

The Flying Deuces.

Magazine for fans of Laurel & Hardy and Abbott & Costello.

October 2025 Edition. Volume 1, Issue 8





Pardon My Sarong

"I know there's no such person as Dracula. You know there's no such person as Dracula. But does Dracula know it?"

Welcome to the October 2025 edition of our newsletter.

Our website <https://theflyingdeuces.co.uk/> started in March this year and was initially just about Laurel and Hardy. The aim was to have a "Tent" and become a member of The Sons of the Desert. The Laurel and Hardy Appreciation Society located at <https://www.sonsofthedesert.co.uk/>.

The problem was for us to become a recognised tent we needed a minimum number of members, which we didn't have as we had just started.

I decided to at least get a website together and start getting great info added. It was then in April or May that I had the idea to make it a joint double act site and include Abbott and Costello. It was also decided not to joint the Sons of the Desert and to go independent.

I still kept the name "The Flying Deuces" as this is a great play on word(s). Deuce in tennis means "Two". Two people in a double act, and two double acts, plus these two great acts are still flying high today.

To add content to the site and make it stand out I decided to add sections for Leading Ladies, Producers, Directors and the behind the scenes staff. I hope that followers enjoy this addition.

But for now, on to this months newsletter, jam packed with 25 pages. Hope you enjoy it.

Phillip

The Flying Deuces Editor.

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THE TREASURE TRAWLERS. LAUREL & HARDY.

A Short Comedy Story by Phillip Chandler



The morning sun cast long shadows across the weathered docks of San Pedro Harbor as Stan Laurel adjusted his too-large fisherman's cap for the dozenth time, the brim sliding down over his eyes with each nervous fidget. Beside him, Oliver Hardy stood with his hands planted firmly on his substantial hips, surveying their latest acquisition with the air of a maritime expert, despite having never set foot on anything larger than a rowboat in his entire life.

"Well, Stanley," Oliver declared with characteristic pomposity, "I do believe we have made a most astute business investment. This magnificent vessel shall be our gateway to untold riches from the bountiful sea."

Stan squinted at the rust-streaked fishing trawler before them, its paint peeling like sunburned skin and its engine coughing black smoke into the crisp morning air. The boat's name, "Lucky Strike," was barely visible beneath layers of grime and what appeared to be several decades of neglect. A seagull perched on the mast eyed them with what Stan could only interpret as pity.

"Gee, Ollie," Stan said, scratching his head beneath the oversized cap, "are you sure this thing won't sink the minute we get out there? It looks like it's already halfway underwater."

Oliver puffed out his chest indignantly. "Stanley, your lack of faith in my nautical expertise is both hurtful and misguided. I have studied the mari-

time arts extensively through careful observation of motion pictures and the occasional perusal of fishing magazines in the barbershop. This vessel, while perhaps showing the noble patina of experience, is exactly what we need to establish ourselves as captains of industry in the lucrative field of commercial fishing."

The truth was that Oliver had purchased the trawler from a suspicious character named Sal who had assured him it was "seaworthy enough" and "only caught fire that one time." The price had been remarkably reasonable, which Oliver had interpreted as evidence of his shrewd negotiating skills rather than a potential red flag regarding the boat's actual condition.

Stan climbed aboard first, his lanky frame moving with the awkward grace of a newborn giraffe on roller skates. The deck creaked ominously under his weight, and he froze mid-step, waiting to see if he would plummet through the rotting planks into the murky water below. When the boat remained intact, he beckoned to Oliver with a tentative wave.

"Come on, Ollie. I think it's safe."

Oliver approached the gangplank with considerably more confidence than the situation warranted, his rotund figure causing the entire vessel to list dramatically to one side as he stepped aboard. The sudden shift sent Stan sliding across the slippery deck, his arms windmilling frantically as he careened toward the opposite rail.

"Stanley!" Oliver bellowed, lunging forward to catch his partner before he tumbled overboard. The rescue attempt resulted in both men becoming entangled in a heap of fishing nets, their limbs twisted together like a human pretzel as they struggled to free themselves from the increasingly complex web of rope and cork floats.

After several minutes of undignified writhing and muffled complaints, they finally extracted themselves from the nets, both looking considerably more dishevelled than when they had started. Oliver's bowler hat sat askew on his head, while Stan's cap had somehow migrated to cover most of his face.

"Perhaps," Oliver said with wounded dignity, "we

THE TREASURER TRAWLERS. CONTINUED

should familiarize ourselves with the vessel's equipment before we venture into open waters."

The engine room proved to be a maze of pipes, gauges, and mechanical components that seemed to have been assembled by someone with only a theoretical understanding of how boats were supposed to work. Oliver studied the various controls with the intense concentration of a surgeon preparing for a delicate operation, while Stan poked tentatively at different switches and levers.

"This must be the throttle," Oliver announced, grasping a large handle with authority. "And this, obviously, is the steering mechanism." He gestured toward what was actually the bilge pump, but his confidence was so complete that Stan didn't dare question his expertise.

Their first attempt to start the engine resulted in a spectacular display of steam, smoke, and mechanical protests that could be heard three piers away. The boat shuddered and groaned like a wounded whale, while various gauges spun wildly and warning lights flashed in patterns that seemed to spell out messages of impending doom.

"I believe," Oliver said calmly, as if the chaos around them was perfectly normal, "that the engine simply needs a moment to warm up. These older vessels often require a gentle touch and patience."

Stan nodded dubiously, watching as a small fire began to smoulder in what he hoped was not an important part of the engine. "Should I get some water for that flame, Ollie?"

"Nonsense, Stanley. That's merely the engine's way of expressing enthusiasm for our maritime adventure."

By some miracle of mechanical stubbornness, the engine eventually settled into a rhythm that could charitably be described as functional. The boat lurched forward

with all the grace of a drunken elephant, weaving an erratic path through the harbour as Oliver wrestled with the steering wheel and Stan attempted to make sense of the various ropes and pulleys that controlled the fishing nets.

Their departure from the harbour was witnessed by a small crowd of genuine fishermen, who watched with a mixture of amusement and horror as the Lucky Strike zig-zagged between moored vessels, narrowly avoiding collisions through a combination of luck and the quick reflexes of other boat operators who steered clear of the obvious maritime disaster in progress.

"We're doing splendidly, Stanley!" Oliver called out over the engine's protests. "I can already smell the salt air and the promise of abundant catches!"

What Oliver was actually smelling was the distinct aroma of burning oil and overheated metal, but his optimism remained unshakeable even as small pieces of the engine began to fall off and clatter across the deck.

Once they reached what Oliver deemed to be suitable fishing waters, approximately half a mile from shore where the water was deep enough to hide their inevitable mistakes, they began the complex process of deploying the fishing nets. This operation, which experienced fishermen could complete in a matter of minutes, took Stan and Oliver the better part of two hours and resulted in one net being deployed upside down, another becoming tangled around the boat's propeller, and a third somehow ending up draped over the mast like a giant spider web.

