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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

DORIS EATON TRAVIS:  
AN ORAL HISTORY OF HER LIFE  
IN THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE

A Dissertation  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

By  
DAWN MARIE COSTELLO  
Norman, Oklahoma  
1997

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DORIS EATON TRAVIS:  
AN ORAL HISTORY OF HER LIFE  
IN THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY



E. L. Lancaster, Co-Chairperson



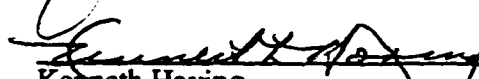
Roger Rideout, Co-Chairperson



Eugene Enrico



James Faulconer



Kenneth Hoving

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. E.L. Lancaster for his wisdom, steadfastness, encouragement and guidance. I am indebted to Dr. Roger Rideout for introducing me to Doris Eaton Travis and starting me on this journey. I thank my committee members Dr. Eugene Enrico, Dr. James Faulconer and Dr. Kenneth Hoving for their guidance and enthusiastic support.

To my family and friends, thank you for your continual encouragement and support. I extend a special thank you to Doris Eaton Travis for sharing her life and her joyous self with me. It has been a supreme pleasure.

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DORIS EATON TRAVIS:  
AN ORAL HISTORY OF HER LIFE IN THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE

BY: DAWN MARIE COSTELLO  
CO-MAJOR PROFESSORS: E. L. LANCASTER, Ph.D. & R. R. RIDEOUT, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study was to document through an oral history the life of Doris Eaton Travis from the beginning of her career in entertainment as a child actor in the Poli Theatre Stock Company in Washington, D. C. and later in the Ziegfeld *Follies* of 1918, 1919 and 1920 to the end of her professional career with the Arthur Murray Dance Studios in 1968. This study chronicles not only her work on Broadway with the Ziegfeld *Follies*, but her transitional work in silent and early sound films, her contributions to trends in social dance via the Arthur Murray Dance Studios, and her development and implementation of a televised instructional program on social dance.

This study was based on interviews with Doris Eaton Travis. Through these interviews, Doris provided an oral narrative of her career from 1918 to 1968. Data were collected through: structured, semi-structured and non-structured interviews with Doris Eaton Travis, review of pertinent documents, such as newspaper articles, production playbills, music manuscripts, letters, and other professional memorabilia that Doris has collected, interviews with other members of Doris Eaton Travis' family completed prior to this study, observation of the subject directly recorded on film and video media.

Based on research for this paper, the author recommended the following for further study: similar historical research should be conducted with living individuals from this era regarding their views of theater and dance history, further studies that concentrate on the role of women in theater and dance in the early part of this century should be undertaken, a thorough investigation of occupations available to women in the first part of this century is warranted, and one major archive dedicated to the Women of the Ziegfeld *Follies* or Women of American Popular Culture and Theater should be established where materials from the personal collections of performers from this period can be catalogued for future research.

DORIS EATON TRAVIS:  
AN ORAL HISTORY OF HER LIFE IN THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Doris Eaton Travis' life and career span important developments in musical theater, early film, and dance in America. In 1910, Doris and her siblings, Pearl, Mary, Charlie and Joseph performed as child actors for the Shubert Production Company in *The Bluebird* at various locations along the east coast. A veteran actor by the age of fourteen, Doris entered the elegant world of the Ziegfeld *Follies* in 1918, ascending rapidly from chorus girl in the *Follies* of 1918 to that of principal with her own specialty numbers in the *Follies* of 1920.

Anxious to expand all possibilities for her children, Mamie Saunders Eaton, Doris' mother, encouraged her to audition for silent movies. In 1921, Doris began filming *Tell Your Children* for director Donald Crisp on location in London and Egypt. Upon returning to the states, Doris traveled to California and for the next fourteen years alternated between the coasts in various musicals and revues. While working for Joseph Gorham in the Gorham *Follies* at the Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California, Doris was the first to sing "Singin' in the Rain," composed for her by Nacio Herb Brown. During this time Doris also starred as Al Jolson's leading lady in *Big Boy* and later toured the west coast with the Music Box Revue.

By 1936, tired of the hand to mouth existence of show business, Doris interviewed as a dance instructor with Arthur Murray, who was well-established in his New York

studio. Doris and her dance partner, Cy Andrews, were the first to request a franchise from Arthur Murray. Doris obtained the Michigan franchise and opened the first Arthur Murray Studio outside New York City. Between 1938 and 1968 Doris developed and managed fourteen dance studios throughout Michigan.

In 1938 the editor of the Detroit *Herald* invited Doris to write a newspaper column. Titled "On Your Toes," Doris' column offered helpful hints to the aspiring social dancer, humorously answering pointed questions from a loyal write-in audience. In the 1950s, Doris developed a weekly television show illustrating the "how-tos" of social dance, featuring herself as hostess and dance instructor. At the time of her decision to leave the Arthur Murray Studios in 1968, Doris had witnessed the powerful rise and fall of social dance, a fleeting era in American popular culture.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to document through an oral history the life of Doris Eaton Travis from the beginning of her career in entertainment as a child actor in the Poli Theatre Stock Company in Washington, D. C. and later in the Ziegfeld *Follies* of 1918, 1919 and 1920 to the end of her professional career with the Arthur Murray Dance Studios in 1968. This study chronicles not only her work on Broadway with the Ziegfeld *Follies*, but her transitional work in silent and early sound films, her contributions to trends in social dance via the Arthur Murray Dance Studios, and her development and implementation of a televised instructional program on social dance.

#### Need for the Study

Doris Eaton Travis' life spans the history of popular American theater and dance from 1910 until 1968. Her many experiences and activities coincide with the rise and decline of the Ziegfeld *Follies*, silent film, and the social dance movement. She lived

these movements, participated in their successes, and worked with leading figures in entertainment history in this century.

Capturing Doris Travis' life through her records and her personal recollections provides a unique history of American entertainment. Allowing Doris to tell her own story through a series of interviews gives a valuable first-hand account of the individuals and events that have shaped American entertainment throughout most of this century.

In the *Journal of American History*, Jaksic (1993) explains that oral history is "a participatory method that weaves a person's knowledge, interpretation, and experience of events with those of the historian." Allen (1993), folklorist and historian, adds, "the content of oral history, what people have said, is only part of its value to historians; the form that oral history takes, how it is told, can also be useful in addressing larger historical questions. Story, for instance, is one such form that affords rich interpretive potential for historians interested in how narrators perceive and construct historical experience." Allen (1992) continues:

In storytelling, whether in conversation or in an interview, narrators are involved not only in communicating experience but also in constructing a shared consciousness of that experience. Stories can therefore tell us something about the larger structures of historical consciousness within which individual narrators understand their own experiences. This is what makes them of value to historians, for stories of personal experiences told in oral history interviews can suggest larger, collectively constructed notions of experience. (p. 606)

Vivian Perlis (1994), Director of Oral History of American Music at Yale University School of Music, champions the importance of oral history as a research technique in the *Journal of American History*:

From 1968 to 1972, when I conducted oral histories on the life and work of American composer Charles Ives, I was motivated by the urgent need to search out Ives' friends and colleagues while they were still alive. At the time I was not aware of oral history as an independent discipline, one with a national organization and numerous workshops, courses, and archives around the country. It was only after the Ives Project was completed, its materials published and hailed as a new kind of biography, the first documentary oral history on a composer, that I became fully aware of oral history and its potential for use in musicological research. (p. 610)

Perlis' work became the nucleus of materials that originated the Oral History of American Music (OHAM) at Yale University. Now in its twenty-fifth year, OHAM is recognized as a major repository of source materials in American music. Such precedents in American music research underscores the validity of oral history techniques.

Oral history is not always possible if the person in question has health problems that hinder their accuracy or recollections. Doris Eaton Travis remains, at ninety-two years of age, a commanding personality with a sharp, well-trained mind. Having just received her bachelors degree in history at the age of eighty-eight from the University of Oklahoma, she is an active scholar herself. She has written, with J. R. Morris, *The Days We Danced*, an historical narrative of her family. As yet unpublished, this book supports Doris' ability to convey her recollections with accuracy and clarity.

The opportunity to record the lives of individuals who have experienced the growth of American entertainment culture in the early part of this century is passing quickly. According to Follies Club records, there are only four women still living who appeared in the classic 1918, 1919, and 1920 Ziegfeld *Follies*. Those four women are Billie Dove, Grace LaRue Graham, Muriel Harrison Merrill and Doris Eaton Travis. Not all

of those living are capable, due to poor health, of giving accurate and detailed interviews. Countless stars who performed with or were close friends of the Eaton family, such as Fanny Brice, Marilyn Miller, Lillian Lorraine, Eddie Cantor, W. C. Fields and Will Rogers are now deceased.

The entertainment industry of the early twentieth century was not documented by current methods of film or video recordings. Much historical burrowing leads one to newspaper clippings which, while helpful, were written in an inflammatory style, often becoming no more than fodder for the publicity needs of the industry. This ineffective, flamboyant and inaccurate reporting style, common to the era, is in sore need of correction and authentication by primary sources. With so few individuals still living, the need for Doris' interviews intensifies.

Doris' career covers an important period of change in American society at the turn of the century. American society was being heavily influenced by urbanization, particularly New York. To illustrate trends in growth within New York City, Snyder (1989) speaking of *The Hub*, a commercial district at 149th Street and Third Avenue offered the following:

From 1900 to 1910, the Bronx grew from 200,500 residents to almost 431,000, the greatest rate of growth of any borough in New York City. This boom, and the real estate bonanza that accompanied it, were caused partly by the extension of the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) subway line into the Bronx. The tracks reached the South Bronx in 1904 and the northern regions of 242nd Street and Broadway in 1908. (p. 94)

Although slightly before Doris' time, this trend toward growth of the population through urbanization, with expanding mass transit, as well as heavy immigration, fueled the increased demand for entertainment. The variety of entertainment available



would reflect the variety of cultures within the population itself. Thus class and social status were reflected in the entertainment industry.

Interviews with Doris Eaton Travis provide insights into this phenomenon both on and off stage. The Eaton family represents those who, wanting to begin careers in entertainment, migrated to New York City. Having quickly risen from chorus girl to primary performer, Doris had reactions to the differences one experienced in each role.

The life of Doris Eaton Travis reflects the experiences of a member of an influential family in Broadway theater history. As a member of the Eaton family, Doris' life has special merit. Over a seven year span beginning in 1918, a member of the Eaton family was always on Broadway. Pearl, in 1918, was the first Eaton hired for the *Follies* and was a featured dancer in the *Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic*, appearing in editions between 1918 and 1920 and in the 1922 road show. Doris' sister, Mary, appeared in *Over The Top* in 1917 with Adele and Fred Astaire. Groomed as Marilyn Miller's successor, Mary starred in the *Follies* for three years, from 1920 to 1922, as well as in *Kid Boots*. She went on to star in other Broadway musicals, her biggest hit being *Five O'Clock Girl* (1927). Doris' brothers, Joseph and Charlie at the age of fourteen and ten, were in the 1921 *Follies* in "The Birthday of the Dauphin" scene.

Aside from her own film career, Doris witnessed her sister Mary make several movies, including *Cocoanuts* (1929) with the Marx Brothers and *Glorifying the American Girl* (1929). Her brother, Charlie, appeared in Fox Studios' first talking picture. He was in the 1924 production of *Peter Pan* with Marilyn Miller and played the role of Andy Hardy in *Skidding*, the predecessor for the Andy Hardy film series. Through her own experiences and that of her family, Doris' views give insight into the decline of the famous *Follies*, the wavering of the musical revue and early growth of the film industry.

Doris gives us the perspective of a woman with a career by the age of fourteen in an era when women were not supposed to be working at all. Society also felt free to look

askance at the entertainer as a person of possibly questionable character. Snyder (1989) notes the double-edged sword a career in entertainment posed for women.

However hard and precarious such a life might be, it offered unique opportunities for one group: women. Whatever the obstacles working-class or immigrant men faced, women confronted all of these plus sex discrimination. In vaudeville (and later, the Ziegfeld *Follies*) they could see the possibility of an independent career and wages that were virtually closed to them in other fields. A turn-of-the-century newspaper article on the vaudeville world concluded, "A woman is as free and independent as a man. Generally she needs no protector, for she is usually able to take care of herself." (p. 54)

Doris was one of the first of a generation of financially independent women. Having tasted this freedom through a career in theater, her path became a winding one. Her steps seemed to always provide her that freedom of self-support.

First introduced in 1895, silent film sprouted and withered in less than thirty years with the domination of talking film in 1929. Doris Eaton Travis headed toward a career in silent film during the end of silent film's heyday. *Tell Your Children* (1924), directed by Donald Crisp, suffered from being produced in a transition period of cinema.

In *Tell Your Children*, an *International Artist* production, Doris played the leading lady. *Tell Your Children* was an extremely high budget British film, shot in location in London, New York and Egypt, yet it never made it past the trade shows. Talkies were already being produced by small film companies hoping to break through a market controlled by smug silent movie production houses. Doris, having experienced events that could have turned her career toward Hollywood filmmaking, is an interesting casualty of the rapid changes in the cinema at this point in history. Although she would

make talking films such as RKO's *Street Girl* and *The Very Idea*, her career would never solidify as a film actress.

Changes were rapid throughout the entertainment world. With television only a new invention, social dance had the opportunity to flower, not as a spectator sport, but blossom into a participant's passion. The history of social dance is only now beginning to be researched as evidenced in the brief number of publications available in the bibliography of this study. Information on its evolution is often found as a summary prior to a self-teaching manual on dance steps. Certainly dance, as other forms of entertainment in the nineteenth century, was strongly influenced by the tremendous economic and social changes that were transforming Western civilization from a rural to a largely urban society. According to Stephenson and Iaccarino (1980):

Rapid growth of the cities was produced by a migration of young people from rural areas and also by a vast number of immigrants. Living in rooming or boarding houses, working long hours at a routine machine job, these newcomers had little or no supervision of their personal lives. There was no entertainment available to them, no television, no radio, no movies. The men could find escape and companionship in the bars and brothels. For the working girls, there was essentially nothing. (p. 11)

The rise of social dance filled a large gap in the cultural development of America. Doris played an influential role in the growth of social dance. Her success with the Arthur Murray Dance Studios, which began in 1936, parallels the growth of the phenomenon of social dance as popular culture and an American industry. Arthur Murray's Dance Studios were unique in their success in addressing society's need. Doris' role as an exceptional teacher and the first franchise holder of an Arthur Murray

Studio outside New York City makes her history important to a study of the development of social dance.

An innovator of new variations on dance steps, she went on her own initiative to research the dance and music of Cuban and Brazilian cultures. Her goal was to acquire the real essence and character of those dances. She incorporated these music and dance styles into her work for her dance studio, even hiring a specific dance band capable of performing the sophisticated Latin rhythms unfamiliar to typical American dance bands of the era. Doris and her partner Cy Andrews created many original presentations of these dances during this extremely successful period in social dance. Again, without documentation, this crucial addendum to social dance history would be lost. Teaching was the act of doing for Doris, so at the time, no real records of innovation were kept, although notices of the introduction of new dances occurred frequently in the local Detroit paper.

Doris Eaton Travis' Detroit-based television program on social dance was the first of its kind and served as the model Arthur Murray and his wife Kathryn employed on their national broadcast of the same era. Doris fought Murray to keep her program on the air as a local broadcast in Detroit. With the support of the local television station she remained on the air for approximately seven years. This broadcast was a showcase for the local Detroit industrial society.

Viewing the many aspects of Doris' career provides a more sociological approach to the study of entertainment, dance and women's role therein. This study is an attempt to utilize a primary source in a timely fashion. It provides a base on which further scholarly research in the field can begin.

#### Related Literature

*The Ziegfeld Follies: Form, Content, and Significance of An American Revue*, by Geraldine Ann Maschio (1981), is the earliest available dissertation dedicated to the

study of the revue as developed by Florenz Ziegfeld. Maschio illustrates how the opulent and intensely pleasurable world created by Ziegfeld symbolized, in theatrical terms, the rewards of "the American Dream." The author considers Ziegfeld's productions the ideal, the model by which all other revues are measured.

Maschio's study illustrates how the Ziegfeld *Follies*, produced from 1907 to 1931, exemplify achievements made in the theatrical arts. The author provides insight to the understanding of Ziegfeld's productions and their place in the development of the musical revue. Maschio's analysis focuses on distinctive elements in staging, scenic and costume design. An historical narrative, Maschio's study (1981) is based on information from the Ziegfeld Collection at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, the Ziegfeld Club, the Joseph Urban Collection at Columbia University and the Library of Congress.

After presenting the development of the revue, an important chronology of the *Follies* from 1907-1931 is given. Included in this chronology is a description of each year's production. This description was a necessary component in corroborating the events of Doris Eaton Travis' life given in interviews with her. Of special importance to the study on Doris Eaton Travis is the attention Maschio gives to the *Follies of 1919*:

The *Follies of 1919* was the most successful of the editions and thus it is described in detail. This show exemplifies the art of the revue: out of a diversity of material, a synthetic form was achieved by the careful ordering of each scene.

Eddie Cantor, who performed in this edition, declared, 'From the angle of sheer amusement the 1919 production was Ziggy's masterpiece. It was one of those happy blendings that bespoke the last work in stage generalship and a perfect harmony existed between actor and material.'

The *Follies of 1919* stands as the mark of Ziegfeld's achievement. (p. 47)

None of the five dissertations on the Ziegfeld *Follies* (Maschio, Plotkins, Grossman, Stone, and Hirsch) used a primary source for interview. Doris' contact with important entertainment figures during the *Follies* era is strong justification for this topic. Not only did Doris understudy two great performers of this era, Marilyn Miller and Ann Pennington, she had personal and professional contact with such prominent New York stars of the Ziegfeld era as Fanny Brice, W. C. Fields, George and Ira Gershwin, Will Rogers, Irving Berlin, and Oscar Levant, her sister even having married Levant's brother, Harry. Because of these associations, Doris' insights and first-hand experiences are of singular importance.

*Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter and the Spectacular Revue: The Theatrical Context of Revue Songs from 1910 to 1937* by Marilyn Jane Plotkins (1982) is an analysis of representative revues and revue songs by these composers. The study examines the degree to which revue songs depend upon theatrical context for success. The Ziegfeld *Follies* from 1910 and after are a critical vehicle for the development of these songs. Plotkins illustrates the extent to which critics and audiences of this era attached the value of a song to its theatrical setting, costume, spectacular effect, or featured performer. Ziegfeld's role in the development of an environment that allowed the revue song to flourish is stressed. Moreover, the study contextualizes Ziegfeld's impact on popular song. Plotkin's study provides a foundation for understanding the impact of the songs performed by Doris Eaton Travis during her career in the musical revue.

*Sadie Salome to Baby Snooks: The Stage Career of Fanny Brice*, by Barbara Wallace Grossman (1984), the study from which the book *Funny Woman, The Life and Times of Fanny Brice* (1991) is based, is an historical narrative that chronicles the life and career of Fanny Brice. Grossman documents Brice's stage career and related activities thoroughly. The author establishes the sequence of shows in which Brice appeared from year to year and, when possible, discusses the role played and/or the

songs and sketches she performed in each production. Grossman also analyzes Brice's development as a comedienne and the evolution of her mature comic style, considering both in the context of American popular entertainment. A useful model in constructing the narrative for the study of Doris Eaton Travis, it also served as a cross-reference to facts and events surrounding Travis' career.

*The Ziegfeld Follies: A Study of Theatrical Opulence from 1907 to 1931* by Rosaline Biason Stone (1985) reconstructs detailed descriptions of the 1907, 1915, 1921 and 1931 *Follies*. At the time of this study, books written about Ziegfeld only mentioned isolated scenes, costumes and stage business. Stone provides a more complete background on these productions through photos, scripts, playbills, and descriptions of sets and stage designs. Because this study does not discuss the *Follies* of 1918-20 in which Doris participated, further research to include these years should be done.

John Emile Hirsch's *Glorifying The American Showgirl: A History of Revue Costume in the United States from 1866 to the Present* (1988), is an ambitious cataloguing of the costumes of this era. The author defends this study with the philosophy "the costumes and the motifs employed by the designers were the real stars of the revue" (Hirsch, 1988). Hirsch focuses on the spectacular costumes of the revue worn by showgirls and chorus girls. He maintains it was the costumes themselves that attracted audiences and differentiated the revue from other theatrical forms. This study provides important analysis and pictorial support of costumes worn by performers such as Doris Eaton Travis in the *Follies*.

Formal biographies of Doris and her siblings appear in *The Ziegfeld Touch: The Life and Times of Florenz Ziegfeld*, by Richard and Paulette Ziegfeld (1992). Richard, a cousin of Florenz Ziegfeld Jr., quoted Doris Eaton Travis in his narrative. Photographs of Doris and her family are included in this publication. Documentation of the actual numbers Doris performed in the 1920 *Follies* can be found in *Fanny Brice*,

by Herbert G. Goldman (1992). (See Appendix C.) Both of these publications aided in supporting facts and events of Doris Eaton Travis' life.

*A Historical View of Twentieth-Century American Society As Witnessed Through Musical Theatre: 1927 - Present* by Lori Dianne Young draws parallels between historical and social conditions in society with selected Broadway musicals. Young finds that analysis of selected musical plots supports her hypothesis that musicals reflect not only historical fact but "ongoing issues of social concern in twentieth-century American society" (Young, 1992). Of concern to the study on Doris Eaton Travis are her descriptions and analysis of social conditions, including women's rights, beginning in the 1920s. Information from this study helped frame the social context in which Doris Eaton Travis began and conducted her career in entertainment.

Mary Brown Carson's study, *Reconstructing Experiences of A Lifetime: An Oral History of Educator Alma Marie Gloeckler* (1992) is supported by the areas of history, sociology and women's studies at San Jose State University. This thesis is an interpretative biography of a woman born in 1906 into a Mennonite family homesteading in Saskatchewan, Canada. The study is "a chronological presentation of the people, places and events that influenced Alma's life" Carson (1992).

Spanning many important events in history, Carson's study is a model of how one person's life, particularly a women at the turn of the century, can mirror important events and changes in society. Using Alma as a primary source allows the subject's own words to appear throughout the narrative. This timely, qualitative research style is rare in fields outside history, sociology or women's studies. It served as a model for the use of oral history in the study on Doris Eaton Travis.

*The Early Development of the Motion Picture (1887-1909)* by Joseph North (1949) provides historical background in early cinema. Unfortunately the scope of the dissertation ends prior to Doris Eaton Travis' entrance onto the silent picture scene. Its



content, however, proved important in constructing a foundation for her experiences in silent film.

Joseph Marusiak seeks to change the common opinion that British films are irrelevant or marginal at best in his dissertation, *Images of British Cinema: A Study of the Critical Perception of Motion Pictures*. Murusiak states:

I hope to show how British cinema has been devalued in some discursive specimens, and I hope to demonstrate that the discourse on cinema is a factor in our understanding of cinema. To use Bordwell's phrase, the "social activity" of critical interpretation can distort understanding or can obviate certain understanding or favor others. (p. 17)

Two films that featured Doris Eaton Travis were British. The opinions of this study shed light on the success or lack thereof of her films and subsequent film career. It also helps provide an overall perspective in determining the merit of British film as a genre.

Paul Leslie Tyler's dissertation, *Sets on the Floor: Social Dance as an Emblem of Community in Rural Indiana* (1992) studies the element of community in dance within local cultures. In this study it is indeed difficult to separate the topic of square dance from the community's sense of self. Tyler believes popular idioms of social dance define community. His study focuses on the unique interplay between the dance and its community as enacted in cultural performances in and around Hoagland, Indiana.

Tyler (1992) illustrates:

The way these people choose to dance tells not only outsiders, but themselves as well, who they are, what are the dimensions of their community, and what is the nature of communal life in this place. I will explore how social dancing and square

dancing are strategies for creating community, for enacting it, and for symbolizing it even where it exists imperfectly. (p. 11)

The study utilizes fieldwork in the taping of dancing events and oral histories given by members of the community. Tyler's work not only serves as a model in structuring an oral history, but it gives a foundation for the sense of community created by the dance studio as Doris Eaton Travis not only experienced, but created.

### Limitations

This study is limited to the life of Doris Eaton Travis from 1918 to 1968. Although notable for their work in theatre, other members of her family are discussed only when topics relate to activities of Doris' life. This study does not focus on the history of theatre, the Ziegfeld *Follies*, or the Arthur Murray Dance Studios. Background information on these topics is presented only to provide context and to frame the comments of Doris Eaton Travis.

### Procedures

This study was based on interviews with Doris Eaton Travis. Through these interviews, Doris provides an oral narrative of her career from 1918 to 1968. Preliminary interviews that provided a foundation for this study were conducted by Dr. Roger Rideout and the author from November of 1994 to March of 1995. Additional data was collected through:

1. Structured, semi-structured and non-structured interviews with Doris Eaton Travis.
2. Review of pertinent documents, such as newspaper articles, production playbills, music manuscripts, letters, and other professional memorabilia that Doris has collected.

3. Interviews with other members of Doris Eaton Travis' family completed prior to this study.
4. Observation of the subject directly recorded on film and video media.

As suggested by Bogdan (1982), a form that contains the researcher's description of the study, what will be done with the findings, as well as other pertinent information, signed by the participant, was taken as evidence of informed consent. Permission to do preliminary work (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) prior to submitting the proposal granted by Doris Eaton Travis (Appendix A).

Questions for the structured and semi-structured interviews resulted from outcomes of the non-structured interview data that was collected. According to Fetterman (1991), "Ideally, the qualitative researcher begins with informal interviews to learn the appropriate questions to ask. Later, as the researcher gains a basic working knowledge of the social setting, the questions become more refined, focused, and structured. The practice of asking structured questions prematurely, before gaining adequate grounding in the social system, runs against the methodological grain of qualitative research."

