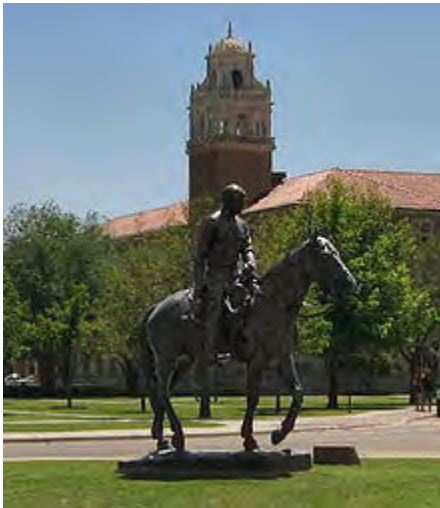
U.S. Route 66 is known as the Will Rogers Highway; a plaque dedicating the highway to the humorist is located opposite the western terminus of Route 66 in Santa Monica.

The California Theatre in San Bernardino is the site of the humorist's final show. He always performed in front of special jewelled curtains of which he had two.

While he was using one, he would send the other to the site of his next performance. Due to his untimely death, the curtain before which he performed last remained with the California Theatre where the artifact stays to this day, and two memorial murals by Ken Twitchell grace the exterior of the fly loft. The California Theatre also named one of its reception spaces the Will Rogers Room.

Texas memorials

The Will Rogers Memorial Center was built in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1936 with a mural, a bust and a life-size statue of Rogers on Soapsuds, titled *Into the Sunset* and sculpted by Electra Waggoner Biggs.



A casting of "Into the Sunset", a statue of Rogers riding his horse Soapsuds, stands on the campus of [Texas Tech University](#).

A casting of *Into the Sunset* stands in the entrance to the main campus quad at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. This memorial was dedicated on February 16, 1950, by Rogers' longtime friend, Amon G. Carter. Another casting resides at the Will Rogers Memorial in Claremore, Oklahoma.

National tributes

In 1936, the NVA Hospital located in Saranac Lake, New York was renamed to the Will Rogers Memorial Hospital in his honor by the National Vaudeville Artists association.

Rogers's eldest son, Bill, starred as his father in the 1952 biopic *The Story of Will Rogers*. Rogers also came to life for modern audiences in the Tony Award-winning musical *The Will Rogers Follies*, with Keith Carradine in the lead role, and he was also portrayed by James Whitmore in the one-man show *Will Rogers' U.S.A.*

On November 4, 1948, the United States Post Office commemorated Rogers with a first day cover of a 3-cent stamp with his image—the inscription reads, "In honor of Will Rogers, Humorist, Claremore, Oklahoma." He was also later honored on the centennial of his birth, in 1979, with the issue of a United States Postal Service 15-cent stamp as part of the "Performing Arts" series.

The Barrow, Alaska airport (BRW), located about 16 miles (26 km) from the location of their fatal airplane crash, is known as the Wiley Post–Will Rogers Memorial Airport.

The final boat of the Benjamin Franklin class ballistic missile submarines USS Will Rogers is named in his honor.

The Will Rogers Theatre, an Art Deco movie house designed by Rapp and Rapp, opened in Chicago's Belmont-Central shopping district in 1936. It operated until 1986 and was razed in 1987.

The Will Rogers Theater in Charleston, Illinois, also an Art Deco movie house was opened in 1938 and designed by Roy M. Kennedy. It had 1,000 seats in its single auditorium. The theatre was placed on the Register of Historic Places in 1984. It was later twinned and then closed by AMC in 2010.

Film portrayals

Rogers was portrayed by A.A. Trimble in cameos in both the 1936 film, *The Great Ziegfeld*, and the 1937 film, *You're a Sweetheart*.

Rogers was portrayed by his son, Will Rogers, Jr., in a cameo in the 1949 film, *Look for the Silver Lining*, and as the star of the 1952 film, *The Story of Will Rogers*.

Rogers was portrayed by actor Keith Carradine in the 1994 film *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*. Carradine had played Rogers three years earlier on Broadway, in the stage musical, *The Will Rogers Follies*.

William Haines

Charles William "Billy" Haines (January 2, 1900 – December 26, 1973) was an American film actor and interior designer. He was a star of the silent era until the 1930s, when Haines' career was cut short by MGM Studios due to his refusal to deny his homosexuality. Haines never returned to film and instead started a successful interior design business with his life partner and was supported by friends in Hollywood.



as he appeared in his first talkie, *Alias Jimmy Valentine* (1928)

Life and career

Early life

Haines was probably born on January 2, 1900 in Staunton, Virginia, the third child of George Adam Haines, a cigar maker, and Laura Virginia Haines (née Matthews). Two older siblings died in infancy. He had four younger siblings: Lillian, born in 1902; Ann, born in 1907; George, Jr., born in 1908; and Henry, born in 1917. He was baptized at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Staunton at the age of eight, where he later sang in the choir. He became fascinated with stage performance and motion pictures at an early age, spending hours watching early silent films in the local theatres.

Haines ran away from home at the age of 14, accompanied by another unidentified young man whom Haines referred to as his "boyfriend". The pair went first to Richmond and then to Hopewell, which had a reputation for immorality. Haines and his boyfriend got jobs working at the local DuPont factory, producing nitrocellulose for \$50 a week. To supplement their income, the couple opened a dance hall, which may have also served as a brothel. His parents, frantic over his disappearance, tracked him through the police to Hopewell. Haines did not return home with them, remaining instead in Hopewell and sending money back home to help support the family. The couple remained in Hopewell until most of the town was destroyed by fire in 1915. Haines moved to New York City. It is unclear whether his boyfriend accompanied him. Following the bankruptcy of the family business and the mental breakdown of George, Sr., the family moved to Richmond in 1916. Haines returned home in 1917 to help support them. With his father recovered and employed, Haines returned to New York City in 1919, settling into the burgeoning gay community of Greenwich Village. He worked a variety of jobs and was for a time the kept man of an older woman before becoming a model. Talent scout Bijou Fernandez discovered

Haines as part of the Samuel Goldwyn Company's "New Faces of 1922" contest and the studio signed him to a \$40 a week contract. He traveled to Hollywood with fellow contest winner Eleanor Boardman in March of that year.

Film career

Haines's career began slowly, as he appeared in extra and bit parts, mostly uncredited. His first significant role was in *Three Wise Fools* (1923). He attracted positive critical attention and the studio began building him up as a new star. However, he continued to play small, unimportant parts at Goldwyn. It was not until his home studio loaned him to Fox in 1923 for *The Desert Outlaw* that he got the opportunity to play a significant role. In 1924, MGM lent Haines to Columbia Pictures for a five-picture deal. The first of these, *The Midnight Express* (1924), received excellent reviews and Columbia offered to buy his contract. The offer was refused and Haines continued in bit roles for Goldwyn. Haines scored his first big personal success with *Brown of Harvard* (1926) opposite Jack Pickford and Mary Brian. It was in *Brown* that he crystallized his screen image, a young arrogant man who is humbled by the last reel. It was a formula to which he was repeatedly returned for the next several years.

On a trip to New York in 1926, Haines met James "Jimmie" Shields, probably as a pick-up on the street. Haines convinced Shields to move to Los Angeles, promising to get him work as an extra. The pair were soon living together and viewed themselves as a committed couple.



Haines with Marion Davies in *Show People*

Haines's string of hits continued with *Little Annie Rooney* (1925) with Mary Pickford and Vola Vale, and *Show People* (1928), costarring Marion Davies. Haines was a top-five box office star from 1928 to 1932. He made a successful transition into talking pictures in the part-talkie *Alias Jimmy Valentine* (1928). His first all-talkie, *Navy Blues*, was released the following year. He starred in *Way Out West* in 1930. The 1930 Quigley Poll, a survey of film exhibitors, listed Haines as the top box office attraction in the country.

In 1933, Haines was arrested in a YMCA with a sailor he had picked up in Los Angeles' Pershing Square. Louis B. Mayer, the studio head at MGM, delivered an ultimatum to Haines: choose between a sham marriage (also known as a "lavender marriage") or his relationship with Shields. Haines chose Shields and they remained together for almost 50 years. Mayer subsequently fired Haines and terminated his contract, quickly recasting Robert Montgomery in roles that had been planned for Haines. Haines did make a few minor films at Poverty Row studios, then retired from film. His final films were made with Mascot Pictures, *Young and Beautiful* and *The Marines Are Coming* in 1934. He was blackballed in Hollywood, having had his name placed in the Doom Book.

Interior design

Haines and Shields began a successful dual career as interior designers and antique dealers. Among their early clients were friends such as Joan Crawford, Gloria Swanson, Carole Lombard, Marion Davies and George Cukor. Their lives were disrupted in 1936 when members of the Ku Klux Klan dragged the two men from their home and beat them, because a neighbor had accused the two of propositioning his son. Crawford, along with other stars such as Claudette Colbert, George Burns, Gracie Allen, Kay Francis, and Charles Boyer urged the men to report this to the police. Marion Davies asked her lover William Randolph Hearst to use his influence to ensure the neighbors were prosecuted to the full extent of the law, but ultimately Haines and Shields chose not to report the incident.

The couple finally settled into the Hollywood community in Brentwood, and their business prospered until their retirement in the early 1970s, except for a brief interruption when Haines served in World War II. Their long list of clients included Betsy Bloomingdale, Ronald and Nancy Reagan when Reagan was governor of California, and Walter and Leonore Annenberg with their 240-acre (0.97 km²) estate "Sunnylands."

Final years and death

Haines never returned to film. Gloria Swanson, another lifelong friend, extended him a personal invitation to appear with her in the film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), but he declined.

Haines and Shields remained together for the rest of their lives. Joan Crawford described them as "the happiest married couple in Hollywood."

Haines died from lung cancer in Santa Monica, California at the age of 73, a week short of his 74th birthday, which was on the new year of 1974. Soon afterward, Shields, who suffered from what many believe to be Alzheimer's Disease, put on Haines' pajamas, took an overdose of pills, and crawled into their bed to die. They were interred side by side in Woodlawn Memorial Cemetery.

Legacy

William Haines Designs remains in operation, with main offices in West Hollywood and showrooms in New York, Denver and Dallas. Haines's life story is told in the 1998 biography *Wisecracker: The Life and Times of William Haines, Hollywood's First Openly Gay Star* by William J. Mann, and his designs are the subject of Peter Schifando and Haines associate Jean H. Mathison's 2005 book *Class Act: William Haines Legendary Hollywood Decorator*. World of Wonder produced *Out of the Closet, Off the Screen: The Life of William Haines*, which aired on HBO in 2001. Haines has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7012 Hollywood Boulevard.

William Powell

William Horatio Powell (July 29, 1892 – March 5, 1984) was an American actor.

A major star at MGM, he was paired with Myrna Loy in 14 films, including the popular *Thin Man* series in which Powell and Loy played Nick and Nora Charles. He was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor three times, for *The Thin Man* (1934), *My Man Godfrey* (1936) and *Life with Father* (1947). Despite the same last name, he was not related to Dick Powell, Eleanor Powell, or Jane Powell.



from the trailer for *Libeled Lady* (1936)



Actors William Powell and Myrna Loy wear oversized shoes

Childhood

Powell, an only child, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to an Irish mother, Nettie Manila (née Brady), and Horatio Warren Powell, born Aug. 10, 1865 in West Middlesex, Pennsylvania (where William H. Powell spent his boyhood summers), to William S. and Harriet Powell. He showed an early aptitude for performing. In 1907, he moved with his family to Kansas City, Missouri, where he graduated from Central High School in 1912. The Powells lived a few blocks away from the Carpenters, whose daughter Harlean evolved into Jean Harlow, although Powell would not meet her until both were established actors.

Film career

After high school, he left home for New York and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts at the age of 18. In 1912, Powell graduated from the AADA, and worked in some vaudeville and stock companies. After several successful experiences on the Broadway stage, he began his Hollywood career in 1922, playing a small role as an evil henchman of Professor Moriarty in a production of *Sherlock Holmes* with John Barrymore. His most memorable role in silent movies was as a bitter film director opposite Emil Jannings' Academy Award-winning performance as a fallen general in *The Last Command* (1928), which led to Powell's first starring role as amateur detective Philo Vance in *The Canary Murder Case* (1929).



William Powell and Myrna Loy
The Great Ziegfeld (1936)



Powell's most famous role was that of Nick Charles in six *Thin Man* films, beginning with *The Thin Man* in 1934. The role provided a perfect opportunity for Powell, with his resonant speaking voice, to showcase his sophisticated charm and his witty sense of humor, and he received his first Academy Award nomination for *The Thin Man*. Myrna Loy played his wife, Nora, in each of the *Thin Man* films. Their partnership was one of Hollywood's most prolific on-screen pairings, with the couple appearing in 14 films together.



He and Loy also starred in the Best Picture of 1936, *The Great Ziegfeld*, with Powell in the title role and Loy as Ziegfeld's wife Billie Burke. That same year, he also received his second Academy Award nomination, for the comedy *My Man Godfrey*.

In 1935, he starred with Jean Harlow in *Reckless*. Soon it developed into a serious romance, but Harlow died at the age of 26 in June 1937, before they could marry. His distress over her death, as well as his own battle with colon cancer around the same time, caused him to accept fewer acting roles.

His career slowed considerably in the 1940s, although in 1947 he received his third Academy Award nomination for his work in *Life with Father*. His last film was *Mister Roberts* in 1955, with Henry Fonda, James Cagney, and Jack Lemmon. Despite numerous entreaties to return to the screen, Powell refused all offers, happy in his retirement.

Personal life



Diana Lewis in *Cry 'Havoc'* (1943)

In 1915, he married Eileen Wilson, with whom he had his only child, William David Powell, before an amicable divorce in 1930. (Powell's son became a television writer and producer before a period of ill health led to his suicide in 1968.)

In 1931, Powell married actress Carole Lombard. The marriage lasted just over two years. They were divorced in 1933, though they too remained on good terms, even starring together in the screwball comedy *My Man Godfrey* three years later.

He had a close relationship with actress Jean Harlow beginning in 1935, but it was cut short by her untimely death in 1937. It is reported that a single white gardenia with an unsigned note was placed in her hands before she was interred, presumed to have been written by Powell. The note read, "Good night, my dearest darling". He also paid for her final resting place—a \$25,000, 9×10-foot private room lined with multicolored imported marble located in the "Sanctuary of Benediction" of the Great Mausoleum, Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale.