A TIMELESS TUG CONTINUED

"The fish," Oliver explained to Stan as they surveyed the chaos around them, "are simply playing hard to get. It's a well-known fact that the most valuable catches require the greatest effort to obtain."

Stan, who was currently suspended three feet off the deck in a tangle of fishing line, nodded as best he could given his circumstances. "That makes sense, Ollie. But do you think you could help me down from here? I'm starting to get dizzy."

The process of extricating Stan from the fishing line proved to be nearly as complicated as getting him tangled in it had been. Oliver's attempts to cut him free with a rusty knife resulted in several small holes in Stan's jacket and one larger hole in the seat of his pants, but eventually they managed to return him to the relative safety of the deck.

Their first actual attempt at fishing began promisingly enough. They managed to get one net properly deployed and were trolling slowly through the water when Stan noticed something unusual about the way the boat was handling.

"Ollie," he said, pointing toward the stern, "is it normal for there to be that much water sloshing around back there?"

Oliver turned to look and discovered that their boat was indeed taking on water at an alarming rate. The bilge pump, which he had mistaken for the steering mechanism, had been running in reverse for the past hour, actively pumping seawater into the hull rather than out of it.

"This is merely a minor technical difficulty," Oliver announced, though his voice carried a slight note of panic as he began frantically oper-

ating the pump handle in the correct direction. "Stanley, perhaps you could assist by bailing out some of this excess water."

Stan grabbed a bucket and began the Sisyphean task of removing water from a boat that was determined to fill itself back up as quickly as he could empty it. For every bucket he threw overboard, two more seemed to appear in the hull, as if the ocean itself was playing a practical joke on their maritime ambitions.

It was during this frantic bailing operation that they felt a sudden, violent tug on their fishing net. The boat lurched sideways with such force that both men were thrown against the rail, and the engine began to strain against whatever massive object they had inadvertently caught.

"Stanley!" Oliver shouted over the mechanical protests. "We've caught something enormous! This could be the catch that makes our fortune!"

Stan peered over the side at the taut fishing line disappearing into the dark water below. "It feels awfully heavy, Ollie. Maybe we should cut it loose before it pulls us under."

"Cut it loose?" Oliver was aghast at the suggestion. "Stanley, we may have hooked the largest fish in the Pacific Ocean! This could be our ticket to fame and prosperity! We must bring it aboard, regardless of the effort required."

What followed was an epic battle between two inexperienced fishermen and whatever leviathan they had managed to snare in their net. The boat groaned and creaked as they attempted to winch their catch to the surface, while the engine coughed and wheezed under the

THE TREASURE TRAWLERS. CONTINUED

strain. Stan operated the winch with the determination of a man who had no idea what he was doing but was committed to doing it anyway, while Oliver provided encouragement and increasingly frantic instructions.

"Steady as she goes, Stanley! Easy does it! Mind the rope! Watch out for that wave! Not so fast! Faster! Stop! Go!"

The cacophony of Oliver's contradictory commands, combined with the mechanical protests of their overtaxed equipment, created a symphony of chaos that could be heard for miles across the water. Seabirds circled overhead, apparently drawn by the spectacle of two grown men engaged in mortal combat with their own fishing gear.

After what felt like hours but was probably closer to twenty minutes, something finally broke the surface of the water. But instead of the massive fish they had expected, what emerged from the depths was a barnacle-encrusted chest, ancient and mysterious, dripping with seaweed and the promise of untold secrets.

"Stanley," Oliver whispered, his eyes wide with wonder, "do you realize what we've found?"

Stan stared at the chest as they hauled it aboard, water streaming from its corroded metal fittings and weathered wood. "It looks like somebody's old trunk, Ollie. Maybe somebody threw it overboard because it was full of dirty laundry."

"Dirty laundry?" Oliver was scandalized by such mundane thinking.

"Stanley, this is clearly a treasure chest, lost to the depths for countless years and now delivered to us by the generous hand of fate! We are about to become wealthy beyond our wildest dreams!"

The chest was indeed heavy, requiring both men to drag it across the deck to a spot where they could examine it

properly. The metal lock had long since corroded away, leaving only a rusty stain on the wood, but the lid remained stubbornly closed, sealed by decades of underwater pressure and marine growth.

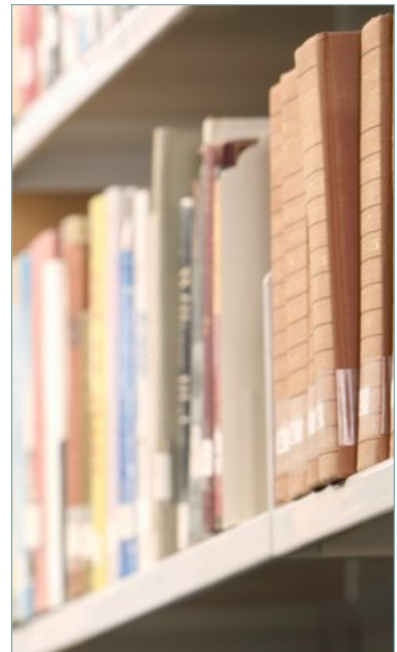
Oliver produced a crowbar from the boat's tool kit and began attacking the chest with the enthusiasm of a prospector who had just struck gold. Stan watched nervously as his partner pried and hammered at the ancient container, half expecting it to explode or release some sort of maritime curse upon them.

"Careful, Ollie," Stan cautioned. "What if there's something dangerous in there? Like a skeleton or a bomb or something?"

"Stanley, your imagination is running away with you," Oliver replied, though he did pause in his efforts to consider the possibility. "Pirates and treasure hunters of old were businessmen, not pranksters. They wouldn't have gone to the trouble of hiding a chest full of dangerous items at the bottom of the ocean."

With a final, mighty heave, the lid of the chest popped open with a sound like a champagne cork, releasing a cloud of musty air that smelled of brine, age, and something indefinably precious. Both men leaned forward eagerly to peer inside, their faces illuminated by a golden glow that seemed to emanate from the chest's contents.

Inside, nestled in what remained of rotted velvet lining, lay a collection of treasures that would have made Blackbeard himself weep with envy. Gold



THE TREASURE TRAWLERS. CONTINUED

coins caught the sunlight and threw it back in brilliant flashes, while precious gems sparkled like captured stars. There were ornate jewellery pieces, silver goblets, and what appeared to be several small golden statues of exotic animals.

"Stanley," Oliver breathed, his voice filled with awe, "we're rich. We're actually, genuinely, spectacularly rich."

Stan reached out tentatively to touch one of the gold coins, as if he expected it to vanish like a mirage the moment his fingers made contact. When the coin remained solid and real beneath his touch, a slow smile spread across his face.