Questions to Doris centered around her experiences in the theatre, in early film and as a dance instructor and director of Arthur Murray Dance Studios. (A list of typical questions is contained in Appendix B.) Interviews completed by Dr. Roger Rideout and the author prior to this study served as a foundation for interviews conducted by the author in this study. In the interviews, replies often extended beyond the scope of the specific questions. Yet, these responses provided useful adjunct information enhancing and directing the study. Interviews with the subject, Doris Eaton Travis, were scheduled and conducted on a regular basis throughout the course of the study. These interviews were audio taped and transcribed by the author. After a narrative was formed from the interviews, all documents were read and verified for accuracy by the subject.

Authors of dissertations on topics related to the *Follies*, (Stone, 1985; Maschio, 1981; Hirsch, 1988; and Grossman, 1984) have used newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, sheet music, costume designs, set designs and playbills as foundations for research. These studies have drawn from personal scrapbooks and photos and have also drawn on the resources of established theatrical archives such as The New York Public Library's Performing Arts Collection at Lincoln Center, the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, the Museum of the City of New York's Theatre and Music Collection, the Ziegfeld Club and the Shubert Archive. Visits to these locations from January 4th through January 5th, 1996 provided preliminary information necessary to construct the background for this research. These resources continued to be consulted throughout the course of this study. Personal contacts such as Maryann Chach, archivist of the Shubert Archives, Nils Hanson, administrator of the Ziegfeld Girls Club, Dr. J. R. Morris, co-author with Doris Eaton of an unpublished manuscript on the Eaton family, *The Days We Danced*, (1997) and John Griffith, director biography series at the Arts and Entertainment Network were available to assist with research.

The study presents a narrative based on interviews with Doris. Scrapbooks, photographs and videos in Doris Eaton Travis' private archives were readily available. They were particularly important in documenting the transitional years of silent film and musical revue work between the coasts, as well as the development of the Arthur Murray Dance Studio franchises.

The various data sources available for this study allows for triangulation--data collected from one source will be compared to data collected from other sources to cross-check the accuracy of the information (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In this study facts from the interviews can be corroborated by articles, clippings, videos, and production files located in important theatrical archives. Archives documenting Doris' activities in the theatre include the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, the New York City Museum Archives, and the Shubert Theatre Archives. In

addition, information on Doris and the Eaton family is available in the archives of the Ziegfeld Follies Girls Club in New York.

#### Overview of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of this study is guided by the following outline. Chapter two offers background information on the musical revue, Florenz Ziegfeld, silent film, social dance and Arthur Murray's dancing studios. Such background provides an historical framework to chronicle the events of Doris Eaton Travis' life. Chapters three through five contain narrative based on interviews given by Doris Eaton Travis on the events of her life and career. Chapter three focuses on Doris Eaton Travis' career with the Ziegfeld *Follies*. Chapter four highlights her career in film and the transitional experiences that followed in various musical revues in California and New York. Chapter five presents Doris Eaton Travis' career with the Arthur Murray Dance Studios. Chapter six provides a summary, conclusions and offers recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Topics discussed in this chapter provide background information for documenting Doris Eaton Travis' career. An overview of the musical revue and Florenz Ziegfeld, silent film and social dance instruction via Arthur Murray's dancing studios is given to aid in understanding the role Doris Eaton Travis' played in the history of theatre, film and dance.

#### The Musical Revue and Florenz Ziegfeld

Although the sources of the musical revue can be traced throughout the history of popular entertainment, the modern revue was born in French fairground entertainment in the 18th century. The *revue de fin d'annee* was a theatrical form which transmitted, through a series of figurative scenes, those songs, events, or persons that captured the public's attention over the course of the year. The form crystallized in productions at the Theatre Porte Saint-Martin between 1840 to 1845 as two acts subdivided into ten to fifteen scenes. Short intermissions divided the acts that concluded with a finale in act one and a grand finale in act two. Often, the featured performer was a female star. By 1869 the *Folies Bergere* of France introduced a female chorus in lavish settings and costumes. By the late 19th century, the revue increasingly referred to spectacular musical entertainments of this type.

The first full-length revue presented in America was *The Passing Show*, which opened at New York City's Casino Theatre on May 12, 1894. Its producer, George Lederer (1861-1935), referred to it as a "topical extravaganza." *The New York Times* described it as "a kind of entertainment little known in this country. It is a review, in

dramatic form, of the chief events of the past year-political, historical and theatrical" (Plotkins 1982).

The word "revue" is French for our English spelling of the word "review." Although the American revue may have had its roots in European ballet, spectacles and extravaganzas, its soul was tied to such American theatrical traditions as the minstrel show and vaudeville. The French spelling was an attempt to claim glamour and sophistication. General acceptance of the French spelling in this country came with the gradual institutionalizing of the Ziegfeld *Follies* of Florenz Ziegfeld.

The development of the revue was due largely to its success in combining the best features of 19th century popular forms with the kind of sophistication and integration demanded of legitimate theatre. The popular forms not only provided an abundant resource of performers, writers, and designers to future producers of revues but demonstrated the strength and durability of their respective appeals to a popular audience. The episodic nature of the revue made these strengths and resources easily adaptable.

The development of the spectacular revue coincides with the career of Florenz Ziegfeld who was the most imitated revue producer of his day. While the *Follies* of 1907 had a modest beginning, with its operating budget of \$13,000, it was still considered unexceptional for the time. In Plotkin's (1988) study she points out:

It had an obligatory plot, and no material of lasting value. The revue, as an independent form, had not yet developed its identity so that the trade papers reviewed the 1907 production under *Vaudeville Acts*. Still, Ziegfeld was already developing a reputation for producing shows of exceptional style and sophistication.

Not since the days of *The Passing Show*, which was a pretty good review of its kind, has anything so novel, so audacious, so elaborate, so generous in measure of diversion and revelation been set before theatregoers of Boston.

One year later Ziegfeld made his mark. After the success of *The Parisian Mode* and *The Soul Kiss* the sophisticated amusement seeker has learned to have confidence in the Ziegfeld trademark, and he is not likely to be disappointed with this latest effort (p. 28).

Plotkins (1988) continues to support the theory that for over two decades Ziegfeld set the standards of style and luxury. Accordingly he stimulated the business of and audience for the American musical theatre, providing the impetus for the more than one hundred spectacular revues that opened on Broadway during the 1920s. The most successful of these included *George White's Scandals*, *The Passing Show*, *Earl Carroll's Vanities*, and the *Music Box Revue*.

The development of the *Follies* and the spectacular revue can also be seen as part of a larger economic boom that invigorated all of Broadway in the 1920s. Theater buildings could be purchased cheaply and were a good investment. In spite of the 1919 actors' strike, production costs remained low. Owners were protected by a stop clause that forced a show to be evicted if receipts fell below a certain rate. If a show ran in the black, the owners collected a forty percent profit.

The revue was able to develop existing talent through successful collaborations and represents a major contribution to the American musical theatre. According to Lehman Engel in Plotkins' (1988) study, every major American songwriter before 1950 got his start in the revue. The list of performers, designers, choreographers, and sketch writers is equally impressive.

In the case of the *Follies*, it was not just Ziegfeld's ability to acquire talent, but his ability to hold on to it that contributed so importantly to the perfection of his formula.



The polish, integration, and style that distinguished the *Follies* from its imitators certainly reflected the quality and continuity of Ziegfeld's collaborations. Plotkin (1988) states:

Joseph Urban designed thirteen out of fifteen *Follies*, Ned Wayburn staged seven, Julian Mitchell staged eight, and Harry B. Smith wrote most of the early books. Dave Stamper, Gene Buck, Irving Berlin, and Victor Herbert contributed material throughout the period. Performers faithful to the *Follies* included Fanny Brice, Marilyn Miller, Bert Williams, W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, Ann Pennington, Ed Wynn, Kay Laurel, and Lillian Lorraine. (p. 29)

Ziegfeld's persistence in procuring and maintaining "the best money could buy" (Plotkin, 1988), made the *Follies* a national institution by 1919. Four years later, it was in decline. Ziegfeld's stars began to leave him for musical shows based on a book or actual plot, and native and imported revues won audiences by offering intimacy, vitality, literacy, wit, and spontaneity in the place of opulence.

### Silent Film

Silent film emerged out of developments in both science and entertainment technology. According to Parkinson (1995), "The 20th century's dominant art form was born out of the 19th century predilection for machinery, movement, optical illusion and public entertainment."

The first 'movies' were not intended to be either projected or silent, but rather to copy the design of the phonograph. In 1887, Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) and his assistant, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson (1860-1935), began work on a combination machine for seeing and hearing. Edison's West Orange Laboratory developed a process to etch photographs onto metal cylinders. While this, along with

many early concepts, proved unworkable, Edison and Dickson proceeded to synthesize elements from every stage of the evolution of the moving image to produce a camera called the Kinetograph in 1890. The following year they developed the Kinetoscope, a peep show machine used to view the motion record pictures taken by the Kinetograph. The Kinetograph inspired the later constructions of the Lumière, Paul, and Armat motion picture machines, which laid the foundations for today's motion pictures.

*The Black Maria*, Raff and Gammon's Kinetoscope parlours, were opened in 1894. The parlours showed short action scenes from popular events such as vaudeville acts and boxing. These scenes were presented as brief unedited clips, no longer than the length of the action itself. Yet, Parkinson (1995) states "the birth of the cinema is attributed to the first demonstration to a paying audience of the Lumières Cinematographe in the Salon Indien, a basement room of the Grand Cafe' in Paris, on the 28th of December in 1895."

Auguste (1862-1954) and Louis (1864-1948) Lumière developed a portable, hand-cranked camera capable of shooting, printing and projecting moving pictures and were soon filming around the world to produce a catalogue of general, military, comic and scenic views. Lumières' style allowed for a basic narrative pattern of beginning, middle and end. According to Fell (1979) their *L'Arroseur arrosé* was the first truly narrative film.

By the years 1896-1898 motion pictures achieved considerable popularity both in the houses where they were projected on a screen and in the parlors where they were viewed in peep show machines. Although the trend was to concentrate on brief films of fifty feet, that could be shown in both the projector and the restrictive peep show, there was also experimentation with longer, more elaborate motion pictures. Between 1900-1903 film makers made the transition from short subjects of fifty feet to story motion pictures that were one-reel long.

As a variety of film makers evolved, with them came innovative techniques to utilize this new story-telling technology. George Méliès (1861-1938), considered to be 'the father of narrative film' produced more than five hundred films between 1896 and 1906. Edwin S. Porter (1870-1941), as a projectionist for Edison, began to "appreciate that the syntactic unit of the narrative film was not the scene but the shot" (Parkinson, 1995). Porter's film, *The Life of an American Fireman* is significant for its innovations of the depiction of onscreen thought and the use of documentary footage for a fictional purpose. In his *The Great Train Robbery* of 1903, Porter overlapped shots to increase tension and used 'pans' and 'tilts' to follow the action, adding to the fluidity and intensity of the narrative. The close-up shot was first used to personalize and objectify events by George Albert Smith in *Grandma's Reading Glass* (1900).

London-based producer Cecil Hepworth's innovations put Great Britain, for a brief period of time, in the lead of cinema development. Hepworth's 1905 film, *Rescued by Rover*, expanded on Porter's advances in continuity to demonstrate contextual value to a film's pace and meaning. Some of Hepworth's new techniques included traveling shots, screen geography and 'implied' information. These techniques were used to create a product that was suspenseful and unrivaled in narrative construction and rhythm.

While motion pictures of this period embodied very slight themes, they developed the public's taste for longer subjects. Motion pictures three hundred to six hundred feet in length began to appear. As the demand for projected motion pictures increased, producers, no longer constrained by the economic necessity of creating short subjects for the peep show, gladly produced longer pictures.

The chief beneficiary of advances by Porter and Hepworth was D. W. Griffith, (1875-1948) who revolutionized motion picture drama. His innovations include the large or close-up figure, distant views, sustained suspense, the 'fade out,' and restraint in acting techniques. Parkinson (1995) points out:

He was an intuitive refiner and extender of existing cinematic methods, which he combined with the conventions of Victorian art, literature and drama in order to tell his stories. (p. 23)

Parkinson (1995) continues:

Griffith also transformed the art of screen acting, right down to instituting rehearsals. Aware that the camera could magnify even the slightest gesture or expression, he insisted on restraint and an adherence to a range of movements and mannerisms which clearly denoted certain emotions, personality traits and psychological states. He invariably cast to suit particular physical types, and assembled a company that comprised some of the leading names of the silent era, including Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Mary Pickford, Blanche Sweet, Lionel Barrymore, Donald Crisp, Henry B. Walthall and Wallace Reid. (p. 24)

As cinema technology developed, so did the talent to exploit it. Making money became a preoccupation of many associated with the development of the cinema. Fell (1979) states this occurred as "a new movie business learned to mass produce entertainment as other industrialists had manufactured cars, breakfast cereal, and bars of soap."

Consolidating production and exhibition, major studios regularized the financing of ambitious projects and systematized production. Assembly-line methods of the large studios encouraged formulized products, so that films, both long and short, were increasingly molded into categories shaped by traditions of audience convention. North (1973) points out:

As a new phenomenon, it is logical that exhibition and distribution had not advanced to the same level as production of this medium. The ideas for an economical and expeditious method of distributing motion pictures was evolved in 1902-1903 with the establishment of the first exchange; and the idea for an economical and popular method of exhibiting motion pictures was evolved in 1905-1906, with the establishment of the screen theatre. (p. 5)

In 1914 'feature films,' the name given movies greater than three reels, increased demands on the studios. These movies cost more to make and fewer could be produced. Such productions needed larger audiences who were willing to pay more money. Prices rose from nickels and dimes to quarters and higher as audiences proved to be willing to pay for this entertainment "in luxurious atmospheres with uniformed ushers and sonorous pipe organs." (Fell 1979) With the development of the picture palace, distribution of film ran to graded patterns of attractiveness: first-, second-, and third-run houses. The best available locations got the best picture first and paid more for this priority.

A negative for investors in the development of feature films was the money required to produce them. Feature films cost \$10,000 to \$20,000 as opposed to \$500-a-reel needed for earlier films. Distributors began investing their own money in production. William W. Hodkinson, an executive, regularized this system. He persuaded distributors to lend capital to designated filmmakers to insure the supply of feature films. By working for percentages, both factions shared in a film's popularity. Hodkinson named his organization Paramount. Similar rival organizations were formed such as Universal, Fox Film Company, Lewis J. Selznick Pictures Company, and Metro Pictures.

Film executives soon realized the advantages of combining filmmaking and film marketing. Film companies became a national commodity. By the early twenties,

studios were listed on the public stock exchange. Fell (1979) further supports this theory by saying, "big business in Hollywood considered its money invested not risked and expected guaranteed returns. Since profit originated in the pockets and pocketbooks of movie-going millions, audience 'predispositions' became matters of increasing concern, sometimes anxiety."

As a result of this, the success of the 'star' was soon based on their draw at the box-office. No matter what training, or lack thereof, actors brought to film, success rested on audience reception. Actors such as Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks succeeded in establishing a rapport with the public and their names became symbols of guaranteed success. Audiences came to the movies to see their favorite 'stars' and cared little about the plot of the stories. Fell (1979) states:

Hollywood of the silent feature slowly evolved into a new and unique social phenomenon, where the 'stars' made more annually than a spectator could earn in a lifetime; where company owners were learning to buy and sell talent the better to hold lucrative fantasies in place; where writers, directors, and cameramen became servants both to actors and owners, while developing the skills on which the others depended. (p. 87)

The growth of the silent film industry can easily be illustrated in salaries paid to the actors. As an example, when Mary Pickford was contracted to film the play, *A Good Little Devil*, according to Fell (1979):

She received an exceptional \$500 a week. Her substantial success in the Famous Players films enriched both the company and Pickford. The salary rose to one, then two thousand dollars weekly. Reinforced with her mother's determination, Pickford knew her worth. Only Chaplin rivaled her popularity. In

1916, both stung and inspired by Charlie Chaplin's contract of \$13,000 a week, Mary Pickford negotiated \$10,000 every Monday plus a \$300,000 bonus to be given when her pictures had earned that sum beyond the initial investment.

(p. 87)

Such salary increases reflected the box-office appeal of certain popular stars as well as the general inflation of the silent movie industry. The financial success of the silent film industry allowed a large faction of successful studios to ignore attempts to combine sound and film. After all, Edison had tried to merge the Kinetoscope to his Kinetophone way back in 1893. The two machines were wired together by acoustic headsets to the individual spectator. The concept failed without proper amplification. Another attempt at merging words and picture occurred when a phonograph accompaniment was synchronized to a projector by D. W. Griffith in *Dream Street*, of 1921. Neither adaptation proved successful.

The technology of sound-on-film was developed in America by Lee De Forest. His audion amplifier provided volume that could be electronically produced. As early as 1924, the Western Electric Company, a subsidiary of American Telephone and Telegraph, having purchased De Forest's patents, attempted to market the idea of sound pictures to Hollywood. Large studios denied interest as they were smug in their profits from the already secure silent film industry.

Smaller firms who had been shut out of the first-run theater business saw sound pictures as their chance to break through the stronghold of the large studios. Such a firm named Warner Brothers successfully produced a sound picture titled *The Jazz Singer*, making all other Hollywood companies take note. Soon after this breakthrough followed the well-known Fox *Movietones*. By late 1929, the last major American silent film appeared and nine thousand movie houses had been converted to sound.

### Social Dance Instruction and the Arthur Murray Dance Studios

As early as the 17th century, dancing was considered important for the socially prominent. This allowed the local "dancing master" or "professor of dancing" to play a prominent role in upper class society. Stephenson and Iaccarino (1980) state, "the first dancing master came to New York City as early as 1686 to teach manners to the children of the well-to do. Dancing had attained respectability by the mid-1700s and by 1800 there were seven dancing academies in the city."

Allen Dodworth opened his first dance academy in New York in 1842. Dictating the direction of social dance through much of the 19th century, Dodworth believed the purpose of the dancing school to be not one of amusement, but to provide a place that deals with "matters to do with men's souls." His book, *Dancing and Its Relation to Education and Social Life* (1885), in use for more than three decades, was a cornerstone in the foundation of instructional literature for social dance. Illustrating the influence of social dance on a multitude of aspects of 19th century life, the book includes advice to gentlemen to remove their hats before dancing, not to make passes at their partners, and not to spit on the floor. While, indeed, the goal of the book is to provide a description of the dances of the day, the pages on proper manners, the *toilette* and the *etiquette* of the ballroom, provide a convincing argument for the expansive influence social dance played in the lives of its devotees.

Ward McAllister, a social lion of the late 19th century, saw the marketing advantages for the dance instructor who stressed potential improvement in social behavior through dance training. McAllister convinced socially ambitious mothers in New York City that the real power of the dancing class was to propel their children up the social ladder. He started McAllister's *Family Circle Dancing Classes*. Stephenson and Iaccarino (1980) point out that these dancing classes were "parties by invitation only. Girls of eight or nine wearing pastel dresses and white gloves learned to smile



and curtsy; boys of the same age donned blue jackets and ties and learned to ask a young lady to dance." A marketing breakthrough, the dancing class suddenly became synonymous with social success.

America's most well-known dance instructors prior to the first world war were Vernon and Irene Castle. Born in England in 1887, Vernon Blyth received a degree in engineering from Birmingham University and shortly afterward came to New York. He adopted the stage name Castle and appeared with some success in several successive productions by Lew Fields. In 1911 he married Irene Foote. Shortly thereafter they went to Paris to take part in a musical show. Failure of the show made them turn to exhibition dancing at the *Cafe' de Paris*. In 1912 they returned to New York City and for the next two years were the most publicized dance team in the world. Adopted by New York society, they commanded fantastic prices for dance lessons and exhibitions. *Castle House* became an established studio for instruction in "refined" dancing. The Castle's instructional book, *Modern Dancing* (1914), described the dances that met their approval, such as the *one-step*, *hesitation waltz*, *tango*, and *maxixe*.

The Castles were innovative in their promotion of social dance instruction. *Castle Park* was established at Coney Island so vacationing New Yorkers could continue their dance lessons. There was a *Castle Club*, of which Vernon was president, and *Castles-by-the-Sea* at elegant Long Beach. In 1914 they appeared together in the Charles Dillingham musical *Watch Your Step*, with songs written by Irving Berlin. In 1915 they were featured at *Castles in the Air*, the roof-garden of the Forty-Fourth Street Theatre, at a salary of \$1,500 a week. (Stephenson and Iaccarino, 1980).

The death of Vernon Castle in 1918 in an airplane crash in Texas ended the rein of the Castles in social dance. Their legacy of showmanship and marketing insight was, however, handed down to perhaps their most famous pupil, Arthur Murray.

Born Murray Teichman in New York in 1895, Arthur's commercial instincts were aroused when he won a waltz contest in 1912 at the age of seventeen. That same year he invested two hundred dollars in dance lessons from Vernon and Irene Castle, and shortly afterward began his own career as a teacher of social dance. In 1919, at the age of twenty-four, he briefly attended Georgia Tech. Dancing pulled him away, however, and he began marketing his mail-order dance lessons.

As in all artistic specializations, there is an attempt by traditionalists to keep instruction in the control of the master teacher. The industry of dance instruction is no different, seen in yearly national meetings held throughout the 19th and 20th century to determine the "appropriate" dance for each year's instruction. Despite this effort to control, there also has always been some attempt to commercialize and mass produce dance instruction. The most notable of these attempts has been the one to make dancing available without the presence of an instructor. According to Stevenson and Iaccarino, "Even in the nineteenth century, there were books such as *Dancing without a Master*, complete with instructions and simple foot diagrams. In 1913 in Peoria, Illinois, The National School of Dancing for Home Instruction was established by Julian Karl. In 1918 Max Rothkugel of New York City published *Dancing Charts for Home Instruction* with foot diagrams tied to individual notes of the musical score."

All this was nothing in comparison to the event that rocked the dance establishment in 1920 when Arthur Murray as a new young dance teacher, having taught under the Castles and G. Hepburn Wilson in New York, offered home instruction with an advertisement entitled, "How I became popular overnight!" Taken from its republication in his book published in 1959, Murray's ad went on to say,

Girls used to avoid me when I asked for a dance. Even the poorest dancers preferred to sit against the wall rather than dance with me. But I didn't wake up until a partner left me standing alone in the middle of the floor. That night I went

home feeling pretty lonesome and mighty blue. As a social success, I was a first-class failure. (p. 54)

The reader need only clip the handy coupon and send for a free dance lesson to begin his or her journey toward becoming a popular dance partner. Enrollees were provided with books of dance instruction containing printed footstep diagrams that illustrated the current popular dances. Arthur Murray's marketing strategy was beyond 'successful,' with some five million people requesting his home dance lessons. The world of dance instruction was in a tither. According to Stephenson and Iaccarino (1980):

This was too much for the established dance teachers. In August of 1923 the International Association of Masters of Dancing stated that, 'Arthur Murray, who has established a dancing association to give instruction by mail, has no connection with our organization.' At the same time, the group approved a new waltz and fox-trot, pledged a continued fight against jazz and other 'unseemly' dancing, and voted an unceasing war on 'so-called dancing instructors who claim to be able to teach the art of dancing through the mails.' (p. 38)

By 1925, Arthur Murray had opened a studio on Forty-Third Street in New York City. While his mass mailings appealed to the average American, the posh studio environment appealed to such elite society figures as Mrs. Merriweather Post Davies, the Kennedys, Harvey Firestone, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, Vincente Minnelli and Winthrop Rockefeller (Murray, 1959). Thirty years later, the business had grown to become a chain of franchised studios throughout the United States. In 1959 *The Saturday Evening Post* listed the Arthur Murray Dance Studios as a \$150,000,000 a year business with branch managers earning as much as \$80,000 a year.

Holding a bit of a grudge against its huge commercial success, recent social dance historians are quick to point out the beginning of the end of the Arthur Murray monopoly. Spending tremendous sums on advertising, the Arthur Murray Studios attracted millions of students from all walks of life. While this growth of the large dance studios revolutionized the teaching of dance, unrestricted growth seemed to have also produced problems. Stephenson and Iaccarino (1980) state:

the large studios have in recent years come under increasing pressure from government agencies because of alleged high-pressure salesmanship, 'bait and switch' techniques and the use of long-term contracts. In 1960 the government ordered the Arthur Murray studios to stop using bogus contests and high-pressure tactics to sell their courses of dance instruction. In 1962 the California Office of the Attorney General began a statewide effort to stamp out a dancing school racket that reaped 'many millions of dollars' from gullible persons. In 1976 Governor Carey of New York State signed a bill providing customers with safeguards in dealing with dancing schools. It is no longer necessary to sign a contract before sampling the instruction, and cancellation fees will be proportional to the services used or completed. Evidently some customers had signed 'lifetime' contracts requiring an initial payment of \$12,000 or more! (p. 40)

The mid-1960s marked the beginning of the end of the golden years for the Arthur Murray Dancing Studios. Heavy advertising and outrageous promises to students via national campaigns created tensions between the franchise owners and Murray's New York-based studio. As tensions rose, Arthur Murray sold his interests in the Arthur Murray Dancing Studios and retired to California.

### CHAPTER III

#### A CAREER ON THE STAGE

##### The Eaton Family

Mary Fletcher Saunders Eaton (1873-1956), known as Mamie, grew up in a staunchly religious household. Her grandmother had been a national officer in the Women's Christian Temperance Union and her parents were leaders in the Methodist Church of Portsmouth, Virginia.