On January 6, 1940, Powell married actress Diana Lewis, whom he called "Mousie," three weeks after they met. They remained married, residing primarily in Palm Springs, California, until Powell died.

Death

On March 5, 1984, Powell died of heart failure in Palm Springs, California, at the age of 91, some 30 years after his retirement. He is buried at the Desert Memorial Park in Cathedral City, California.

Honors

Academy Awards nominations

1934 Best Actor – *The Thin Man*

1936 Best Actor – *My Man Godfrey*

1948 Best Actor – *Life with Father*

Other

William Powell has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 1636 Vine Street. He won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actor in 1947 for *Life with Father* and *The Senator Was Indiscreet*.

William S. Hart

William Surrey Hart (December 6, 1864 – June 23, 1946) was an American silent film actor, screenwriter, director and producer. He is remembered for having "imbued all of his characters with honor and integrity."



Biography

Hart was born in Newburgh, New York; to James Howard Hart (1829–1902) and Katherine Diédricht Hart (1833–1909). William had 2 brothers and 4 sisters. His father was of Irish ancestry, and his mother was of German heritage. In his twenties, Hart began his acting career on stage and would not consider acting in movies until he was 49 years of age. He toured and traveled extensively while trying to make a name for himself as an actor, and for a time coached shows at the Asheville Opera House around year 1900. His family had moved to Asheville but after his youngest sister Lotta died of typhoid fever they all left together for Brooklyn until William went back on tour.



Sketch of William S. Hart in 1929

A successful Shakespearean actor on Broadway who had worked with Margaret Mather and other stars, he appeared in the original 1899 stage production of *Ben-Hur*.

Hart went on to become one of the first great stars of the motion picture western. Fascinated by the Old West, he acquired Billy the Kid's "six shooters" and was a friend of legendary lawmen Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson. He entered films in 1914 where, after playing supporting roles in two short films, he achieved stardom as the lead in the feature *The Bargain*. Hart was particularly interested in making realistic western films. His films are noted for their authentic costumes and props, as well as Hart's extraordinary acting ability, honed on Shakespearean theater stages in the United States and England.

Beginning in 1915, Hart starred in his own series of two-reel western short subjects for producer Thomas Ince, which were so popular that they were supplanted by a series of feature films. Many of Hart's early films continued to play in theaters, under new titles, for another decade. In 1917 Hart accepted a lucrative offer from Adolph Zukor to join Famous Players-Lasky, which merged into Paramount Pictures. In the films Hart began to ride a brown and white pinto he called *Fritz*. Fritz was the forerunner of later famous movie horses known by their own name, i.e., horses like Tom Mix's *Tony*, Roy Rogers's *Trigger* and Clayton Moore's *Silver*, etc. Hart was now making feature films exclusively, and films like *Square Deal Sanderson* and *The Toll Gate* were popular with fans. Hart married young Hollywood actress Winifred Westover. Although their marriage was short-lived, they had one child, William S. Hart, Jr.(1922–2004).

By the early 1920s, however, Hart's brand of gritty, rugged westerns with drab costumes and moralistic themes gradually fell out of fashion. The public became attracted by a new kind of movie cowboy, epitomized by Tom Mix, who wore flashier costumes and was faster with the action. Paramount dropped Hart, who then made one last bid for his kind of western. He produced *Tumbleweeds* (1925) with his own money, arranging to release it independently through United Artists. The film turned out well, with an epic land-rush sequence, but did only fair business at the box office. Hart was angered by United Artists' failure to promote his film properly and sued United Artists. The legal proceedings dragged on for years, and the courts finally ruled in Hart's favor, in 1940.



Hart's ranch home, "La Loma de los Vientos" in [Newhall, California](#), built between 1924 and 1928 in the [Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style](#), is currently a museum

After *Tumbleweeds*, Hart retired to his Newhall, California, ranch home, "La Loma de los Vientos," which was designed by architect Arthur R. Kelly. In 1939 he appeared in his only sound film, a spoken prologue for a reissue of *Tumbleweeds*. The 75-year-old Hart, filmed on location at his Newhall ranch, reflects on the Old West and recalls his silent-movie days fondly. The speech turned out to be William S. Hart's farewell to the screen, and it's a fitting valedictory. Most prints and video versions of *Tumbleweeds* circulating today include Hart's speech. Hart died on June 23, 1946, in Newhall, California at the age of 81. He was buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York.

Dedications

For his contribution to the motion picture industry, William S. Hart has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6363 Hollywood Blvd. In 1975, he was inducted into the Western Performers Hall of Fame at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

As part of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, California, Hart's former home and 260-acre (1.1 km²) ranch in Newhall is now William S. Hart Park. The William S. Hart High School District as well as William S. Hart Senior High School, both located in the Santa Clarita Valley in the northern part of Los Angeles County, were named in his honor.

On November 10, 1962, Hart was honored posthumously in an episode of the short-lived *The Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Show*, a western variety program on ABC.

ZaSu Pitts

ZaSu Pitts (January 3, 1894 – June 7, 1963) was an American actress who starred in many silent dramas and comedies, transitioning to comedy sound films.



Pitts in trailer for the film *Tish* (1942)

Early life

ZaSu Pitts was born in Parsons, Kansas to Rulandus and Nellie (Shay) Pitts; she was the third of four children. Her father, who had lost a leg while serving in the 76th New York Infantry Regiment in the Civil War, had settled the family in Kansas by the time ZaSu was born.

The names of her mother's sisters Eliza and Susan became the basis for ZaSu's unique first name, which has been (incorrectly) spelled as **Zazu Pitts** in many film credits and articles. Though the name is commonly mispronounced, in her 1963 book *Candy Hits* (p. 15), Pitts herself gives the correct pronunciation as "Say Zoo" (/ seɪ zuː /), recounting that Mary Pickford predicted, "any will mispronounce it", and adding, "How right was ..."

In 1903, when she was nine years old, the family moved to Santa Cruz, California, seeking a warmer climate and better job opportunities. Her childhood home at 208 Lincoln Street still stands. She attended Santa Cruz High School, where she participated in school theatricals.

Career

Pitts made her stage debut in 1915 and was discovered two years later for films by pioneer screenwriter Frances Marion. Pitts made her debut in the silent film, *The Little Princess* (1917), starring Mary Pickford. Pitts became a leading lady in Erich von Stroheim's masterpiece, *Greed* (1924); based on this performance, von Stroheim labeled Pitts "the greatest dramatic actress". Von Stroheim also featured her in his films *Sins of the Fathers* (1928), *The Wedding March* (1928), *War Nurse* (1930) and *Walking Down Broadway*, which was re-edited by Alfred L. Werker and released as *Hello, Sister!* (1933). She earned praise in all those films.



ca. 1920

Pitts grew in popularity following a series of Universal one-reeler comedies and earned her first feature-length lead in King Vidor's *Better Times* (1919). The following year she met and married actor Tom Gallery. The couple paired in several films, including *Bright Eyes* (1921), *Heart of Twenty* (1920), *Patsy* (1921) and *A Daughter of Luxury* (1922). Their daughter, Ann, was born in 1922.

In 1924, the actress, now a reputable comedy *farceuse*, was given the greatest tragic role of her career in Erich von Stroheim's epic classic, *Greed* (1924), a nine-hour-plus picture, edited to under two hours. The surprise casting initially shocked Hollywood, but showed that Pitts could draw tears with her doleful demeanor as well as laughs. The movie has gained respect over time, having failed initially at the box office due to its extensive cutting.

Pitts enjoyed her greatest fame in the 1930s, often starring in B movies and comedy shorts, teamed with Thelma Todd. She also played secondary parts in many films. Her stock persona (a fretful, flustered, worrisome spinster) made her instantly recognizable and was often imitated in cartoons and other films. She starred in a number of Hal Roach shorts and features, and co-starred in a series of feature-length comedies with Slim Summerville.

Switching between comedy shorts and features, by the advent of sound, she was relegated to comedy roles. A bitter disappointment was when she was replaced in the classic war drama *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) by Beryl Mercer after her initial appearance in previews drew unintentional laughs, despite the intensity of her acting. She had viewers rolling in the aisles in *The Dummy* (1929), *Finn and Hattie* (1931), *The Guardsman* (1931), *Blondie of the Follies* (1932), *Sing and Like It* (1934) and *Ruggles of Red Gap* (1935).

In the 1940s, she also found work in vaudeville and on radio, trading quivery banter with Bing Crosby, Al Jolson, and Rudy Vallee, among others. She appeared several times on the earliest *Fibber McGee and Molly* show, playing a dizzy dame constantly looking for a husband. Her brief stint in the Hildegard Withers mystery series, replacing Edna May Oliver, was not successful, however.

In 1944 Pitts tackled Broadway, making her debut in the mystery, *Ramshackle Inn*. The play, written expressly for her, fared well, and she took the show on the road in later years. Post-war films continued to give Pitts the chance to play comic snoops and flighty relatives in such fare as *Life with Father* (1947), but in the 1950s she started focusing on TV.

This culminated in her best known series role, playing second banana to Gale Storm on *The Gale Storm Show* (1956) (also known as *Oh, Susannah*), as Elvira Nugent ("Nugie"), the shipboard beautician. Her last role was as a switchboard operator in the Stanley Kramer comedy *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1963), and, less than seven months after the filming of the last scene, she became that movie's second cast member to die after filming was completed.

Personal life

Marriages

Tom Gallery (July 23, 1920 – May 2, 1933; divorced); two children: Ann Gallery (natural) and Don Gallery (born Marvin Carville La Marr), whom they adopted and renamed after the 1926 drug-related death of his mother and Pitts' good friend, silent film actress Barbara La Marr.

John E. Woodall (October 8, 1933 – June 7, 1963) (her death).

Death

Declining health dominated Pitts' later years, particularly after she was diagnosed with cancer in the mid-1950s. However, she continued to work until the very end – making brief appearances in *The Thrill of It All* (1963) with Doris Day and James Garner, besides *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.

She died June 7, 1963, aged 69, in Hollywood, California and was interred at Holy Cross Cemetery, Culver City.

Legacy

ZaSu Pitts was an excellent cook and collector of candy recipes, which culminated in a cookbook titled *Candy Hits by ZaSu Pitts*, published posthumously in 1963.

Mae Questel caricatured Pitts's voice and "oh, dear" mannerisms for the character Olive Oyl for the Fleischer Studios animated cartoon version of *Popeye the Sailor*.

ZaSu Pitts has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In 1994, she was honored with her image on a United States postage stamp designed by caricaturist Al Hirschfeld.

In Parsons, Kansas, there is a star tile at the entrance to the Parsons Theatre to commemorate her.

During the 1980s, a large R&B/Soul band based in San Francisco performed under the name "The ZaSu Pitts Memorial Orchestra"

She was referenced by the comedic trio Zucker, Abrahams and Zucker in the 1982 police spoof comedy series *Police Squad!* episode "A Substantial Gift (The Broken Promise)" (first aired on March 4, 1982). In that episode, lead character Frank Drebin exposes a suspect's secret identity by reciting that she was formerly "*a brunette hitman known as Zasu Pitts*".

A street in Las Vegas, Nevada is named after her.

An allusion in *Bored of the Rings*.

Pitts is mentioned in the play and movie version of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. The main character, Sheridan Whiteside (Monty Woolley), orders his nurse to "Stop acting like ZaSu Pitts and explain yourself!"

In a made-for-TV version of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, in which Orson Welles played Whiteside, Pitts was cast as the nurse, Miss Preen, so the remark about "stop acting like ZaSu Pitts" was actually made directly to Pitts herself.

BONUS MATERIAL

**Actresses that were NOT in silent films,
but were Hollywood legends.**

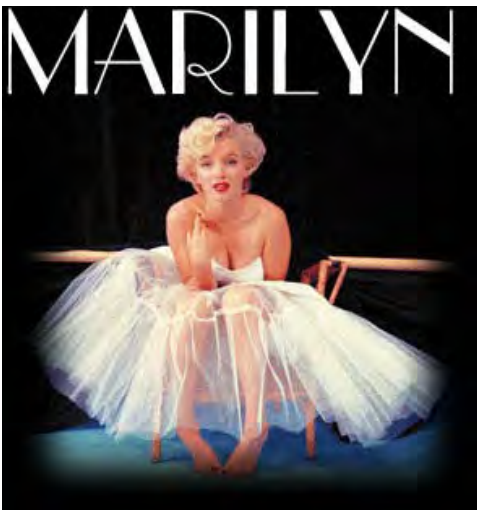
Marilyn Monroe

Marilyn Monroe (born **Norma Jeane Mortenson** but baptized and raised as Norma Jeane Baker; June 1, 1926 – August 5, 1962) was an American actress, singer, model and showgirl who became a major sex symbol, starring in a number of commercially successful motion pictures during the 1950s.



Monroe in *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957)

After spending much of her childhood in foster homes, Monroe began a career as a model, which led to a film contract in 1946. Her early film appearances were minor, but her performances in *The Asphalt Jungle* and *All About Eve* (both 1950) drew attention to her—by now her hair was dyed blonde. By 1953, Monroe had progressed to a leading role in *Niagara* (1953), a melodramatic film noir that dwelled on her seductiveness. Her "dumb blonde" persona was used to comic effect in subsequent films as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953) and *The Seven Year Itch* (1955). Limited by typecasting, Monroe studied at the Actors Studio to broaden her range. Her dramatic performance in *Bus Stop* (1956) was hailed by critics, and she received a Golden Globe nomination. Her production company, Marilyn Monroe Productions, released *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), for which she received a BAFTA Award nomination and won a David di Donatello award. She received a Golden Globe Award for her performance in *Some Like It Hot* (1959). Monroe's final completed film was *The Misfits*, co-starring Clark Gable with the screenplay written by her then husband, Arthur Miller.



The final years of Monroe's life were marked by illness, personal problems, and a reputation for being unreliable and difficult to work with. The circumstances of her death, from an overdose of barbiturates, have been the subject of conjecture. Though officially classified as a "probable suicide", the possibility of an accidental overdose, as well as the possibility of homicide, have not been ruled out. In 1999, Monroe was ranked as the sixth greatest female star of all time by the American Film Institute. In the years and decades following her death, Monroe has often been cited as both a pop and a cultural icon as well as the quintessential American female sex symbol.