"Gee, Ollie, does this mean we don't have to be fishermen anymore?"

"Stanley, my dear friend," Oliver said, carefully lifting a particularly impressive ruby from the chest, "we can be anything we want to be. We can buy a fleet of fishing boats, or a mansion, or our own private island. The world is now our oyster, and we have just discovered the pearl inside."

The journey back to shore was considerably more pleasant than their outward voyage had been. The boat's various mechanical problems seemed less urgent when viewed through the lens of newfound wealth, and even the persistent leak in the hull appeared to be merely a minor inconvenience rather than a potential disaster.

They spent the return trip examining their treasure, marvelling at each new discovery and speculating about the chest's origins. Oliver, drawing upon his extensive knowledge of pirate movies, constructed an elaborate theory about Spanish galleons and buried treasure, while Stan was more interested in the practical question of how they were going to carry all this wealth without dropping it overboard.

"We'll need to be very careful about this, Stanley," Oliver cautioned as they approached the harbour. "Word of our discovery must not spread until we've had a chance to properly secure our fortune. Treasure hunters and fortune seekers would descend upon us like locusts if they knew what we had found."

Stan nodded solemnly, though he was already imagining the look on their landlord's face when they paid their overdue rent with a handful of gold coins.

The docking process proved to be every bit as chaotic as their departure had been, with the added complication of trying to manoeuvre a sinking boat while protecting a chest full of priceless artifacts. Oliver's attempts to guide the boat into its slip resulted in several minor collisions with other vessels, while Stan struggled to keep the treasure chest from sliding around the deck as the boat lurched and swayed.

By the time they finally managed to tie up at the dock, both men were exhausted, soaked, and covered in a mixture of seawater, engine oil, and barnacle fragments. But their bedraggled appearance couldn't diminish the joy that radiated from their faces as they carefully lifted the treasure chest and began the process of transporting it to safety.

The transformation that followed their discovery was nothing short of remarkable. Within a week, Stan and Oliver had traded their modest boarding house accommodations for a luxurious suite at the city's finest hotel. Their threadbare

THE TREASURE TRAWLERS CONTINUED

clothing was replaced by the finest tailored suits money could buy, and their simple meals of beans and bread gave way to elaborate feasts prepared by renowned chefs.

Oliver, in particular, embraced his new role as a man of wealth and distinction with characteristic enthusiasm. He purchased a collection of expensive cigars, a gold-headed walking stick, and a pocket watch that chimed the hour with a melody that he claimed was composed specifically for him by a famous musician. His vocabulary expanded to include phrases like "my good man" and "I shall have my people contact your people," delivered with the pompous authority of someone who had always been wealthy rather than someone who had stumbled into fortune through sheer accident.

Stan, meanwhile, approached his newfound wealth with the same bemused confusion that he brought to most aspects of life. He was delighted by the luxury that surrounded them but remained fundamentally unchanged by their circumstances. He still scratched his head when puzzled, still spoke in the same gentle, uncertain tones, and still looked to Oliver for guidance in navigating their transformed world.

Their first major purchase was a magnificent mansion overlooking the ocean, complete with servants, gardens, and a private dock where they could moor a proper yacht rather than the decrepit fishing trawler that had brought them their fortune. The house came fully furnished with antiques and artwork that the previous owner assured them were "of the finest quality and impeccable provenance."

Oliver took great pleasure in conducting tours of their new home for anyone who would listen, pointing out architectural details and artistic treasures with the air of someone who had studied such things extensively rather than someone who had learned everything he knew about luxury from a brief conversation with an interior decorator.

"This particular chandelier," he would announce to visitors, gesturing grandly at the crystal fixture hanging in their dining room, "was crafted by master artisans in Vienna and has illuminated the homes of European nobility for over two centuries. Stanley and I felt it would be the perfect centrepiece for our morning breakfast gatherings."

Stan would nod along with these presentations, occasionally adding helpful details like, "And it makes pretty rainbows on the wall when the sun shines through it," which never failed to deflate Oliver's pretensions slightly.

Their social calendar quickly filled with invitations to charity galas, society parties, and exclusive events where they mingled with the city's elite. Oliver revelled in these gatherings, regaling anyone who would listen with increasingly embellished accounts of their treasure-hunting adventure. In his version of events, they had battled fierce storms, outsmarted rival treasure hunters, and used their superior nautical skills to locate the chest through careful study of ancient maps and maritime legends.

Stan's contributions to these social conversations were typically more modest and considerably more accurate. When asked about their discovery, he would usually say something like, "Well, we were trying to catch some fish, but our boat was sinking, and then we accidentally caught this old box instead. It was really heavy."

These simple, honest accounts often proved more popular with their fellow party-goers than Oliver's elaborate tales, much to Oliver's chagrin. There was something endearing about Stan's complete lack of pretension that made people feel comfortable and welcome, even in the most formal social settings.

Their newfound wealth also allowed them to indulge in hobbies and interests that had previously been beyond their means. Oliver developed a passion for collecting rare books, though his selections were based more on the impressiveness of their leather bindings than on their literary merit. He would spend hours in his study, surrounded by volumes of poetry, philosophy, and history, most of which remained unopened but all of which contributed to the scholarly atmosphere he was trying to cultivate.

Stan, meanwhile, discovered a love for gardening and spent much of his time tending to the elaborate flower beds and vegetable gardens that surrounded their mansion. He had a natu-

THE TREASURE TRAWLERS CONTINUED

ral talent for coaxing plants to grow and bloom, and soon their grounds became famous throughout the neighbourhood for their beauty and abundance. Visitors would often find him kneeling in the dirt, carefully transplanting seedlings or watering delicate flowers, his expensive clothes forgotten in his enthusiasm for his horticultural pursuits.

The irony of their situation was not lost on either of them. They had set out to make their fortune through hard work and maritime expertise, only to discover that their greatest success came from their complete incompetence as fishermen. If they had been skilled sailors, they never would have deployed their nets incorrectly, never would have been in danger of sinking, and never would have accidentally dredged up the treasure that transformed their lives.

"You know, Stanley," Oliver mused one evening as they sat on the terrace of their mansion, watching the sunset paint the ocean in shades of gold and crimson, "I believe there's a lesson to be learned from our experience."

Stan looked up from the flower catalogue he had been studying, his face bright with curiosity. "What's that, Ollie?"

"Sometimes," Oliver said with uncharacteristic philosophical depth, "the greatest rewards come not from doing things correctly, but from doing them so spectacularly wrong that fate itself takes pity on you and intervenes on your behalf."

Stan considered this wisdom for a moment, then nodded thoughtfully. "That makes sense, Ollie. But do you think we should maybe learn how to do some things right, just in case fate gets busy with other people?"

Oliver chuckled and took a sip of the expensive brandy that had become his evening ritual. "Stanley, my dear friend, I think we should simply continue being ourselves. After all, it's worked out rather well for us so far."