An overwhelming atmosphere of conservatism from her family prevented the young Mamie, totally enamored with acting, from participating in anything other than school or church readings. Doris alludes in her unpublished manuscript with J. R. Morris, *The Days We Danced*, (1997) that although Mamie was careful not to "let any of us kids get involved in professional theater until after their (Mamie's parents) death" all the while Mamie took her children to as many performances as possible. Performances at school and church were kosher and "on the occasion when Mama took us to a play at a local commercial theater, she wouldn't dare tell her folks where we had been." This independent streak appeared later when Mamie stood up to her family by running away from home at the age of 16 to marry Charles Eaton.

Tellingly little is known of Doris' father, Charles Henry Eaton (1874-1939). Also of Portsmouth, no biographical information of him is contained in Doris' *The Days We Danced* (1997). Doris does say, "Papa had made only \$18 a week when he worked for the Norfolk *Landmark* as a linotype operator, and then \$28 a week from *The Washington Post*." She also discusses his inability to hold a full-time job after the age of 42. His lack of ability to improve his earning power seems to have placed a wedge between himself and his family, so much so that throughout Doris' life he spent much

of his time working all night, sleeping during the day. During one period in New York he rented his own room away from the rest of the family. Charles died on his way home from one of his late nights with his blue-collar friends at the newspaper, having fallen and cracked his head on the pavement.

The voids surrounding Charles' life may have been caustic for Mamie's decision to attain a show business career for her children. The Eaton family's theatrical career may also have been due to Mamie's own squelched theatrical aspirations. Did theater seem the solution because more children were born than could be supported by the father's income or did the mother have children with a secret desire of having a theatrical family of her own? This is not known. Whichever provided the motivation, the achievements of the seven children of this family, with no prior connections to the industry of entertainment are impressive. Those achievements were, without question, the result of the investment of time and energy by Mamie Saunders Eaton as well as by her oldest daughter, Evelyn, who seemed groomed as a surrogate mother.

Evelyn (1894-1980) dedicated her life to achieving a stage career for her younger brothers and sisters. It was, perhaps, too convenient for her to be left taking care of the younger ones as Mamie went on the road with each production's 'new star' from the family. Married in 1917 to Bob Mills, Evelyn had three children of her own who developed successful stage careers. She remained, at her death, disillusioned about her life's work in regard to the family.

Robert (1896-1935) was never interested in a theater career. In 1916, he left the family to be a doorman at a New York hotel. He joined the army in 1917 and returned, married. He and his wife, Jean ran a domestic service throughout their lives until they divorced shortly before his death due to drug and alcohol abuse.

Pearl (1898-1958) spent five years in show business, primarily in Ziegfeld's *Midnight Frolic*. A well-known dance director/choreographer, Pearl was Broadway's first woman stage manager and RKO's first dance director. She married Harry Levant,

but later divorced. While struggling with alcohol and her inability to re-enter show business as a writer, Pearl was murdered in her apartment. Neighbors reported knowing she had a large sum of cash in the apartment the night before the incident. The case was never solved.

Mary (1901-1948) the most famous of the children, married three times. She first married film director Millard Webb in 1929, then Charles Emery and finally Eddie Lawton just a few years before her death. She died of a reported heart attack, although Doris points, in her unpublished manuscript *The Days We Danced*, that alcohol abuse and sleeping pills probably contributed to her death.

Joseph (1907- ), although he appeared in the *1921 Follies*, often remained away from the family in the care of others while they went on tour. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, had a one-year contract writing for RKO, and served in World War II. After the war, he joined the Eaton dance-studio business and eventually became a Regional Director for Arthur Murray Dance Studios. He is married and currently living in Michigan.

Charlie (1911- ) never married. His career included work as a comedian, actor and vaudevillian. After military service, he too, went to work for Doris in the Detroit dance studios. He specialized in Latin dance and large group instruction. He currently resides in Norman, Oklahoma where Doris and her husband, Paul, still live.

### Show Business Chronology of the Eaton Family

The following family show business chronology outlines the show business appearances of each family member.

In 1908, Mamie enrolled Pearl, age 10, Mary, aged 7, and Doris, age 5, in dance lessons at Cora Shreve's Dancing School, in Washington, D. C. Their appearances in Shreve's dance productions launched careers that would last for almost thirty years.

In 1911, Evelyn, the oldest sister, who spent more time in the role of caretaker rather than developing her own talents, took Pearl, Mary, and Doris to try-out for parts in the Shubert's road company production of *The Blue Bird*. All three were hired.

From 1912 through 1914, five of the seven Eaton children appeared in a number of Poli stock company shows in Washington and Baltimore, including *Mrs. Wiggs and the Cabbage Patch* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. Joe, as a five year old, was often listed in the program as "Josephine" playing the part of the young female complete with long golden curls.

In 1915 Poli received permission from the Shubert's to present a Washington production of *The Blue Bird*. Mary and Doris were chosen to play the two leads. The show's success encouraged the Shuberts to do a New York revival and road show, both of which starred Mary and Doris. Pearl had a minor role in the cast.

After four months on the road in 1916, *The Blue Bird* returned to New York. Mary and Doris received excellent reviews and after a four-week run. Pearl was hired for the Winter Garden chorus of *Robinson Crusoe, Jr.* starring Al Jolson. At this point, Mamie Eaton moved her family in New York from Washington. Mary studied ballet with Theodore Kosloff. Doris and Charlie traveled with Mamie doing performances for various Poli stock companies.

In 1917, Pearl and Evelyn were in the chorus of Shubert's *The Passing Show of 1917* at the Winter Garden. Evelyn married that same year and quit show business. Impressively, Mary appeared in *Follow Me* with Anna Held, but was forced to leave because, at fifteen, she was under the legal performance age.

In 1918, Mary performed ballet in a show called *Intime* in Washington, D. C. The show received positive reviews, but was particularly notable due to President Wilson's attendance in the audience. Mary also appeared *Over the Top* on Broadway with Justine Johnstone and Ed Wynn. Significantly, *Over the Top* was the Broadway debut of Fred and Adele Astaire.



That same year Pearl became the first Eaton hired by Ziegfeld for the chorus of the Ziegfeld *Follies of 1918* which starred Will Rogers and W. C. Fields. Pearl became an assistant to Ziegfeld's dance director, Ned Wayburn. Doris was hired for the *Follies* road show and, at age 14, assumed the name of Doris Levant to pass for the legal age of 16. The rise proved fruitful as Doris was immediately hired as an understudy to Ann Pennington.

In 1919, Pearl danced in Ziegfeld's *Midnight Frolic*, at the New Amsterdam Roof Garden on 42nd Street. Doris became a specialty dancer in the *Follies of 1919*. Considered perhaps the strongest and most successful of Ziegfeld's productions, the *Follies of 1919* starred Eddie Cantor and Marilyn Miller. Doris experienced a major career break, as she understudied Marilyn Miller for this production. Indeed, she was asked to substitute for Marilyn, dancing to Irving Berlin's "Mandy," for two weeks. Mary danced in *The Passing Show of 1919*. George M. Cohan saw Mary dance in this production and hired her for *The Royal Vagabond*.

In 1920, Ziegfeld persuaded Cohan to release Mary from contract so that she could star in the *Follies of 1920*. Doris had become a *Follies* principal and Pearl continued in the *Midnight Frolic*. Doris also made appearances in two movies at Astoria, Long Island. *At the Stage Door*, with Billie Dove and *The Broadway Peacock*, with Pearl White. Both featured Doris' name and picture in advertisements of the movies.

At age 10, Charlie appeared in the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1921*. Joe quickly took his place in the *Follies of 1921* when Charlie dropped out of the production to make a movie entitled *Peter Ibbetson* at Famous Actors-Lasky Studios at Astoria, Long Island and *The Prodigal Judge* at Vitagraph studios. Mary sang a Rudolf Friml song, "Bring Back My Blushing Rose" in the *1921 Follies*. This was the year that Doris and her mother went to England and Egypt to star in the movie *Lark's Gate*, later titled *Tell Your Children*, directed by Donald Crisp.

Mary starred in the *Follies of 1922*, while Pearl went on the road with the *Midnight Frolic*. Ziegfeld hired Pearl to evaluate all dance applicants for that year's *Follies*. In 1922, Doris left for Hollywood to star in the Gorham *Follies*.

Mary starred with Eddie Cantor in *Kid Boots*, produced by Ziegfeld, in 1923. Pearl went on the road with the *Follies*, as a specialty dancer. Charlie, only 12, played the Palace, doing the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, with 10 year old Miriam Batista. Pearl starred with Texas Guinan as a specialty dancer at the El Fey Club.

In 1924, there were four Eatons on Broadway at four different theaters: Mary in *Kid Boots* with Cantor, Doris in *The Sap* with Raymond Hitchcock, Pearl in *Annie Dear* with Billie Burke, and Charlie in *Peter Pan* with Marilyn Miller.

Doris began 1925 as a dancer in *No Other Girl* with Eddie Buzzell and Mary Lawler. Doris was then hired as the leading-lady in *Big Boy*, opposite Al Jolson. Before the year's end, Doris went on the road in the John Cort production of *Suzanne*. Charlie was on the road in *The Naked Man* with Henry Hull and Ann Morrison.

In 1926, Doris went to Hollywood to star in *The Music Box Review*, with Morton Downey. Nacio Herb Brown composed *The Doll Dance* for Doris. Although never receiving official credit, Doris wrote lyrics published for the song and had her picture appear on the song cover.

In 1927 all three sisters were again on Broadway at the same time. Mary had her biggest hit in *Five O'Clock Girl* with Oscar Shaw. Doris was in the long-running *Excess Baggage* with Miriam Hopkins, Eric Dressler and Frank McHugh. Pearl was in *She's My Baby* with Bea Lilly. Charlie was on the road with *Don't Count Your Chickens* with Mary Boland.

In 1928, Doris filmed *An Affair of the Follies* with Billie Dove. Charlie created the role of Andy Hardy in the play *Skidding* with Walter Able. Charlie left the cast to go to Hollywood to star in Fox's first full-length talking picture, *The Ghost Talks*. Doris

returned to New York to appear in *Cross My Heart*. Various reviews of the performance claimed her syncopated tap-dancing stopped the show.

Doris introduced the song, "Singing in the Rain," in 1929. It was written for her by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed in the Music Box *Review* at the Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel. Doris then entered a Franchon and Marco Production, *The Serpentine Idea*, and led a dance troupe of thirty dancers in productions created to entertain between the new movie shorts presented in the old vaudeville houses along the California coast. Doris made two talking films in California, *The Very Idea* and *Street Girl*. Mary starred in, *Glorifying the American Girl*, filmed at Astoria, Long Island. The film, produced by Ziegfeld, was to bring Ziegfeld's concepts to the big screen. Mary also made *Cocoanuts* with the Marx Brothers. Pearl traveled to Hollywood to become the dance director for RKO. With them, Pearl directed *Rio Rita* and *Hit the Deck*. Charlie filmed *Harmony at Home* for Fox. Joe, after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, went to work in RKO's story department.

Around 1930 and 1931, as radio and "talking pictures" became hugely popular, vaudeville moved into the movie theaters. Doris was still dancing in "stage shows" up and down the west coast. She eventually got a role in the chorus of the Eddie Cantor movie, *Whoopie*. That would be her last film appearance. Mary went to London to star in a dancing revue called *Folly To Be Wise*. This was also Mary's last starring role. The depression negatively affected the show business careers of all the Eatons.

In 1932, Doris returned to New York as a specialty dancer in the Hollywood restaurant and club of Nils T. Granlund. Mary and Pearl, both married, left show business for good. Charlie had parts in the short running plays *Incubator*, *Tommy*, and *Growing Pains*. Charlie joined Doris in New York as they tried their hand at vaudeville.

1933 brought Doris only stock company work in Hempstead, Long Island and in Hartford, Connecticut for the Thatcher stock company. She played the *ingenue* in

modest plays such as *Stepping Sisters*, *June Moon*, *Her Unborn Child*, *As Husbands Go*, *The Late Christopher Bean*, and *Polly With A Past*. Charlie teamed up with Buster West and developed a vaudeville act.

In 1934 and 1935, Doris made her final Broadway appearance with a minor role in *Merrily We Roll Along*, with Walter Able and Mary Philips. Doris and Charlie attempted their vaudeville act, but their efforts were fruitless.

1936 marked the close of the Eaton family's work in professional theater. Charlie made his final appearance on Broadway in *Lady Luck*. Doris began her work as a teacher of dance for Arthur Murray in the New York Studios. Signaling her first real break from the preordained family pastime of appearing in theatrical performances, Doris met Cy Andrews, another dancer at the studio, and they headed for Detroit to establish the first of what would be perhaps the strongest dance studio outside New York City.

Continuing from 1938 until 1968, Doris built a chain of eighteen dance studios throughout the state of Michigan. At her request, Joe and Charlie would join her and manage two other branches within the city of Detroit. Through Doris' influence, the Detroit studios became a center for Latin dance.

### Preparing for The *Follies*

The Eatons were established as a theater family well before Doris began her first *Follies* in 1918 with Florenz Ziegfeld. With two boys and four girls to choose from, roving managers of stock companies often contacted the Eaton family to fill child roles in upcoming productions. Such notoriety came from the Eaton children's success in productions such as *The Bluebird*, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* with the Poli stock company in Washington, D. C. Child actors in stock company productions were accustomed to doing two matinees and six evening performances a week.

It was not uncommon for Doris, at the age of ten, to be performing three weeks in Washington and an additional three weeks in Baltimore with one of these well-known shows. While playing a part, Doris often found herself simultaneously rehearsing in another part for an upcoming show. Her stage talents were firmly grounded in hard work.

Doris' mother became accustomed to traveling with the children, securing accommodations for her family in area rooming houses. Mrs. Eaton found she had to be extremely thrifty, often cooking meals on a small stove in their hotel room. According to Doris, the Eaton children were always amply fed, despite their tight budget and humble rooming house accommodations.

New to the world of entertainment, Mrs. Eaton never allowed her children to take their success in the theater for granted. Knowing too well the competitive nature of show business, Mrs. Eaton always stressed humility. Doris recalls how well her mother seemed to adapt to new situations. She did not see her mother as a typical pushy stage mother, but rather as someone with a quiet will that was recognized as inner strength. Her mother was quick to point out the numbers of other young child actors waiting in the wings for stardom and often cautioned her children not to get conceited as there was always someone else to take their place.

While Doris' choice to enter the entertainment field was somewhat pre-ordained, she had her own personal love for the theater and the role it played in childhood and adolescence. Doris loved performing in the theater. The bright lights and makeup enchanted her. She found theater people interesting and colorful.

It was a fantasy world that you went into like reading a fairy story. I wasn't searching for anything. I didn't feel depressed. I wasn't abused. I wasn't limited in anyway or felt compressed. I would say that the family was gently beginning to expand socially in a level that we weren't too familiar with. It was a gradual thing.

You just took it day by day. Probably some of it rubbed off on you, but you weren't thinking about 'what's happening to me?' You just kept growing and subtle changing. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

For Doris, being in the theater was a job, work, and a way of making a living. Someone in the family needed to be working all the time. The family member who was working provided the money that supported the whole family. It was a group effort in family survival.

Yet, aside from making a living, Doris always realized the power of the theater to transcend the human spirit beyond its everyday existence. This 'being able to walk into another world, being able to walk into a fantasy,' is a common human desire Doris sees as a constant over her lifetime.

I think the fantasy of the theater and all it comprises is a very deep attraction yet for people, both men and women. I think men use theatrical personalities, or characters in the same way that women would, although they don't show it like women do. Women are more emotional let's say in that they'd like to look like Gloria Swanson and try to fix their hair like Gloria Swanson. Men would be more subtle about it. They wouldn't necessarily try to look like William S. Hart. They would certainly role-play to achieve certain things they wanted, like power. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

### The Ziegfeld *Follies*

Doris acknowledged that a noticable difference existed between the aura of burlesque and the aura of the *Follies*. Her impression was that the *Follies* was indeed 'higher art' than burlesque.

Ziegfeld always kept the 'elegance' in his productions. Now, sometimes girls wore scanty clothes, but it was never presented in a vulgar way. They were presented in the way you would see a half-clothed nude in a classical painting. I always felt this was the essence of Ziegfeld's shows, even from the beginning. They always seemed to be so lovely.

Although I didn't see much burlesque at the age of fourteen, what I did see of it was *robust*. The costumes were very scanty. The girls used to throw their things off, their stockings, their gloves, all parts of their clothes. Burlesque was more ribald. It *really* was. You *felt* a big difference, between their fun presentations and Ziegfeld's atmosphere of elegance, beauty, and exquisiteness. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Doris saw Ziegfeld attempt depth in the shows he presented, going to great lengths to present different levels of entertainment within each show. She observed the natural beauty, but pointed to the beauty of the costumes and the scenery as distinguishing features of his work. Ziegfeld's entertainment value appeared in his shows through integrating comedians whom he believed would draw a wider audience. From Ziegfeld's perspective it followed that both men and women enjoyed attending the extravagant Ziegfeld shows.

Women enjoyed the *Follies* as much as the men did because, I think, they could see *themselves* up there on the stage with the beautiful Ziegfeld girls. The men went because they were attracted by the beautiful Ziegfeld girls. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Doris contrasted this with her recollection that the main audiences attending burlesque shows were men. She did not remember women going to burlesque shows.

She recalled the difference between that form of entertainment and the *Follies* was something that could be felt.

The *Follies* allowed men to view women in a different way from how they viewed their wives. Doris felt the *Follies* brought an enlightened sensuality and openness to the viewing of beautiful women. This image seemed particularly attractive to the wealthy businessman with money to burn. According to Doris, this was a side effect.

I don't think Ziegfeld started out to do that specifically. It's just that what he developed was so attractive, so lovely and of such high quality that it attracted the educated, intellectual audience. Burlesque, instead, captured the working man as an audience. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Also, Ziegfeld was interested in exploiting youth. Youth was an important image in all he presented. Through his eyes youth *was* beauty. This must have had an affect on the self-image of such young women, often only fourteen, fifteen and sixteen years old. Ziegfeld seemed to have been sensitive to this issue as he frequently had the mothers of the youngest girls travel with them, doubling his expense at the outset.

Yet, to become successful in the *Follies* meant you were making a very good salary. Even a chorus girl was paid well by Ziegfeld. Doris felt it was indeed, often difficult for such young women to handle their success, especially the showgirls who were rushed by rows and rows of stage door johnnies after each show.

I think it's very hard for those girls who got so much adulation, with men hounding them for their company, plying them with gifts and things. You can get into a world that's unreal. They (the showgirls) fall out of it eventually, some after a longer period, some shorter. Many ended up so pitifully. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)



Doris sees not being able to make an adjustment back to a more 'normal' lifestyle after such adulation, as one of the risks of the business.

That's show business. A showgirl is beautiful for just *so* many years. She gets all this adulation and acclaim for her beauty. People make a big fuss over her. But audiences change. The next year, there's another group of girls coming up. The men who were adoring this group just turned their affections to the next group. So that first group found themselves, like so many people in show business do, with no job.

So what do they do? They're not trained for anything. They can go be a store clerk. If they want to be a secretary they have to go to school and learn something. The showgirls had no abilities but their beauty and the picture they made. That's all they seemed to have. So when that was changed, and as I say there was a new group coming up every year or so the men that were following them would change their affections each year, those girls would drop off and drop out of sight. What were they going to do? D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

It is Doris' opinion that few of the Ziegfeld showgirls would have gone into serious acting if they had not been in the *Follies*. The *Follies* seemed to be a phenomenon unto itself. She saw few of these women attempt to redirect their career into the world of serious acting.

Possibly some of them saw the hand writing on the wall soon enough, and decided to try and make it in show business another way. There may have been a handful who escaped that way, but who they were, I don't know. Some of them married quite well, you know. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Indeed, marrying 'well' seemed to be the most common post-*Follies* career. The Ziegfeld experience drew a respectable, and generally rich, crowd of suitors. Certainly being a Ziegfeld girl, a young woman was instantly placed in an exciting, if brief, career. A *Follies* girl was given the opportunity to meet people who were on a higher social level. It would have been, otherwise, extremely rare for a young woman of this era to step out of a humble existence into a strikingly different world. During this era, few, if any, careers would have been available to women outside the home. None would have allowed the rapid fire boost to the top that being a Ziegfeld girl provided.

Being a chorus girl was the easiest way to get into something. If you were good-looking enough and could dance well enough there was opportunity. There was a lot of theater in those days, you see, lots of theater, all over the country. Even small towns had little theater groups. The larger towns had the big shows where they had big chorus girl lines and that sort of thing, but there was a lot of show business all over the east coast. Most of the shows would be created from New York and Chicago, New York mostly. Naturally, girls went to New York to get into show business. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Some of Doris' peers had agents for booking their talents, some did not. Meanwhile, the 'business' of theater was controlled by men.

Different girls worked different ways. We had agents for some of the shows, agents would call you if they were casting a show and they kept abreast of the available talent on Broadway. But I don't think most showgirls had agents. I think there would be very little 'agent work' in trying to line up showgirls for a show. When Ziegfeld was setting up his shows, I don't know if he advertised for showgirls or not. I don't know how the girls came to him.

My sister Pearl got to Ziegfeld through a friend of ours, a businessman who we'd met. He became quite attached to the family and introduced Pearl to Ziegfeld, that's how she got in. I'd imagine these beautiful showgirls were introduced to Ziegfeld by business men rather than putting an ad in the paper and having a whole flock come to an audition. The dancers would audition through a newspaper ad. Ziegfeld would put an ad in for a chorus line and get response from the dancing group through that ad, but I don't think by the showgirls. I think they mostly came through friends. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

#### General Impressions of Working For Ziegfeld

Doris supports the view that Ziegfeld was known at that time to be the highest paying producer on Broadway.

I'm sure he paid the highest salaries of anybody on Broadway. Of course, when the George White Scandals came along they had to match it, naturally, which helped to elevate the whole idea of the chorus girls' position. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Each years' *Follies* opened in late May or June, ran through the summer in New York, and went on the road in October. The show would be on the road until the following May, completing a nine month run. There was a break between the closing of one show and the rehearsing of a new one. Customarily the cast rehearsed for four to five weeks. Material would be carefully prepared ahead of rehearsals, as the directors would know exactly what they wanted from each performer in each scene.

Doris describes the *Follies* as a 'type' of vaudeville show. Yet in contrast with the vaudeville show, where each act is individual and unrelated to the next, the *Follies'* cast participated in several acts throughout the show. The comedy skits were separated by

beautiful musical numbers and dancing. Each show usually opened with a big musical number followed by individual specialties the cast members had throughout the show.

General artists had little input in determining the content of the skits or routines in which they participated. According to Doris, top writers were on hand to assist the comedians with their material.

They would have writers for people like W. C. Fields and Eddie Cantor. I imagine W. C. Fields contributed a lot of his own material. Eddie Cantor probably also had some say into what he would do. But they had tough writers to write skits for those people. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

These Ziegfeld principals were well established in vaudeville before coming to Ziegfeld. Seeming to use the philosophy, if it isn't broken, don't fix it, Ziegfeld structured these veteran performers' skits around what had made them successful in vaudeville.

He used their acts as they had developed them. Then he had additional skits they participated in. I remember Fanny Brice, W. C. Fields and Ray Dooley were all in a skit together. Depending on the cast he had for the *Follies*, he would have these skits written in which different principals would play together. Eddie Cantor usually had one or two skits he performed in. You listened to their *own* specialty. Eddie Cantor sang. Fanny Brice sang and did comical routines. W. C. Fields had his juggling act. But they also became characters of these group skits. He (Ziegfeld) used their own material, then he worked in other things around them using their talents. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

According to Doris, Ziegfeld seemed to have a constant, sincere interest in all the people of the cast, both men and women alike. Despite heavy publicity, if there were dishonorable scandals, they were not apparent to Doris from her role in the cast of the *Follies*. Doris found Flo Ziegfeld to be patriarchal in his approach to the chorus members of the show.

Mr. Ziegfeld, at least to my group of chorus girls and to me, always extended a kind of fatherly approach. We always felt like we were his children, this big family. He'd come backstage, talk to us, ask us how we were, ask if everything was all right. I don't know how to express it. You got this fatherly feeling being with his chorus group. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

Ziegfeld's presence seemed to be strongly felt by the cast members. Professionalism was paramount and Ziegfeld, himself, was known to oversee individual numbers in great detail.

I recall the first *Follies* Mary and I were in together, the 1920 *Follies*. A number called *Wedding Bells* was worked out for Mary. It opened with Mary seated in a little canopy bed. The day we got the scenery rehearsal going and they had the canopy bed there, Mr. Ziegfeld was there. He was not satisfied with the way it hung or the way the drapes were. He had Mary get in and out of that bed, I bet, twenty times because he wanted her to get out of it a certain way. He wanted the covers to fall a certain way. The lights had to go a certain way. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

With select numbers, those that required a certain atmosphere and elegance, Ziegfeld was markedly meticulous. According to Doris he did not bother people like

W. C. Fields or Fanny Brice, those who had acts reasonably intact. However, Doris remembers an exception to that when Fanny Brice did *My Man*. She recalls he was very particular about how the lighting hit Fanny for that number and what the atmosphere of the stage was behind her.

Ziegfeld's omnipotence seemed to take an active role when he observed and altered the atmosphere of the performance. He demanded not just correctness to his vision, but invoked a beauty and elegance in his productions that seemed to permeate through all elements of his work. Doris describes this aura as something he conveyed in few words, yet with a directness that was intuitively felt by all associated with him.