Family and early life

Marilyn Monroe was born on June 1, 1926 in the Los Angeles County Hospital as Norma Jeane Mortenson (soon after changed to Baker), the third child born to Gladys Pearl Baker (née Monroe) (May 27, 1902 – March 11, 1984). Monroe's birth certificate names the father as Martin Edward Mortensen with his residence stated as "unknown". The name Mortenson is listed as her surname on the birth certificate, although Gladys immediately had it changed to Baker, the surname of her first husband and which she still used. Martin's surname was misspelled on the birth certificate leading to more confusion on who her actual father was. Gladys Baker had married a Martin E. Mortensen in 1924, but they had separated before Gladys' pregnancy. Several of Monroe's biographers suggest that Gladys Baker used his name to avoid the stigma of illegitimacy. Mortensen died at the age of 85, and Monroe's birth certificate, together with her parents' marriage and divorce documents, were discovered. The documents showed that Mortensen filed for divorce from Gladys on March 5, 1927, and it was finalized on October 15, 1928. Throughout her life, Marilyn Monroe denied that Mortensen was her father. She said that, when she was a child, she had been shown a photograph of a man that Gladys identified as her father, Charles Stanley Gifford. She remembered that he had a thin mustache and somewhat resembled Clark Gable, and that she had amused herself by pretending that Gable was her father.

Gladys was mentally unstable and financially unable to care for the young Norma Jeane, so she placed her with foster parents Albert and Ida Bolender of Hawthorne, California, where she lived until she was seven. One day, Gladys visited and demanded that the Bolenders return Norma Jeane to her. Ida refused, she knew Gladys was unstable and the situation would not benefit her young daughter. Gladys pulled Ida into the yard, then quickly ran back to the house and locked herself in. Several minutes later, she walked out with one of Albert Bolender's military duffel bags. To Ida's horror, Gladys had stuffed a screaming Norma Jeane into the bag, zipped it up, and was carrying it right out with her. Ida charged toward her, and their struggle split the bag apart, dumping out Norma Jeane, who wept loudly as Ida grabbed her and pulled her back inside the house, away from Gladys. In 1933, Gladys bought a house

and brought Norma Jeane to live with her. A few months later, Gladys began a series of mental episodes that would plague her for the rest of her life. In *My Story*, Monroe recalls her mother "screaming and laughing" as she was forcibly removed to the State Hospital in Norwalk.

Norma Jeane was declared a ward of the state. Gladys' best friend, Grace McKee, became her guardian. It was Grace who told Monroe that someday she would become a movie star. Grace was captivated by Jean Harlow, and would let Norma Jeane wear makeup and take her out to get her hair curled. They would go to the movies together, forming the basis for Norma Jeane's fascination with the cinema and the stars on screen. When she was 9, McKee married Ervin Silliman "Doc" Goddard in 1935, and subsequently sent Monroe to the Los Angeles Orphans Home (later renamed Hollygrove), followed by a succession of foster homes. While at Hollygrove, several families were interested in adopting her; however, reluctance on Gladys' part to sign adoption papers thwarted those attempts. In 1937, Monroe moved back into Grace and Doc Goddard's house, joining Doc's daughter from a previous marriage. Due to Doc's frequent attempts to sexually assault Norma Jeane, this arrangement did not last long.

Grace sent Monroe to live with her great-aunt, Olive Brunings in Compton, California; this was also a brief stint ended by an assault (some reports say it was sexual)--one of Olive's sons had attacked the now middle-school-aged girl. Biographers and psychologists have questioned whether at least some of Norma Jeane's later behavior (i.e. hypersexuality, sleep disturbances, substance abuse, disturbed interpersonal relationships), was a manifestation of the effects of childhood sexual abuse in the context of her already problematic relationships with her psychiatrically ill mother and subsequent caregivers. In early 1938, Grace sent her to live with yet another one of her aunts, Ana Lower, who lived in Van Nuys, another city in Los Angeles County. Years later, she would reflect fondly about the time that she spent with Lower, whom she affectionately called "Aunt Ana." She would explain that it was one of the only times in her life when she felt truly stable. As she aged, however, Lower developed serious health problems.

In 1942, Monroe moved back to Grace and Doc Goddard's house. While attending Van Nuys High School, she met a neighbor's son, James Dougherty (more commonly referred to as simply "Jim"), and began a relationship with him. Several months later, Grace and Doc Goddard decided to relocate to Virginia, where Doc had received a lucrative job offer. Although it was never explained why, they decided not to take Monroe with them. An offer from a neighborhood family to adopt her was proposed, but Gladys rejected the offer. With few options left, Grace approached Dougherty's mother and suggested that Jim marry her so that she would not have to return to an orphanage or foster care, as she was two years below the California legal age. Jim was initially reluctant, but he finally relented and married her in a ceremony arranged by Ana Lower. During this period, Monroe briefly supported her family as a homemaker. In 1943, during World War II, Dougherty enlisted in the Merchant Marine. He was initially stationed on Santa Catalina Island off California's west coast, and Monroe lived with him there in the town of Avalon for several months before he was shipped out to the Pacific. Frightened that he might not come back alive, Monroe begged him to try and get her pregnant before he left. Dougherty disagreed, feeling that she was too young to have a baby, but he promised that they would revisit the subject when he returned home. Subsequently, Monroe moved in with Dougherty's mother.

Career

Early work: 1945–47



Mrs. Norma Jeane Dougherty, Yank Magazine, 1945

While Dougherty served in the Merchant Marine, Monroe began working in the Radioplane Munitions Factory, mainly spraying airplane parts with fire retardant and inspecting parachutes. During that time, Army photographer David Conover noticed her and snapped a photograph of her for a Yank magazine article. He encouraged her to apply to The Blue Book Modeling Agency. She signed with the agency and began researching the work of Jean Harlow and Lana Turner. She was told that they were looking for models with lighter hair, so Norma Jeane bleached her brunette hair to a golden blonde.

Monroe became one of Blue Book's most successful models; she appeared on dozens of magazine covers. Her successful modeling career brought her to the attention of Ben Lyon, a 20th Century Fox executive, who arranged a screen test for her. Lyon was impressed and commented, "It's Jean Harlow all over again." She was offered a standard six-month contract with a starting salary of \$125 per week. Lyon did not like the name Norma Jeane and chose "Carole Lind" as a stagename, after Carole Lombard and Jenny Lind, but he soon decided it was not an appropriate choice. Monroe was invited to spend the weekend with Lyon and his wife Bebe Daniels at their home. It was there that they decided to find her a new name. Following her idol Jean Harlow, she decided to choose her mother's maiden name of Monroe. Several variations such as Norma Jeane Monroe and Norma Monroe were tried and initially "Jeane Monroe" was chosen. Eventually, Lyon decided Jeane and variants were too common, and he decided on a more alliterative sounding name. He suggested "Marilyn", commenting that she reminded him of Marilyn Miller. Monroe was initially hesitant because Marilyn was the contraction of the name Mary Lynn, a name she did not like.[citation needed] Lyon, however, felt that the name "Marilyn Monroe" was sexy, had a "nice flow", and would be "lucky" due to the double "M" and thus Norma Jeane Baker took the name Marilyn Monroe.

Marilyn Monroe's first movie role was an uncredited role as a telephone operator in *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* in 1947. She won a brief role that same year in *Dangerous Years* and extra appearances in *Green Grass of Wyoming* and *You Were Meant for Me*, she also won a three scene role as Betty in *Scudda Hoo! Scudda Hay!*. Monroe's part in *Scudda Hoo! Scudda Hay!* was to be three scenes long, but before the release of the film her part was cut down to a brief one-line scene.[citation needed] *Green Grass of Wyoming*, *You Were Meant For Me*, and *Scudda Hoo! Scudda Hay!*, wouldn't be released until 1948, which was months after Monroe's contract had ended in late 1947. She attempted to find opportunities for film work, and while unemployed, she posed for nude photographs. She was paid \$50 and signed the model release form as "Mona Monroe".[citation needed] It would be the only time she would get paid for the nude photos. That year, she was also crowned the first "Miss California Artichoke Queen" at the annual artichoke festival in Castroville.

Breakthrough: 1948–51

In 1948, Monroe signed a six-month contract with Columbia Pictures and was introduced to the studio's head drama coach Natasha Lytess, who became her acting coach for several years. She starred in the low-budget musical *Ladies of the Chorus* (1948). Monroe was capitalized as one of the film's bright spots, but the movie didn't bring any success for Monroe nor Columbia. During her short stint at Columbia, studio head Harry Cohn softened her appearance somewhat by correcting a slight overbite she had.



in *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950)

She had a small role in the Marx Brothers film *Love Happy* (1949). Monroe impressed the producers, who sent her to New York to feature in the film's promotional campaign. *Love Happy* brought Monroe to the attention of the talent agent, Johnny Hyde, who agreed to represent her. He arranged for her to audition for John Huston, who cast her in the drama *The Asphalt Jungle* as the young mistress of an aging criminal. Her performance brought strong reviews, and was seen by the writer and director, Joseph Mankiewicz. He accepted Hyde's suggestion of Monroe for a small comedic role in *All About Eve* as Miss Caswell, an aspiring actress, described by another character as a student of "The Copacabana School of Dramatic Art". Mankiewicz later commented that he had seen an innocence in her that he found appealing, and that this had confirmed his belief in her suitability for the role. Following Monroe's success in these roles, Hyde negotiated a seven-year contract for her with 20th Century Fox, shortly before his death in December 1950. It was at some time during this 1949–50 period that Hyde arranged for her to have a slight bump of cartilage removed from her somewhat bulbous nose which further softened her appearance and accounts for the slight variation in look she had in films after 1950.

In 1951, Monroe enrolled at University of California, Los Angeles, where she studied literature and art appreciation, and appeared in several minor films playing opposite such long-established performers as Mickey Rooney, Constance Bennett, June Allyson, Dick Powell and Claudette Colbert. In March 1951, she appeared as a presenter at the 23rd Academy Awards ceremony. In 1952, Monroe appeared on the cover of *Look* magazine wearing a Georgia Tech sweater as part of an article celebrating female enrollment to the school's main campus. In the early 1950s, Monroe unsuccessfully auditioned for the role of Daisy Mae in a proposed *Li'l Abner* television series based on the Al Capp comic strip, but the effort never materialized.

Leading films: 1952–55



First issue of Playboy, December 1953

In March 1952, Monroe faced a possible scandal when one of her nude photos from a 1949 session with photographer Tom Kelley was featured in a calendar. The press speculated about the identity of the anonymous model and commented that she closely resembled Monroe. As the studio discussed how to deal with the problem, Monroe suggested that she should simply admit that she had posed for the photograph but emphasize that she had done so only because she had no money to pay her rent. She gave an interview in which she discussed the circumstances that led to her posing for the photographs, and the resulting publicity elicited a degree of sympathy for her plight as a struggling actress.

She made her first appearance on the cover of Life magazine in April 1952, where she was described as "The Talk of Hollywood". Stories of her childhood and upbringing portrayed her in a sympathetic light: a cover story for the May 1952 edition of True Experiences magazine showed a smiling and wholesome Monroe beside a caption that read, "Do I look happy? I should — for I was a child nobody wanted. A lonely girl with a dream — who awakened to find that dream come true. I am Marilyn Monroe. Read my Cinderella story." It was also during this time that she began dating baseball player Joe DiMaggio. A photograph of DiMaggio visiting Monroe at the 20th Century Fox studio was printed in newspapers throughout the United States, and reports of a developing romance between them generated further interest in Monroe.

Four films in which Monroe featured were released beginning in 1952. She had been lent to RKO Studios to appear in a supporting role in *Clash by Night*, a Barbara Stanwyck drama, directed by Fritz Lang. Released in June 1952, the film was popular with audiences, with much of its success credited to curiosity about Monroe, who received generally favorable reviews from critics.



With Keith Andes in *Clash by Night* (1952)

This was followed by two films released in July, the comedy *We're Not Married!*, and the drama *Don't Bother to Knock*. *We're Not Married!* featured Monroe as a beauty pageant contestant. *Variety* described the film as "lightweight". Its reviewer commented that Monroe was featured to full advantage in a bathing suit, and that some of her scenes suggested a degree of exploitation. In *Don't Bother to Knock* she played the starring role of a babysitter who threatens to attack the child in her care. The downbeat melodrama was poorly reviewed, although Monroe commented that it contained some of her strongest dramatic acting. *Monkey Business*, a successful comedy directed by Howard Hawks starring Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers, was released in September and was the first movie in which Monroe appeared in with platinum blonde hair. In *O. Henry's Full House* for 20th Century Fox, released in August 1952, Monroe had a single one-minute scene with Charles Laughton, yet she received top billing alongside him and the film's other stars, including Anne Baxter, Farley Granger, Jean Peters and Richard Widmark.

Darryl F. Zanuck considered that Monroe's film potential was worth developing and cast her in *Niagara*, as a femme fatale scheming to murder her husband, played by Joseph Cotten. During filming, Monroe's make-up artist Whitey Snyder noticed her stage fright (that would ultimately mark her behavior on film sets throughout her career); the director assigned him to spend hours gently coaxing and comforting Monroe as she prepared to film her scenes. Reviews of the film dwelled on her sexuality, while noting that her acting was imperfect.



As Rose in *Niagara*

Much of the critical commentary following the release of the film focused on Monroe's overtly sexual performance, and a scene which shows Monroe (from the back) making a long walk toward Niagara Falls received frequent note in reviews. After seeing the film, Constance Bennett reportedly quipped, "There's a broad with her future behind her." Whitey Snyder also commented that it was during preparation for this film, after much experimentation, that Monroe achieved "the look, and we used that look for several pictures in a row ... the look was established." While the film was a success, and Monroe's performance had positive reviews, her conduct at promotional events sometimes drew negative comments. Her appearance at the Photoplay awards dinner in a skin-tight gold lamé dress was criticized. Louella Parsons' newspaper column quoted Joan Crawford discussing Monroe's "vulgarity" and describing her behavior as "unbecoming an actress and a lady". Monroe had previously received criticism for wearing a dress with a neckline cut almost to her navel when she acted as Grand Marshall at the Miss America Parade in September 1952. A photograph from this event was used on the cover of the first issue of *Playboy* in December 1953, with a nude photograph of Monroe, taken in 1949, inside the magazine.