As the stars began to appear in the darkening sky, both men reflected on the strange journey that had brought them from their humble beginnings to their current life of luxury and ease. The old fishing trawler still sat at their private dock, now more of a conversation piece than a working vessel, its rust and decay somehow seeming charming rather than decrepit in the context of their transformed circumstances.

They had kept the boat partly out of sentimentality and

partly as a reminder of how quickly life could change. Sometimes, when the mood struck them, they would take it out for short trips along the coast, though they never again attempted to use it for actual fishing. The risk of accidentally discovering another treasure chest seemed too great, and they were quite content with the fortune they had already found.

Their story became something of a local legend, told and retold in the bars and cafes along the waterfront. Each telling added new details and embellishments, until the tale of Stan and Oliver's accidental treasure hunt took on mythic proportions. Some versions had them battling sea monsters, others featured dramatic rescues and narrow escapes from rival treasure hunters.

The truth, as Stan and Oliver well knew, was both simpler and more wonderful than any of the embellished versions. They had been two ordinary men who had stumbled into extraordinary circumstances through a combination of good intentions, spectacular incompetence, and remarkable luck. Their treasure was real, their wealth was genuine, and their friendship had only grown stronger through their shared adventure.

Years later, when people asked them for the secret to their success, Oliver would launch into elaborate explanations about preparation, determination, and the importance of seizing opportunity when it presented itself. Stan would usually just smile and say, "We got lost, and then we got lucky."

Both answers were true, in their own way, and both men had learned to appreciate the different perspectives they brought to their partnership. Oliver's grandiose dreams and unwavering confidence had gotten them started on their maritime adventure, while Stan's practical concerns and honest observations had kept them grounded in reality even as their circumstances became increasingly surreal.

Their mansion became a gathering place for friends and neighbours, a warm and welcoming home where laughter was more common than pretension and where the most elaborate dinner parties somehow always ended with

The Treasure Trawlers Continued

everyone gathered around the piano, singing old songs and sharing stories. The treasure that had made their wealth possible was carefully secured in a bank vault, but the real treasure they had discovered was the joy that came from sharing their good fortune with others.

On quiet evenings, when the social obligations were fulfilled and the house was peaceful, Stan and Oliver would often find themselves back on the terrace, looking out at the ocean that had changed their lives so dramatically. The water would catch the moonlight and throw it back in silver patterns, and somewhere in the distance, they could hear the gentle sound of waves against the shore.

"Do you ever miss it, Stanley?" Oliver would sometimes ask. "The simple life we had before all this?"

Stan would consider the question seriously, as he considered most things, before answering. "I miss some parts of it, Ollie. But I like this better. We can help people now, and we don't have to worry about paying the rent or where our next meal is coming from. And we still have each other, which was always the best part anyway."

Oliver would nod and smile, raising his glass in a toast to their friendship and their incredibly good fortune. "To the Lucky Strike," he would say, "and to the luckiest strike of all."

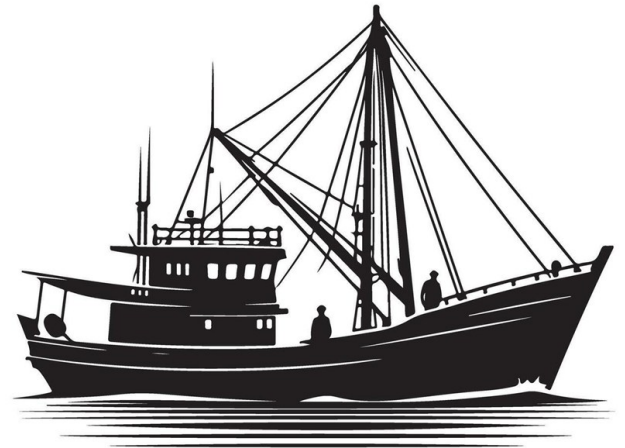
"To getting lost and getting lucky," Stan would reply, and they would clink their glasses together as the ocean whispered its eternal secrets to the shore below.

Their story had become a testament to the power of friendship, the unpredictability of fate, and the wonderful truth that sometimes the best adventures begin with the worst plans. They had set out to catch fish and had instead caught a dream, transforming their lives in ways they never could have imagined when they first stepped aboard that rickety old

fishing boat.

The treasure chest that had started it all was eventually donated to a maritime museum, where it became the centrepiece of an exhibit about lost treasures and the people who found them. A small plaque beside the display told the story of two friends who had discovered that the greatest riches in life weren't always the ones you set out to find, but the ones that found you when you least expected them.

And if visitors to the museum listened carefully on quiet afternoons, they might have heard the faint sound of laughter carried on the ocean breeze, as if somewhere out there, two old friends were still sharing the joke of their incredible, impossible, wonderful adventure.



VIRGINIA BRUCE

Virginia Bruce (born Helen Virginia Briggs; September 29, 1910 - February 24, 1982) was an American actress and singer.

Bruce was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As an infant she moved with her parents, Earil and Margaret Briggs, to Fargo, North Dakota. The city directory of Fargo documents that the Briggs family lived there at 421 14th Street South. After Bruce graduated from Fargo Central High School in 1928, she moved with her family to Los Angeles intending to enroll at the University of California, Los Angeles when a friendly wager sent her seeking film work.

Bruce's first screen work was in 1929 as an extra for Paramount in *Why Bring That Up?* In 1930, she appeared on Broadway in the musical *Smiles* at the Ziegfeld Theatre, followed by the Broadway production *America's Sweetheart* in 1931.

Bruce returned to Hollywood in 1932, where she began work in early August at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer on the film *Kongo* starring Walter Huston. During production on that project, on August 10, she married John Gilbert (her first, his fourth) with whom she recently costarred in *Downstairs*. The *Film Daily* reported that the couple's "quick" wedding was held in Gilbert's dressing room on the studio lot. Among the people attending the small ceremony were the head of MGM production Irving Thalberg, who served as the groom's best man; screenwriter Donald Ogden Stewart, whose wife Beatrice acted as matron of honor; MGM art director and set designer Cedric Gibbons; and his wife, actress Dolores del Rio.

Bruce retired briefly from acting after the birth of their daughter Susan Ann, although she returned to film appearances after her divorce from Gilbert (caused by his alcoholism) in May 1934. Gilbert died of a heart attack in 1936.

Bruce is credited with introducing the Cole Porter standard "I've Got You Under My Skin" in the 1936 film *Born to Dance*. The same year, she costarred in the MGM musical *The Great Ziegfeld*. She also performed periodically on radio. In 1949, for example, Bruce starred in *Make Believe Town*, a 30-minute afternoon drama broadcast daily on CBS Radio. In the early 1960s, she retired from films.