Traveling with the *Follies* on the road meant being out of New York for approximately four months; Chicago for four weeks, Kansas City, St. Louis, and other such cities for a week. Philadelphia was usually a two week stand. There was a regular route the *Follies* covered, even in 1918, with each show traveling by train to the same cities, spending about the same time in each city, each year.

We had private coaches for the show because in addition to two coaches, at least, to take care of the cast, they had the scenery and all that equipment that had to go into another coach, so there were about three. I don't think we ever had a special train. I think we were just hooked onto a regular run. Sometimes we'd leave very early in the morning at six o'clock. Usually it was at a very early hour that the movement was made from one city to another. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

#### Segregation of Cast: Principals and Chorus, Black and White

Doris observed segregation of two forms within the performance arena. First, members of the chorus did not fraternize with the principals. It was clearly a situation of the chorus members speaking only when spoken to by the elite cast of principals.

This hierarchy was not only social, but transferred to issues of transportation and lodging. Doris, herself, would enter that realm by the *Follies of 1919*.

Secondly, blacks were primarily absent. Black showgirls were performing in Harlem, but they were not part of Ziegfeld's concept of the American beauty. An exception to Ziegfeld's all-white cast was Bert Williams. This comedian, appreciated by audiences for his extraordinary talent, was still subjected to discrimination throughout his career with the *Follies*.

The issue of segregation is illustrated in Doris' recollections of Bert Williams. Black and born in the West Indies, even at the height of his career in show business, Williams could live in a good hotel in New York only if he used the rear entrance. When asked if she thought being the only black member of the *Follies* cast was difficult, Doris replied she was sure it was especially difficult on the road.

We didn't see much of him except when he was doing his act. One of his numbers was *Nobody*. That was one of his famous ones. But you seldom saw him around the theater except when he was ready to do his act. I really don't recall how he traveled with us. I just don't recall. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Segregation between the chorus members and principals existed in the travel arrangements of the Ziegfeld cast, with each group traveling in a different coach. Housing accommodations maintained during the long trips out on the road also illustrated the unspoken hierarchy. There was always a distance placed between the veteran performers and the newcomers to the chorus.

This is illustrated by the grouping of the company during their train travel away from New York. Two coaches were required to hold all the performers on road trips away from New York. The principal performers were placed in one coach and the

chorus girls were in the other. While cordial, there was little intimacy between the principals and the chorus girls. Doris experienced both sides of the fence, being a chorus girl in 1918 and rising to principal for the 1919-1920 seasons.

Doris remembers that chorus members stayed in modest accommodations. At that time it was common for chorus members to stay in rooming houses. Doris overheard other performers talk about the rooming houses; which one was nice and which one was not very good. Separating the 'haves' from the 'have nots', principals, according to Doris, always stayed at big hotels.

### 1918

The *Follies of 1918* were significant as it marked Marilyn Miller's first appearance under Ziegfeld as well as Lillian Lorraine's final performance, having begun her association with Ziegfeld in 1909. Marilyn Miller was to soon leave the Ziegfeld audiences woozy with her more than accomplished ballet-style dancing. At least Ziegfeld was woozy as Baral reports in his book *Revue* (1962), "Ziegfeld ordered a fresh costume for her every night at \$175 per costume."

According to Robert Baral (1962) in his book, *Revue*, expenses were mounting. He states the *1918 Follies* "cost \$110,000 to produce. For one oriental scene Ziegfeld demanded that twelve pillows entirely of satin be made, at \$300 apiece, illustrating his law that only the very finest be used in a *Follies*, regardless of cost." He's referring to an elaborate scene that featured Lillian Lorraine entitled, *The Garden of Your Dreams*. Joseph Urban designed the Japanese garden set and Frank Carter stood singing nearby.

World War I was sending Americans to France. Men placed attendance at a Ziegfeld performance at the New Amsterdam Theater on 42nd Street in New York City as a high priority on their list of 'things to do' before leaving. This assumption is supported by the number of military numbers produced for the show of 1918. Two that stand out include *Aviators' Parade*, highlighting aviator costumes, and *Blue Devils*,



featuring women in blue uniforms patterned after a French military unit of the same name. Ben Ali Haggin, famous for tableaux designed to contain living showgirls, provided his support of the war effort in his tableau titled, *Forward Allies*.

Many of the idiom's great performers appeared in the 1918 production. Eddie Cantor appeared minus his burnt cork, black chalk used to cover the face, for the first time. Cantor, Lorraine and Carter all sang songs composed by Irving Berlin. Will Rogers sent wit spinning out to the audience as he lassoed Anne Pennington and sang with Lillian Lorraine. Bert Savoy performed as a female impersonator; Savoy and Brennan provided camp comedy; and Bee Palmer did a shimmy dance. Other principals included Dolores, the Fairbanks Twins, Frisco, Harry Kelly, Allyn King, Kay Laurell, Martha Mansfield, Gus Minton, Billie Ritchie and W. C. Fields. As though all that talent was not formidable enough, George Gershwin had the honor of pounding away on the rehearsal piano.

In 1918, Doris' sister, Pearl, appeared in both the *Follies* and the *Midnight Frolic* on the roof garden of the New Amsterdam theater in New York. Doris was attending summer school to make up for studies she had missed while traveling with the Poli company throughout New England. Pearl worked under Ned Wayburn as a special assistant to help him prepare the chorus dancers for the upcoming roadshow of the current *Follies*.

Doris came home from school one afternoon and asked her mother if she could go down to the New Amsterdam Theater on forty-second street in New York with Pearl and watch a rehearsal. Her mother consented. Doris next decided she needed to borrow a long dress from her sister, Mary. At fourteen, Doris did not yet own a long dress. Since she was allowed to go to the rehearsal, she felt she deserved to wear the appropriate wardrobe.

Doris and Pearl rested during a break in the rehearsal when Ned Wayburn walked over to give Pearl additional instructions. The tall, commanding Wayburn gazed at

Doris, noting her resemblance to his wife. It seems Wayburn thought Doris looked enough like her to be her twin sister. Wayburn inquired of Doris' ability to dance as he needed someone to understudy a *Follies* principal, Anne Pennington. Pearl had no doubts of Doris' ability, but she was concerned about gaining their mother's permission for Doris to travel on the road since she was only fourteen years old. Wayburn offered to pay Mrs. Eaton's expenses and allow her to travel with Doris as an escort. After a family conference it was decided to allow Doris to enter the *Follies*. Doris remembers:

The next day I went to school in the morning, from nine to twelve, came home, put on Mary's long dress and went down to the New Amsterdam. I was in the *Follies*. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 14, 1994)

As an understudy for Anne Pennington in the *1918 Follies*, Doris began as a chorus girl, performing in eight numbers her first year. A typical day for the fourteen year old chorus girl included long afternoon rehearsals from one to five o'clock. They were rugged rehearsals as stage directors were quite demanding as to the quality of the performance each and every performer gave.

While in New York, dancers attended extra rehearsals at area dance studios to learn new material and perfect ongoing material. Two matinees were given each week. After an early meal at five o'clock, the performers arrived at the theater around a quarter past seven. Following a warm-up session on the stage to limber up, the dancers put on make-up and waited to begin the opening chorus. Even at this young age, Doris quickly became accustomed to the 'night life' of the entertainment community. She soon joined in the custom of eating a late night meal after each show and rising late the next morning.

Doris recalled the one time she almost substituted for Anne Pennington in that first Ziegfeld *Follies of 1918*.

We were in Kansas City. She (Pennington) was late getting back from wherever she had been. I was in her costume all ready to go on about five minutes before she was supposed to go on. She came dashing in and said, "For God's sake, help me get that costume on! Ziegfeld will fire me if I miss this number!" The wardrobe woman started tearing the costume off of me and putting it on her. *She* went on to do the number. That was the closest I ever got to going on for her. It was quite a moment. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 14, 1994)

Doris did get to appear on the stage by herself that year. The number, reflecting the issues of the ongoing war, depicted girls in costumes of an occupation women had taken over during the war. Doris was a bellboy. She came on stage by herself, walking to the beat of the music while the principal performer sang lyrics to describe her occupation.

In another number Doris participated as a chorus girl illustrating war sympathies apparent at the time. Wayburn's big production number entitled *Aviators' Parade* was part of the first-act finale. This military dance had forty-eight chorus girls participating. The stage had a big opening in the floor with a silk tent covering the hole. From underneath the stage each girl rose one at a time and entered the stage through the tent, spread out in a horizontal company front, and danced a form of tap called the military buck. The costumes were silk and satin gold aviator outfits and included silver trench hats.

Another routine Doris remembers was *The Blue Devils*. A take off on the Blue Devils of France, each girl wore a large bouree, of a soft blue color that matched the rest of the costume. At one point in the number all the girls came down stage and put

their feet over the footlights, talking right to the audience as they sang. Memorable figures to Doris in that years' cast include Bert Williams, Lillian Lorraine, Will Rogers, Anne Pennington, Eddie Cantor and W. C. Fields.

Children at fourteen years of age were still, according to law, required to be in school. Doris had to frequently change her name to avoid the Gary Society, a watchdog organization created to uphold child labor laws. Doris appears as Doris Levant in the *1918 Follies* taking the married name of her sister, Pearl, who was married to Oscar Levant's brother, Harry.

### 1919

The *Follies of 1919*, aside from closing from August 12 to September 10 due to the Actors Equity strike, has gone down in history as Ziegfeld's greatest overall success. Irving Berlin outdid himself with "A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody," which became synonymous with the flowing staircase and the 'Ziegfeld walk' of the beautiful chorus girls. "You Can't Make Your Shimmy Shake On Tea," allowed Bert Williams to poke fun at prohibition. "You'd Be Surprised," was the last song Eddie Cantor sang for Ziegfeld until he returned in 1923 to do *Kid Boots* with Mary Eaton, as well as "Mandy," the song Doris Eaton understudied with Marilyn Miller.

Over thirty songs in all were produced for this production of 1919. Along with Berlin, Gene Buck, Dave Stamper, Harry Tierney and Joseph McCarthy also churned out hits. Gene Buck's opening salad scene, which included Doris Eaton and the Fairbanks Twins, is often cited for its creativity. Ziegfeld also began hiring instrumental composers such as Victor Herbert to produce stunning ballet music.

Principals of the cast of the *1919 Follies* were DeLyle Alda, Eddie Cantor, Johnny and Ray Dooley, Eddie Dowling, Phil Dwyer, the Fairbanks Twins, Mary Hay, George LeMaire, Marilyn Miller, John Steele, Van and Schenck, Hazel Wahburn and

Bert Williams. Bert Williams left the *Follies* after that year. Marilyn Miller also left the *Follies*, but remained under Ziegfeld's production in the Broadway show *Sally*.

Rising from the position as chorus girl her second year in the *Follies*, Doris, was put in a group of four girls called 'specialty dancers.' These specialty dancers wore costumes that enhanced, indeed became part of the backdrop for, the musical numbers. In the featured number entitled, *A Salad*, each girl represented an element of a salad. Doris was 'Paprika' along with the Fairbanks Twins as 'Salt' and 'Pepper.' Other members of the salad included Mildred Sinclair as 'Lettuce,' Marcelle Earle as 'Spice,' Edith Hawes as 'Oil,' Kathryn Perry as 'Sugar,' and Mary Ware as 'Chicken.' Although hired by Ziegfeld himself, Doris still had to appear under a different name to avoid being recognized as underage. This year's choice was Lucille Levant.

She was soon asked to understudy Marilyn Miller. Due to an illness, Marilyn did not perform for an entire week in Chicago. Doris was her replacement. Frank Carter, Marilyn Miller's husband, was driving from Maryland, where he was appearing in a play called *Seesaw*, to Philadelphia and was killed in a car accident. Marilyn did not appear at all in the show for two weeks in Philadelphia and Doris took her place.

The finale of the first act of the 1919 show was a musical number featuring a song called "Mandy," written by Irving Berlin. The whole stage was covered in tiers sufficient enough to hold the entire cast. Marilyn Miller (or Doris) came down the center staircase. The cast did a tambourine drill number akin to those commonly seen in the old minstrel shows. This *Mandy* dance became a personal trademark for Doris, as well as one of the most successful songs written for the *Follies* by Irving Berlin.

Berlin was well acquainted with the Eaton family.

I got to know Mr. Berlin fairly well. He wrote the "Mandy" number that was in the finale of the first act of the 1919 *Follies*. The family got quite well acquainted

with Irving Berlin, he knew Pearl, he knew Mary and he knew my brother Charlie. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

## 1920

Robert Baral in *Revue* (1962) cites Mary Eaton's appearance as a particular highlight of the *1920 Follies*. "Mary Eaton, lovely toe dancer, joined Ziegfeld and took over where Marilyn Miller had left off. She was an immediate success on her own. Basically her technique as a dancer was much finer than Marilyn Miller's and had a certain style that was definitely her own. She soon acquired a wide public."

He also cites an Irving Berlin number entitled, *Bells*, as a outstanding event of the overall production. "Bells, also from the Berlin keyboard, was a trick novelty number with the girls attired in costumes decorated with bells, when they danced the bells picked up the sustaining melody of the song." This number also starred Mary Eaton.

Fanny Brice was going strong with three of her most famous trade mark songs, "I'm A Vamp From East Broadway," "I Was A Floradora Baby" and "I'm An Indian." Ben Ali Haggin kept busy assembling fantasies of the Venetian girl while Victor Herbert was joined by Art Hickman in the orchestra pit. This was also the year W. C. Fields conceived, wrote and staged "The Family Ford," with Ray Dooley as the squalling brat.

That year, Ziegfeld engaged Doris' sister, Mary, to replace Marilyn Miller, who was to star in his new show, *Sally*. In the *Follies of 1920*, Doris was a special dancer, had her own solo, and was in several skits. She was now sixteen and could legally use her own name in the program.

I also had a solo all by myself on the stage. It was kind of a cute number. The stage was empty. There was a great big bandbox on the center of the stage. The spotlight would hit the band box and I opened the top and came out of the bandbox

and did my number. That was my big solo in the *1920 Follies*. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

Victor Herbert wrote music for Doris' sister, Mary, in her first appearance in the *Follies*. Doris recalled his attentiveness to the overall presentation of the number that used his music.

Mr. Herbert wrote the ballet for my sister the first year she was in the *Follies*. He was a charming gentleman. He came to rehearsals many times to check the music to see it was proper for the routine she was doing and helped to get it set just properly for her number. He was quite interested in what Mary was doing with the particular waltz he wrote for her. It was nice to see such interest.

D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

#### The Eatons Continue on Broadway

By 1922, Doris' brothers were on stage with the *Follies*. As before, the connection the family had with the theater and being at the right place at the right time had much to do with their performance opportunity.

Around the *1921 Follies* there was a French skit that needed a little boy to play the daulphin. Ziegfeld had mentioned to Mary he was looking for a little boy to play this part. Mary said I have a little brother who could play the part, so Ziegfeld said, 'All right, bring him down.' So my mother took Charlie down and Ziegfeld said, 'Great, that's just what I want.' Charlie was about eight years old.

Charlie was in the *Follies* for that summer before he had an opportunity to make a movie in Astoria, Long Island. He was to play the child's part in *Peter Ibbetson* and it was a very good part. My mother went to Mr. Ziegfeld and said,

'This is a wonderful offer for Charlie and I'd like to accept it.' Ziegfeld said, 'What am I going to do for the dauphin?' Mother said, 'Well, I have another son (Joseph) who's just a couple of years older, he could play the part.' Ziegfeld said, 'Well, bring him down.' So that's how Joe got into the *Follies* and played the part for four weeks while Charlie made this movie. Charlie went back to the *Follies* after the movie finished. That's how they got into the *Follies*.

D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

With all this family involvement in show business, Doris maintains her mother did not push her children into the business.

She was very retiring, very careful because we were young. She traveled with me while I was in the 1918 and 1919 *Follies*. She traveled with Mary and me when Mary got into the *Follies of 1920*. That was a marvelous year for us, for the three of us being together, in that show, traveling around the road together. It was a year to remember. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, November 30, 1994)

Mary went on into the next *Follies*. Doris is sure Ziegfeld would have placed her in the 1921 *Follies* as well, if she had been interested. She bases her opinion on the quickness with which he had given her a solo in the 1920 *Follies*. Doris had gone from chorus girl to specialty dancer to soloist to principal within three years. If she had been determined to develop herself along this line, she is convinced Ziegfeld would have given her the opportunity.

Yet, Doris is content with the decision she made to try something new. An individualist at heart, no doubt Doris was looking for a career on which to place her own personal stamp. She considers the experience in England that followed an irreplaceable step toward this end. Although she went on to other work in the



entertainment field, Doris witnessed the fading of the *Follies* that seemed to begin around 1925.

I would think that part of the reason for the decline was that Ziegfeld branched out into musical comedies with shows like *Showboat* and *Sally*. He became interested in that phase of show business. Times got more difficult, too, as we got into the late 20s. Money wasn't quite so available for extravagant productions. Ziggy loved to spend money. He spent, oh, \$5,000 for a dress for Lillian Lorraine, similar things for Marilyn's costumes.

As the late 20s came around, that money was not as available. He couldn't do the things he used to do. Of course, I think he got into quite a lot of financial difficulties, personally, at that time. That would be my understanding as to why the *Follies* quality faded from those original productions. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

After 1922, Mary continued work with Ziegfeld in *Kid Boots* with Eddie Cantor. Doris, Pearl and Charlie were also on Broadway. Life was good at the Eaton household.

I know one part of being in show business that was quite delightful. This was after the *Follies* when Mary was in *Kid Boots*. By 1927 there were four of us on Broadway at one time; Mary was in *Kid Boots*, I was in *Excess Baggage* with Frank McHugh and Miriam Hopkins, Charlie was in *Peter Pan* with Marilyn Miller and Pearl was with Billie Burke. For one year there all of us were on Broadway at one time.

We'd have Sunday afternoon gatherings at our place at 161 W. 54th Street. They were sort of rotating affairs. We'd have a gathering at our place on Sunday

afternoon, then Marilyn (Miller) would have it another Sunday. Somebody else would have it another Sunday, then it would get back to us. Those were marvelous gatherings. We had Marilyn, of course, Bea Lillie, Clifton Webb, Gershwin, Oscar Levant used to sit there and play at our piano these afternoons. I just can't remember all the group that just used to drop in and drop out. They would have it at Marilyn's place the next Sunday. Mary put a sign on the caviar, 'This cost \$20 a pound, eat it!' Those were really wonderful experiences and remembrances. That one or two years on Broadway was a highlight. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

There seem to be no regrets regarding the brevity of Doris' career on the *Follies* stage. To Doris, moving on seemed quite natural.

If I had stayed in (the *Follies*) I would have taken the position that I'd better start training myself to make myself better than anyone else around here to keep qualifying, or else I would have just petered out. But I feel I was very lucky. I didn't have to make that choice. I came back from the *Follies* and this agent got in touch with Mama very shortly after we'd returned and the opportunity to go to Europe came up. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Reflecting on her overall three year career with the Ziegfeld *Follies* Doris summarizes:

I was what they called 'a hooper.' Ned Wayburn used to call the dancers 'hoofers.' He used to say to us, 'Once a hooper, always a hooper.' I guess I remained a hooper all my life. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

## CHAPTER IV

### SILENT FILM

#### In Pursuit of the Silver Screen

Three years of work with the *Follies* gave Doris enough visibility to be considered a much-esteemed and in-demand member of the Ziegfeld principal cast. After the 1920 *Follies* she made two movies at the RKO studios in Astoria, Long Island. The first, *At the Stage Door*, starred Billie Dove, and the second, *The Broadway Peacock*, starred Pearl White and was directed by Theda Bara's husband, Charles Brabin.

In 1922, Doris was contacted by Edward Small, an agent with whom she often worked, to come to his office. There she met and was hired by John Gliddon from International Artists Film Company Limited of London to star in a film titled *Lark's Gate*. Exterior scenes for the movie were filmed at Luxor and Alexandria in Egypt and up the Nile. Interiors of the film were made in London. Doris starred as the young ingenue opposite Walter Tennyson with Donald Crisp as director of the film.

The story is based on *Larksgate*, a novel by Rachel Macnamara (1920). The scenario was written by Hermione Flatau, a sister to novelist Dorothea Flatau. The plot chronicles the story of a young girl who falls in love with the 'wrong' man, becomes pregnant, and the problems that ensue.

The progress of this black and white silent film, directed by Donald Crisp, was covered by various industry journals of the period. Articles in Doris' scrapbooks suggest that producer John Glidden spared no expense on this production. Exterior scenes on location included a scene at Luxor where an entire street in the local bazaar was specially hired for the afternoon's filming. Scenes were shot along the Riviera

coast, particularly at Le Troyas, noted for its wonderful coloring of copper-hued rocks set against the sea.

By September 14, 1921, a release by *Gaumont Company Limited* listed this same movie renamed as *Tell Your Children*. *Motion Picture Studio* listed a review of *Tell Your Children* in their issue of September 16, 1922. It listed Donald Crisp as director, Walter Tennyson and Doris Eaton as stars of the film, and Cecil Morton Yorke, Gertrude McCoy, Harding Steerman, Adeline Hayden Coffin, Warwick Warde, Rony Fraser, Robert English, Margaret Halstan, Mary Rorke, C. Tilson-Chowne, Alec Alexander, Jr. and Ron Coventry as supporting cast members. The scenario at this point was attributed to Donald Crisp and Leslie Gordon.

The release declared the film superbly acted and directed. It indicated that the time, trouble and expense that had been expended on *Tell Your Children*, had not been spent in vain. The industry release commended Donald Crisp's handling of the subject material, sensitive for its day, and considered the film well produced. Both Doris and Walter Tennyson were listed as making their debuts in this film. Doris was commended for having an attractive screen personality well suited for the British screen.

*The Morning Post* of September 18, 1922 has a slightly different interpretation of the purpose of the film, the title of their review being, *Drama as Propaganda*.

The IAFC's new film was shown privately last week. It is named *Tell Your Children*, and will form part of the British National Film League program.

Produced by Mr. Donald Crisp, it sets out frankly to dispense propaganda as well as entertainment, urging the duty of parents in telling their children the facts of life. It is always doubtful to what extent the public approves of this form of propaganda, and the question arises whether the story should not point its own moral. But the picture remains of good entertainment value as well. (p. 6)

The article goes on to list the acting of Doris Eaton, an American star, as the best part of the film. Walter Tennyson, Mary Rorke and Margaret Halstan are also given recognition for fine acting. The outstanding location shots prompted strong, enthusiastic support for the photography in the film.

Doris remembers the intense work that was put into the shooting of the film. Being a full length picture, she was required to be on location for approximately six months. Every morning the cast and crew went across the Nile in a boat with oarsmen singing their chants as they rowed. On the other side of the Nile, Doris and the cast rode donkeys to the ruins and the Temple of Karnack, taking location shots in those areas.

With no electricity available, hand-held cameras were used and cameramen were at the mercy of the weather. The actors stood in the shade of the ruins between shots, trying to avoid the brutal heat.

All this battling with the elements left little time for scene rehearsals. Doris remembers being given no more than ten minutes of instructions before the filming of each scene. It was a simple matter of reading the story, running through it, and then filming. The actors were briefed on their motions, but because of the limited viewing of the stationary camera, the motion was limited.

Although the discovery of Tut's tomb was as recent as 1922, there was still a pristine quality to Egypt. Few outsiders were ever present. Doris recalls often seeing only the crew members during the filming.

Interestingly enough, another film, originally called *His Supreme Sacrifice* was also made at the same time, apparently from out-takes of the same shooting as *Tell Your Children*. Unknown to Doris, International Arts re-released *Tell Your Children* in 1927 as *The Call of the East*. Neither of the movies is credited to Donald Crisp in any film catalogues from the era.

Only seventeen at the time, Doris was accompanied by her mother throughout the filming. Six months in production, her mother could be found following Doris to each day's location shot, riding along on donkeys and camels, as required.

Doris' extensive stage experience prepared her for work in silent film. She felt comfortable since doing a scene in front of a movie camera was similar to standing on the stage for her. Yet, despite extensive exposure and experience in the world of theater, Doris never consciously prepared for a long term career in dramatic acting. Although she took dancing lessons, she did not enroll in any form of acting school. Her family's visibility and her own early recognition in the theater allowed her easy access to the top producers and directors of the day. It was common for Doris to be contacted by an agent with that agent's mind already set on using her for a particular part. Cold auditions were not typical for Doris.

At seventeen, Doris still did not keep track of what she was reimbursed for her work. She has no knowledge of what she was paid for her work in the film. She does remember staying in lovely hotels where she and her mother ate in the dining room. She is certain the tab was paid by the film company and not her mother.

Whatever the monetary reimbursement, certainly the life-changing experiences of travel and history went beyond any seventeen year old's wildest imagination. On her return from Egypt, Doris and her mother stayed with the Tennysons in their castle, d'Eyncourt, in England. She recalls the prim and proper atmosphere around the castle. Socializing with both the Tennyson brothers and their parents fit the stereotypical image of British 'high society,' with charm, elegance and manners to spare. Doris recalls this event as being one of the most enriching of her brief film career.

*Tell Your Children* never made it past the British trade shows. According to Doris, no footage of the film remains today. After these experiences around the world, Doris went back to New York and was immediately engaged for a musical revue at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California.

### California: Years in Transition

Doris would spend the next twelve years bouncing between New York and California in search of a strong foothold for her career. It was never really clear if that career would be on the stage or the screen. Many New York stars were shooting for the Hollywood movies. Doris would try as well. Her early romances seemed to bud in California and may have had a hand in her repeated trips to the west coast. Regardless, Doris was so mobile in the next period of her life, that it was, at first, difficult for even her to recall the events of this period in detail. A tabloid of change mirrored the insecurity and mounting stress that was being placed upon a less than financially stable career.