Performing "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)

Her next film was *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) co-starring Jane Russell and directed by Howard Hawks. Her role as Lorelei Lee, a gold-digging showgirl, required her to act, sing, and dance. The two stars became friends, with Russell describing Monroe as "very shy and very sweet and far more intelligent than people gave her credit for". She later recalled that Monroe showed her dedication by rehearsing her dance routines each evening after most of the crew had left, but she arrived habitually late on set for filming. Realizing that Monroe remained in her dressing room due to stage fright, and that Hawks was growing impatient with her tardiness, Russell started escorting her to the set.

At the Los Angeles premiere of the film, Monroe and Russell pressed their hand- and footprints in the cement in the forecourt of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. Monroe received positive reviews and the film grossed more than double its production costs. Her rendition of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" became associated with her. *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* also marked one of the earliest films in which William Travilla dressed Monroe. Travilla dressed Monroe in eight of her films including *Bus Stop*, *Don't Bother to Knock*, *How to Marry a Millionaire*, *River of No Return*, *There's No Business Like Show Business*, *Monkey Business*, and *The Seven Year Itch*. *How to Marry a Millionaire* was a comedy about three models scheming to attract wealthy husbands. The film teamed Monroe with Betty Grable and Lauren Bacall, and was directed by Jean Negulesco. The producer and scriptwriter, Nunnally Johnson, said that it was the first film in which audiences "liked Marilyn for herself" she diagnosed the reason very shrewdly. She said that it was the only picture she'd been in, in which she had a measure of modesty... about her own attractiveness."

Monroe's films of this period established her "dumb blonde" persona and contributed to her popularity. In 1953 and 1954, she was listed in the annual "Quigley Poll of the Top Ten Money Making Stars", which was compiled from the votes of movie exhibitors throughout the United States for the stars that had generated the most revenue in their theaters over the previous year. "I want to grow and develop and play serious dramatic parts. My dramatic coach, Natasha Lytess, tells everybody that I have a great soul, but so far nobody's interested in it." Monroe told the *New York Times*. She saw a possibility in 20th Century Fox's upcoming film, *The Egyptian*, but was rebuffed by Darryl F. Zanuck who refused to screen test her.



Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell putting signatures, hand and foot prints in cement at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on June 26, 1953

Instead, she was assigned to the western *River of No Return*, opposite Robert Mitchum. Director Otto Preminger resented Monroe's reliance on Natasha Lytess, who coached Monroe and announced her verdict at the end of each scene. Eventually Monroe refused to speak to Preminger, and Mitchum had to mediate. Of the finished product, she commented, "I think I deserve a better deal than a grade Z cowboy movie in which the acting finished second to the scenery and the CinemaScope process." In late 1953 Monroe was scheduled to begin filming *The Girl in Pink Tights* with Frank Sinatra. When she failed to appear for work, 20th Century Fox suspended her.

International success: 1954–57



Marilyn Monroe, appearing with the USO, poses for soldiers in Korea after a performance at the 3rd U.S. Inf. Div. area, February 17, 1954.

Monroe and Joe DiMaggio were married in San Francisco on January 14, 1954. They traveled to Japan soon after, combining a honeymoon with a business trip previously arranged by DiMaggio. For two weeks she took a secondary role to DiMaggio as he conducted his business, having told a reporter, "Marriage is my main career from now on." Monroe then traveled alone to Korea where she performed for 13,000 American Marines over a three-day period. She later commented that the experience had helped her overcome a fear of performing in front of large crowds. Edward H. Comins (1932–2011) of Las Vegas, Nevada, the winner of a Bronze Star medal in the Korean War, reported having cooked for Monroe during one of her engagements abroad.

Returning to Hollywood in March 1954, Monroe settled her disagreement with 20th Century Fox and appeared in the musical *There's No Business Like Show Business*. The film failed to recover its production costs and was poorly received. Ed Sullivan described Monroe's performance of the song "Heat Wave" as "one of the most flagrant violations of good taste" he had witnessed. Time magazine compared her unfavorably to co-star Ethel Merman, while Bosley Crowther for The New York Times said that Mitzi Gaynor had surpassed Monroe's "embarrassing to behold" performance. The reviews echoed Monroe's opinion of the film. She had made it reluctantly, on the assurance that she would be given the starring role in the film adaptation of the Broadway hit *The Seven Year Itch*.



in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955)



An iconic image entered popular culture.

One of Monroe's most notable film roles was shot in September 1954, a skirt-blowing key scene for *The Seven Year Itch* in New York City. In it, she stands with her co-star, Tom Ewell, while the air from a subway grating blows her skirt up. A large crowd watched as director Billy Wilder ordered the scene to be refilmed many times. Joe DiMaggio was reported to have been present and infuriated by the spectacle. After a quarrel, witnessed by journalist Walter Winchell, the couple returned to California where they avoided the press for two weeks, until Monroe announced that they had separated. Their divorce was granted in November 1954. The filming was completed in early 1955, and after refusing what she considered to be inferior parts in *The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing* and *How to Be Very, Very Popular*, Monroe decided to leave Hollywood on the advice of Milton Greene. The role of Curly Flagg in *How to Be Very, Very Popular* went to Sheree North, and *Girl in the Red Velvet Swing* went to Joan Collins. *The Seven Year Itch* was released and became a success, earning an estimated \$8 million. Monroe received positive reviews for her performance and was in a strong position to negotiate with 20th Century Fox. On New Year's Eve 1955, they signed a new contract which required Monroe to make four films over a seven-year period. The newly formed Marilyn Monroe Productions would be paid \$100,000 plus a share of profits for each film. In addition to being able to work for other studios, Monroe had the right to reject any script, director or cinematographer she did not approve of.

Milton Greene had first met Monroe in 1953 when he was assigned to photograph her for *Look* magazine. While many photographers tried to emphasize her sexy image, Greene presented her in more modest poses, and she was pleased with his work. As a friendship developed between them, she confided in him her frustration with her 20th Century Fox contract and the roles she was offered. Her salary for *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* amounted to \$18,000, while freelancer Jane Russell was paid more than \$100,000. Greene agreed that she could earn more by breaking away from 20th Century Fox. He gave up his job in 1954, mortgaged his home to finance Monroe, and allowed her to live with his family as they determined the future course of her career.

On April 8, 1955, veteran journalist Edward R. Murrow interviewed Greene and his wife Amy, as well as Monroe, at the Greenes' home in Connecticut on a live telecast of the CBS program *Person to Person*. The kinescope of the telecast has been released on home video.

Truman Capote introduced Monroe to Constance Collier, who gave her acting lessons. She felt that Monroe was not suited to stage acting, but possessed a "lovely talent" that was "so fragile and subtle, it can only be caught by the camera". After only a few weeks of lessons, Collier died. Monroe had met Paula Strasberg and her daughter Susan on the set of *There's No Business Like Show Business*, and had previously said that she would like to study with Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio. In March 1955, Monroe met with Cheryl Crawford, one of the founders of the Actors Studio, and convinced her to introduce her to Lee Strasberg, who interviewed her the following day and agreed to accept her as a student.

In May 1955, Monroe started dating playwright Arthur Miller; they had met in Hollywood in 1950 and when Miller discovered she was in New York, he arranged for a mutual friend to reintroduce them. On June 1, 1955, Monroe's birthday, Joe DiMaggio accompanied Monroe to the premiere of *The Seven Year Itch* in New York City. He later hosted a birthday party for her, but the evening ended with a public quarrel, and Monroe left the party without him. A lengthy period of estrangement followed. Throughout that year, Monroe studied with the Actors Studio, and found that one of her biggest obstacles was her severe stage fright. She was befriended by the actors Kevin McCarthy and Eli Wallach who each recalled her as studious and sincere in her approach to her studies, and noted that she tried to avoid attention by sitting quietly in the back of the class. When Strasberg felt Monroe was ready to give a performance in front of her peers, Monroe and Maureen Stapleton chose the opening scene from Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, and although she had faltered during each rehearsal, she was able to

complete the performance without forgetting her lines. Kim Stanley later recalled that students were discouraged from applauding, but that Monroe's performance had resulted in spontaneous applause from the audience. While Monroe was a student, Lee Strasberg commented, "I have worked with hundreds and hundreds of actors and actresses, and there are only two that stand out way above the rest. Number one is Marlon Brando, and the second is Marilyn Monroe."

The first film to be made under the contract and production company was *Bus Stop* directed by Joshua Logan. Logan had studied under Constantin Stanislavski, approved of method acting, and was supportive of Monroe. Monroe severed contact with her drama coach, Natasha Lytess, replacing her with Paula Strasberg, who became a constant presence during the filming of Monroe's subsequent films.



Monroe's dramatic performance as Chérie in *Bus Stop* (1956), a saloon singer with little talent, marked a departure from her earlier comedies..

In *Bus Stop*, Monroe played Chérie, a saloon singer with little talent who falls in love with a cowboy, Beauregard "Bo" Decker, played by Don Murray. Her costumes, make-up and hair reflected a character who lacked sophistication, and Monroe provided deliberately mediocre singing and dancing. Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* proclaimed: "Hold on to your chairs, everybody, and get set for a rattling surprise. Marilyn Monroe has finally proved herself an actress." In his autobiography, *Movie Stars, Real People and Me*, director Logan wrote: "I found Marilyn to be one of the great talents of all time... she struck me as being a much brighter person than I had ever imagined, and I think that was the first time I learned that intelligence and, yes, brilliance have nothing to do with education." Logan championed Monroe for an Academy Award nomination and complimented her professionalism until the end of his life. Though not nominated for an Academy Award, she received a Golden Globe nomination.



In *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), Monroe co-starred with Laurence Olivier, who also directed the film.

Bus Stop was followed by *The Prince and the Showgirl* directed by Laurence Olivier, who also co-starred. Prior to filming, Olivier praised Monroe as "a brilliant comedienne, which to me means she is also an extremely skilled actress". During filming in England he resented Monroe's dependence on her drama coach, Paula Strasberg, regarding Strasberg as a fraud whose only talent was the ability to "butter Marilyn up". He recalled his attempts at explaining a scene to Monroe, only to hear Strasberg interject, "Honey — just think of Coca-Cola and Frank Sinatra." Olivier later commented that in the film "Marilyn was quite wonderful, the best of all." Monroe's performance was hailed by critics, especially in Europe, where she won the David di Donatello, the Italian equivalent of the Academy Awards, as well as the French Crystal Star Award. She was also nominated for a BAFTA. It was more than a year before Monroe began her next film. During her hiatus, she summered with Miller in Amagansett, New York. She suffered a miscarriage on August 1, 1957.

Last films: 1958–62



In *Some Like It Hot* (1959)

With Miller's encouragement she returned to Hollywood in August 1958 to star in *Some Like It Hot*. The film was directed by Billy Wilder and co-starred Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis. Wilder had experienced Monroe's tardiness, stage fright, and inability to remember lines during production of *The Seven Year Itch*. However her behavior was now more hostile, and was marked by refusals to participate in filming and occasional outbursts of profanity. Monroe consistently refused to take direction from Wilder, or insisted on numerous retakes of simple scenes until she was satisfied. She developed a rapport with Lemmon, but she disliked Curtis after hearing that he had described their love scenes as "like kissing Hitler". Curtis later stated that the comment was intended as a joke. During filming, Monroe discovered that she was pregnant. She suffered another miscarriage in December 1958, as filming was completed.

Some Like It Hot became a resounding success, and was nominated for six Academy Awards. Monroe was acclaimed for her performance and won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress - Motion Picture Musical or Comedy. Wilder commented that the film was the biggest success he had ever been associated with. He discussed the problems he encountered during filming, saying "Marilyn was so difficult because she was totally unpredictable. I never knew what kind of day we were going to have... would she be cooperative or obstructive?" He had little patience with her method-acting technique and said that instead of going to the Actors Studio "she should have gone to a train-engineer's school ... to learn something about arriving on schedule." Wilder had become ill during filming, and explained, "We were in mid-flight – and there was a nut on the plane." In hindsight, he discussed Monroe's "certain indefinable magic" and "absolute genius as a comic actress."

By this time, Monroe had only completed one film, *Bus Stop*, under her four-picture contract with 20th Century Fox. She agreed to appear in *Let's Make Love*, which was to be directed by George Cukor, but she was not satisfied with the script, and Arthur Miller rewrote it. Gregory Peck was originally cast in the male lead role, but he refused the role after Miller's rewrite; Cary Grant, Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner and Rock Hudson also refused the role before it was offered to Yves Montand. Monroe and Miller befriended Montand and his wife, actress Simone Signoret, and filming progressed well until Miller was required to travel to Europe on business. Monroe began to leave the film set early and on several occasions failed to attend, but her attitude improved after Montand confronted her. Signoret returned to Europe to make a film, and Monroe and Montand began a brief affair that ended when Montand refused to leave Signoret. The film was not a critical or commercial success.

Monroe's health deteriorated during this period, and she began to see a Los Angeles psychiatrist, Dr. Ralph Greenson. He later recalled that during this time she frequently complained of insomnia, and told Greenson that she visited several medical doctors to obtain what Greenson considered an excessive variety of drugs. He concluded that she was progressing to the point of addiction, but also noted that she could give up the drugs for extended periods without suffering any withdrawal symptoms. According to

Greenson, the marriage between Miller and Monroe was strained; he said that Miller appeared to genuinely care for Monroe and was willing to help her, but that Monroe rebuffed while also expressing resentment towards him for not doing more to help her. Greenson stated that his main objective at the time was to enforce a drastic reduction in Monroe's drug intake.