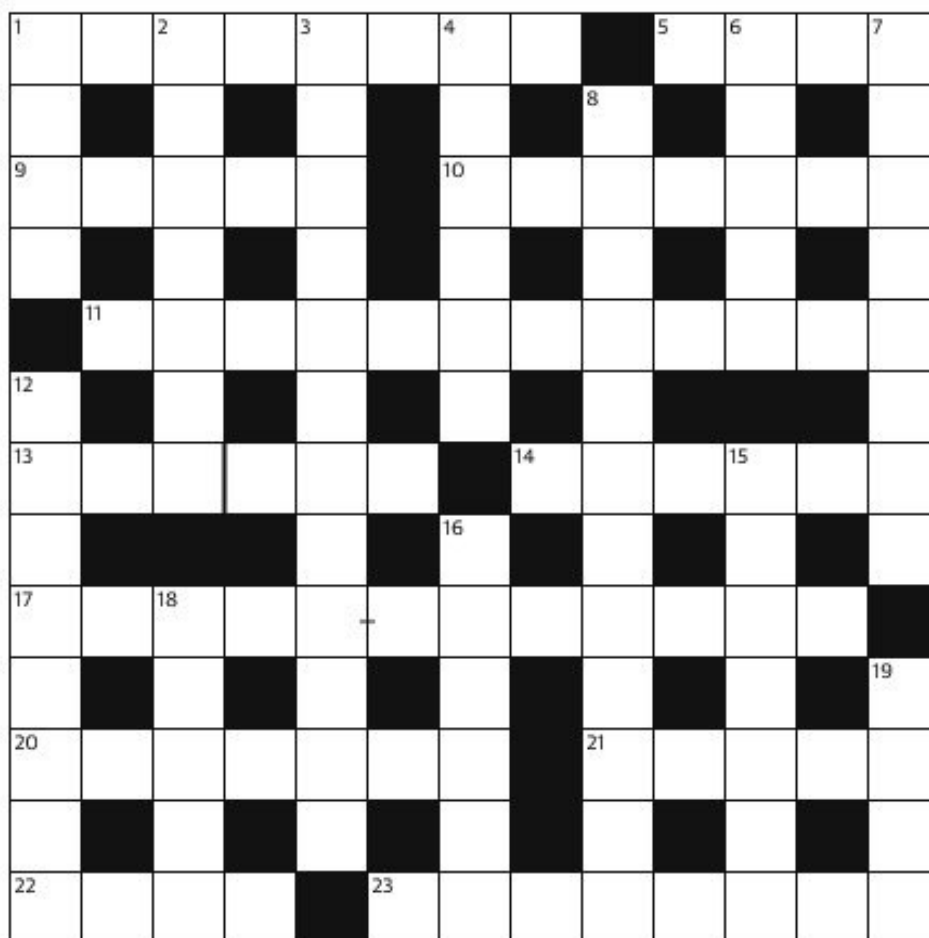
Bruce married American film director J. Walter Ruben in 1937. she had 2 children. Bruce was a Democrat who supported the campaign of Adlai Stevenson during the 1952 presidential election. Bruce died of cancer at age 71 on February 24, 1982, at the Motion Picture & Television Country House and Hospital in Woodland Hills, Los Angeles, California.



SEPTEMBER 2025 CROSSWORD ANSWERS

1	W	E	2	S	L	3	E	Y		4	S	5	N	I	6	P	E	7	S
	A			E			N					A			R			U	
8	S	P	A	I	N				9	A	U	T	H	O	R	S			
	A			B			U			F		U			N			S	
10	B	R	A	Z	I	E	R					11	R	O	G	U	E		
	I			S					I			A						X	
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15	S						T			A					R			16	J
17	M	O	18	C	K	S			19	A	I	20	R	R	A	G	E		
	U			O			T			N		U			N			T	
21	T	H	R	E	A	D	S					22	M	E	A	N	S		
	T			R			K					B			D			K	
23	Y	E	S	M	E	N				24	S	A	L	A	M	I			

OCTOBER 2025 CROSSWORD



Across

- 1** Wine server (8)
- 5** Fashion or food? (4)
- 9** Overcharge (slang) (5)
- 10** Point to (7)
- 11** Nervous behaviour (12)
- 13** Hit out (3,3)
- 14** Clothes fastener (6)
- 17** Failing to take the long view (5-7)
- 20** Distinguished (7)
- 21** Airship (5)
- 22** Source of growth (4)
- 23** Chance - to search for something valuable (8)

Down

- 1** Destroy - instrument panel (4)
- 2** The Lord's game? (7)
- 3** Opposite of day wear (12)
- 4** French wit (6)
- 6** Rapidly (5)
- 7** Rare suet (anag) - it's highly prized (8)
- 8** Luddites (12)
- 12** Small groups (8)
- 15** Very (as in moment) - accurate (7)
- 16** Whistler's mother, for example (6)
- 18** Black or green fruit (5)
- 19** Minor dispute (4)

IT AIN'T HAY. ABBOTT & COSTELLO



It Ain't Hay is a 1943 film starring the comedy team of Abbott and Costello. It Ain't Hay is based upon the Damon Runyon story, Princess O'Hara, which Universal first made into a film in 1935 with Chester Morris. Filming of this picture began on September 28, 1942, and lasted until November 11. Lou's brother Pat Costello was used as his stunt-double in the "headless horseman" sequence. It was during production, on November 6, that Lou's wife Anne gave birth to their son, Lou "Butch" Costello, Jr.

Cab driver Wilbur Hoolihan accidentally kills a hack horse owned by King O'Hara and his daughter, Princess O'Hara, by feeding it candy. In hopes of raising enough money to replace it, he and his friend Grover Mockridge visit a crooked gambling parlor. They win enough money, but before they can purchase a new horse, a con man swindles Wilbur out of the cash. Some touts inform Wilbur and Grover that an old horse is available for free at one of the upstate tracks. They visit the track but mistakenly take the wrong horse, a champion by the name of Tea Biscuit, and present the horse to O'Hara.

Tea Biscuit's owner, Col. Brainard, offers a reward for the return of the horse. By this time, O'Hara has taken a fare up to Saratoga. Wilbur and Grover, realizing their error, drive to Saratoga to find O'Hara. The three touts also realize that Wilbur and Grover took Tea Biscuit, and trail them hoping to recover the horse and collect the reward. Wilbur and Grover manage to find O'Hara and hide Tea Biscuit in their hotel room, but they are hounded by the house detective, Warner, who was tipped off by the touts. Fleeing Warner, Wilbur rides the horse but ends up at the track in time for a big race.

The three touts and Warner converge on the track and confront Grover, who makes a deal with them to turn over the horse Wilbur riding for \$100. Grover then uses that money to bet on Tea Biscuit. Before

the race, Wilbur is thrown off Tea Biscuit and lands on Rhubarb, and Rhubarb's jockey saddles up Tea Biscuit. With a real jockey aboard, Tea Biscuit wins the race while Wilbur and Rhubarb come in last. Warner and the touts take Wilbur's horse, which they believe is Tea Biscuit, to Col. Brainard for the reward, but it is the wrong horse. Grover holds the only winning ticket on Tea Biscuit, and uses the windfall to buy O'Hara a replacement horse.