After filming *Tell Your Children*, Doris traveled to California to star in a revue called the *Gorham Follies*, at the Coconut Grove Room of the Ambassador Hotel. Produced by Joe Gorham, Doris was introduced by a song written for her by Arthur Freed entitled, "Doris Come Out of the Chorus."

Doris fell in love with Gorham and married him. Within the same year he died of a heart attack, leaving Doris an eighteen year old widow. After giving away his real estate investments to his family, Doris quickly returned to New York where she felt more comfortable.

During the 1924-25 season Doris appeared in *The Sap* at the Apollo theater with Raymond Hitchcock. She would go on the road with the show as well. Her next role was in *No Other Girl*. Her dancing in that production landed her a starring role on Broadway with Al Jolson in *Big Boy*. Not in the original cast, she replaced the leading lady a few months into the production.

Following the road show of *Big Boy*, Doris returned to California. Hired as the lead dancer for *The Hollywood Music Box Review*, Nacio Herb Brown wrote a special dance number titled "The Doll Dance" for Doris. For years, Doris was pictured on the

cover of the sheet music. She also wrote lyrics for the song that were published but never credited to her. At this point, Doris fell in love with Nacio Herb Brown, eight years her senior. Their on-and-off again romance would last for six years, but ultimately end with each going their separate ways.

Following the *Music Box Review*, Doris went into a Franchon and Marco production called *The Serpentine Idea*. Doris appeared as lead with twenty-four dancers. This dance line, later coined *The Follies Idea*, appeared between feature pictures in movie houses all up and down the west coast. This combination of vaudeville and the new motion picture business proved to be uninspiring to Doris and after seventeen weeks she returned to New York.

In New York in 1927, Doris had a role in a play called, *Excess Baggage*, with Miriam Hopkins, Eric Dressler, and Frank McHugh. In 1928 she had a dancing role in the musical *Cross My Heart*.

In 1929 Doris returned to California. In a new production of the *Hollywood Music Box Revue* Doris introduced "Singing in the Rain." In *The Days We Danced* (1997), Doris states, "Herb Brown wrote that song for me to do in a special dance production number in the *Revue* before its inclusion in a motion picture later that year called, *Hollywood Revue*, in which the song was sung by Cliff Edwards. "Ukulele Ike" Edwards is listed in all the music archives as having introduced the song, obviously because of the movie. The truth is, I sang it every night for seventeen weeks in the *1929 Music Box Revue*, as published reports of that time make clear."

Doris made two movies for RKO-Radio around 1930. Doris recalls, "*Street Girl* was a musical, with music written by Oscar Levant and with one hundred dancers directed by Pearl. It was the first talking picture made by the newly combined RKO and Radio." The plot was the story of a Hungarian violinist who takes over a down-and-out four-piece band and leads them to great success.



*The Very Idea*, starring Frank Craven, gave Doris a straight comedic acting role. "The story of a childless couple selecting surrogate parents to have a child for them," from her writing in *The Days We Danced*, Doris considers this movie "poorly produced and poorly conceived" and indeed, blames it for the quick close to her movie career. Doris continued to make trips between the coasts after these productions to find work. In her last movie in California, she performed as a chorus member in Eddie Cantor's, *Whoopie*.

In New York, Doris became the lead dancer in Nils T. Granlund's *Hollywood Revue of 1932*, held at his restaurant. Following this, Doris appeared in a short-lived play titled *Page Pygmalion*.

About this time, Doris began to tire of the constant vigil of looking for work and starving in between. She saw the effects of radio and the depression hitting theater audiences drastically. For steady work she resorted to doing stock company work for the Thatcher Stock Companies in New England and later in Hempstead, Long Island. Titles of her performances there include *Stepping Sisters*, *June Moon*, *Her Unborn Child*, *As Husbands Go*, *The Late Christopher Bean*, and *Polly With a Past*. None of these performances proved memorable to Doris.

Doris and Charlie worked on potential vaudeville acts to pitch for work. In 1934 Doris got a minor role in the Kaufmann and Hart play, *Merrily We Roll Along*, at the Music Box Theater. Starring Walter Able and Mary Philips, the play ran only nineteen weeks and was Doris' last appearance in a Broadway show.

Overall despair and lack of employment opportunities forced Doris to consider dance hall work. Fortunately she was encouraged to talk to Arthur Murray in hopes of working as a tap dancing teacher for him. With Murray's promise of a weekly paycheck, Doris closed the stage door for the final time.

## CHAPTER V

### A CAREER IN DANCE

#### The Arthur Murray Dance Studios: Beginnings

Doris points to the marriage of her sister Mary in 1929 as the beginning of the end of the family's work in show business. At this point her father lived in the York Hotel in New York in a single room. Her mother was staying with her son Robert and her brother Charlie was living in a single room apartment in New York. When Doris' money ran out she moved to Astoria, a suburb of New York City, to live with her sister Evelyn and Evelyn's three children.

A tenant in Doris' apartment building expressed an interest in tap dancing. Soon after, Doris taught tap dancing in the basement of their building. This was her first official teaching job and she was paid one dollar an hour. With three of those dollars she could get back to New York to look for work, although nothing materialized. After a few months Doris realized living with Evelyn, her husband and her three children was creating stress for all of them, so Doris went back to New York City to live with Charlie.

Still looking for work in show business, Doris renewed acquaintances with George Besler, "a good Charleston dancer" and son of one of the stockholders of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad. From a well to do family with a lovely home in New Jersey, George was pleased to take Doris to elegant Princeton dances and other high society functions. Having an actress on one's arm was still the highest of fashion for a young suitor. Although Doris was not interested enough to make their relationship a permanent one, his family was very fond of her. Doris and Helen Besler, George's sister, became close friends, with Doris frequently visiting Helen in

New Rochelle, New York. Helen's son was taking tap dance lessons at the Arthur Murray studio. Helen was aware that the studio seemed to have more students than it could handle. Helen and Doris concluded that Doris' tap dancing skills might be a marketable tool for her. Knowing the extremity of Doris' need for work, Helen suggested she explore the possibility of teaching at the Arthur Murray studio.

Helen said, "Why don't you go down to Arthur Murray? This teacher says he has more pupils than he can possibly handle. You know tap dancing, maybe that would fill in for a little while until something happened. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

Doris immediately made an appointment with Arthur Murray in New York. Explaining her background, she suggested perhaps he could use a second tap dancing teacher. He responded by putting her to work at one o'clock the next day. Prompted by the other ballroom teachers, Doris asked for a salary of one dollar an hour. Murray simply complied and Doris was never sure if she had asked for too little or too much. Doris was struck by the opportunity to earn a weekly paycheck and quickly decided she had found a secure way to make a living.

My first check was \$18.00. The next week it was \$36.00 After the second week I said to myself, This means I can get a pay check every week? I am *no* longer in show business. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

Doris began her teaching career with Arthur Murray in 1936. Although it did provide a steady income, such a change of career did not mean an easy life. Doris found teaching to be difficult.

I ended up teaching from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. practically everyday. On Saturday it was from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. It was hard. Teaching is hard, especially when you are on your feet that many hours. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

Doris was what show business labeled, "a hooper," specializing primarily in tap dancing. Her training prepared her to pick up dance steps at sight and her natural curiosity drew her to the less familiar ballroom dance steps being taught in the studio. Since Arthur Murray trained his own teachers, there was always a teacher training class in progress at the studio. Doris soon asked if she could attend the training sessions in ballroom dance. The Rumba was just becoming popular at that time and Murray was thorough enough to have hired a native Cuban to teach the special Latin sessions. Doris soon became intensely interested not only in social dance but specifically in Latin dance.

The Rumba was just coming at that time and Arthur had a Cuban there to teach us. I just *love* the Rumba. I was in that class every minute I possibly could be!  
D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

Doris' enthusiasm over learning something new expanded her employment opportunities. Up to this point, Doris had primarily taught tap dancing to children. In the summer months her work had customarily disappeared as most of her young clients were on vacation. Learning more social dance steps, Doris broadened the variety of dance classes she could teach. Doris spent six weeks in an Arthur Murray training class in his New York studio learning new steps. Knowing she would learn even faster by teaching the new information, she took a few ballroom dance students immediately.

Arthur Murray had a building for his dance studio with approximately eight floors. The floors were segregated with men teachers on one floor and women teachers on another. Oddly enough, Doris' tap dancing studio was located on an all male floor. It seems that this gave Doris a more aggressive environment for learning and creating new dance steps. With her tap dancing studio on the same floor as the men, she was free to go into their lounge between lessons. She found that the male teachers spent time aggressively discussing new dance steps, experimenting and creating new dances constantly. They began to use Doris as their partner to try out their new creations.

My tap dancing studio was on the floor where the men were. I used to go in the teachers' lounge between lessons. The male teachers were always talking about dancing and trying new steps. I learned a great deal as they began to use me as the partner to try out these new steps. I received wonderful practice in learning to follow as well as learning the new dances they created. D. Eaton Travis  
(Interview, December 2, 1994)

#### On the Way to Detroit

It was through this experience Doris also met a fellow teacher who was to be influential in her career, Cy Andrews. Cy was employed by Arthur Murray and taught on the same floor as Doris. Cy was restless, however, and had already spent the summer of 1935 in Springlake, New Jersey at the Essex and Sussex Hotel teaching private dance lessons to the resort guests. This was a 'mini' Arthur Murray branch studio. The fee for lessons was identical to the fee charged in New York, with Arthur Murray receiving ten percent of the gross.

Hotel owners seemed to consider this a fair trade. They allowed a dance instructor to charge guests for the lessons and in return the atmosphere of the classy Friday night dance at the hotel was enriched by the visual beauty of good dancing. In addition, Cy

acted as junior host for all social activities. This included Monday evening parties held for children, a mid-week beach party, and dancing with the guests on Friday and Saturday evenings from 9:00 to 11:30 p.m. Cy convinced Doris to teach with him the next summer in New Jersey.

The dance partners had a full teaching schedule. Children also were offered lessons, with Doris teaching them. Doris and Cy found themselves teaching seasonal guests during the daytime and residents of the hotel in the early evening.

After two summers in Springlake, by September of 1937, Cy married another dance teacher. Mr. Crum, the owner of the hotel in Springlake, also owned the Flamingo Hotel in Miami, Florida and encouraged Cy to teach dance for the winter season in Florida. Cy believed that with Doris, his new wife and another dancer, they could adequately staff the Flamingo. Doris, a bit tired of teaching tap lesson after tap lesson at Arthur Murray's New York studio, agreed to join him.

While at the Flamingo, Doris and Cy met many people vacationing from Detroit which then was flourishing with the booming auto industry. Cy was anxious to open a studio outside of New York. It was apparent to both Doris and Cy that their collaboration created an excellent business partnership. Cy assessed the situation and decided they should open a studio together as partners in Detroit.

While Arthur Murray gave Doris and Cy permission to begin a studio in Detroit, he neglected to follow through in contacting the hotel owner in preparation for their arrival as he had promised. Doris and Cy were unaware that Mr. Hennessey, a top executive of the Statler chain of hotels, would barely know who they were when they arrived back in Detroit. Doris, realizing they were starting from ground zero began conducting business negotiations with the hotel executive herself.

I was very naive of business procedures. I was fresh out of show business and a new teacher. I seemed to hit such innocent periods in my life where I didn't know

what I was doing, like talking to Mr. Hennessey. I didn't approach it like a business person at all. I just told him what we would like to do. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

She felt she had no background in business negotiations, yet the situation warranted her becoming the primary negotiator. Her anxiety over this experience is understandable when one realizes that most of Doris' previous show business career negotiations had been managed by her mother. In this situation, however, while the owner wanted fifteen percent, Doris was able to negotiate paying the hotel ten percent of the income from the dance studio. Thereafter, she would be in command of much of the major decision making for the studio.

By late April of 1938, Doris and Cy had moved to the Statler Hotel, located on Washington Boulevard at Grand Circus Park in Detroit. The evening of their arrival in town, a ten piece band was performing in the Terrace Room of the Statler, but only three couples were dancing. Not wasting a moment, Cy and Doris moved onto the dance floor, literally stopping traffic. Live demonstration seemed to be one of the most successful recruitment tools. From this particular demonstration that evening they obtained their first student for their dance studio in the Statler.

An advertisement was placed in the Detroit paper announcing the opening of an Arthur Murray Studio of Social Dance at the Statler Hotel. The next day there was a line of between twenty and twenty-five people outside of Doris' office wanting to sign up for dance lessons. Interest grew, as each day five to seven new clients appeared to sign up for lessons. Since lessons were only taught privately at this stage, each client was given an individual teacher for the lessons.

Arthur Murray's prestige provided a strong platform on which to build a successful program. He was not only well-known in New York, but due to his appearances on cruise ships and at other major resort hotels across the country, Doris and Cy were

assured notice by members of high society when they advertised under the title of Arthur Murray's Dance Studio. Taking ten percent off the top of such franchises, Arthur Murray sent out training manuals and eventually offered organizational meetings for branch managers.

Murray held managers meeting regularly in New York. His first convention of managers outside New York was held at Doris and Cy's studio in Detroit in 1938. Mr. and Mrs. Murray were in attendance. Murray's decision to use the Detroit studio for their first meeting outside New York is an indication of his esteem and respect for the work being done there. People seeking to become managers at other locations throughout the country were encouraged to visit the Detroit studio as a model for setting up their own location.

According to Doris and countless newspaper advertisements, Arthur Murray's advertising style utilized a strong emotional approach. Rather than appeal to dancing as a general advantage to someone socially, his advertising was aimed at the most personal of motivations: self-confidence, security and sex appeal. Arthur Murray learned to exploit the emotional and personal impact of being an accomplished dancer. Toward the end of his career, this overly ambitious sales program was to be the downfall of his dance empire.

Decidedly, there's no question that the sales program got out of hand. They were selling things to people who couldn't afford it. I didn't mind selling to somebody who could afford it, if it didn't make any difference, but I know a lot of students were forced through sales pressure to buy more lessons than they could afford.

D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

Cy and Doris took promotion of their studio quite personally. Over the years, if they disagreed with Arthur Murray in his management style, they protested to him.



Pressure from Murray's office or mere greed encouraged the sale of multi-year lesson packages with exaggerated lists of benefits that could not possibly be fulfilled. When customers were dissatisfied with broken promises, they wanted their money back from the individual owner of each franchise. The life-time sales program cost in excess of \$5,000. Even though Doris attempted to have each manager place a percentage of their income in a trust to cover such expenses, eventually the Murray concept that the only lucrative lesson was the untaught lesson created a chasm between the New York office and Doris' Michigan studios. After her attempts to organize other disgruntled studio owners throughout the country and her refusal to pay franchise fees to the Murray organization, Murray canceled her franchise in 1962.

In her unpublished manuscript, *The Days We Danced*, with J. R. Morris, (1997) Doris describes what transpired between the two companies. Doris, with the help of her husband's business accountant, Al Giuliani, hired New York attorney Louis Nizer to sue Arthur Murray, Inc. for \$1 million. Murray turned around and sued Arthur Murray Studios of Michigan, Inc. and Doris Eaton Travis for \$5 million plus all back franchise fees. The case was settled out of court with Arthur Murray, Inc. paying Doris' company the lawyers' fees of approximately \$150,000. Doris was also given a contract allowing her to use the Arthur Murray name. The contract freed her from any back fees and promised her no responsibility for future franchise fees for a ten-year period.

Fortunately, in most instances Doris and Cy were allowed great freedom to define their own studio emphasis. Their policy was that good *teaching* produced expanding sales. Doris and Cy continued to develop their own distinctive recruitment techniques. They found great success through dance demonstrations. Doris described the 'champagne act' they used in the Terrace Room as a way to entice new students into taking lessons. Cy and Doris would demonstrate a ballroom dance step and then select someone from the audience to come to the dance floor so they could be taught the step.

That procedure was done four or five times until the audience had viewed the process enough times to be convinced they too could learn to dance. The final stage of the champagne act was to ask the audience by a show of applause, who had been the most successful student. The audience's choice received a quart of champagne.

While Arthur Murray was seen to incorporate this same sales pitch in later years on his nationally syndicated television show, its most immediate claim to fame was that of the increasing attendance at the Terrace Room for Doris and Cy in their fledgling business. Doris remembers that people would come and see the basic teaching process.

People would see the basic teaching process. After seeing pupils improve in no more than two or three minutes, they were convinced to enroll in lessons for themselves. It was wonderful advertising! We had all the students we could handle at the Statler. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

#### Dance Facilities at the Statler Hotel

The facilities set aside for dance instruction in the Statler Hotel began with two living rooms and three studios. As the staff increased, so did the number of rooms used by the dance instructors. Before leaving for another facility in 1945, the entire second floor of the Statler Hotel was dedicated to the teaching of dance.

Their original contract with the Statler Hotel provided five rooms. There were two living rooms, one for Cy and his wife, one for Doris, two studios and an office. The public area of the studio consisted of two studio spaces and an office. The office was really just a wall that created an entrance to the group of rooms. Each time a new training class was added another studio space was required to house it.

Gradually the two living rooms were turned into studio space as well. After this, Cy and his wife shared a two bedroom suite in the hotel with Doris. Before leaving the hotel, the dance studio had approximately fifteen rooms.

### Running the Studio

Cy and Doris gradually advertised for teachers and started a training class for them. An official opening day inviting anyone interested in becoming a dance teacher was announced in the local paper. Such an ad soliciting new teachers of dance rallied together thirty to thirty-five people when only five or six were needed.

Much of Doris' job in selecting teachers required her to choose the people least suited for a career in teaching. There was not a fail safe manner of judging this, however. Often people would answer the ad, enroll in the six week teacher training class and then disappear. They were better dancers for the experience, but Doris was left without anything to show for her investment of time and effort. As a result of the frequency of this, it became studio policy to have all teacher trainees sign a contract prior to training stating they were required to teach at the studio for six months following training or they were legally required to pay the studio for their training sessions.

Dancing lessons were very inexpensive, only \$3.50 to \$4.00 an hour. The teachers working under Doris were paid \$1.50 to \$1.75 an hour, plus commissions on renewal sales. Cy and Doris established themselves as a company with all income going through them. Company expenses included the teacher's compensation, recordkeeping, and transportation to outside exhibitions. The Statler and Arthur Murray in New York each were paid ten percent commission on the gross of the Detroit business.

Initial progress came quickly to the new owners of the Detroit studio. Both Doris and Cy had contacts outside the city from which to draw new teachers. Many teachers from the New York area knew of the Detroit studio and were interested in working there. Doris indicates many were ready for greater responsibility than they were given while working under Murray in New York.

Doris describes her September training class of 1938 as typical. Of the fifteen people enrolled, six were placed on the staff immediately and booked with students.

A day in the life of these new teachers usually began at one o'clock, although they could be required to teach in the morning to accommodate pupils in business who wanted early lessons. The times and number of lessons booked was generally left to the discretion of each teacher. Many were interested in booking as many lessons as possible to increase their income. Several teachers who started with Cy and Doris during the first classes remained with them for many years. Several who were in classes after the studio moved to Washington Boulevard stayed until the studio was sold many years later. It was obvious to Doris that the dance business was like show business to these special career teachers; once in the blood it seemed impossible to walk away from it.

Cy kept track of the bookkeeping, advertising and sales, although both Doris and Cy discussed the overall direction of the studio. Cy was responsible for the sales training of the teachers. After the teacher trainees were taught to dance, they had to learn to talk about the courses offered and illustrate the benefits of dancing. This required a deeper, more complete understanding of the product. These trainees, called "interviewers," had the responsibility of interviewing each pupil as they signed up for lessons. The interviewers made up the sales department under Cy's direction.

An interviewer examined the new pupils and determined their experience, interest and reason for studying dance. This interview process was important for the satisfaction of the pupil, as programs such as the graded medal program that later developed were in place to provide as much incentive as the new pupil desired.

Following the initial meeting, the pupil would be turned over to another interviewer who would try out a few steps with the pupil to determine their actual skill level, how quickly they could learn, their natural sense of rhythm, or what specific problems

needed addressing in their style. A teacher was then selected whose personality and teaching style best fit the needs of the pupil.

The interviewers also taught dance lessons. All members in the studio had to go through the dance training class. Likewise, all were also trained to handle the sales aspect of the business.

The bulk of the responsibility for teacher training was left to Doris. She developed the dancing skill of each teacher and saw that they continued learning and developing themselves. Doris realized some teachers preferred teaching, applying a hands-on approach with the pupils themselves, and some did not.

Doris helped guide each teacher trainee toward the area best suited for them. Often a teacher preferred working entirely in sales. These teachers would frequently start the beginning pupil, giving them six to eight lessons, and then hand the pupil over to a teacher more interested in coaching the pupil in long term development.

You had this little rift among the teachers themselves. Naturally, they knew who were the great dancers among them and who were inadequate, but perhaps better teachers. You don't necessarily have to have an expertly skilled dancer to be a good teacher. In fact, sometimes your most skillful dancers are not the best teachers. They don't have the patience to teach slowly. The teacher has to be able to take the pace of the student. It was very important to try to suit the teacher to the student. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

The studio model Doris utilized was complex enough to allow each teacher to find his or her own niche. It also allowed Doris and Cy to focus on their own strong points.

My job was the dance training because that was what I was qualified for and I liked the best. I developed the dancers and the exhibition program. I did a lot of exhibitions with the teachers for groups like the Chrysler organization, the General Motors organization, and the Eight O'clock Press Club breakfast. As these companies got acquainted with the entertainment we could provide they began to contact us to provide entertainment for parties they'd be giving for their staff or business meetings. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

The exhibition program Doris developed made the Arthur Murray Dance Studio of Detroit highly visible. As a result of dance demonstrations, members of the audiences would become interested and come to the studio. Teachers from the studio did not solicit during the exhibitions. As a result of great popularity and the fact that the teachers who demonstrated had to forego their teaching schedules for that evening, Doris was soon forced to charge a fee for each of the presentations made by studio members.

During the war years of 1941 to 1945, Doris and Cy were forced to move from the Statler Hotel to make room for increased hotel traffic. The dance studio was moved a block and a half away on Washington Boulevard. The new facility had 15,000 square feet with twenty-two studios and additional offices. This increased facility mirrored the increase in enrollment experienced by Doris' studio. The war years seemed to create a greater need for the relaxation and socialization dancing could provide. It was during this time that Cy and Doris also expanded their business to include other dance studios throughout Michigan.

Although Doris did not offer classes for children in the Detroit studio due to limited space, she was very active in the education of young people in the area. She did countless free exhibitions in the public school system. For school children from the age of ten to fifteen she would have a morning dance exhibition. Her motivation for

these presentations was her conviction that it was such a wonderful education for the children to have an opportunity to learn to dance. She knew if they were not exposed to dance, they would not develop an interest in dancing. Doris also felt gratified by the response of the teachers in attendance. She could tell that public school teachers were thrilled the students were being given a chance to look at something completely different from their normal experience.

Doris inherited a children's program at Grosse Point when she began working with Paul Strasburg. She expanded these classes over the course of her years in Detroit. Grosse Point was at that time the 'high' society end of town. The classes had been started by Strasburg, a career dance teacher who had the longest, most prestigious history of instruction in Detroit at that time. His success was great enough to warrant him owning his own ballroom. Struggling with advanced arthritis, Strasburg asked Doris to join him in teaching these classes. Due to his failing health, the physical aspects of teaching had become too much for him. As Strasburg gave verbal directions to each class while sitting stationary in a chair, Doris performed the physical movements required for each demonstration.

That experience lead her to expand her teaching to The Detroit Golf Club, the nuveau-riche society from the opposite end of town. She began teaching children's classes there. Doris soon held a monopoly on the teaching of children's classes in Detroit.

#### Expansion Throughout Michigan

In 1939, Doris had invited both Joe and Charlie to join her working in the dance studio in Detroit. Charlie had already started working as a dance instructor in Los Angeles. The arrival of her brothers to Detroit allowed Doris to begin expansion of her business. By the early 1940s Doris and Cy had three studios in Detroit: Eastside, Northwest and Downtown. Doris' brothers, Joseph and Charlie, each managed a

branch in Detroit. With a solid core of teachers based within the Detroit operation, it soon became evident that Cy and Doris had the skills and staff to manage even more studios. Following the creation of branches of their operation in complimentary locations in and around Detroit, they began to branch out to other cities throughout Michigan.

Arthur Murray gave Doris and Cy permission to open a studio in Flint, Michigan. Doris and Cy continued opening studios throughout the state of Michigan until they had other studios in Pontiac, Port Huron, Saginaw, Traverse City, Dearborn, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Birmingham, Wyandotte, Bay City, Lansing, and Jackson. Arthur Murray eventually awarded Cy and Doris a franchise for the entire state of Michigan. After choosing the proper location, it took about two weeks to set up a studio in a new location. The studio itself required only a reception area and office with the rest of the space being divided into the needed number of studios. A manager from the Detroit studio was taken to the new location to open operations there. Potential teachers were selected from applicants in each area.

As their industry grew, Doris held things together by using a traveling manager to check the bookkeeping and records of each studio. She held manager conventions once a month in Detroit for the group of teachers in Michigan working at her branch studios. While these meetings were originally held in Detroit, Doris began the practice of rotating meetings among each of the Michigan studios.

Of the branch managers, most were married couples, such as those in Flint, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo. Saginaw had a brother and sister team and Port Huron had a single man as operating manager. Many of these managers remained in their positions for many years.

In February of 1948, Doris bought Cy's half of the business. Arthur Murray suggested that Cy would make a better board member for his national group of studios



than a local manager. Doris agreed the chemistry had changed between them and welcomed the new arrangement.