Monroe in her final completed film, *The Misfits* (1961)

In 1956, Arthur Miller had briefly resided in Nevada and wrote a short story about some of the local people he had become acquainted with, a divorced woman and some aging cowboys. By 1960 he had developed the short story into a screenplay, and envisaged it as containing a suitable role for Monroe. It became her last completed film. *The Misfits*, directed by John Huston and costarring Clark Gable, Montgomery Clift, Eli Wallach and Thelma Ritter. Shooting commenced in July 1960, with most taking place in the hot Northern Nevada desert. Monroe was frequently ill and unable to perform, and away from the influence of Dr. Greenson, she had resumed her consumption of sleeping pills and alcohol. A visitor to the set, Susan Strasberg, later described Monroe as "mortally injured in some way," and in August, Monroe was rushed to Los Angeles where she was hospitalized for ten days. Newspapers reported that she had been near death, although the nature of her illness was not disclosed. Louella Parsons wrote in her newspaper column that Monroe was "a very sick girl, much sicker than at first believed", and disclosed that she was being treated by a psychiatrist. Monroe returned to Nevada and completed the film, but she became hostile towards Arthur Miller, and public arguments were reported by the press. Making the film had proved to be an arduous experience for the actors; in addition to Monroe's distress, Montgomery Clift had frequently been unable to perform due to illness, and by the final day of shooting, Thelma Ritter was in hospital suffering from exhaustion. Gable, commenting that he felt unwell, left the set without attending the wrap party. Monroe and Miller returned to New York on separate flights.

Within ten days Monroe had announced her separation from Miller, and Gable had died from a heart attack. Gable's widow, Kay, commented to Louella Parsons that it had been the "eternal waiting" on the set of *The Misfits* that had contributed to his death, though she did not name Monroe. When reporters asked Monroe if she felt guilty about Gable's death, she refused to answer, but the journalist Sidney Skolsky recalled that privately she expressed regret for her poor treatment of Gable during filming and described her as being in "a dark pit of despair". Monroe later attended the christening of the Gables' son, at the invitation of Kay Gable. *The Misfits* received mediocre reviews, and was not a commercial success, though some praised the performances of Monroe and Gable. Huston later commented that Monroe's performance was not acting in the true sense, and that she had drawn from her own experiences to show herself, rather than a character. "She had no techniques. It was all the truth. It was only Marilyn."

During the following months, Monroe's dependence on alcohol and prescription medications began to take a toll on her health, and friends such as Susan Strasberg later spoke of her illness. Her divorce from Arthur Miller was finalized in January 1961, with Monroe citing "incompatibility of character", and in

February she voluntarily entered the Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic. Monroe later described the experience as a "nightmare". She was able to phone Joe DiMaggio from the clinic, and he immediately traveled from Florida to New York to facilitate her transfer to the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. She remained there for three weeks. Illness prevented her from working for the remainder of the year; she underwent surgery to correct a blockage in her Fallopian tubes in May, and the following month underwent gallbladder surgery. She returned to California and lived in a rented apartment as she convalesced.

In 1962, Monroe began filming *Something's Got to Give*, which was to be the third film of her four-film contract with 20th Century Fox. It was to be directed by George Cukor, and co-starred Dean Martin and Cyd Charisse. She was ill with a virus as filming commenced, and suffered from high temperatures and recurrent sinusitis. On one occasion she refused to perform with Martin as he had a cold, and the producer Henry Weinstein recalled seeing her on several occasions being physically ill as she prepared to film her scenes, and attributed it to her dread of performing. He commented, "Very few people experience terror. We all experience anxiety, unhappiness, heartbreaks, but that was sheer primal terror."

On May 19, 1962, she attended the early birthday celebration of President John F. Kennedy at Madison Square Garden, at the suggestion of Kennedy's brother-in-law, actor Peter Lawford. Monroe performed "Happy Birthday" along with a specially written verse based on Bob Hope's "Thanks for the Memory". Kennedy responded to her performance with the remark, "Thank you. I can now retire from politics after having had 'Happy Birthday' sung to me in such a sweet, wholesome way." (also see entry Happy Birthday, Mr. President)

Monroe returned to the set of *Something's Got to Give* and filmed a sequence in which she appeared nude in a swimming pool. Commenting that she wanted to "push Liz Taylor off the magazine covers", she gave permission for several partially nude photographs to be published by Life. Having only reported for work on twelve occasions out of a total of 35 days of production, Monroe was dismissed. The studio 20th Century Fox filed a lawsuit against her for half a million dollars, and the studio's vice president, Peter Levathes, issued a statement saying "The star system has gotten way out of hand. We've let the inmates run the asylum, and they've practically destroyed it." Monroe was replaced by Lee Remick, and when Dean Martin refused to work with any other actress, he was also threatened with a lawsuit. Following her dismissal, Monroe engaged in several high-profile publicity ventures. She gave an interview to *Cosmopolitan* and was photographed at Peter Lawford's beach house sipping champagne and walking on the beach. She next posed for Bert Stern for *Vogue* in a series of photographs that included several nudes. Published after her death, they became known as 'The Last Sitting'. Richard Meryman interviewed her for Life, in which Monroe reflected upon her relationship with her fans and her uncertainties in identifying herself as a "star" and a "sex symbol". She referred to the events surrounding Arthur Miller's appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956, and her studio's warning that she would be "finished" if she showed public support for him, and commented, "You have to start all over again. But I believe you're always as good as your potential. I now live in my work and in a few relationships with the few people I can really count on. Fame will go by, and, so long, I've had you fame. If it goes by, I've always known it was fickle. So at least it's something I experienced, but that's not where I live."

In the final weeks of her life, Monroe engaged in discussions about future film projects, and firm arrangements were made to continue negotiations on *Something's Got to Give*. Among the projects was a biography of Jean Harlow filmed two years later unsuccessfully with Carroll Baker. Starring roles in Billy Wilder's *Irma la Douce* and *What a Way to Go!* were also discussed; Shirley MacLaine eventually played the roles in both films. Kim Novak replaced her in *Kiss Me, Stupid*, a comedy in which she was to star opposite Dean Martin. A film version of the Broadway musical, *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*, and

an unnamed World War I-themed musical co-starring Gene Kelly were also discussed, but the projects never materialized due to her death. Her dispute with 20th Century Fox was resolved, and her contract renewed into a \$1 million two-picture deal, and filming of *Something's Got to Give* was scheduled to resume in early fall 1962. Marilyn, having fired her own agent and MCA in 1961 managed her own negotiations as President of Marilyn Monroe Productions. Also on the table was an Italian four film deal worth 10 million giving her script, director, and co-star approval. Allan "Whitey" Snyder who saw her during the last week of her life, said Monroe was pleased by the opportunities available to her, and that she "never looked better was in great spirits".

Death and aftermath



The crypt of Marilyn Monroe (2005)

On August 5, 1962, LAPD police sergeant Jack Clemmons received a call at 4:25 am from Dr. Ralph Greenson, Monroe's psychiatrist, proclaiming that Monroe was found dead at her home in Brentwood, Los Angeles, California. She was 36 years old. At the subsequent autopsy, eight milligram per cent of Chloral hydrate and 4.5 milligram percent of Nembutal were found in her system, and Dr. Thomas Noguchi of the Los Angeles County Coroners office recorded cause of death as "acute barbiturate poisoning," resulting from a "probable suicide." Many theories, including murder, circulated about the circumstances of her death and the timeline after the body was found. Some conspiracy theories involved John and Robert Kennedy, while other theories suggested CIA or Mafia complicity. It was reported that the last person Monroe called was the President.

On August 8, 1962, Monroe was interred in a crypt at Corridor of Memories #24, at the Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery in Los Angeles. Lee Strasberg delivered the eulogy. The crypt space immediately to the left of Monroe's was bought and reserved by Hugh Hefner in 1992. DiMaggio took control of the funeral arrangements which consisted of only 31 close family and friends. Police were also present to keep the press away. Her casket was solid bronze and was lined with champagne colored silk. Allan "Whitey" Snyder did her make-up which was supposedly a promise made in earlier years if she were to die before him. She was wearing her favorite green Emilio Pucci dress. In her hands was a small bouquet of pink teacup roses. For the next 20 years, red roses were placed in a vase attached to the crypt, courtesy of Joe DiMaggio.

In August 2009, the crypt space directly above that of Monroe was placed for auction on eBay. Elsie Poncher plans to exhume her husband and move him to an adjacent plot. She advertised the crypt, hoping "to make enough money to pay off the \$1.6 million mortgage" on her Beverly Hills mansion. The winning bid was placed by an anonymous Japanese man for \$4.6 million, but the winning bidder later backed out "because of the paying problem". Playboy magazine founder Hugh Hefner, who never met Monroe, bought the crypt next to hers at the Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery. He affirmed that the initial success of his magazine directly correlated with Monroe.[citation needed]

Administration of estate



Monroe's Brentwood home (1992)

In her will, Monroe stated she would leave Lee Strasberg her personal effects, which amounted to just over half of her residuary estate, expressing her desire that he "distribute among my friends, colleagues and those to whom I am devoted". Instead, Strasberg stored them in a warehouse, and willed them to his widow, Anna, who successfully sued Los Angeles-based Odyssey Auctions in 1994 to prevent the sale of items consigned by the nephew of Monroe's business manager, Inez Melson. In October 1999, Christie's auctioned the bulk of Monroe's effects, including those recovered from Melson's nephew, netting an amount of \$13,405,785. Subsequently, Strasberg sued the children of four photographers to determine rights of publicity, which permits the licensing of images of deceased personages for commercial purposes. The decision as to whether Monroe was a resident of California, where she died and where her will was probated, or New York, which she considered her primary residence, was worth millions.

On May 4, 2007, a New York judge ruled that Monroe's rights of publicity ended at her death. In October 2007, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill 771. The legislation was supported by Anna Strasberg and the Screen Actors Guild. Senate Bill 771 established that non-family members may inherit rights of publicity through the residuary clause of the deceased's will, provided that the person was a resident of California at the time of death. In March 2008, the United States District Court in Los Angeles ruled that Monroe was a resident of New York at the time of her death, citing the statement of the executor of her estate to California tax authorities, and a 1966 sworn affidavit by her housekeeper. The decision was reaffirmed by the United States District Court of New York in September 2008.

In July 2010, Monroe's Brentwood home was put up for sale by Prudential California Realty. The house was sold for \$3.6 million. Monroe left to Lee Strasberg an archive of her own writing—diaries, poems, and letters, which Anna discovered in October 1999. In October 2010, the documents were published as a book, *Fragments*.

Personal life

Relationships

Monroe had three marriages, all of which ended in divorce. The first was to James Dougherty, the second to Joe DiMaggio, and lastly to Arthur Miller. Allegedly, she was briefly married to writer Robert "Bob" Slatzer. She is alleged to have had affairs with both John and Robert Kennedy. Marlon Brando, in his autobiography *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, claimed that he had had a relationship with her, and enduring friendship lasting until her death. She also suffered two miscarriages and an ectopic pregnancy during her three marriages.

Monroe married James Dougherty on June 19, 1942, at the home of Chester Howell in Los Angeles. As a result of her modeling career, he began to lose interest in her and stated that he did not approve of her new job. Monroe then decided to divorce Dougherty. The marriage ended when he returned from

overseas in 1946. In *The Secret Happiness of Marilyn Monroe* and *To Norma Jeane with Love*, Jimmie, he claimed they were in love, but dreams of stardom lured her away. In 1953, he wrote a piece called "Marilyn Monroe Was My Wife" for *Photoplay*, in which he claimed that she threatened to jump off the Santa Monica Pier if he left her. She was reported to have been furious and explained in 1956 interview that she confessed to having attempted suicide during the marriage and stated that she felt trapped and bored by Dougherty, even blaming their marriage on her foster mother. In her autobiography, explaining the sudden dissolution of their marriage, Monroe stated, "My marriage didn't make me sad, but it didn't make me happy either. My husband and I hardly spoke to each other. This wasn't because we were angry. We had nothing to say. I was dying of boredom."

Doc Goddard had plans to publish extra details about the marriage, citing that he hoped to clear up rumors about an arranged marriage, but decided against the publication at the last minute. In the 2004 documentary *Marilyn's Man*, Dougherty made three new claims: that he invented the "Marilyn Monroe" persona; studio executives forced her to divorce him; and that he was her true love and her "dedicated friend for life".

Monroe eloped with Joe DiMaggio at San Francisco City Hall on January 14, 1954. In 1951, DiMaggio saw a photograph of Monroe alongside Chicago White Sox players Joe Dobson and Gus Zernial, prompting him to request a date with her in 1952. Of their initial meeting, Monroe wrote in *My Story* that she did not have a desire to know him, as she had feared a stereotypical jock.



Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe staying at Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on their honeymoon (1954)

During their honeymoon in Japan, she was asked to visit Korea as part of the USO. She performed ten shows in four days for over 100,000 servicemen. Maury Allen quoted New York Yankees PR man Arthur Richman that Joe told him that 

the marriage went wrong from then. On September 14, 1954, Monroe filmed the famed skirt-blowing scene for *The Seven Year Itch* in front of New York's Trans-Lux Theater. Bill Kobrin, then Fox's east coast correspondent, told the *Palm Springs Desert Sun* in 1956 that it was Billy Wilder's idea to turn the shoot into a media circus, and that the couple had a "yelling battle" in the theater lobby. She filed for divorce on grounds of mental cruelty nine months after the wedding.

In February 1961, Monroe was admitted to the Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic. She contacted DiMaggio, who secured her release. She later joined him in Florida, where he was serving as a batting coach at the New York Yankees' training camp. Bob Hope jokingly dedicated Best Song nominee *The Second Time Around* to them at the 1961 Academy Awards. According to Allen, on August 1, 1962, DiMaggio – alarmed by how Monroe had fallen in with people he considered detrimental to her well-being – quit his job with a PX supplier to ask her to remarry him. After Monroe's death, DiMaggio claimed her body and arranged her funeral. For 20 years, he had a half-dozen red roses delivered to her

crypt three times a week. In 2006, DiMaggio's adopted granddaughters auctioned the bulk of his estate, which featured two letters Monroe penned to him and a photograph signed "I love you, Joe, Marilyn."

On June 29, 1956, Monroe married playwright Arthur Miller, in a civil ceremony in White Plains, New York. Monroe met Miller in 1950. During this filming of *Bus Stop*, the relationship between Monroe and Miller had developed, and although the couple were able to maintain their privacy for almost a year, the press began to write about them as a couple, often referred to as "The Egghead and The Hourglass". In reflecting on his courtship of Monroe, Miller wrote, "She was a whirling light to me then, all paradox and enticing mystery, street-tough one moment, then lifted by a lyrical and poetic sensitivity that few retain past early adolescence."

The reports of their romance were soon overtaken by news that Miller had been called to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee to explain his supposed communist affiliations. Called upon to identify communists he was acquainted with, Miller refused and was charged with contempt of Congress. He was acquitted on appeal. During the investigation, Monroe was urged by film executives to abandon Miller, rather than risk her career but she refused, later branding them as "born cowards".