There is a scene that breaks the fourth wall: Wilbur and Grover are in their apartment when someone knocks at the door. Grover says, "Go answer the door, it might be Warner." Wilbur answers, "It won't do no good, we're signed up with Universal." Abbott and Costello had a long-term contract with Universal Pictures at the time. Also, in the beginning of the movie, someone asks Shemp Howard's character why he's carrying an umbrella when it isn't raining. He answers, "Who knows? I'm a Damon Runyon character."



IT AINT HAY. ABBOTT & COSTELLO



Cast

Bud Abbott as Grover Mockridge

Lou Costello as Wilbur Hoolihan

Grace McDonald as Kitty McGloin

Cecil Kellaway as King O'Hara

Eugene Pallette as Gregory Warner

Patsy O'Connor as Peggy / Princess O'Hara

Leighton Noble as Pvt. Joe Collins

Shemp Howard as Umbrella Sam

Samuel S. Hinds as Col. Brainard

Eddie Quillan as Harry the Horse

Richard Lane as Slicker

Andrew Tombes as Big-Hearted Charlie

Wade Boteler as Reilly

Selmer Jackson as Grant

Mike Mazurki as Bouncer (Uncredited)

Herb Vigran as Man in the Back Room (Uncredited)

Pierre Watkin as Major Harper (Uncredited)

HAL ROACH



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Harold Eugene "Hal" Roach Sr. (January 14, 1892 – November 2, 1992) was an American film and television producer, director and screenwriter, who was the founder of the namesake Hal Roach Studios.

Roach was active in the industry from the 1910s to the 1990s. He is known for producing a number of early Media franchise successes, including the Laurel and Hardy franchise, Harold Lloyd's early films, the films of entertainer Charley Chase, and the Our Gang short film comedy series.

Roach was born in Elmira, New York, to Charles Henry Roach, whose father was born in Wicklow, County Wicklow, Ireland, and Mabel Gertrude Bally, her father John Bally being from Switzerland. A presentation by the American humorist Mark Twain impressed Roach as a young grade school student.

Hal's first job was as a newspaper deliverer. One of his customers lived at Quarry Farm - Samuel Clemens, more widely known as Mark Twain. ". After an adventurous youth that took him to Alaska, Roach arrived in Hollywood in 1912 and began working as an extra in silent films.

When Hal Roach came to Southern California at the age of 20, he had reached the tail end of a four-year trek across America, which took him from his hometown of Elmira, New York to Alaska, and down the Pacific Coast. Along the way, he picked up the know-how necessary to land work as an extra in a J. Warren Kerrigan western, which was being filmed on location in the desert. It was here that he first met fellow player Harold Lloyd, the first of many talents whom Hal Roach would nurture and build a fortune on. During the filming of a roulette sequence, Roach got himself promoted to the position of technical advisor by pointing out that the ball has to travel in the opposite direction of the wheel – knowledge he had gained in San Francisco's Barbary Coast.

On July 23, 1914, Roach incorporated Rolin Film Company with Dan Linthicum and I.H. Nance. In 1914, the Lewis Leonard Bradbury (November 6, 1823 – July 15, 1892) mansion,



on the corner of Court Street and Hill Street, Bunker Hill, Los Angeles, California, was Roach's film studio.

Upon coming into an inheritance, in 1915 he began producing short film comedies with his friend Harold Lloyd, who portrayed a character known as Willie Work, as in *Willie Runs the Park* and *Lonesome Luke*, as in *Lonesome Luke*, *Social Gangster*. In 1915, his first success, *Just Nuts* (1915), landed a long-standing distribution deal with Pathé Exchange.

Unable to expand his studios in Downtown Los Angeles because of zoning, Roach leased several studio sites in the Los Angeles area until he purchased what became the Hal Roach Studios from Harry Culver in Culver City, California, at 8822 Washington Boulevard, and built by 1920. During the 1920s and 1930s, he employed Lloyd (his top money-maker until his departure in 1923), Will Rogers, Max Davidson, the *Our Gang* children, Charley Chase, Harry Langdon, Thelma Todd, ZaSu Pitts, Patsy Kelly and, most famously, Laurel and Hardy. During the 1920s, Roach's biggest rival was producer Mack Sennett. In 1925, Roach hired away Sennett's supervising director, F. Richard Jones.

Roach released his films through Pathé Exchange until 1927, when he struck a distri-

HAL ROACH CONTINUED



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bution deal with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. He converted his silent-movie studio to sound in late 1928 and began releasing talking shorts in early 1929. In the days before dubbing, foreign-language versions of the Roach comedies were created by reshooting each film in Spanish, French, and occasionally Italian and German. Laurel & Hardy, Charley Chase, and the Our Gang kids (some of whom had barely begun school) were required to recite the foreign dialogue phonetically, often working from blackboards hidden off-camera.

In 1931, with the release of the Laurel & Hardy film *Pardon Us*, Roach began producing occasional full-length features alongside the short subjects. Two-reel comedies were less profitable than features, and Roach phased most of them out by 1936. When the Our Gang feature film *General Spanky* did not do as well as expected, Roach intended to disband Our Gang entirely. MGM still wanted the Our Gang short subjects, so Roach agreed to supply them in single-reel (10-minute) form.

Roach was also a good friend to Walt Disney, who was a fan of Laurel and Hardy at the time. A monkey dressed in a Mickey Mouse costume as well as actors in Three Little Pigs costumes appeared in the 1934 Laurel and Hardy film *March of the Wooden Soldiers*. Mickey Mouse also appeared in

Hollywood Party, also from 1934 and featuring Laurel and Hardy.

In 1937, Renato Senise, nephew of Carmine Senise, the then deputy chief of the Italian police, conceived a joint business venture of Roach partnering with Vittorio Mussolini, son of fascist Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, to form a production company called "R.A.M." (Roach and Mussolini). On 11 September 1937, Roach and Vittorio Mussolini formed R.A.M. Productions.

Roach claimed the scheme involved Italian bankers providing US\$6 million that would enable Roach's studio to produce a series of 12 films. Eight would be for Italian screening only while the remaining four would receive world distribution. The first film for Italy was to be a feature film of the opera *Rigoletto*.

The Hollywood Anti-Nazi League for the Defense of American Democracy resented Mussolini's presence and placed notices in various trade magazines: "He asked for - and received - the privilege of being the first aviator to bomb helpless Ethiopians . . . his presence here is not an occasion for celebration or social fetes. Those who welcome him are opening their arms to a friend of Hitler and an enemy of democracy."