Cy went on to be one of the directors of the Arthur Murray board that was developed to help studios across the country. Cy, unfortunately, found little success after this turn in his career. Financially, he ended up with practically nothing. Doris, on the other hand, did very well, opening up, by her own admission, too many studios. She claims that this was indicative of her strong will power and her desire to conquer all that is put in front of her. She also places part of the blame on the shoulders of Arthur Murray. According to Doris, he stated that she was required to open as many studios as he requested since she had the state franchise. If she declined, he threatened to give the territory to someone else. Doris felt she had no choice but to open perhaps seen in retrospect, too many studios in Michigan.

At one time, Doris managed eighteen studios throughout Michigan. In the fall of 1968 she sold her interests in the dance studios to Ron Anderson. At this point, all Michigan studios had been closed, except for the original downtown Washington Boulevard studio in Detroit. Arthur Murray had sold his national business two years before and branch studios all over the country were for sale or bankrupt.

For several years we managers felt something was happening, but we were still under the Arthur Murray pressure of, "This is what you are going to do." This is where I got into the problem of royalty fees and stopped paying them because we were not getting the service we were supposed to be getting from the board of directors and the Arthur Murray organization. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

Doris sued Arthur Murray for breach of contract on May 25, 1962, before selling her franchise. She won and began considering retirement at that time. Her monopoly

on the dance studios of Arthur Murray in Michigan was unique and indicative of a special period in popular culture.

Never has there been such a thing. It was a phenomenon. It was just a phenomenon. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

#### Doris' Views of Developments in Social Dance

Doris was involved in dance throughout her life. As a performer she learned what was necessary for the next job. After taking a job with the Arthur Murray Studios, Doris had to switch her attention to the study of overall dance style and the ease with which a dance could be taught to a novice. With an acute eye Doris watched as dances changed, either because they were uninteresting to her dance clientele or because they were too difficult. Sometimes it was just time for something new. Doris' viewpoint on changes in social dance, while including her early career in the 1920s, includes active participation in the field for over fifty years. Her background in both entertainment and teaching gives her perspective greater depth and awareness.

Doris sees Irene and Vernon Castle as the true originators of the "fashion" of social dance. After the Castles returned from Paris around 1910, they opened the *Castles in the Air* Studio in New York, where Arthur Murray took his first dance lessons. Doris knew Arthur Murray learned much from the Castles. Arthur Murray's gift was to creatively reduce a dance movement to its simplest form and market it to a wide audience.

Doris considered four dances suitable to teach a beginning student to give them a well-rounded understanding of social dance: waltz, foxtrot, rumba and swing. She encouraged her students to recognize how subtle changes in rhythm and tempo could alter the identity of a dance. The patterns Doris used for each dance would be altered based on the speed at which the dance was performed.

The following are recollections Doris had of particular dances she taught throughout her career. While some of her memories note changes in dance, often the fact that she notes a consistency in a dance form over time is also relevant.

### The Tango

Doris read about the rise of the popular ‘Tango teas’ that were attributed to the Castles. The Castles had learned the tango from an Argentine dance band in Paris. Although the tango the Castles brought back to America was not, according to Doris, “a very intricate one”, it was the beginning of “the tango tea wave” that soon took over New York. According to Doris, all the big hotels had a tea dance daily from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. With women dressed to the hilt, Doris believed that gigolos appeared to balance the low ratio of men to women.

To Doris teaching the tango was very simple. Although certain movements have been burlesqued through the years, originally its dance movements were basic to what the fox-trot eventually became.

### The Fox-Trot

Doris thought Mr. Fox used the walking movement from the tango as a basis for his dance. According to Doris, Mr. Fox took two walks and two two-steps to make the original Fox-trot dance pattern.

She continues to talk of changes in the basic fox-trot caused by changes in the music over time.

When rag-time came in they wanted to ‘jazz’ it up a little bit so they began to rag the one-step or rag the two-step with the shoulders. Ragtime came first, then jazz continued. They began to enlarge on jazz movements, but not for social dancing

so much. It penetrated it a little bit. The Toddle in Chicago, that did a lot of the jazz movements of the time as well as the rhythmic movements of the steps.

Then came all those crazy dances that came up like 'the fish.' People began to dance in small little nightclubs, the disco-techs, doing separate little dances. The fish, the monkey, these were all things people did by themselves. The dances all developed out of jazz, which loosened the body movements. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

### The Two-Step

The two-step came from the polka. The polka was what Doris called a "hop and skip and-a jump," but it also had a "one and two and-a one and two." This second interpretation of the polka influenced the two-step. A versatile dance, the two-step could be altered to fit changing music styles.

Doris cites Arthur Murray's combination of a walking movement with the two-step movement as his most unique and influential contribution to dance. The walking movement was simply: 'walk, walk' or in fox-trot time it would take two (quarter note) beats: 'one, two, one, two.' Murray recognized there were two movements in social dancing: a walk and a side movement. He combined the walk and the side-step. The revised pattern became 'walk, walk, side-together' [quarter, quarter, eighth-note.] From that he could add different dance positions, using that basic pattern to get great variety in his fox-trot. As he developed training classes, teachers such as Doris came up with innovative ideas of how to use it, as well.

### The Waltz

Doris feels that the waltz remained relatively unchanged over the years. It took different forms, but the rhythm did not change, always remaining a basic 1,2,3. Because of this consistency in rhythm, the movements did not change in the waltz.

Doris considers there to be very little variation in the footwork in the waltz during this early period of her career.

### Swing

Doris also taught swing, or jitterbug as it was called in New York. Swing could be interpreted in a soft and lackadaisical manner or it could be very rhythmical and upbeat in movements. Swing was divided into three different dances through the tempo at which it was taught, jitterbug being the fastest.

### Latin Dances

Latin dances were greatly influenced by the tempos of the music. The samba had three different tempos that greatly changed the character of the dance. The slowest samba eventually became known as the bossa nova. The rumba also had three different tempos. The extensions caused by the change of tempo in the rumba extended that single dance into three dances. Latin dance eventually became a specialty area for Doris.

### The Growth of Latin Dance

Real interest in Latin music began around 1929 as a result of increased American tourism in Latin America. In the summer of 1930 the Edward Marks Music Company published "The Peanut Vender," and America suddenly became aware of Latin-American music as a source of dance numbers. In the late 1920s Xavier Cugat formed an orchestra that specialized in Latin-American music. He opened at the Coconut Grove in Los Angeles and appeared in early sound movies such as *In Gay Madrid*, starring Ramon Novarro in 1930. Later in the 1930s, Cugat played at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York and by the end of the decade was recognized as having the outstanding Latin orchestra of the day. Doris was the first Arthur Murray Studio to

invite Cugat to play at her Detroit studio on a regular basis. She hired the best Latin bands to perform for her students throughout her career.

Doris continually sought retraining in the latest dance steps, often returning to New York for refresher courses with advanced teachers. Along with lessons at the Murray studio in New York, Doris studied at other area dance studios to soak up the Latin dance fever then sweeping the city. Arthur Murray did have a Cuban instructor at his New York studio, but instruction was only available in a class format.

I wanted to dance with the Cuban *himself* to get the feel and subtle movement of the dance. That was how I developed myself. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

Because Latin music had become so popular, there were several Cuban teachers in New York City with whom Doris worked. She sought instruction with a master teacher one on one to feel the subtle movement of each dance. Doris always sought authenticity in Latin dance. Her desire was to absorb the 'feel' of the beat in each dance, knowing a rumba could distinguish itself from a samba on a very subtle level. She continued this self-imposed continuing education throughout her career.

This deep desire to absorb the true essence of Latin dance drove Doris to travel to the native countries of the dances. With money from her own pocket she traveled to Cuba, Brazil and Argentina. Returning to share the skills that she had gained, the Detroit dance studio began to shine in the area of Latin dance. As the most outstanding Latin dance studio in the Arthur Murray franchise, Murray decided to hold his first manager convention in Detroit.

Especially after we had gone to South America, where I studied the tango and the samba with people of that culture to get the real feel of it, our studio *had* it. In the

dance conventions we held in Detroit the next two or three years, it was what we had in Detroit that spread through the Arthur Murray organization. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

Doris was emphatic about spreading Latin dance throughout Detroit. When Doris and Cy arrived in Detroit, only big society bands were heard playing at the Terrace room. These bands knew little about Latin music. The common style of the music of these bands was more akin to waltzes and fox-trots. They definitely had not played a rumba.

By the end of their first summer, Doris and Cy had hired a "latinized" band to play in their studio. These Cuban musicians played the music of their country with genuine flair. Frankie Lozano was one of Doris' favorite Cuban band leaders, and she later featured him and his band on her local television show.

The Detroit studio featured live Cuban music at parties for the pupils. Ten to twelve musicians were employed to perform for the four or five large parties held throughout the year. Even more distinctive were the Friday afternoon 'live band' sessions Doris arranged for both pupils and teachers.

I wanted to give the teachers something special. If you didn't give the teachers something to inspire them, teaching became drudgery, even if you enjoyed teaching. They needed an outlet to let themselves go. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Doris believed that teachers could burnout from the effects of a hard teaching job. Doris acknowledges that teaching was hard and repetitious. Just as she needed to see new dance movements, she also looked for something to inspire her teachers. Consequently, she began Friday afternoon sessions. A small group of two or three

Latin musicians would arrive at 3:00 p.m. From 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. the pupils and teachers danced together. From 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., teachers danced without pupils.

Doris described the progression of a typical Friday afternoon session. Beginning at 3:00 with a small number of musicians there would be ten to twelve musicians there by 5:00. These musicians showed up because they wanted to play their music for dancers. Doris felt the musicians played their hearts out because they were sharing with people who could love their music. Doris remembers those sessions as some of the most exciting and memorable at the studio.

Through the many recordings Doris was able to bring back from her visits to Cuba, Doris prepared her students for the arrival of the famous Latin dance band leader, Xavier Cougat. Of Cougat's arrival in the fall of 1938 she states:

We were ready. We had lots of students then who could do the rumba. The local bands didn't know how to play rumba at all. They were playing such fast stuff the students couldn't possibly dance to it. They didn't know what Cuban music was in Detroit, *our* students did. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, December 2, 1994)

The students in Detroit made an impression on the famous band leader as well. Cougat came back a second year. He loved performing for the students at the Terrace Room as they seemed to truly enjoy his music. On his second trip to Detroit the Conga was sweeping the country. Doris remembers demonstrations of the Conga and Conga chains all over the Terrace room, with Cougat's band playing. This was, to Doris, an extremely rich experience.

One could point to the arrival of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers at RKO with the film *Flying Down To Rio* as fuel for this Latin fire spreading across the country. Their introduction of the rumba number, "The Carioca," made film history. In the same picture Astaire also danced the tango with Dolores Del Rio in "Orchids in the



Moonlight.” Dance lovers in Detroit were bombarded by the passion of Latin culture and dance on all fronts.

Doris’ pupils quickly caught the Latin fever. Rumba was an exciting alternative to the familiar fox-trot. As Doris taught her students, they began to infiltrate the night clubs throughout Detroit, demanding music appropriate to dancing the rumba. As the dance public learned these dances and expressed their impatience with the area bands’ reluctance to play music for Latin dancing, Doris looked for a solution.

In a fashion that seemed to fair well for Doris throughout her life, she assessed the needs of the people around her and set out to solve the problems they faced. In this case, her students were not happy that they could not frequent other dancing establishments in Detroit and show off their Latin dance skills. Doris called a meeting of five of the leading local dance band leaders and negotiated a change. She explained to them the economics of the situation. To play the Cuban sound all of her students enjoyed was to increase their business, to refuse was to lose business.

Three or four times Doris invited area band leaders to her dance studio and she played her Cuban recordings while dancing the appropriate steps to illustrate the authentic quality of each dance. At one point she even had the band leaders dance to her recordings. She found this to be the quickest way to win them over to her concepts of ‘appropriate tempos.’ Consequently, she had a major impact on the nightclubs of Detroit. She cultivated her association with not only Xavier Cougat, but other famous Latin performers such as Carmen Cavallera, Enricho Madrigera, and local Cubans such as Panchito and his band. Panchito, a favorite of Doris’ who eventually played every Friday afternoon at the studio, later claimed to have gotten his start on a successful career in Detroit at the Arthur Murray branch that Doris and Cy managed.

Doris went to Cuba several summers, studying with different master teachers there. Perhaps most importantly, she went into the dance halls to watch Cubans dance. She found the general population seemed to dance from inspiration and intuition. Dance

was a part of their everyday living. Doris found herself frequently inviting the best dancers back to the hotel to instruct her in their dance interpretations.

In 1948 Doris, her brother Charlie and two other teachers traveled to Brazil. Albert Bradley, chairman of the board of General Motors in Detroit, set up contacts for Doris to spend ten days in Rio de Janeiro.

It's a very large colored population, you know. This was the colored dance hall. That's where you saw the *dancing*. This was not the kind of dancing where they just let the dancers go to pieces. It was a controlled thing, very high class. These colored women were dressed beautifully with their hair all done and the men had white suits and ties that just looked so elegant against their black skin. They did not allow us to go down on the dance floor. We had to sit up on the balcony and just watch. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

Doris' group were the only outsiders allowed in the dance hall one evening in Rio. Doris had impressed her Brazilian contacts with the depth of her interest and ability in learning their dance culture. Outsiders, particularly whites, were not allowed to participate or view the local culture on such an intimate level.

You looked down on this huge dance floor and it was just undulating, just like waves at the sea. Everybody on the beat, everybody moving. What a sensation! I asked if they did any faster dances during the evening and our guide responded, "No, we only allow a certain tempo. We have to keep it at that, if we let it get any faster, the whole place would go berserk. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

Doris' group spent another ten days in Buenos Aires. A local dance institute presented a two-hour program on Argentine dancing specifically for Doris and her entourage. Doris found an entirely different level of tango dancing in the local, less elegant dance halls of Buenos Aires.

The real tango dancers do a lot of footwork that's kind of sneaky. You looked over the floor and all you saw were these feet flying in all directions; going back and coming forward, these feet coming around each other. Fascinating. The tango *we* learned was more the upper level tango from the dance studios. I didn't get much of the dance hall type. That would have taken another month! These kids danced every night. It was just like putting on their clothes. It was so natural for them. It would have taken us a *long* time to absorb that. D. Eaton Travis  
(Interview, June 20, 1995)

Clearly, immersing herself in the culture of the country, for whom dance was and still is almost a subconscious form of national expression, intensified her interest and passion in portraying much more than mere dance steps.

We would see these little kids, four and five years old rumba-ing down the street. Nobody taught them. They just watched their parents I suppose. Dancing is the cheapest kind of entertainment you can get. People who don't have money, that's what they do. When we went to Cuba, these dance halls were loaded with the poor. We had some marvelous experiences down there. They loved us. After about seven years, they all knew us down there in the different dance halls. They'd make a circle around us when we Americans would start to rumba. They were amazed we could do what they were doing. It was just fascinating. Everybody danced.

Their body movements are just so interesting to see. The expression they have when they are dancing is just one element. There is something spiritual about it. It really is something spiritual. All of these poor people you see just give themselves to that expression of movement. The Cubans do it one way, the Argentineans do it another, and the Brazilians do it another. You just get that same element every time you see it. It's just part of their life somehow. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

Doris worked very hard to bring back the mysterious element of authenticity to the courses in Latin dance she taught throughout her lifetime. Arthur Murray even asked her to demonstrate to him what she had observed. According to Doris, Murray was very good at simplifying complex steps to a single, basic pattern. It seems, even though Murray carefully watched Doris' demonstrations, the intricate movements of style and nuance evaded him. Doris laughingly tried to explain that he needed a certain body action in the dance to make it look Cuban. She stressed that the dance could not remain square and still illustrate the essence of Latin flavor. Murray, according to Doris, quickly gave up. She describes him as a beautiful smooth dancer. While he did the tango and waltz beautifully, Doris did not consider him a rhythmic dancer. He seemed to acknowledge that fact by leaving Latin dancing to Doris.

#### Social Programs Developed at the Studio

Doris overstepped the call of duty as teacher, many times in what she provided for the students in her studio. She put tremendous effort into developing an exceptional social program for her pupils. A dance was held every week in the studio. She also organized huge, elaborate balls four or five times a year. All students who were enrolled in dance lessons at the studio were able to participate in these functions.

It was through her effort that many of her pupils signed up for a lifetime of lessons with the Arthur Murray studios. The cost of the lifetime membership program was \$5,000. Doris felt this was an extremely reasonable fee for the benefits they were purchasing. Students were given an opportunity to participate in a dance party almost every week with private dance lessons each week. Doris saw this not only as enrolling in dance lessons, but also investing in a social outing.

The extensive social program Doris developed gave her studio a distinctive trademark. Doris defends this social entertainment and the role it played in the lives of, particularly, the women of the day.

When I got into teaching social dancing, I met so many women whose lives were very dull and limited socially, widows and unmarried women. I soon realized that various things had brought their lives to a very narrow existence. Our studio became their entire outlet for social activity. This happened not only because we concentrated on the fundamentals of dance, but each pupil was in an atmosphere of song and dance. They were around happy personalities and enjoyed the feeling that somebody cared about what happened to them. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 22, 1996)

Doris found that many people, especially women, had never found an opportunity to express themselves. Countless women, fifty to seventy years old, had never had anyone give them encouragement or attention. They usually did not feel that they were doing anything worthwhile or beautiful. Through their work at the dance studio they could look in the large mirrors lining every wall and see themselves and the beautiful image they were creating. Doris recalled that seeing the satisfaction, delight, and joy these women received from the social programs at the studio. She fondly pointed out that each pupil took on a special radiance while dancing with their teacher.

One of Doris' wealthy students had a fight with their lawyer when he found out what she was spending on dance lessons. She had signed up for the lifetime course in which she was entitled to dance lessons for the rest of her life. She was also entitled to attend any of the social parties.

This person's lawyer said, "For \$5,000 you could buy yourself a mink coat" She replied, "Yes, I could. And I could hang the mink coat in the closet up there and I could look at it every day. For \$5,000 I get five years of *social* life and *that's* what I want. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March, 1996)

Doris saw that what she provided through the social program at her studio went beyond just learning to dance. She flinches at the consistency with which the media of the day represented Arthur Murray's program as a harsh sales program. Doris stressed that for those people who could afford it, studying dance provided both a sense of security and a social life.

As television became popular, the big bands stopped traveling. Yet Doris still had clients who wanted to go out and dance. As fewer and fewer hotel or nightclub bands were available, Doris arranged entire social evenings of dinner and dance for her teachers and students. Approximately twenty teachers and their students would attend. Doris arranged for everyone's dinner at one of the hotels where an exciting band was playing.

Doris realized the success of this program reflected her pupils desires to get out and socialize without having the pressures of lining up their own partners. Doris capitalized on these feelings by arranging non-threatening evenings for those who were interested. She also realized if she did not develop a social program for her pupils to enjoy their dancing, there would be no point in them taking lessons. By necessity, her actions reflected astute marketing skills. One of her goals was to make sure that the

atmosphere she presented was as classy as possible. Doris truly felt dedicated to this mission for her students. She was convinced many of them would have had nothing socially if she had not conceived and carried out this on-going program.

As socialization patterns changed in the culture around her, Doris developed an even more comprehensive social dance program. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s Doris developed a medal system in her studios. Examinations were given for students to advance through levels of achievement. Students progressed from bronze, silver to gold status as their skills improved. She began hosting monthly dance parties in the studio and large 'medal' balls in the local Masonic hall, where medals for achievement in dance were awarded.

The students became very concerned about their exhibitions and worked hard at them. That's where I would be able to help them because I could go in and give them a bit of ease in their presentation, encourage them and have them rehearse a little before me to help them, whatever they needed. They took it seriously and worked hard at it. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

The medal balls were always tuxedo affairs. Doris went to great lengths to maintain an era of elegance and propriety inside her studio. Drinks were not allowed in the ballroom.

We never had liquor at the balls or dinner parties I gave. At the medal balls we didn't have food or anything like that anyway. Some of the pupils resented it because they wanted to have a 'good' time, but I explained, "You have to understand I have a lot of teachers here, some are eighteen, nineteen and twenty years old. I'm not going to submit them to that kind of an atmosphere. Social dancing and drinking don't go together. I won't submit my teachers to that.

I don't want them to drink. You want them to give you a good lesson. You don't want them to be half tight when you come in here and pay for a lesson. Well, I don't want them to have to teach somebody who's half tight!

D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

### Social Unrest Outside the Studio

Social class was also well illustrated in the clientele of the dance studio. Little fraternization occurred between the executives of Grosse Pointe, where Doris was hired to provide private classes for their children, and the average 'off-the-street' dance student of downtown Detroit.

Through the dance studio, one sees the hierarchy of a segregated society. These lines of demarcation were being strongly drawn in Detroit, as the city struggled with the effects of the powerful auto industry and the need for a minimally educated work force to serve the assembly lines.

Doris held tightly to her conception of civility within the studio while society changed rapidly outside its doors. Indicative of those changes were the racial tensions that developed in Detroit over the course of Doris' tenure in the city. Doris was working in Detroit just as the demographics of the area were beginning to change. According to Doris, when she first went to Detroit in 1936 the black population was 25%. She felt it was closer to 85% by the time she left. No avenue of life escaped exposure to these tensions, including the dance studio.

We had a situation that developed. We did have one or two Negro couples who came to the studio and were taught by the teachers. When they applied as teachers I had to say to them, I cannot make a pupil take lessons from anyone he or she does



not want to take from. I can train you and make you a teacher, but I can't book you. If I can't book you, you can't make any money. I can't control that.

D. Eaton Travis (Interview, June 20, 1995)

### The Television Show

Breaking new ground, in 1946 Doris started a television show that today might be termed an infomercial. Used as an advertisement for her dance studio, Doris paid \$2300 for each half-hour segment she presented. During each segment Doris, the teachers and students of her Arthur Murray branch studio in Detroit presented a televised demonstration on the latest dance steps. The goal of each production was both to educate and to entice viewers to enroll at the studio. Doris produced each episode often in the summer when there was more time available away from the teaching studio. Doris did not create every exhibition, but she did supervise all of them. Doris allowed the teachers to create their own exhibitions with their pupils and believed in letting her instructors have input into their portion of each show. Doris would merely review the exhibition and add or change whatever she felt was needed so it could be properly integrated into the entire show.

Each weekly show was filmed live. Doris choose a band to perform from the top Cuban bands she used in her teaching studio. Panchito was one of her favorites.

I set the teachers up a month or so ahead. I said, 'Now you get an exhibition ready for Miss So and So for about a month from now and let me know when you're ready.' I had several teachers working with their pupils on exhibition as I developed each television program. The type of exhibition that was ready determined my script. We'd rehearse it there in the dance studio for a couple of days before the show, then they always came down to rehearse the show at the television studio before we did it. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

With all the earmarks of a professional production, Doris' show took the local station by storm. Unusual for its day, many of the episodes were shot with film, making the end products' shelf life longer than other contemporary productions.

The first shows were shot in the dance studio because Doris wanted the distinctive atmosphere of the actual studio around her. Later, to prevent the need for moving equipment to and from the dance studio, the filming was completed at the television studio. The television executives went out of their way to give Doris enough dance space to accommodate her exhibitions. They also allowed her to decorate the filming location to present the image of a comfortable studio club.

Doris' television show preceded the national dance show hosted by Arthur Murray and his wife Katherine in the early 1950s. Murray had a successful national marketing scheme in mind for the show, which he felt might be hindered if Doris continued her show out of Detroit.

Since we did the show for seven or eight years, it overlapped Murray's show.

After I had started my show, I think maybe the next year or so, Arthur Murray started his show. When he went on he wanted me to get out because, naturally, his show was playing in Detroit too. It was national.

I was talking with one of the studio people one day and he said, 'Arthur Murray would like you to get off the air. We're not going to have it. If *he* wants to get off the air, ok, but we want the local show here.' So I stayed on during the season. Arthur Murray was on the same week as I was. I was on one day and he was on another. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

This incident also points out the popularity of dance across the nation at this time. Instructional dance was in demand. It was entertaining and enriching enough to be

seen as viable programming for the growing television industry. There was, however, a major difference between the marketing concept behind Murray's show and the one Doris found to be successful in Detroit. Shunning a glitzy approach that focused on slapstick comedy or the showcasing of top professional dancers, Doris chose to maintain a local focus in her programming.

Our show was pure dancing. Only our students and teachers performed. We had guests on the program in the nature of our audience. For instance, if we invited members of the Chrysler Girl's Club to be guests on our show we would introduce the president of that club and have a little interview with her. We might also have an author from a local university, such as Wayne State University, who'd just written a book about women titled, 'In Detroit, Courage was the Fashion.' We'd have such a local person as a guest one evening. We'd then have a little interview about her book, and have her discuss her work at the university. That's the kind of guest we had. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

Doris' broadcasts were genuine attempts to promote exceptional and outstanding members of the Detroit community. Appearances were made by groups such as the Lawyer's club, the General Motors Girl's club, and local newspaper reporters. Even the local boy scout troop received air-time via Doris' dancing broadcast.

This proved to be an extremely busy time for Doris and the studio. Aside from teaching and running the dance studio, rehearsals were often held in the afternoons for the television show. Despite the expense and extra work, Doris saw the show as an exceptional advertising tool. She continued to produce episodes for seven years. Throughout its tenure, the purpose of the show was to highlight local personalities, clubs and events of the Detroit area as well as offering the students and teachers of Doris' studio the opportunity to showcase their talents to the local community.

It was educational and it gave the pupils opportunity. Our television show *was* pupils and teachers. It wasn't professional people from outside hired to come and do a dance. This was 'presenting the pupil.' D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

Doris enjoyed the personal influence she had on the lives of her students. As she reflects, many of her memories bring specific persons and their individual progress to mind.