The press began to discuss an impending marriage, but Monroe and Miller refused to confirm the rumor. In June 1956, a reporter was following them by car, and as they attempted to elude him, the reporter's car crashed, killing a female passenger. Monroe became hysterical upon hearing the news, and their engagement was announced, partly in the expectation that it would reduce the excessive media interest they were being subjected to.

City Court Judge Seymour D. Robinowitz presided over the hushed ceremony in the law office of Sam Slavitt. (The wedding had been kept secret from both the press and the public.) Monroe and Miller wed again two days later in a Jewish ceremony before a small group of guests. Rabbi Robert E. Goldberg, a Reform rabbi at Congregation Mishkan Israel, presided over the ceremony. Their nuptials were celebrated at the home of Miller's literary agent, Kay Brown, in Westchester County, New York. Some 30 friends and relatives attended the hastily arranged party.

Nominally raised as a Christian but before her 1956 conversion (to Judaism), Monroe laughingly rejected Jane Russell's conversion attempts during the 1953 filming of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, saying, "Jane tried to convert me (to religion) and I tried to introduce her to Freud". She did convert to Judaism before marrying Miller.

Less than two weeks after the wedding, the Millers flew to London, where they were greeted at Parkside House by Laurence Olivier and wife Vivien Leigh. Monroe created chaos among the normally staid British press. After she finished shooting *The Prince and the Showgirl* with Laurence Olivier, the couple returned to the United States from England and discovered she was pregnant. Tony Curtis, her co-star from *Some Like It Hot*, claims he got Monroe pregnant during their on-off affair that was rekindled during the filming of *Some Like It Hot* in 1959, while she was still married to Arthur Miller.

Miller's screenplay for *The Misfits*, a story about a despairing divorcée, was meant to be a Valentine gift for his wife, but by the time filming started in 1960 their marriage was beyond repair. A Mexican divorce was granted on January 24, 1961 in Ciudad Juarez by Francisco José Gómez Fraire. On February 17, 1962, Miller married Inge Morath, one of the Magnum photographers recording the making of *The Misfits*. In January 1964, Miller's play *After The Fall* opened, featuring a beautiful and devouring shrew named Maggie. Simone Signoret noted in her autobiography the morbidity of Miller and Elia Kazan resuming their professional association "over a casket". In interviews and in his autobiography, Miller insisted that Maggie was not based on Monroe. However, he never pretended that his last Broadway-bound work, *Finishing the Picture*, was not based on the making of *The Misfits*. He

appeared in the documentary *The Century of the Self*, lamenting the psychological work being done on her before her death.



From President Kennedy's birthday gala where Monroe sang "Happy Birthday, Mr. President", May 19, 1962.

On May 19, 1962, Monroe made her last significant public appearance, singing "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" at a birthday party for President John F. Kennedy at Madison Square Garden. The dress that she wore to the event, specially designed and made for her by Jean Louis, sold at an auction in 1999 for \$1.26 million. Monroe reportedly had an affair with President John F. Kennedy. JFK's reputed mistress Judith Exner, in her 1977 autobiography, also wrote about an affair that she said the president and Monroe had.

Journalist Anthony Summers examines the issue of Monroe's relationships with the Kennedy brothers at length in two books: his 1993 biography of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, entitled *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover*, and his 1985 biography of Monroe, entitled *Goddess*. In the Hoover book, Summers concludes that Monroe was in love with President Kennedy and wanted to marry him in the early 1960s; that she called the White House frequently; and that, when the married President had to break off their affair, Monroe became even more depressed, and then turned to Robert Kennedy, who visited Monroe in Los Angeles the day that she died.

Patricia Seaton Lawford, the fourth wife of actor Peter Lawford, also deals with the Monroe-Kennedy matters in her 1988 biography of Peter Lawford, entitled *The Peter Lawford Story*. Lawford's first wife was Patricia Kennedy Lawford, a sister of John and Robert; Lawford was very close to the Kennedy family for over a decade, including the time of Monroe's death. In 1997, documents purporting to prove a coverup of a relationship between JFK and Monroe were discovered to be fraudulent.

Psychoanalysis

Monroe had a long experience with psychoanalysis. She was in analysis with Margaret Herz Hohenberg, Anna Freud, Marianne Rie Kris, Ralph S. Greenson (who found Monroe dead), and Milton Wexler.

Politics

In Monroe's last interview she pleaded with a reporter to end the article with the following quote: "What I really want to say: That what the world really needs is a real feeling of kinship. Everybody: stars, laborers, Negroes, Jews, Arabs. We are all brothers. Please don't make me a joke. End the interview with what I believe."

Monroe was friends with Ella Fitzgerald and helped Ella in her career. Ella Fitzgerald later recounted, "I owe Marilyn Monroe a real debt...it was because of her that I played the Mocambo, a very popular nightclub in the '50s. She personally called the owner of the club, and told him she wanted me booked immediately, and if he would do it, she would take a front table every night. She told him – and it was true, due to Marilyn's superstar status – that the press would go wild. The owner said yes, and Marilyn was there, front table, every night. The press went overboard. After that, I never had to play a small jazz club again. She was an unusual woman – a little ahead of her times. And she didn't know it."

Political discussions were recounted with Robert Kennedy as to policy towards Cuba, and President Kennedy. The latter said to have taken place at had luncheon with the Peter Lawfords. She was very pleased, as she had asked the President a lot of socially significant questions concerning the morality of atomic testing. Monroe supported Peace Action, which was created from a merge of Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign.

While in Mexico in 1962, she openly associated with Americans who were identified by the FBI as communists, such as Frederick Vanderbilt Field. The daughter of Monroe's last psychiatrist, Joan Greenson, said that Monroe was "passionate about equal rights, rights for blacks, rights for the poor. She identified strongly with the workers."

Portrayals

Monroe has been portrayed by:

- Catherine Hicks in *Marilyn: The Untold Story* (1980)
- Susan Griffiths in a fictionalized biopic *Marilyn and Me* (1991)
- Melody Anderson in *Marilyn & Bobby: Her Final Affair* (1993)
- By Ashley Judd as the younger Marilyn (who constantly appears as an illusion to the older Marilyn throughout the film), and by Mira Sorvino as the older Marilyn in *Norma Jean & Marilyn* (1996)
- Mariah Carey in her music video "I Still Believe" (1998)
- Barbara Niven in *The Rat Pack* (1998)
- Poppy Montgomery in *Blonde* (2001)
- Holly Beavon in *James Dean* (2001) (NOTE: This role was uncredited)
- Sophie Monk in *The Mystery of Natalie Wood* (2004)
- Charlotte Sullivan in *The Kennedys* (2011)
- Michelle Williams in *My Week with Marilyn* (2011)
- Naomi Watts will portray Monroe in another adaptation of Joyce Carol Oates' book in a film also called *Blonde* (2012). It is unknown if it will premiere on TV or be released to theaters.
- Susan Griffiths is a Marilyn Monroe impersonator who has portrayed Monroe, or an intentional look-alike, in several films and television series, including the 1994 film *Pulp Fiction* (a look-alike waitress), *Quantum Leap*, *Dark Skies*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Timecop*.

Filmography

Film title	Year	Role	Co-actors	Director	Producer	Notes
The Shocking Miss Pilgrim	1947	Telephone Operator	Betty Grable and Dick Haymes	George Seaton	20th Century Fox	Uncredited
Dangerous Years	1947	Evie	Billy Halop and Ann E. Todd	Arthur Pierson	20th Century Fox	
Green Grass of Wyoming	1948	Square Dance extra	Peggy Cummins and Charles Coburn	Louis King	20th Century Fox	Uncredited
You Were Meant for Me	1948	Lady in Waiting	Cary Grant and Jeanne Crain	Lloyd Bacon	20th Century Fox	Uncredited
Scudda Hoo! Scudda Hay!	1948	Betty	June Haver and Natalie Wood	Hugh Herbert	20th Century Fox	Uncredited
Ladies of the Chorus	1948	Peggy Martin	Adele Jergens and Rand Brooks	Phil Karlson	Columbia Pictures	First major film appearance
Love Happy	1949	Grunion's Client	Harpo Marx, Chico Marx, and Groucho Marx	David Miller	United Artists	
A Ticket to Tomahawk	1950	Clara	Dan Dailey, Anne Baxter, and Rory Calhoun	Richard Sale	20th Century Fox	Uncredited
Right Cross	1950	Dusky Ledoux	June Allyson and Dick Powell	John Sturges	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer	Uncredited
The Fireball	1950	Polly	Mickey Rooney and Pat O'Brien	Tay Garnett	20th Century Fox	Aka: The Challenge
The Asphalt Jungle	1950	Angela Phinlay	Sterling Hayden, Louis Calhern, and Jean Hagen	John Huston	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer	
All About Eve	1950	Miss Claudia Caswell	Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, and George Sanders	Joseph L. Mankiewicz	20th Century Fox	
Home Town Story	1951	Iris Martin	Jeffrey Lynn, Alan Hale, Jr., and Donald Crisp	Arthur Pierson	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer	
As Young as You Feel	1951	Hariett	Monty Woolley, Thelma Ritter, and Jean Peters	Harmen Jones	20th Century Fox	
Love Nest	1951	Roberta "Bobbie"	June Haver, William Lundigan,	Joseph M. Newman	20th Century	

Film title	Year	Role	Co-actors	Director	Producer	Notes
Let's Make It Legal	1951	Stevens Joyce Mannering	and Frank Fay Claudette Colbert, Macdonald Carey, and Barbara Bates	Richard Sale	Fox 20th Century Fox	
O. Henry's Full House	1952	Streetwalker	Fred Allen, Anne Baxter, and Richard Widmark	Henry Koster	20th Century Fox	Cameo appearance
Monkey Business	1952	Lois Laurel	Cary Grant, Ginger Rogers, and Charles Coburn	Howard Hawks	20th Century Fox	
Clash by Night	1952	Peggy	Barbara Stanwyck, Keith Andes, and Paul Douglas	Fritz Lang	RKO Radio Pictures	
We're Not Married!	1952	Anabel Norris	Ginger Rogers, Fred Allen, Victor Moore, David Wayne, and Zsa Zsa Gabor	Edmund Goulding	20th Century Fox	
Don't Bother to Knock	1952	Nell Forbes	Richard Widmark and Anne Bancroft	Roy Ward Baker	20th Century Fox	First starring role
Niagara	1953	Rose Loomis	Joseph Cotten and Jean Peters	Henry Hathaway	20th Century Fox	
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes	1953	Lorelei Lee	Jane Russell, Charles Coburn, and Elliot Reid	Howard Hawks	20th Century Fox	Nominated for Best Motion Picture Actress in Comedy or Musical
How to Marry a Millionaire	1953	Pola Debevoise	Betty Grable, Lauren Bacall, and William Powell	Jean Negulesco	20th Century Fox	
River of No Return	1954	Kay Weston	Robert Mitchum, Tommy Rettig, and Rory Calhoun	Otto Preminger	20th Century Fox	
There's No Business Like Show Business	1954	Victoria "Vicky" Hoffman	Ethel Merman, Dan Dailey, Donald O'Connor, and Mitzi Gaynor	Walter Lang	20th Century Fox	
The Seven Year Itch	1955	The Girl	Tom Ewell and Evelyn Keyes	Billy Wilder	20th Century Fox	Contains the famous scene of Monroe's skirt being blown up by a subway grating.
Bus Stop	1956	Chérie	Don Murray and Arthur O'Connell	Joshua Logan	20th Century Fox	Aka: The Wrong Kind of Girl

Film title	Year	Role	Co-actors	Director	Producer	Notes
The Prince and the Showgirl	1957	Elsie Marina	Laurence Olivier	Laurence Olivier	Warner Brothers	The only film released under Marilyn Monroe Productions.
Some Like It Hot	1959	Sugar Kane Kowalczyk	Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon	Billy Wilder	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer	Monroe's most successful film. Known as a comedy film classic.
Let's Make Love	1960	Amanda Dell	Yves Montand, Frankie Vaughan, and Tony Randall	George Cukor	20th Century Fox	
The Misfits	1961	Roslyn Taber	Clark Gable, Eli Wallach, Montgomery Clift	John Huston	United Artists	Final film appearance
Marilyn	1963	Herself (archive footage)			20th Century Fox	Documentary film

Uncompleted films

Film	Year	Role	Co-stars	Director	Producer
Something's Got to Give	1962	Ellen Wagstaff Arden	Dean Martin and Cyd Charisse	George Cukor	20th Century Fox

Television appearances

As Herself

TV Program	Year	Notes
The Jack Benny Program	1953	1 episode
Person to Person	1955	Television documentary
Premier Khrushchev in the USA	1959	Television documentary
President Kennedy's Birthday Salute	1962	Television movie
Lykke og krone	1962	Television documentary

Songs

Year	Film title	Song title
1948	Ladies of the Chorus	"Every Baby Needs a Da-Da-Daddy" "Anyone Can See I Love You" "Ladies Of The Chorus"
1950	A Ticket to Tomahawk	"Oh, What a Forward Young Man You Are"
1953	Niagara	"Kiss" "Two Little Girls from Little Rock" "When Love Goes Wrong" "Bye Bye Baby" "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend"
1953	Gentlemen Prefer Blondes	"Four French Dances – Sur le balcon, La Tentateur, Sol taire, Parle d'affair" "Down Boy" "When The Wild Wild Women Go Swimmin' Down In the Bimini Bay" "She Acts Like A Woman Should" "You'd Be Surprised" "A Fine Romance" "Do It Again" "I'm Gonna File My Claim"
1953	Recordings for RCA	"One Silver Dollar"
1954	River of No Return	"Down In The Meadow" "River Of No Return" "Heat Wave"
1954	There's No Business Like Show Business	"Lazy" "After You Get What You Want" "A Man Chases a Girl"
1956	Bus Stop	"That Old Black Magic"
1957	The Prince and the Showgirl	"I Found a Dream" "Runnin' Wild"
1959	Some Like It Hot	"I Wanna Be Loved By You" "I'm Through With Love" "Some Like It Hot" "My Heart Belongs to Daddy"
1960	Let's Make Love	"Specialization" "Let's Make Love" "Incurably Romantic"
1962	-	"Happy Birthday, Mr. President"

Awards and nominations

1951 Henrietta Award: The Best Young Box Office Personality
1952 Photoplay Award: Fastest Rising Star of 1952
1952 Photoplay Award: Special Award
1952 Look American Magazine Achievement Award: Most Promising Female Newcomer of 1952
1953 Golden Globe Henrietta Award: World Film Favorite Female.
1953 Sweetheart of The Month (Playboy)
1953 Photoplay Award: Most Popular Female Star
1954 Photoplay Award for Best Actress: for Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and How to Marry a Millionaire
1956 BAFTA Film Award nomination: Best Foreign Actress for The Seven Year Itch
1956 Golden Globe nomination: Best Motion Picture Actress in Comedy or Musical for Bus Stop
1958 BAFTA Film Award nomination: Best Foreign Actress for The Prince and the Showgirl
1958 David di Donatello Award (Italian): Best Foreign Actress for The Prince and the Showgirl
1959 Crystal Star Award (French): Best Foreign Actress for The Prince and the Showgirl
1960 Golden Globe, Best Motion Picture Actress in Comedy or Musical for Some Like It Hot
1962 Golden Globe, World Film Favorite: Female
Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame 6104 Hollywood Blvd.
1999 she was ranked as the sixth greatest female star of all time by the American Film Institute in their list AFI's 100 Years...100 Stars.