Roach defended himself by saying: You don't know, but that I might have dinner with Mussolini when I go back to Italy. Maybe I can suggest to him that Hitler is not going quite right about things and maybe Mussolini will write Hitler a note and tell him so... I never made a move in Europe in this matter at any time without the advice and cooperation of some of the most prominent Jews there who told me I was doing the finest thing ever done in their estimation — tying up with Mussolini's son and taking the boy back to Hollywood.

This proposed business alliance with Mussolini alarmed MGM, which intervened and forced Roach to buy his way out of the venture. Loews chairman Nicholas Schenck was so upset with this incident, combined with the underperformance of much of Roach's

HAL ROACH CONTINUED

latest feature-film output (except Laurel & Hardy titles and the 1937 hit *Topper*), that he ultimately cancelled Roach's distribution contract with MGM.

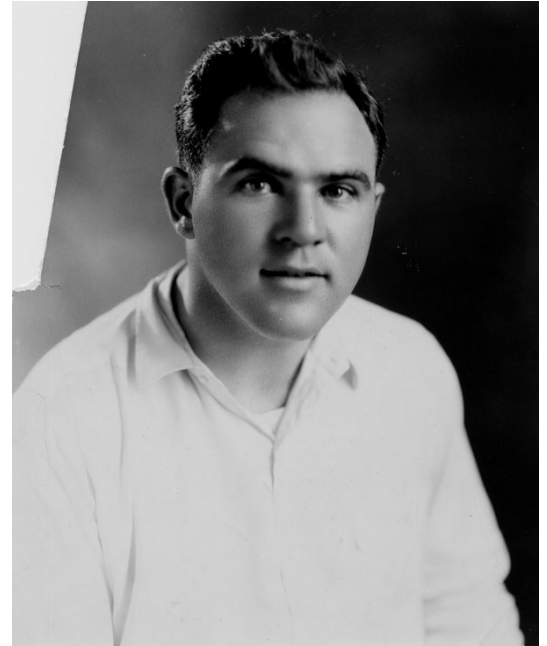
In May 1938, Roach sold MGM the production rights and actors contracts to the *Our Gang* shorts. Roach signed a distribution deal with United Artists at this time.

From 1937 to 1940, Roach concentrated on producing glossy features, abandoning low comedy almost completely. Most of his new films were either sophisticated farces (like *Topper* and *The Housekeeper's Daughter*, 1939) or rugged action fare (like *Captain Fury*, 1939, and *One Million B.C.*, 1940). Roach's one venture into heavy drama was the acclaimed *Of Mice and Men* (1939), in which actors Burgess Meredith and Lon Chaney Jr. played the leading roles. The Laurel and Hardy comedies, once the Roach studio's biggest drawing cards, were now the studio's least important product and were phased out altogether in 1940.

In 1940, Roach experimented with medium-length featurettes, running 40 to 50 minutes each. He contended that these "streamliners", as he called them, would be useful in double feature situations where the main attraction was a longer-length epic. Exhibitors agreed with him and used Roach's mini-features to balance top-heavy double bills. He had intended to introduce the new format with a series of four Laurel and Hardy featurettes, but was overruled by United Artists, which insisted on two Laurel & Hardy feature films instead. United Artists continued to release Roach's streamliners through 1943. By this time, Roach no longer had a resident company of comedy stars and cast his films with familiar featured players (William Tracy and Joe Sawyer, Johnny Downs, Jean Porter, Frank Faylen, William Bendix, George E. Stone, Bobby Watson, etc.).

Recognizing the value of his film library, in 1943 Roach began licensing revivals of his older productions for theatrical distribution through Film Classics, Inc. and home-movie distribution.

Hal Roach Sr., commissioned in the U.S. Army Signal Reserve Corps in 1927, was called back to active military duty in the Signal Corps in June 1942, at age 50. The studio output he oversaw in uniform was converted from entertainment fea-



turettes to military training films. The studios were leased to the U.S. Army Air Forces, and the First Motion Picture Unit made 400 training, morale and propaganda films at "Fort Roach." Members of the unit included Ronald Reagan and Alan Ladd. After the war the government returned the studio to Roach, with millions of dollars of improvements.

In 1946, Hal Roach resumed motion picture production, with former Harold Lloyd co-star Bebe Daniels as an associate producer. Roach was the first Hollywood producer to adopt an all-color production schedule, making four streamliners in Cinecolor, although the increased production costs did not result in increased revenue. In 1948, with his studio deeply in debt, Roach re-established his studio for television production, with Hal Roach Jr., producing series such as *The Stu Erwin Show*, *Steve Donovan*, *Western Marshal*, *Racket Squad*, *The Public Defender*, *The Gale Storm Show*, *Rocky Jones*, *Space Ranger* and *My Little Margie*, and independent producers leasing the facilities for such programs as *Amos 'n' Andy*, *The Life of Riley* and *The Abbott and Costello Show*. By 1951, the studio was producing 1,500 hours of television programs a year, nearly three times Hollywood's annual output of feature movies.

HAL ROACH CONTINUED



Roach's old theatrical films were also early arrivals on television. His Laurel and Hardy comedies were successful in television syndication, as were the Our Gang comedies he produced from 1929 to 1938.

In 1955, Roach sold his interests in the production company to his son, Hal Roach Jr., and retired from active production. The younger Roach lacked much of his father's business acumen and was forced to sell the studio in 1958 to The Scranton Corporation, a division of the automobile-parts conglomerate F. L. Jacobs Co. The Roach studio finally shut down in 1961.

For two more decades, Roach Sr. occasionally worked as a consultant on projects related to his past work. In 1983 the "Hal Roach Studios" name was reactivated as a video concern, pioneering the new field of colorizing movies. Roach lent his film library to the cause but was otherwise not involved in the new video productions. Extremely vigorous into an advanced age, Roach contemplated a comedy comeback at 96.

In 1984, 92-year-old Roach was presented with an honorary Academy Award. Former Our Gang members Jackie Cooper and George "Spanky" McFarland made the presentation to a flattered Roach, with McFarland thanking the producer for hiring him 53 years prior. An additional Our Gang member, Ernie Morrison, was in the crowd and started the standing ovation for Roach. Years earlier Cooper had been the youngest Academy Award nominee ever for his performance in Skippy when he had been under contract with Roach. Although Paramount had paid Roach \$25,000 for Cooper's services in that film, Roach paid Cooper only his standard salary of \$50 per week.

On January 21, 1992, Roach was a guest on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, guest-hosted by Jay Leno, one week after his 100th birthday. During the interview, Roach recounted experiences with such stars as Stan Laurel and Jean Harlow; he even did a brief, energetic demonstration of the "humble hula" dance. In February 1992, Roach traveled to Berlin to receive the honorary award of the Berlinale Kamera for Lifetime Achievement at the 42nd Berlin International Film Festival.