One little lady, she must've been about seventy, I had her do a little exhibition on television one night. She said to me afterward, 'Mrs. Travis, I could never tell you what this dance studio has meant to me. Never, ever in my whole life have I had anybody pay the attention to me that you and your folks here have.' She said, 'To get on television? It's beyond my fondest dreams!' She was with us fifteen years. That became her life. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

Doris and her teaching staff saw countless individuals blossom with the new found self-esteem that dance lessons provided. The success was infectious and, indeed, colors Doris' recollections of her own satisfactions with teaching.

The transformation in feeling (self-worth) these pupils went through when they began to see themselves capable of doing something, with somebody applauding them and them feeling the accomplishment, there's just nothing to replace the satisfaction someone like myself could get. To see them come in, barely walking, and then see them be able to perform an exhibition on the television show or at one of our balls, it was *very* satisfying work to me. I *loved* every minute of it. I *still*

love it. We used to speak of the studio like we were saying, 'Mother.' It was a person to us, to the pupils too. D. Eaton Travis (Interview, March 20, 1996)

### Closing the Doors

Several events lead to Doris' decision to sell the Michigan studios in 1968. Television, home stereo equipment and the fading of the big dance bands had taken a toll on the dance studio business by the late 1950s. Contemporary popular music like rock-and-roll music focused on dancing without couples touching one another. Indeed, no sophisticated training was required to enjoy this new dancing. This directly damaged the industry of dance instruction. Doris joined with many franchise owners of this time in offering her business for sale.

Dissatisfied customers were closing in on individual owners like Doris when promises made through Arthur Murray's publicity and sales tactics could not be satisfied. Arthur Murray, Inc. had established a loan company to allow students to borrow the money from him in advance of their contracted lessons. Murray earned interest on millions of dollars in loans as well as pushing his managers to sell lifetime dance packages. He was not concerned about the long-term liability incurred by the studios, such as Doris', that had to provide the services. Doris resisted, especially since Arthur Murray, Inc. seemed to ignore the product of teaching each pupil.

By 1957 Doris began to lose her patience. Her franchise agreement with Arthur Murray, at that time, called for her to pay seven percent of gross receipts from all her studios to Arthur Murray, Inc. of New York. In return, Arthur Murray, Inc. of New York was to do nation-wide promotion of the dance lessons, establish guidelines for the teaching of dance, provide a curriculum and materials for each studio, and oversee all auditing and accounting of each studio. None of this was being provided for Doris' studios. Instead, she found herself bombarded with damage control required to soften overly aggressive sales tactics from New York, such as promising a student the ability

to claim their lessons at any point in time throughout the rest of their life. If a student had purchased lessons in another state and later moved to Michigan, they came to Doris for lessons, even though her studio would receive no money from this student.

In 1960 Doris was billed \$100,000 by the federal government for an accounting oversight some ten years before. Cy had long since left the Arthur Murray organization, so although half the bill was his, it became Doris' debt. Doris began closing branch studios to tighten her fiscal belt. Simultaneously, the Federal Trade Commission began an investigation of Arthur Murray, Inc.

Increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of support from the New York Office, Doris was instructed by her attorney to stop making franchise payments. She received threats from the New York office about losing her franchise if these fees were not paid, but she held fast. Doris organized a meeting with studios from other cities outside of Michigan to express a unified cry of discontent. In 1962 Doris was rewarded by having her franchise cancelled by Arthur Murray, Inc.

Doris and her accountant, Al Giuliani, hired New York attorney Louis Nizer to defend their case. Nizer was perhaps the most well-known lawyer of the time, having handled such high profile cases as the Billy Rose divorce case. Doris sued Arthur Murray, Katherine Murray, and Arthur Murray, Inc. for one million dollars plus the cancellation of all back franchise fees. Doris was sued five million by Arthur Murray, Inc. Doris credited her victory to her accountant, Al Giuliani, whose impeccable records included over eight file cabinets of information documenting every failure of Arthur Murray, Inc. to fulfill their contract arrangement.

The case was settled out of court. Arthur Murray, Inc. agreed to pay Doris the lawyers' fees and awarded her a contract allowing her to continue using the Arthur Murray name with no back fees owed and no future payment of franchise fees for ten years. The settlement allowed Doris to pay off back debts, stabilize the franchises and offer her businesses for sale.

After her victory against Arthur Murray, Inc., Doris was able to repay \$250,000 in debts to her husband, Paul Travis, whom she had met years earlier through the dance studio. Paul had paid for Arthur Murray lessons on cruises hosted by Arthur Murray and still had lessons remaining. Given a marketing list of prospective clients, Doris called Paul in Michigan to see if he would like to take lessons. Paul asked her out. Over the next couple of years, Paul took dance lessons with other teachers in Doris' studio, until Doris finally consented to go out with him. They were married January 19, 1949.

Doris dissolved her dance studios in 1968 and she and Paul agreed to pool their resources and go into ranching. Doris and Paul Travis moved to Norman, Oklahoma to raise quarter horses. They still live in Norman, having just celebrated their forty-seventh wedding anniversary. Charlie Eaton also resides in Norman, Oklahoma, while Joseph Eaton still lives in Michigan.

In 1992 Doris received a Bachelor of Arts degree with distinction from the University of Oklahoma. She had been a part-time undergraduate student for twelve years. Doris has continued teaching dance classes for friends in the community and still performs her most famous routine, "Mandy," today in 1997. She and her brother, Charlie, often offer dance classes for the residents of Charlie's retirement home. Plans are being made for Doris to appear, along with other members of the Ziegfeld Follies Girls Club, in New York on the stage of the New Amsterdam Theater at its anticipated re-opening in May, 1997. Doris is also being flown April 7, 1997 to New York to be filmed for an episode of 20/20 with Barbara Walters. She is planning to dance the *Mandy* routine on the stage of the New Amsterdam for Ms. Walters. As Doris says, "Once a hooper, always a hooper."

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to document through an oral history the life of Doris Eaton Travis from the beginning of her career in entertainment as a child actor in the Poli Theatre Stock Company in Washington, D. C. and later in the Ziegfeld *Follies* of 1918, 1919 and 1920 to the end of her professional career with the Arthur Murray Dance Studios in 1968. This study chronicles not only her work on Broadway with the Ziegfeld *Follies*, but her transitional work in silent and early sound films, her contributions to trends in social dance via the Arthur Murray Dance Studios, and her development and implementation of a televised instructional program on social dance.

This study on Doris Eaton Travis provided an opportunity to view society through the eyes of a woman whose life nearly spanned all of the Twentieth century. Her work with both theatrical and social dance make her insights valuable from the perspective of artist and woman. Her many experiences and activities coincide with the rise and decline of the Ziegfeld *Follies*, silent film, and the social dance movement. She lived these movements, participated in their successes, and worked with leading figures in entertainment history in this century. Capturing Doris Travis' life through her records and her personal recollections provides a unique history of American entertainment.

#### Conclusions

Doris Eaton Travis has observed and experienced dance, both as an act of doing and as a vehicle for change, over the course of a lifetime. From her impressions of being a woman of the *Follies*, through her brief movie career, to her break from her



family in 1936 to begin her own successful dance studios; her life illustrates opportunity, decision and change. Doris took advantage of her opportunities and wove for herself an interesting, engaging, and successful tapestry. Through this tapestry one can view both dance and women in America's popular culture during her career.

Looking with hindsight, my concept of the study and its telling has changed. In approaching Doris Eaton Travis as a topic for an oral history, I was confident that I would be drawing from a primary source the details and remembrances that would distinguish an individual's living of an era. Instead, I learned that the recording of history is controlled by the power and perspective of the teller. This subject presented me an with an outline, details of a life given like unconnected dots on a page. It was left for me to connect those dots and, when necessary, note when dots that should have been there, were missing. The significance of my study of the life of Doris Eaton Travis is often as much about what was not said, as it is about what was said.

Doris gave few emotional motivations throughout my interviews with her. She shared only scant information about her parents and offered little discussion of her other siblings. Doris responded only with direct, factual answers regarding her family. This could be due to the fact that Doris was concurrently working on a book of her own on her family history, but I also conclude that descriptive elaboration is not in Doris' nature. Thus, in seeking the description of details that would provide a more colorful recollection of an era past, I was often left searching for more.

Soon after the interviews began, I also realized that one cannot look back on a period in which one was age fourteen or fifteen and retrieve anything other than memories of a fourteen or fifteen year old. This was particularly noticeable during Doris' period with the Ziegfeld *Follies*. She was a child of a family that worked in the theater. I was never quite sure that Doris might have been just as happy going to school and reading books. Although she rarely remembers tactile or atmospheric elements of her *Follies* experiences, she did recall when simplicity was used, for

example when Ziegfeld had nothing but a bare stage to support Fanny Brices' number, *My Man*.

The distance from which Doris views her past is further highlighted by her lack of any personal recollections of the famous personalities she was surrounded by during her career prior to 1936. My observations are that Doris was shy and, certainly for the first part of her life, overshadowed by her older sister Mary. There were no great resentments about this, but certainly Doris did not feel the strength of her own personality until she left the family and traveled to Detroit to run the dance studio. It is from this point on in the interview that Doris' eyes lighted up with personal pride and self-esteem at her accomplishments.

Our discussions on dance seemed to illustrate the interests and ideals of a fine craftsman. The perspective was in line with one who viewed her work as 'a job.' It seems apparent that having lived through the precarious history of the ups and downs of a theatrical family during the depression, that to Doris, having a secure financial existence was her goal and her art. Again, through her theatrical and dance training she was able to provide not only income for herself, but as her business expanded in Detroit, she was able to also employ her brothers.

Another motivation that recurs throughout Doris' life is the reuniting of the family unit. The irony of much of Doris' life is that there was always great rejoicing in her narrative when the family was together but due to the nature of their work, they spent much of their lives apart beginning in early childhood. From Doris' perspective, having the family together was and still is a priority. This can be seen in her recent relocation of her brother Charlie to Norman, Oklahoma to be near her husband. While people question Doris in awe at her brush with celebrity status, it is perhaps Doris' perspective in her nineties that family, stability, pride and security are her life's greatest works.

### Dance as Sociology

American society has shown a reluctance to recognize theatrical and social dance as art forms worthy of reflective study. It also seems difficult for traditional paths previously paved for the study of dance to include theatrical and social dance as illustrative of societal changes, and certainly not as a means to redefine the self or, more specifically, woman's identity. Angela McRobbie in her article *Fame, Flashdance and Fantasies of Achievement* (1990) notes an inability to view any dance form from a sociological perspective.

It is surprising just how negligent sociology and cultural studies have been of dance. As a leisure practice, a performance art and as a representational form, dance continues to elude analysis. And while dance theory and dance criticism are well-developed in their own right they do not offer the kind of broader social and cultural analysis which is still needed. (p. 39)

The limited serious study on the *Follies*, when it clearly occupied a position of power within the entertainment industry at a time when the opulence of a country was mirrored in the opulence on stage, is proof of the neglect of scholars to study this element of American popular culture in a serious sociological context.

It is remarkable to note the unified cry that is currently being raised to view dance in a broader sociological perspective. Judith Lynne Hanna, author of *Dance, Sex and Gender* (1988) states that "no book explicitly examines sexuality, the 'battle of the sexes,' and the cultural construction of gender options as they are played out in the production and visual imagery of dance." Although useful, dance biographies, autobiographies and picture books do not confront the changing content and context of sociological movements as they manifest themselves in dance. Issues discussed with Doris such as changes in dance forms over the thirty years of her work with Arthur

Murray are only some of the vehicles from which to draw sociological conclusions based on life experiences.

To further support the need to view dance from a sociological perspective, McRobbie (1990) promotes the following view:

Some of the most richly coded class practices in contemporary society can be observed in leisure and particularly in dance. The various contexts of social dancing tell us a great deal about the everyday lives and expectations of their participants. Dance marks out important moments in the lifecycle and it punctuates the more banal weekly cycle of labor and leisure, and what Ian Chambers has labeled the 'freedom of Saturday night.'

Dancing, where the explicit and implicit zones of socialized pleasures and individualized desires entwine in the momentary rediscovery of the 'reason of the body' is undoubtedly one of the main avenues along which pop's sense travels.  
(p. 42)

Indeed, one can view that dance, more like poetry (with its multiple, symbolic, and elusive meanings) than prose, has qualities that psychologists report arouse viewers and influence their attitudes and opinions (Hanna, 1988). Theatrical and social dance, perhaps from their more immediate contact with a larger cross-section of the general public, can offer a comprehensive sociological perspective, one that gives voice to timely issues of beauty, power, sexuality, economic roles, use of leisure time and the evolving individualism seen growing within a distinctive American culture. Conclusions made from examinations of Doris' life in theatrical and social dance enriches any research in dance and further support Hanna's (1988) view that, "dances are social acts that contribute to the continual emergence of culture."

McRobbie (1990) suggests a sociology of dance would have to step outside the field of performance and examine dance as a social activity, a sexual ritual, a form of self-expression, a kind of exercise, and a way of speaking through the body.

Historians of working-class culture have acknowledged the place occupied by dance in leisure and the opportunities it has afforded for courtship, relaxation, and boisterous or even riotous behavior. Unfortunately in most cases the nature of the dance remains in the background, something enjoyed more by women than by men and therefore marginal to the real business of working-class life. (p. 42)

Yet, the availability of free time along with having the money to invest in social dance was a barometer of economic growth and freedom. Doris' career changes were primarily driven by changes in the entertainment business brought on by larger issues of economic growth and failure or technologic breakthroughs such as radio and television.

Sociological insights can be gained through the observation of the experiences of Doris Eaton Travis in her career with the Arthur Murray Dance studios. Her marketing was based on the very principle that through dance skill and fluency came social acceptance, even elevation, through social spheres. Issues of communication were seen through the changes in dance styles. The fact that a large number of people *wanted* to take dance instruction and that Murray's advertising was able to capitalize on taking dance lessons as a vehicle for social mobility shows the ability of social dance to illustrate the desires of American popular culture.

Doris' experiences with the dance studio are profound in their ability to illustrate both the racial tensions seen growing in the Detroit area and a growing sensitivity to multi-cultural awareness through her study of Latin dance. Doris endeavored to train blacks to teach social dance. While she could train them as teachers, she could not

guarantee them bookings. Dance was a market driven industry and Detroit at that time was dominated by a wealthy, white culture not interested in integration. Yet, on the other hand, this same white culture was dipping heavily into the black culture from countries like Brazil, Argentina and Cuba through their almost fanatic interest in the traditional dances from these countries. Through this perspective, Doris' work in integrating Latin dances into her repertoire of traditional social dances made dance a vehicle for breaking down ethnic barriers. The revolutionary aspect of this situation is increased when one considers Doris was a woman stepping inside other cultures as a professional and researcher when these cultures did not see women as role models in their own worlds.

#### The *Follies* as Sociology

A phenomenon such as the Ziegfeld *Follies* provides insight into the character of popular culture of the time. Through an examination of those who participated, such as Doris Eaton Travis, a multi-dimensional perspective of the content, context and meaning of dance can be viewed.

A close look at the *Follies* through the experiences of Doris Eaton Travis reveals much about the society of that era. Ziegfeld created an illusion of 'high culture' where low ethnic roots existed. He was successful in marketing material that originated in vaudeville acts and minstrels to a more elite audience. Equally, he was also successful marketing to the masses as well as the elite. He integrated 'high culture' into a popular medium. Ziegfeld was the first to present classical ballet in this popular entertainment vehicle, with Doris' sister Mary, being the first ballerina to incorporate multiple pirouettes across a previously 'tapped on' floor. Using classical ballet in this previously vaudeville medium blurs the distinctions between 'high' and popular culture. This blurring serves to make the interchange from one to the other seem

surmountable for the participants and audience. This ability to cross cultural boundaries proved particularly valuable to women.

The *Follies* were extremely important in fixing a 'feminine identity' for its era. The droves of young women auditionees, some 15,000 a year, to the *Follies* is proof of women's desire for social mobility and economic freedom. Women, disadvantaged by a poor background, acted on their aspirations to escape. Since many of the women in question were girls of fourteen and sixteen years old, brought to auditions by mothers, one can infer visions of opportunity were firmly fixed even in the minds of women already too old to take advantage of the opportunity.

Historically, the Ziegfeld years encompassed a unique period where for the first time women in the workplace were both culturally accepted and highly profitable. The fact that women were getting jobs in the field of entertainment had much to do with society's light regard of their actions. Opportunities in a legitimate theatrical dance career also allowed for high salaries. According to Hanna (1988), "There are few other places in popular culture where girls will find such active role models and such incentives to achieve" than dance. Dance offered both the romance required of women's imagination and an area where an emphasis on the importance of work could be combined.

#### Social and Theatrical Dance as Vehicles for Women's Expression and Opportunity

While men saw the opportunity to acquire beautiful women as trophies to flaunt in front of society as symbols of their own virility and power, there were also new opportunities for women. These opportunities included the freedom gained as women became more and more in possession of their own bodies. Because of the economic independence possible to an astute woman of the *Follies*, an evolution began, that would years later be termed the Woman's *revolution*, as the bodies on stage remained

more in possession of owners, rather than exploited by external force; either men or economics.

Women of the *Follies* were at the edge of making their own choices. For the first time in American culture, a large number of women had a socially acceptable vehicle to use their beauty and talent to earn large sums of money, gaining power and status. The extremity of these choices can be demonstrated in the high numbers of women who traveled the road of self-destruction, having no role-models for such a life of independence, wealth and power. Nor did many of them have the endurance for such a rapid change from a 'common' to an 'elite' societal status. Doris Eaton Travis was one woman of the *Follies* who lived through one of the earliest periods in American history where women were awarded such rapid and powerful success, surviving the freedom that went along with it.

Mobility and travel were new to women of the early 1900s. Such changes required the beginning of redefining the role of women to the household and family. Hanna (1988) notes the changes required in a woman's relationship to the family if she is to excel in a professional area.

This requires the absence or at least the marginalization of the family and familial relationships. Because the girl is more tightly ensconced within the family than her male peers, it is more important for her to free herself from these ties if she is to achieve her potential. (p. 58)

The behaviors of the young women of the *Follies* were transitional in regard to mobility and freedom. While traveling throughout the country in an era when train travel was still a luxury, these young women were still accompanied by their mothers at Ziegfeld's directive. Ziegfeld, himself, referred to as a father figure by Doris, supports the theory that the Ziegfeld *Follies* was a transitional 'family'. This artificial 'family'



allowed women of the early 1900s to disengage themselves from their own families and attach to a more mobile, powerful, profitable and professional one. This newly created 'family' exposed young women to a uniquely powerful and flexible lifestyle, in a context of more safety than any other path previously available. The women of the *Follies* illustrate the dynamics of moving into a more independent space, with the promise of achievement.

While Doris had exceptional opportunities through the theatrical careers of her family, already in process at the start of her career, her work in the theater does illustrate several important points. Doris had an extremely mobile lifestyle. Traveling throughout the east and midwest through her career with the *Follies* was a luxury for a woman in this era. The skills learned in the *Follies* became her means to a career with Arthur Murray. The art of dance became a vehicle for financial independence and security, giving her yet increased power and choices. Indeed, dance was one of the few socially acceptable careers in entertainment for a woman at this time, a debt owed Ziegfeld through his ability to increase the respectability for women in his shows in particular.

Doris took advantage of this phenomenon. She was able to excel in business through the socially acceptable art form of dance. Being of a practical nature, the insecurity and irregularity of life in the theater and film, seemed to never be completely comfortable to Doris. Her natural inclination seemed to be to establish roots. This is shown in her choice of settling down with a dance studio business in Detroit. Her focus at that point seemed to be toward the improvement of community life and the life of the individual within the social elite. Using the power of ownership she gained in being a full partner and later owner of not one but many franchises, she worked within the acceptable domain of teaching toward a feminine cloaked end of community service.

Yet, dance also kept women as the object of the male gaze: a commodity filling an economic need, especially in prosperous economic times. To a large extent women of

the stage reflected man's desires. As Doris confirms, what was different in the *Follies* was the consenting female gaze present in the audience. Vaudeville had excluded society women from its audience. Ziegfeld, again showing his insightful marketing skill, included elements of beauty and elegance that he recognized would appeal to women of 'high culture.' Now he was actually mixing the predetermined hierarchy of the audience itself, attracting 'high culture' dreams and low culture lusts all at once. As these boundaries were masked, change and innovation occurred.

Just as women spoke through their bodies in dance, their bodies were also their commodity, their labor power and their artistic raw material. The dance, most easily seen to represent freedom of body movement, also represented to this era a freedom of dress, carriage and lifestyle.

Hanna (1988) notes, "In our rigidly gendered society, images of Woman are not wholly separate from specific woman's concrete experiences." Thus, what is seen on stage is most probably a reflection of experiences of women of that era. This being the case, one cannot consider the issue of women's identity as defined through the experience of the *Follies* without considering the role played by costume.

Dress surrounds and contains the body. Yet, dress also discloses and discovers the body. Inexorably, the body is defined by the parts that are unclothed as well as by the parts clothed. By examining décolletage, the bared back, the revealed midriff, the visibility of the ankle and leg, and the transparency of fabrics used, one can understand the power of the body and the power of clothing to articulate the body and that power.

What one wears negotiates physicality; it demarcates the parts of the body and realizes it as a sum of those parts; and it positions the body, corporeality, in the civilized circumstances of society. That Western dress has continually varied its uses of apertures to the body and its exposure of critical body parts suggest the changing needs and roles of the body in culture.

A conventional explanation that shifting erogenous zones are the reason body exposure is always changing assumes only the viewer and presumes that women dress only to please 'the male gaze.' While this may have been true at the end of the 19th century, the Ziegfeld *Follies* did much to provide women a vehicle for defining their own identities through the skill, visibility, confidence and power they achieved as performers in the *Follies*.

In this light, one can interpret the visible leg of 1920s fashion being mandated by women's power and mobility in the age of modernism. One views the bare midriff as a testament to non-Western stimuli for Western dress, most likely seen through the *Follies* presentation of exotic entertainment. Such deviations from traditional dress certainly affected the wearer's self-confidence and perception, the viewer's attitude, and society's opinions about self, body, and social contact. To know that fashion constructs windows to the body is to know that fashion also builds personal perception and constructs the collective consciousness. Change in such consciousness over time is a tremendous indicator of the state of woman in society. The women of the *Follies*, as instigators of changes in fashion, illustrated evolution and revolutions of their day.

Increased activity and the need for mobility raised the lengths of dresses and increased the visibility of foot, ankle, and leg shortly after the turn of the century. This fashion trend could have only been intensified by the young Ziegfeld *Follies* dancers. The power of their position can be seen in the desires of other young women of the time to emulate their dress, makeup and hair styles. The rapid evolution of the visible leg accompanied new developments seen in women's rights, dance and social mobility.

According to Doris, Ziegfeld understood that in the revelation of the body, suggestion and suggestiveness was more powerful than overt display. His elegant use of veils and transparent costume was more sophisticated than mere burlesque stripping. The use of costume on women in the *Follies* tended to demarcate and illustrate discriminating choices about the body. Such fashion is about the power of the body,

concealed under the civilized apparatus of clothing, to materialize. Just as a dance of veils is a deliberate act of controlled perception, our view of the body is more than mere voyeurism; it aspires to comprehension as well. The comprehension of women within an era, to themselves and to others, can be seen through their dress and costume. Man's role or dominance in this costuming is also an indication of woman's freedom. According to Doris, the respect and elegance Ziegfeld and his crew of designers gave the women of the *Follies* did much to develop a strong core of self-esteem. That self-esteem and confidence then went on to be a platform of confidence women of the *Follies* stood on throughout their lives.

Hanna in her book, *Dance, Sex and Gender* (1988) states:

Sexuality and dance share the same instrument-the human body. Using the signature key of sexuality, essential for human survival and desirable for pleasure, dance resonates universal behavioral needs (Montagu 1981) and particular concerns. With the medium as part of the message, dance evokes, reinforces, and clarifies desires and fantasies, some of which would otherwise be incoherent. Holding up a mirror, dance says to us: Look at yourself or at how you might be. (p. 16)

The role of women in dance is only beginning to achieve recognition. So there are many conclusions yet to be drawn. By viewing the life of Doris Eaton Travis as a professional in dance over a lifetime, it is easy to agree with Hanna (1988) regarding her claim, "In dance, messages of power, dominance, defiance, and equality usually can be sent without accountability. The same unaccountability may provide a low-risk route to change."

McRobbie (1990) sees dance as capable of forming a symbiotic relationship with its audience, especially when that audience consists of young women.

The really important feature about dance, however, (and the one most unlikely to be foregrounded in conventional dance writing), is that as an art and a representational form, as a performance and a spectacle, it has an extremely strong, almost symbiotic relationship with its public. For girls and young women, particularly for those not brought up in a cultural background which sees it as part of its duty to introduce young people to the fine arts, to painting, literature, classical music, and great drama, dance exists as both a practice and as a spectacle. (p. 41)

Dance, was for Doris an entry to the world of entertainment. Once there, she developed skills and matured as a performer. Through the experience and skills that she gained, she was given a chance to actively make choices regarding her career. Indeed, the choice of having a career was still unique to women at this time. Doris' life experiences illustrates that dance is an emphatic way for humans to identify themselves, maintain or erase their boundaries. Given increased culturally accepted access to this art form, women have made the most of dance as a means for transformation of themselves and their image.