Judy Garland

Judy Garland (born **Frances Ethel Gumm**; June 10, 1922 – June 22, 1969) was an American actress and singer. Through a career that spanned 45 of her 47 years and for her renowned contralto voice, she attained international stardom as an actress in musical and dramatic roles, as a recording artist and on the concert stage. Respected for her versatility, she received a Juvenile Academy Award, won a Golden Globe Award, as well as Grammy Awards and a Special Tony Award. She was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in the remake of *A Star is Born* and for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in the 1961 film, *Judgment at Nuremberg*. At 39 years of age, she remains the youngest recipient of the Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement in the motion picture industry.



A publicity photo of Garland in *Presenting Lily Mars* (1943).

After appearing in vaudeville with her two older sisters, Garland was signed to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as a teenager. There she made more than two dozen films, including nine with Mickey Rooney and the 1939 film with which she would be most identified, *The Wizard of Oz*. After 15 years, she was released from the studio but gained renewed success through record-breaking concert appearances, including a return to acting beginning with critically acclaimed performances.

Despite her professional triumphs, Garland battled personal problems throughout her life. Insecure about her appearance, her feelings were compounded by film executives who told her she was unattractive and manipulated her on-screen physical appearance. She was plagued by financial instability, often owing hundreds of thousands of dollars in back taxes. She married five times, with her first four marriages ending in divorce. She had a long struggle with alcoholism during most of her career, she died of an accidental drug overdose at the age of 47, leaving children Liza Minnelli, Lorna Luft, and Joey Luft.

In 1997, Garland was posthumously awarded a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Several of her recordings have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. In 1999, the American Film Institute placed her among the ten greatest female stars in the history of American cinema.

Early life

Born **Frances Ethel Gumm** in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, Garland was the youngest child of Francis Avent "Frank" Gumm (March 20, 1886 – November 17, 1935) and Ethel Marion Milne (November 17, 1893 – January 5, 1953). Her parents were vaudevillians who settled in Grand Rapids to run a movie theatre that featured vaudeville acts.

Garland's ancestry on both sides of her family can be traced back to the early colonial days of the United States. Her father was descended from the Marable family of Virginia, her grandfather a Milne from Aberdeen (as she told an audience on May 29, 1951 in Edinburgh), and her mother from Patrick Fitzpatrick, who emigrated to America in the 1770s from Smithtown, County Meath, Ireland.

Named after both her parents and baptized at a local Episcopal church, "Baby" (as she was called by her parents and sisters) shared her family's flair for song and dance. Her first appearance came at the age of two-and-a-half when she joined her two older sisters, Mary Jane "Suzy/Suzanne" Gumm (1915–64) and Dorothy Virginia "Jimmie" Gumm (1917–77), on the stage of her father's movie theater during a Christmas show and sang a chorus of "Jingle Bells". Accompanied by their mother on piano, The Gumm Sisters performed there for the next few years. Following rumors that Frank Gumm had made sexual advances toward male ushers there, the family relocated to Lancaster, California, in June 1926. Frank purchased and operated another theater in Lancaster, and Ethel, acting as their manager, began working to get her daughters into motion pictures. Garland graduated from Antelope Valley High School shortly after.

Early career

The Gumm Sisters

In 1928, The Gumm Sisters enrolled in a dance school run by Ethel Meglin, proprietress of the Meglin Kiddies dance troupe. They appeared with the troupe at its annual Christmas show. It was through the Meglin Kiddies that they made their film debut, in a 1929 short subject called *The Big Revue*. This was followed by appearances in two Vitaphone shorts the following year, *A Holiday in Storyland* (featuring Garland's first on-screen solo) and *The Wedding of Jack and Jill*. They next appeared together in *Bubbles*. Their final on-screen appearance came in 1935, in another short entitled *La Fiesta de Santa Barbara*.

In 1934, the trio, who by then had been touring the vaudeville circuit as "The Gumm Sisters" for many years, performed in Chicago at the Oriental Theater with George Jessel. He encouraged the group to choose a more appealing name after "Gumm" was met with laughter from the audience. According to theatrical legend, their act was once erroneously billed at a Chicago theater as "The Glum Sisters."

Several stories persist regarding the origin of the name "Garland". One is that it was originated by Jessel after Carole Lombard's character Lily Garland in the film *Twentieth Century* which was then playing at the Oriental; another is that the girls chose the surname after drama critic Robert Garland. Garland's daughter Lorna Luft stated that her mother selected the name when Jessel announced that the trio "looked prettier than a garland of flowers". Another variation surfaced when he was a guest on Garland's television show in 1963. He claimed that he had sent actress Judith Anderson a telegram containing the word "garland," and it stuck in his mind. In fact the name Garland was their mother's maiden name.

By late 1934 the "Gumm Sisters" had changed their name to the "Garland Sisters." Frances changed her name to "Judy" soon after, inspired by a popular Hoagy Carmichael song. By August 1935 they were

broken up when Suzanne Garland flew to Reno, Nevada, and married musician Lee Kahn, a member of the Jimmy Davis orchestra playing at Cal-Neva Lodge, Lake Tahoe.

Signed at MGM

In 1935, Garland was signed to a contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, supposedly without a screen test, though she had made a test for the studio several months earlier. It did not know what to do with her, as at age 13 she was older than the traditional child star but too young for adult roles. Her physical appearance created a dilemma for MGM. At only 4 feet 11.5 inches (151.1 cm), her "cute" or "girl next door" looks did not exemplify the more glamorous persona required of leading ladies of the time. She was self-conscious and anxious about her appearance. "Judy went to school at Metro with Ava Gardner, Lana Turner, Elizabeth Taylor, real beauties," said Charles Walters, who directed her in a number of films. "Judy was the big money-maker at the time, a big success, but she was the ugly duckling ...I think it had a very damaging effect on her emotionally for a long time. I think it lasted forever, really." Her insecurity was exacerbated by the attitude of studio chief Louis B. Mayer, who referred to her as his "little hunchback". During her early years at the studio, she was photographed and dressed in plain garments or frilly juvenile gowns and costumes to match the "girl-next-door" image that was created for her. She was made to wear removable caps on her teeth and rubberized disks to reshape her nose. She performed at various studio functions and was eventually cast opposite Deanna Durbin in the musical short *Every Sunday*. The film contrasted her alto vocal range and swing style with Durbin's operatic soprano and served as an extended screen test for the pair, as studio executives were questioning the wisdom of having two girl singers on the roster. Mayer finally decided to keep both actresses, but by that time Durbin's option had lapsed and she was signed by Universal Studios.

On November 16, 1935, in the midst of preparing for a radio performance on the *Shell Chateau Hour*, Garland learned that her father, who had been hospitalized with meningitis, had taken a turn for the worse. Frank Gumm died the following morning, on November 17, leaving her devastated. Her song for the *Shell Chateau Hour* was her first professional rendition of "Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart", a song which would become a standard in many of her concerts.



Garland with Mickey Rooney in *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938)

Garland next came to the attention of studio executives by singing a special arrangement of "You Made Me Love You" to Clark Gable at a birthday party held by the studio for the actor; her rendition was so well regarded that she performed the song in the all-star extravaganza *Broadway Melody of 1938* (1937), in which she sang it to a photograph of him.

MGM hit on a winning formula when it paired Garland with Mickey Rooney in a string of "backyard musicals". The duo first appeared together in the 1937 B movie *Thoroughbreds Don't Cry*. They became a sensation, and teamed up again in *Love Finds Andy Hardy*. She would eventually star with him in nine films.

To keep up with the frantic pace of making one film after another, Garland, Rooney, and other young performers were constantly given amphetamines, as well as barbiturates to take before going to bed. For Garland, this regular dose of drugs led to addiction and a lifelong struggle, and contributed to her eventual demise. She later resented the hectic schedule and felt that her youth had been stolen from her by MGM. Despite successful film and recording careers, several awards, critical praise, and her ability to fill concert halls worldwide, she was plagued throughout her life with self-doubt and required constant reassurance that she was talented and attractive.

The Wizard of Oz



Garland as Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

In 1938, at age 16, Garland was cast as Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), a film based on the children's book by L. Frank Baum. In this film, she sang the song for which she would forever be identified, "Over the Rainbow". Although producers Arthur Freed and Mervyn LeRoy had wanted her from the start, studio chief Mayer tried first to borrow Shirley Temple from 20th Century Fox. Her services were denied and Garland was cast. She was initially outfitted in a blonde wig for the part, but Freed and LeRoy decided against it shortly into filming. Her breasts were bound with tape and she was made to wear a special corset to flatten out her curves and make her appear younger; her blue gingham dress was also chosen for its blurring effect on her figure.

Shooting commenced on October 13, 1938, and was completed on March 16, 1939, with a final cost of more than US\$2 million. From the conclusion of filming, MGM kept Judy Garland busy with promotional tours and the shooting of *Babes in Arms*. She and Mickey Rooney were sent on a cross-country promotional tour, culminating in the August 17 New York City premiere at the Capitol Theater, which included a five-show-a-day appearance schedule for the two stars.

On November 17, 1939, Garland's mother, Ethel, married William P. Gillmore in Yuma, Arizona. It was the fourth anniversary of her first husband's death.

The Wizard of Oz was a tremendous critical success, though its high budget and promotions costs of an estimated \$4 million coupled with the lower revenue generated by children's tickets meant that the film did not make a profit until it was rereleased in the 1940s. At the 1940 Academy Awards ceremony, Garland received an Academy Juvenile Award for her performances in 1939, including *The Wizard of Oz* and *Babes in Arms*. Following this recognition, she became one of MGM's most bankable stars.

Stardom as an adult

In 1940, she starred in three films: *Andy Hardy Meets Debutante*, *Strike Up the Band*, and *Little Nellie Kelly*. In the latter, she played her first adult role, a dual role of both mother and daughter. *Little Nellie Kelly* was purchased from George M. Cohan as a vehicle for her to display both her audience appeal and her physical appearance. The role was a challenge for her, requiring the use of an accent, her first adult kiss, and the only death scene of her career. The success of these three films, and a further three films in 1941, secured her position at MGM as a major property.



Garland performing "The Trolley Song" in *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944)

During this time Garland experienced her first serious adult romances. The first was with the band leader Artie Shaw. She was deeply devoted to him and was devastated in early 1940 when he eloped with Lana Turner. Another failed relationship (and her first failed marriage) included an abortion her mother and husband persuaded her to have in order to continue working. She was noticeably thinner in her next film, *For Me and My Gal*, alongside Gene Kelly in his first screen appearance. She was top billed over the credits for the first time, and effectively made the transition from teenage star to adult actress.

At the age of 21, she was given the "glamour treatment" in *Presenting Lily Mars*, in which she was dressed in "grown-up" gowns. Her lightened hair was also pulled up in a stylish fashion. However, no matter how glamorous or beautiful she appeared on screen or in photographs, she was never confident in her appearance and never escaped the "girl next door" image that had been created for her.

One of Garland's most successful films for MGM was *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), in which she introduced three standards: "The Trolley Song", "The Boy Next Door", and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas". Vincente Minnelli was assigned to direct this movie, and he requested that makeup artist Dorothy Ponedel be assigned to her for the picture. Ponedel refined her appearance in several ways, including extending and reshaping her eyebrows, changing her hairline, modifying her lip line, and removing her nose discs. She appreciated the results so much that Ponedel was written into her contract for all her remaining pictures at MGM.

The Clock (1945) was her first straight dramatic film, opposite Robert Walker. Though the film was critically praised and earned a profit, most movie fans expected her to sing. It would be many years before she acted again in a non-singing dramatic role.

Garland's other famous films of the 1940s include *The Harvey Girls* (1946), in which she introduced the Academy Award-winning song "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe", and *The Pirate* (1948).

Leaving MGM

During filming for *The Pirate* in April 1947, Garland suffered a nervous breakdown and was placed in a private sanitarium. She was able to complete filming, but in July she undertook her first suicide attempt, making minor cuts to her wrist with a broken glass. During this period, she spent two weeks in treatment at the Austen Riggs Center, a psychiatric hospital in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Following her work on *The Pirate*, she completed three more films for MGM: *Easter Parade* (in which she danced with Fred Astaire), *In the Good Old Summertime*, and her final film with MGM, *Summer Stock*.

Because of her mental condition, Garland was unable to complete a series of films. During the filming of *The Barkleys of Broadway*, she was taking prescription sleeping medication along with illicitly obtained pills containing morphine. It was around this time she also developed a serious problem with alcohol. These, in combination with migraine headaches, led her to miss several shooting days in a row. After being advised by her doctor that she would only be able to work in four-to-five-day increments with extended rest periods between, MGM executive Arthur Freed made the decision to suspend her on July 18, 1948. She was replaced by Ginger Rogers.

Garland was cast in the film adaptation of *Annie Get Your Gun* in the title role of Annie Oakley. She was nervous at the prospect of taking on a role strongly identified with Ethel Merman, anxious about appearing in an unglamorous part after breaking from juvenile parts for several years, and disturbed by her treatment at the hands of director Busby Berkeley. She began arriving late to the set, and sometimes failed to appear. She was suspended from the picture on May 10, 1949, and was replaced by Betty Hutton.

Garland was next cast in the film *Royal Wedding* with Fred Astaire after June Allyson became pregnant in 1950. She again failed to report to the set on multiple occasions, and the studio suspended her contract on June 17, 1950. She was replaced by Jane Powell. Reputable biographies following her death stated that after this latest dismissal, she slightly grazed her neck with a broken water glass, requiring only a Band-Aid, but at the time, the public was informed that a despondent Garland had slashed her throat. "All I could see ahead was more confusion," Garland later said of this suicide attempt. "I wanted to black out the future as well as the past. I wanted to hurt myself and everyone who had hurt me."

Later career

Renewed stardom on the stage

In October 1951, Garland opened in a vaudeville-style, two-a-day engagement at Broadway's newly refurbished Palace Theatre. Her 19-week engagement exceeded all previous records for the theater, and was described as "one of the greatest personal triumphs in show business history". Garland was honored for her contribution to the revival of vaudeville with a Special Tony Award.

Garland's personal and professional achievements during this time were marred by the actions of her mother, Ethel. In May 1952, at the height of her comeback, Ethel was featured in a Los Angeles Mirror story in which she revealed that while Garland was making a small fortune at the Palace, Ethel was working a desk job at Douglas Aircraft Company for \$61 a week. They had been estranged for years, with Garland characterizing her mother as "no good for anything except to create chaos and fear" and accusing her of mismanaging and misappropriating her salary from the earliest days of her career. Garland's sister Virginia denied this, stating "Mama never took a dime from Judy." On January 5, 1953, Ethel was found dead in the Douglas Aircraft parking lot.

A Star Is Born

In 1954, Garland filmed a musical remake of the 1937 film *A Star is Born* for Warner Bros. She and her third husband, Sid Luft, through their production company, Transcona Enterprises, produced the film while Warner Bros. supplied the funds, production facilities, and crew. Directed by George Cukor and costarring James Mason, it was a large undertaking to which she initially fully dedicated herself. As shooting progressed, however, she began making the same pleas of illness which she had so often made during her final films at MGM. Production delays led to cost overruns and angry confrontations with Warner Bros. head Jack Warner. Principal photography wrapped on March 17, 1954. At Luft's suggestion, the "Born in a Trunk" medley was filmed as a showcase for her and inserted over director Cukor's objections, who feared the additional length would lead to cuts in other areas. It was completed on July 29.



Garland in *A Star Is Born* (1954)

Upon its September 29 world premiere, the film was met with tremendous critical and popular acclaim. Before release it was edited at the instruction of Jack Warner; theater operators, concerned that they were losing money because they were only able to run the film for three or four shows per day instead of five or six, pressured the studio to make additional reductions. About 30 minutes of footage was cut, sparking outrage among critics and filmgoers. *A Star is Born* ended up losing money, and the secure financial position Garland had expected from the profits did not materialize. Transcona made no more films with Warner.

Garland was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress and, in the run-up to the 27th Academy Awards, was generally expected to be the winner. She could not attend the ceremony because she had just given birth to her son, Joseph Luft, so a television crew was in her hospital room with cameras and wires to televise her anticipated acceptance speech. The Oscar was won, however, by Grace Kelly for *The Country Girl* (1954). The camera crew was packing up before Kelly could even reach the stage. Garland even made jokes about the incident on her television series, saying "...and nobody said good-bye." Groucho Marx sent her a telegram after the awards ceremony, declaring her loss "the biggest robbery since Brinks". To this day, it is still considered to be one of the biggest upsets in the history of the Academy Awards and generally felt that she should have rightly won the Oscar and her performance far exceeded Kelly's. *TIME* magazine labeled her performance as "just about the greatest one-woman show in modern movie history". Garland won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress in a Musical for the role.

Garland's films after *A Star Is Born* included *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) (for which she was Oscar- and Golden Globe-nominated for Best Supporting Actress), the animated feature *Gay Purr-ee* (1962), and *A Child Is Waiting* (1963) with Burt Lancaster. Her final film, *I Could Go On Singing* (1963), costarring Dirk Bogarde, mirrored her own life with its story of a world famous singing star. Her last screen performance of a song was the prophetic *I Could Go on Singing* at the end of the film.

Television, concerts, and Carnegie Hall

Beginning in 1955, Garland appeared in a number of television specials. The first, the 1955 debut episode of *Ford Star Jubilee*, was the first full-scale color broadcast ever on CBS and was a ratings triumph, scoring a 34.8 Nielsen rating. She signed a three-year, \$300,000 contract with the network. Only one additional special, a live concert edition of *General Electric Theater*, was broadcast in 1956 before the relationship between the Lufts and CBS broke down in a dispute over the planned format of upcoming specials. In 1956, Garland performed four weeks at the New Frontier Hotel on the Las Vegas Strip for a salary of \$55,000 per week, making her the highest-paid entertainer to work in Las Vegas. Despite a brief bout of laryngitis, her performances there were so successful that her run was extended an extra week. Later that year she returned to the Palace Theatre, site of her two-a-day triumph. She opened in September, once again to rave reviews and popular acclaim.



Garland before a concert, 1957

In November 1959 Garland was hospitalized, diagnosed with acute hepatitis. Over the next few weeks several quarts of fluid were drained from her body until, still weak, she was released from the hospital in January 1960. She was told by doctors that she likely had five years or less to live, and that even if she did survive she would be a semi-invalid and would never sing again. She initially felt "greatly relieved" at the diagnosis. "The pressure was off me for the first time in my life." However, she successfully recovered over the next several months and, in August of that year, returned to the stage of the Palladium. She felt so warmly embraced by the British that she announced her intention to move permanently to England.

Her concert appearance at Carnegie Hall on April 23, 1961, was a considerable highlight, called by many "the greatest night in show business history". The two-record *Judy at Carnegie Hall* was certified gold, charting for 95 weeks on Billboard, including 13 weeks at number one. The album won four Grammy Awards including Album of the Year and Best Female Vocal of the Year. The album has never been out of print.

In 1961, Garland and CBS settled their contract disputes with the help of her new agent, Freddie Fields, and negotiated a new round of specials. The first, entitled *The Judy Garland Show*, aired in 1962 and featured guests Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. Following this success, CBS made a \$24 million offer to

her for a weekly television series of her own, also to be called *The Judy Garland Show*, which was deemed at the time in the press to be "the biggest talent deal in TV history". Although she had said as early as 1955 that she would never do a weekly television series, in the early 1960s she was in a financially precarious situation. Garland was several hundred thousand dollars in debt to the Internal Revenue Service, having failed to pay taxes in 1951 and 1952, and the financial failure of *A Star is Born* meant that she received nothing from that investment. A successful run on television was intended to secure her financial future.

Following a third special, *Judy Garland and Her Guests Phil Silvers and Robert Goulet*, Garland's weekly series debuted September 29, 1963. The *Judy Garland Show* was critically praised, but for a variety of reasons (including being placed in the time slot opposite *Bonanza* on NBC) the show lasted only one season and was cancelled in 1964 after 26 episodes. Despite its short run, the series was nominated for four Emmy Awards. The demise of the series was personally and financially devastating for Garland, who never fully recovered from its failure.

Final years



Mickey Deans and Garland, at their wedding in March 1969, only three months before her death

With the demise of her television series, Garland returned to the stage. Most notably, she performed at the London Palladium with her then 18-year-old daughter Liza Minnelli in November 1964. The concert, which was also filmed for British television network ITV, was one of her final appearances at the venue. She made guest appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *The Tonight Show*, *The Hollywood Palace*, and *The Merv Griffin Show*, on which she guest-hosted an episode.

A 1964 tour of Australia was largely disastrous. Garland's first concert in Sydney, held in the Sydney Stadium because no concert hall could accommodate the crowds who wanted to see her, went well and received positive reviews. Her second performance, in Melbourne, started an hour late. The crowd of 7,000, angered by her tardiness and believing her to be drunk, booed and heckled her, and she fled the stage after just 45 minutes. She later characterized the Melbourne crowd as "brutish". A second concert in Sydney was uneventful but the Melbourne appearance garnered her significant bad press. Some of that bad press was deflected by the announcement of a near fatal episode of pleurisy.

In February 1967, Garland had been cast as Helen Lawson in *Valley of the Dolls* for 20th Century Fox. The character of Neely O'Hara in the book by Jacqueline Susann was rumored to have been based on her. The role of O'Hara in the film was played by Patty Duke. During the filming, she missed rehearsals and was fired in April. She was replaced by Susan Hayward. Her prerecording of the song "I'll Plant My Own Tree" survived, along with her wardrobe tests.

Returning to the stage, Garland made her last appearances at New York's Palace Theatre in July, a 16-show tour, performing with her children Lorna and Joey Luft. She wore a sequined pantsuit on stage for this tour, which was part of the original wardrobe for her character in *Valley of the Dolls*.

Marriages

David Rose

Garland began a relationship with musician David Rose, and, on her 18th birthday, he gave her an engagement ring. The studio intervened because he was still married at the time to the actress and singer Martha Raye. They agreed to wait a year to allow for his divorce from her to become final, and were wed on July 27, 1941. Garland, who had aborted her pregnancy by him in 1942, agreed to a trial separation in January 1943, and they divorced in 1944.

Vincente Minnelli

During the filming of *Meet Me in St. Louis*, after some initial conflict between them, Garland and Vincente Minnelli entered a relationship together. They were married June 15, 1945, and on March 12, 1946, daughter Liza was born. In 1951, they divorced.

Sid Luft

She engaged Sid Luft as her manager the same year she divorced Minnelli. He arranged a four-month concert tour of the United Kingdom, where she played to sold-out audiences throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland. It included her first appearances at the renowned London Palladium, for a four-week stand in April. Although some in the British press chided her before her opening for being "too plump", she received rave reviews and the ovation was described by the Palladium manager as the loudest he had ever heard.

Garland and Luft were married on June 8, 1952, in Hollister, California. Garland gave birth to Lorna Luft, herself a future actress and singer, on November 21, 1952, and to Joey Luft on March 29 1955.

Garland sued Luft for divorce in 1963, claiming "cruelty" as the grounds. She also asserted that he had repeatedly struck her while he was drinking and that he had attempted to take their children from her by force. She had filed for divorce more than once previously, including as early as 1956.

Mark Herron

Garland's fourth marriage was to tour promoter Mark Herron. They announced that their marriage had taken place aboard a freighter off the coast of Hong Kong; however, she was not legally divorced from Luft at the time the ceremony was performed. It became final on May 19, 1965, but she and Herron did not legally marry until November 14, 1965 and then separated six months later.

Mickey Deans

By early 1969, Garland's health had deteriorated. She performed in London at the Talk of the Town nightclub for a five-week run and made her last concert appearance in Copenhagen during March 1969. She married her fifth and final husband, musician and entrepreneur Mickey Deans, at Chelsea Register Office, London, on March 15, 1969, her divorce from Herron having been finalized on February 11.

Death

On June 22 1969, Garland was found dead by Deans in the bathroom of their rented house in Chelsea, London. At the subsequent inquest, coroner Gavin Thursdon stated that the cause of death was "an incautious self-overdosage" of barbiturates; her blood contained the equivalent of ten 1.5-grain (97 mg) Seconal capsules. Thursdon stressed that the overdose had been unintentional and that there was no evidence to suggest she had committed suicide. Her autopsy showed that there was no inflammation of her stomach lining and no drug residue in there, which indicated that the drug had been ingested over a long period of time, rather than in one dose. Her death certificate stated that her death had been "accidental." Even so, a British specialist who had attended her said she had been living on borrowed time due to cirrhosis of the liver. She had turned 47 just 12 days prior to her death. Her Wizard of Oz costar Ray Bolger commented at her funeral, "She just plain wore out."

On June 26, Deans took Garland's remains to New York City, where an estimated 20,000 people lined up for hours at the Frank E. Campbell Funeral Chapel in Manhattan to pay their respects. On June 27, James Mason gave a eulogy at the funeral, from which the public and press were barred, which was an Episcopal service led by the Rev. Peter A. Delaney of Marylebone Church, London, who had officiated at her marriage to Deans. She was interred in a crypt in the community mausoleum at Ferncliff Cemetery, in Hartsdale, New York.

Legacy



Star for recognition of film work at 1715 Vine Street on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. She has another for recording at 6764 Hollywood Blvd.

Garland's legacy as a performer and a personality has endured long after her death. The American Film Institute named her eighth among the Greatest Female Stars of All Time. She has been the subject of over two dozen biographies since her death, including the well-received *Me and My Shadows: A Family*

Memoir by her daughter, Lorna Luft, whose memoir was later adapted into the multiple award-winning television miniseries, *Life with Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows*, which won Emmy Awards for the two actresses portraying her (Tammy Blanchard and Judy Davis). English actress Tracie Bennett portrayed Garland to critical acclaim in a dramatization of her eventual decline and months preceding her death in a play titled *End of the Rainbow* at London's Trafalgar Studios. Both the play and Bennett received Laurence Olivier Award nominations.

Garland was posthumously awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997. Several of her recordings have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. These include "Over the Rainbow", which was ranked as the number one movie song of all time in the American Film Institute's "100 Years...100 Songs" list. Four more Garland songs are featured on the list: "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" (#76), "Get Happy" (#61), "The Trolley Song" (#26), and "The Man That Got Away" (#11). She has twice been honored on U.S. postage stamps, in 1989 (as Dorothy) and again in 2006 (as Vicki Lester from *A Star Is Born*). She is mentioned in the 1998 horror film *I Still Know What You Did Last Summer* when the hotel clerk is explaining the history of the hotel in the Bahamas where the film takes place.

Gay icon

Garland always had a large base of fans in the gay community and has become a gay icon. Reasons often given for her standing, especially among gay men, are admiration of her ability as a performer, the way her personal struggles mirrored those of gay men in America during the height of her fame and her value as a camp figure. When asked about how she felt about having a large gay following, she responded, "I couldn't care less. I sing to people."

Some have also suggested a connection between the date of Garland's death and funeral on June 27, 1969 and the Stonewall riots, the flashpoint of the modern Gay Liberation movement, which started in the early hours of June 28. However, in a 2009 interview gay historian David Carter stated that this connection is untrue, and based on a mocking reference to the riot by an anti-gay writer in the *Village Voice* the next day.