It (dance) also comes to life as a set of magical childhood narratives. In each of these forms dance carries within it the possibility of some mysterious transformative power. Its art lies in its ability to create a fantasy of change, escape, or achievement for girls and young women who are surrounded by much more mundane and limiting leisure opportunities. Dance is also different from the other arts in that it is readily available to young girls as a legitimate passion, something they might be expected to want to do, unlike painting or classical music or even writing. It has more interactive effect than the other high arts. (p. 41)

Dance as an artistic mode can be seen as a kind of utopia, used as a symbolic escape route from the more normative expectations of girls and young women. It has proved a popular vehicle for change for women simply because it can, particularly in the theatrical form, depart from roles strongly associated with women. Yet, theatrical and social dance are rarely examined in regard to their influence on women's roles.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Based on research for this paper, the author recommends the following for further study.

1. Similar historical research should be conducted with living individuals from this era regarding their views of theater and dance history.
2. Further studies that concentrate on the role of women in theater and dance in the early part of this century should be undertaken.
3. A thorough investigation of occupations available to women in the first part of this century is warranted.
4. One major archive dedicated to the Women of the Ziegfeld *Follies* or Women of American Popular Culture and Theater should be established where materials from the personal collections of performers from this period can be catalogued for future research.

APPENDIX A  
PERMISSION FORM

June, 1996

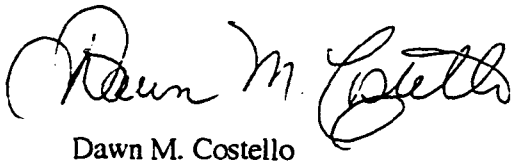
Dear Doris Eaton Travis,

I have been granted permission to write my dissertation about your life and career. This process will involve interviewing you, tape recording your responses, and obtaining other data from you, such as scrapbooks, photos and videos as needed for documentation.

It is important for the study that you are forthright in your responses. Questions will reflect my sincere and genuine interest in accurately documenting the events of your life. You will be asked to check my information for accuracy.

Thank you in advance for participating in this project.

Sincerely,

  
Dawn M. Costello

#### Permission Grant

I have read and understand the above, and wish to participate in this project.

Name <u>Dawn M. Costello</u>	Name <u>Doris Eaton Travis</u>
Date <u>May 28, 1996</u>	Date <u>May 28, 1996</u>



APPENDIX B  
EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL QUESTIONS FOR  
DORIS EATON TRAVIS

1. How did you first begin on Broadway?
2. How old were you?
3. Did you have any previous theatrical experience?
4. Were your brothers and sisters also on Broadway?
5. What year was that?
6. Would this be verifiable through the Shubert Company in New York?
7. What was your role in that starting production?
8. How long was the run?
9. What was it like to take that production on the road?
10. Were quite a number of children chosen for these productions?
11. How many others were selected?
12. Were you paid?
13. Did you have to join a union at that point?
14. Describe your experiences working in early stock companies such as the Poli Company.
15. Did primary performers rotate through all the stock company productions for certain periods of time?
16. How many weeks a year did you perform?
17. How many different shows were produced during this time?
18. Did that interfere with your schooling?
19. How many shows a week did you play?
20. How many productions would these repertoire actors have known to be able to do 40 weeks of different productions?
21. Were you performing one show and rehearsing for the next show simultaneously?
22. Did those early childhood roles require any dancing on your part?
23. Discuss your tour to Washington and Baltimore.

24. Did you travel by train?
25. Would you get there before light and then be leaving after the evening performance when it was still dark?
26. Did your mother accompany you?
27. Did the Shuberts actually provide a place for you to stay while on tour or were you expected to find your own rooms?
28. Where was your family living at this time?
29. Describe how you joined the Ziegfeld *Follies*.
30. How old were you when you began the *Follies*?
31. What did you do in the first Ziegfeld show?
32. What was the structure of a typical Ziegfeld show?
33. Were the *Follies* a series of unrelated skits and show pieces?
34. What was Ziegfeld's involvement in the productions in which you performed?
35. Did you meet him several times?
36. Was he a fatherly figure, supportive?
37. How many months did that particular production run?
38. How many of the cast remained around for the next year's *Follies*?
39. Describe how the cast could, while being on the road with the 1918 production, be prepared for the next year's production.
40. Did Ziegfeld have production people getting the next show ready so it was only a matter of the performers coming in and learning the routines and the steps?
41. What control did general artists, such as yourself, have in determining the content of any of the skits in which you performed in?
42. Did the comics contribute a lot of their own material?
43. I would think at 16 that you were getting very close to being an adult member of the cast. Didn't that put you closer to the older members of the cast or were you still considered "the kid" at 16?

44. Was there a hierarchy between chorus girls and other performers?
45. Did you have a stage name?
46. What were some of the most significant *Follies* productions your siblings were in?
47. Was the money that your sisters and brothers made in the *Follies* put into a family fund?
48. Did you have your own dressing room?
49. Who were some of the other principals of the Ziegfeld shows in which you performed?
50. What was your professional and/or personal relationship to them?
51. What would W. C. Fields have been like off stage?
52. Was there any indication at that point of his drinking problem?
53. Would he have been in his early 40s about that time?
54. If his drinking was a visible problem, did it seem to interfere with his performances?
55. What was Fanny Brice like?
56. Was Ed Wynn around during this time?
57. What was it like to perform around Eddie Cantor?
58. Describe your experiences as understudy to Marilyn Miller.
59. What was the club atop the New Amsterdam Theater?
60. Were the *Midnight Frolic* productions different or similar to the *Follies*?
61. Was Ziegfeld, in your opinion influenced by Tony Pastor?
62. What composers did you meet and work with such as Gershwin, Berlin, or Porter?
63. What songs of particular merit did you sing or perform to?
64. Was there a big separation between burlesque and the *Follies* at the time? Was one considered "higher art" than the other?

65. Did any of the burlesque stars of that era participate in the *Follies*?
66. Did Ziegfeld attempt to attract a larger audience, not just addressing the desires of an all male audience?
67. If you had stayed in the *Follies* longer, do you think you would have been satisfied creatively, or would you have gotten tired of it?
68. Ziegfeld was obviously interested in exploiting youth. Was this difficult for the 14, 15, and 16 year old girls in the *Follies*?
69. To become successful in the *Follies* was to mean that you were making a very good salary. Even as a chorus girl it seemed Ziegfeld paid better than previous producers. Was it difficult for these women to handle the success?
70. Would the eventual disappearance of the adulation be difficult for the women to adjust to?
71. Do you think some of these women would've gone into serious acting if they're hadn't been the *Follies*?
72. Did being a *Follies*' girl give women of that day financial freedom?
73. Was Ziegfeld known at that time to be the producer that paid the highest salaries?
74. When you went into silent film, did you view that as being much different than the work on the stage you had been doing?
75. Did you ever want to do more dramatic acting?
76. Did you see your work in the theater as just a job?
77. What was your perception of opportunities for young women when you were a teenager?
78. What movies and movie stars did you like?
79. When you saw female screen actors, what did you admire in them?
80. Were there any friends of your family, women friends of your parents that were supporting their families on their own or had their own businesses?

81. We still seem drawn to glamour today in all of Hollywood and film. Do you find that over your lifetime, being able to walk into another world, being able to walk into the fantasy that showbiz offers, that all that has not changed much?
82. Do you think there's a difference in the way people view beauty in women from when you were a kid to now? How?
83. Were most of the people in charge of the theater business men?
84. What turned your career to silent film?
85. Describe your experience in early film.
86. What was your first film?
87. What was its plot?
88. Who directed it?
89. Who starred in it with you?
90. Was this a top budget film for its day?
91. How much time did you get to rehearse a scene there, given these were silent films, they had to have been generally choreographed for the dramatic effect?
92. Did you have a script coach who more or less coordinated, who ran you through it even once before you went on camera?
93. Because you always had one camera, stationary, I assume you couldn't move?
94. Were there any particular action scenes that required them to move cameras along tracks or any particular construction?
95. You were there in Egypt shortly after the discovery of Tuts' Tomb in 1922, so much of Egyptology after World War I really took place after this point. What was that area like?
96. Who accompanied you to London and Egypt?
97. Did your mother go with you to the sets each day or did she stay in your accommodations?
98. How many months were you in production on this?

99. When was the film released?
100. Did you ever come across any reviews of it even in England as to what extent it was received?
101. What were you paid for that film?
102. At seventeen, did your mom handle all of the business, or the agent?
103. Did you see Crisp again?
104. How many reels was the movie with Crisp?
105. What was it like working with Alfred Tennyson?
106. What work did you do in California?
107. Discuss your work in Los Angeles at the Coconut Grove Ambassador.
108. Why was it called the Gorham Follies, was he the west coast Ziegfeld?
109. Would you have been contracted from New York?
110. Describe what happened after Gorham died of a heart attack that next year, in 1924.
111. Describe your experiences in the play *Dumb as a Fox* directed by Raymond Hitchcock.
112. Describe your experience in *No Other Girl*.
113. Detail when and what shows you did on each of the coasts at this time.
114. What was your involvement with the Music Box Revue and the new Music Box Theater in Hollywood?
115. Any idea what you were making at this time?
116. How did theater owners see bringing in film as advantageous to their business?
117. How did combining film and theater change the job of the actor?
118. What was the publicity style of the newspapers that followed theater?
119. How did you get to perform *Singing' in the Rain*?
120. How did you begin your work with Arthur Murray?
121. Where did you start teaching dance?

122. What were the hours, what did you get paid?
123. How did you come to have your own franchise?
124. Describe your experiences running multiple dance studios in Michigan.
125. What was your daily schedule like?
126. Describe the exhibition dancing you did in the Statler Hotel.
127. Describe your dance research trips to Cuba and Rio.
128. Did you do this at your own expense?
129. What changes did you see in dance patterns over your history with Arthur Murray?
130. How did you alter typical dance steps to make them uniquely yours?
131. What are some of the major changes you experienced in trends of social dance during your career as a dance instructor?
132. You hired particular bands to play at your dance studio; who and why?
133. Discuss the development of your Detroit studio.
134. Discuss the training of the dance instructors under you.
135. Discuss the opening of other franchises under you, what was your role in their management?
136. Discuss the development of the television show on dance in Detroit.
137. Discuss the weekly column you wrote for the Detroit Herald, "On Your Toes."
138. Describe the medal system of dance you used in your dance studio.
139. Socially, what role did the dance studio seem to play in the lives of your students?
140. Is ballroom dancing different today?



APPENDIX C  
PROGRAM OF THE  
ZIEGFELD *FOLLIES* OF 1918, 1919 AND 1920

### The Ziegfeld *Follies* of 1918

The following is a reprint of the original program of the 1918 Follies taken from original programs housed at Lincoln Center in New York. It lists the content of each Act, the performers who participated and the titles of the songs they performed.

#### 1918

A Musical Revue in Two Acts and Twenty-Six Scenes. Lines and Lyrics by Rennold Wolf and Gene Buck. Music by Louis A. Hirsch and Dave Stamper. Interpolations by Irving Berlin and Victor Jacobi. Scenery by Joseph Urban. Staged by Ned Wayburn. Produced Under the Personal Direction of Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr.

#### Act I

Scene One "The Warring World."

Spirit of the Follies (Kay Laurel)

Scene Two

The Folly of

Speed  
Dance  
Drink  
Fame  
Vanity  
Bluff  
Love  
Clothes

Herald (Sylvia Ellias)

OLIVE OSBORNE  
JULIE ROSS  
FLORENCE CRIPPS  
GLADYS ZIELIAN  
FLORENCE ATKINSON  
GLADYS FELDMAN  
DOROTHY LEEDS  
ROSE DOLORES

Scene Three "The Peaches of 1918"

The Follies Girl of 1918 (Allyn King)

Scene Four "A Patent Attorney's Office"

W. C. Fields, Frank Carter, Eddie Cantor, Gus Minton, Harry Kelly

Scene Five	Indian Dance (Anne Pennington)	
Scene Six	Song: "Evening Star" Sung by Lillian Lorraine	
Scene Seven	"In Old Versailles"	
	Billie Burke	ALLYN KING
	Henry Miller	FRANK CARTER
	Syncopated Tune (Marilyn Miller)	
Scene Eight	Camouflage as devised and written by Will Rogers with Harry Kelly	
Scene Nine	"A Miniature: When I'm Looking at You" sung by Lillian Lorraine, Marie Wallace, Marion Fairbanks, Madeline Fairbanks	
Scene Ten	"Timely Topics" (Will Rogers)	
	"A Prairie Frolic" (Ann Pennington)	
Scene Eleven	FINALE	
	Song: "I'll Pin a Medal on the Girl I Left Behind" (Irving Berlin)	
	"We're Busy Building Boats"	
	"Aviators' Parade"	
	"Red Cross" (Edith Hawes)	
	"A Yankee Doodle Dance" (Marilyn Miller)	
	Allied Color Bearers United	
Scene Twelve	"Forward Allies" (staged by Ben Ali Haggin)	
	Kay Laurel, Pauline Hall, Fairbanks Twins, Dolores, Dorothy Leeds	

## Act II

### Scene Thirteen "The Lower Regions"

His Satanic Majesty	WILL ROGERS
Head Clerk	FRANK CARTER
The Girl in Hell	ALLYN KING
Bell Boy	KATHRYN PERRY
A Profiteer	HARRY KELLY
New York Society Woman	"DOLORES"
A Dancing Girl	ANN PENNINGTON
Eve	KAY LAUREL
Twin Imps	FAIRBANKS TWINS
Liberty Load Slacker	CLAY HILL
Somebody's Sweetheart	DOROTHY LEEDS
Senator La Follette	W. C. FIELDS
The Czar	ASSISON YOUNGS
The Kaiser	GUS MINTON

Scene Fourteen Song: "Mine Was a Marriage of Convenience" Sung by Marilyn Miller

Scene Fifteen "The Blue Devils" (Lillian Lorraine with Misses R. Taylor, Eaton, Virginia, Brady, Larned, Perry, Westcott, Ross, Masso, Wallace, La Barre, Ahearn, Reed, Savage, Baron, Sheppard, Jordan, Miller, Braham, Wood, Harrison, Washburn Clarens)

Scene Sixteen "A Game of Golf" (W. C. Fields)

Scene Seventeen Song: "Poor Little Me" (Marilyn Miller)

Scene Eighteen "The Aviator's Test" (Eddie Cantor, Frank Carter, Gus Minton, Harry Kelly)

Scene Nineteen "Since the Men Have Gone to War"

Scene Twenty "Any Old Time at All" (Lillian Lorraine)

Scene Twenty-One "A Dream" (Marilyn Miller, Frank Carter, Dorothy Miller)

Scene Twenty-Two "Fresh From the Bronx" (Eddie Cantor)

Scene Twenty-Three "The Garden of Your Dreams" (Lillian Lorraine, Frank Carter)

Scene Twenty-Four "Getting Acquainted" (Savoy and Brennan)

Scene Twenty-Five "I Want to Learn How to Jazz Dance" Sung by Bee Palmer, danced by Ann Pennington

Scene Twenty-six FINALE

### The Ziegfeld *Follies* of 1919

The following is a reprint of the original program of the 1919 Follies taken from original programs housed at Lincoln Center in New York. It lists the content of each Act, the performers who participated and the titles of the songs they performed.

### 1919

A Musical Revue in Two Acts and Twenty-Three Scenes. Book and Music by Irving Berlin, Gene Buck, Rennold Wolf and Dave Stamper. Ballet composed by Victor Herbert. Scenery by Joseph Urban. Staged by Ned Wayburn. Produced Under the Personal Direction of Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr.

### Act I

Scene One "The Follies Salad." Sung by Eddie Dowling

Lettuce  
Spice  
Oil  
Sugar  
Paprika  
Chicken  
Salt and Pepper  
Follies Girl of 1919

MILDRED SINCLAIR  
MARCELLE EARLE  
EDITH HAWES  
KATHRYN PERRY  
LUCILLE LEVANT  
MARY HAY  
FAIRBANKS TWINS  
FLORENCE WARE

Scene Two "Hail to the Thirteenth Folly" (arrangement by Ben Ali Haggin)

Scene Three "A Pet"

Scene Four "A Spanish Frolic"

Scene Five Song: "My Baby's Arms." Sung by Delyle Alda

Assisted by Lucille Levant, Kathryn Perry, Mary Hay

Florence Ware and Fairbanks Twins

Scene Six Song: "Sweet Sixteen." Sung by Marilyn Miller

Scene Seven "The Popular Pests"

Waiter	EDDIE DOWLING
Janitor	BERT WILLIAMS
The Motorman	GUS VAN
The Hall Boy	JOE SCHENCK
Hat Check Boy	JOHNNY DOOLEY
Taxi Driver	EDDIE CANTOR
Servant Girl	RAY DOOLEY

Scene Eight Song: "Tulip Time." Sung by John Steel and Delyle Alda

Scene Nine "He Seldom Misses"

Sure-Shot Dick	GEORGE LEMAIRE
Jasper Slocum	BERT WILLIAMS
Prairie Nell	JESSIE REED

Scene Ten Song: "Shimmy Town." Sung Johnny and Ray Dooley

Scene Eleven "The Apostle of Pep" (Eddie Cantor)

Scene Twelve "I Love a Minstrel Show" (Johnny Dooley)

Scene Thirteen "The Follies Minstrels" (Words and Music by Irving Berlin)

- a) Song: "Tambo" (Eddie Cantor)
- b) Song: "Bones" (Bert Williams)
- c) Song: "Middle Man" (George Lemaire)
- d) "Quartette" (Joe Schenck, John Steel, Johnny Dooley, Gus Van)
- e) Song: "Mandy." Sung by Van & Schenck

George Primrose  
Mandy  
Mandys

headed by

MARILYN MILLER  
RAY DOOLEY  
LUCILLE LEVANT &  
MARY HAY

## FINALE

### ACT II

Scene One Song: "Harem Life." Sung by Hazel Washburn

- a) "Ladies of the Harem"
- b) "Cleopatra" (Martha Pierre)
- c) "Favorite Wives" (Jesse Reed, Alta King, Hazel Washburn, Charlotte Wakefield, Billie Dove, Ruth Taylor, Nan Larned and Margaret Irving)
- d) "A Dancer" (Lucille Levant)

Scene Two            Song: "I am the Guy Who Guards the Harem."  
                              Sung by Johnny Dooley

Scene Three        Songs (Bert Williams)

Scene Four        "The Circus Ballet" (Music by Victor Herbert,  
                              Danced by Marilyn Miller)

Scene Five Song: "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody." Sung by John Steel  
                              (Words and Music by Irving Berlin)

- a) "Humoresque" (Florence Crane)
- b) "Spring Song" (Hazel Washburn)
- c) "Elegy" (Martha Pierre)

d) "Barcarolle" (Jessie Reed)

e) "Serenade" (Alta King)

f) "Traumeri" (Margaret Irving)

Melody, Fantasy and Folly of Years Gone By: a Picture by Ben Ali Haggin

Scene Six "At the Osteopath's" (George Lemaire, Eddie Cantor,  
Kathryn Perry and Hazel Washburn)

Scene Seven "Prohibition"

a) "Father Time" (Eddie Dowling)

b) "Liquor Lovers"

c) "Bartenders" (Van & Schenck)

d) "Chorus Girls"

e) "The Working Man" (Addison Young)

f) Song: "You Cannot Make Your Shimmy Shake on Tea." Sung by Bert Williams

g) Scene: "A Saloon of the Future"

h) Song: "A Syncopated Cocktail." Sung by Marilyn Miller



Scene Eight      Song (Van & Schenck)

Scene Nine      Song: "My Tambourine Girl." Sung by John Steel

Scene Ten "Salvation Army Girls": FINALE

a) Scene: "Victory Arch"

b) Song: "We Made the Doughnuts Over There."

(Words and Music by Irving Berlin)

Score

"The Follies Salad" (Dave Stamper-Gene Buck)

"My Baby's Arms" (Harry Tierney)

"Sweet Sixteen" (Stamper-Buck)

"Tulip Time" (Stamper-Buck)

"Shimmy Town" (Stamper-Buck)

"The Follies Minstrels" (Irving Berlin)

"Mandy" (Berlin)

"Harem Life" (Berlin)

"I Am The Guy Who Guards the Harem" (Berlin)

"The Circus Ballet" (Victor Herbert)

"A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody" (Berlin)

"Prohibition" (Berlin)

"You Cannot Make Your Shimmy Shake On Tea" (Berlin)

"The Near Future" (Berlin)

"A Syncopated Cocktail" (Berlin)

"My Tambourine Girl" (Berlin)

"We Made The Doughnuts Over There" (Berlin)

### The Ziegfeld *Follies* of 1920

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#### 1920

A Musical Revue in Two Acts and Twenty-Five Scenes. Book and Lyrics by Gene Buck. Music by Dave Stamper. Additional Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin. Special Music by Victor Herbert. Scenery by Joseph Urban. Staged by Edward Royce. Produced Under the Personal Direction of Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr.

#### Act I

- Scene One          Opening
- Scene Two "Creation"
- Scene Three          Song: "So Hard To Keep Them When They're  
Beautiful"
- Scene Four          "A Room at Mount Vernon"
- Scene Five "Chiffon Fantasie"
- Scene Six "In the Park"
- Scene Seven          Song: "I'm a Vamp from East Broadway." Sung by Fanny Brice
- Scene Eight          "In the Clouds"
- Scene Nine          Speciality (Moran and Mack)
- Scene Ten "Truly Rural"
- a) Song: "Any Place Would be Wonderful with You"

(Bernard Granville and Doris Eaton)

- b) Song: "Mary and Doug" (Mary Eaton and Carl Randall)
- c) Song: "Where Do Mosquitoes Go?" (Gus Van and Joe Schenck)
- d) Dance (Jack Donahue)
- e) "The Family Ford" (Conceived, Written and Staged by W. C. Fields)

George Fliverton  
Baby Rose Fliverton  
Mrs. Fliverton  
Elsie May  
Henry Steel  
James Cunningham  
Miss Rose  
Jack Rose  
Adele Smith  
Dick Burns

W. C. FIELDS  
RAYDOOLEY  
FANNY BRICE  
JESSIE REED  
WM. BLANCHE  
JACK MAHAN  
BABEMARLOW  
MISS ROLPH  
MISS GRADY  
ADDIE YOUNG

Scene Eleven      Specialty (Jerome and Herbert)

Scene Twelve      "The Land of the Bells"

## FINALE

## ACT II

Scene One "The Little Follies Theatre: During Intermission"

- a) "In the Lobby"

The First Nighter  
Between the Actors

BERNARD GRANVILLE  
THE FOLLIES BOYS

- b) "In the Theatre"

The Tired Businessman  
The Lady With Him  
The Water Girls

CARLRANDALL  
DELYLEALDA  
SIX LITTLE FOLLIES  
GIRLS

Just A Husband  
His Wife  
A Critic  
A Fellow Who Paid to Get In  
A Lover  
His Sweetheart

W. C. FIELDS  
FANNY BRICE  
CHARLES WINNINGER  
JACK DONAHUE  
JOHN STEEL  
MARY EATON

Scene Two        "The *Follies*' Curtains" (Van and Schenck)

Scene Three      "The Dancing School: Her First Lesson"

The Pupil  
The Master  
Another Pupil

MARY EATON  
CHARLES WINNINGER  
FANNY BRICE

Scene Four       Song: "The Legs of Nations"

Scene Five "On Fifth Avenue: The Ziegfeld Sextette"

The Ziegfeld Follies Girls: Betty Morton, Alta King, Margaret Irving,

Jessie Reed, Charlotte Wakefield, Ethel Hallor

Sextette Boys: The Rolls Royce Chauffeurs

Song: "I Was a Floradora Baby" Sung by Fanny Brice

Scene Six "Chinese Fantasy"

Scene Seven      Chappie Dance (Bernard Granville and Doris Eaton)

Scene Eight       "The Gypsy Trail"

Scene Nine        Dance (Lillian Broderick and Carl Randall)

Scene Ten "The Golden Gates"

Scene Eleven      "The Love Boat"

Scene Twelve      (Unknown)

Scene Thirteen   "The Midnight Frolic"

## FINALE

### Score

"So Hard to Keep When They're Beautiful" (Harry Tierney-Joseph McCarthy)

"Sunshine and Shadows" (Dave Stamper-Gene Buck)

"When the Right One Comes Along" (Victor Herbert-Buck)

"I'm a Vamp from East Broadway" (Irving Berlin-Ruby-Kalmar)

"The Girls of My Dreams" (Berlin)

"Any Place Would Be Wonderful with You" (Stamper-Buck)

"Mary and Doug" (Stamper-Buck)

"Where Do Mosquitoes Go?" (Tierney-McCarthy)

"Bells" (Berlin)

"The Legs of Nations" (Berlin)

"I Was a Floradora Baby" (Harry Carroll-Ballard MacDonald)

"Chinese Firecrackers" (Berlin)

"Tell Me, Little Gypsy" (Berlin)

"The Syncopated Vamp" (Berlin)

#### DATES, THEATRE AND LOCATION OF TRAVELING VERSION OF SHOW

##### 1920

June 15-19	Nixon's Apollo	Atlantic City, NJ
June 22-Oct. 16	New Amsterdam	New York, NY
Oct. 18-Nov. 13	Colonial	Boston, MA
Nov. 15-20	National	Washington, DC
Nov. 22-27	Nixon	Pittsburgh, PA
Nov. 29-Dec. 4	Euclid Ave. Opera House	Cleveland, OH
Dec. 5-18	New Detroit	Detroit, MI
Dec. 19-March 5, 1921	Colonial	Chicago, IL

1921

March 6-12  
March 14-19  
March 21-26  
March 28-April 2  
April 4-23  
April 25-30

American  
English's Opera House  
Grand Opera House  
Hartman  
Forest  
Academy of Music

St. Louis, MO  
Indianapolis, IN  
Cincinnati, OH  
Columbus, OH  
Philadelphia, PA  
Baltimore, MD

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