On March 30, 1992, Roach appeared at the 64th Academy Awards ceremony, hosted by Billy Crystal. When Roach rose from the audience to a standing ovation, he decided to give a speech without a microphone, causing Crystal to quip "I think that's appropriate because Mr. Roach started in silent films."

In 1916, Roach's mother and father moved into Roach's studio in Culver City, living there until their death. In September 1916, Roach married actress Marguerite Nichols, who worked as an actress in the 1930s and 1940s, and died in March 1941. They had two children, Hal Roach Jr., who followed his father as a producer and director, and Margaret Roach.

Roach married a second time, on September 1, 1942, to Lucille Prin, a Los Angeles secretary. They were married at the on-base home of Colonel Franklin C. Wolfe and his wife at

HAL ROACH CONTINUED

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Wright-Patterson Airfield in Dayton, Ohio, where Roach was stationed at the time while serving as a major in the United States Army Air Corps. Roach and Lucille had four children, Elizabeth Carson Roach (December 26, 1945 – September 5, 1946), Maria May Roach (born April 14, 1947), Jeanne Alice Roach (born October 7, 1949), and Kathleen Bridget Roach (born January 29, 1951).

Hal Roach died in his home in Bel Air, Los Angeles, from pneumonia, on November 2, 1992, at the age of 100. He had married twice, and had six children, eight grandchildren, and a number of great-grandchildren. Roach outlived three of his children by more than 20 years: Hal Jr. (died in 1972), Margaret (died in 1964), and Elizabeth (died in 1946). He also outlived many of the children who starred in his films. Roach is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Elmira, New York, where he grew up.

In the 2018 Laurel and Hardy biopic *Stan & Ollie*, Roach was portrayed by Danny Huston.

In 2020, Rose McGowan alleged that, in 1937, Roach was responsible for a case of large-scale sexual abuse of actresses. The closest link to such accusations against him is that an infamous sex party was held by MGM at the Hal Roach Ranch, which was used by the company as a studio. This is also in relation to one of the earliest reports of rape in Hollywood, filed by blacklisted dancer and extra Patricia Douglas, which was later covered in the documentary *Girl 27*, a production McGowan herself has praised for educating on sexual abuse in Hollywood.



KATHRYN GRAYSON

Kathryn Grayson (born Zelma Kathryn Elisabeth Hedrick; February 9, 1922 - February 17, 2010) was an American actress and coloratura soprano. From the age of 12, Grayson trained as an opera singer. She was under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer by the early 1940s, soon establishing a career principally through her work in musicals. After several supporting roles, she was a lead performer in such films as *Thousands Cheer* (1943), *Anchors Aweigh* (1945) with Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly and *Show Boat* (1951) and *Kiss Me Kate* (1953), both with Howard Keel. She also worked in theatre, appearing in *Camelot* (1962-1964). Later in the decade, she performed in several operas, including *La bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *La traviata*.

Zelma Kathryn Elisabeth Hedrick was born on February 9, 1922, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, one of four children of Charles Hedrick, a building contractor-realtor, and Lillian Hedrick (nee Grayson). The Hedrick family later moved to Kirkwood, Missouri, outside St. Louis. At the age of 12, Grayson was discovered singing on the empty stage of the St. Louis Municipal Opera House by a janitor, who introduced her to Frances Marshall of the Chicago Civic Opera, from whom Grayson received voice lessons. Grayson's sister Frances Raeburn (born Mildred Hedrick) was also an actress and singer, appearing along with her in the film *Seven Sweethearts*. Grayson had two brothers, Clarence "Bud" E. Hedrick, and Harold. The family moved to California when she was 15 years old.

In 1940, an MGM talent scout saw Grayson performing at a music festival. MGM hoped to find a replacement for Deanna Durbin, who had left the studio for Universal Pictures. For the next 18 months, Grayson took voice, drama and diction lessons and followed a routine of dieting and exercise. Within a year, she had her first screen test. However, studio executives were not satisfied, and she endured a further six



months of lessons until she made her first film appearance in 1941's *Andy Hardy's Private Secretary* as secretary Kathryn Land, participating in three musical numbers.

Two further films were planned for Grayson in 1941: *White House Girl*, which was later produced in 1948 with Durbin, and *Very Warm for May*, from the Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein musical of the same name. The film eventually was produced in 1944 as *Broadway Rhythm*. Grayson appeared in three films in 1942: *The Vanishing Virginian*, *Rio Rita* and *Seven Sweethearts*. In the first, Grayson plays the teenage daughter, Rebecca, of the eccentric Yancey family from Lynchburg, Virginia. Set in 1913, the film was based on Rebecca Yancey Williams's own family.

Grayson co-starred in *Rio Rita* with Abbott and Costello. Grayson portrayed the title character, Rita Winslow. The film was originally meant to be an adaptation of the 1927 Broadway musical; however, only two songs were retained for the film, the title song, and "The Ranger Song", which was performed by Grayson.

Co-starring Van Heflin, *Seven Sweethearts* cast Grayson as the youngest of seven daughters from Holland, Michigan, who is hired by reporter-photographer Heflin to serve as a model and secretary while he

KATHRYN GRAYSON CONTINUED



covers the town's tulip festival, and with whom he falls in love.

In 1943, Grayson appeared in the film *Thousands Cheer*, (originally titled *Private Miss Jones*), along with Gene Kelly, Mickey Rooney, Eleanor Powell, June Allyson and others. The film was intended as a morale booster for American troops and their families. Grayson starred as the singing daughter of an Army commander.

It was announced in 1942 that Grayson would appear in *An American Symphony* with Judy Garland. Garland was replaced by June Allyson, and the film was retitled as *"Two Sisters from Boston"* and released in 1946.

Grayson did not appear in any films for nearly two years (from 1943 to 1945), but instead worked at entertaining troops during the war and performing on radio programs. Notably, it is reported that she would only perform under the condition that the audience was integrated, as troops were segregated at the time.

She returned to films in *Anchors Aweigh*, a musical romantic-comedy set in Los Angeles and co-starring Kelly and Frank Sinatra. *Anchors Aweigh* was the fifth-highest grossing film of 1945, earning over \$4.779 million.

This was followed by *Two Sisters from Boston*

and guest appearances in *Ziegfeld Follies* and *Till the Clouds Roll By*. Her performance in *Till the Clouds Roll By* included "Make Believe" in a capsule version of the musical *Show Boat*, which would be remade five years later, with Grayson in the starring role.

MGM re-paired Grayson and Sinatra for two movies in 1947 and 1948, *It Happened in Brooklyn* and *The Kissing Bandit*. Both films performed poorly at the box office, and audiences thought the plots absurd. After the setbacks of *Brooklyn* and *Bandit*, Grayson was partnered with tenor Mario Lanza in *That Midnight Kiss* in 1949.

In 1950, Grayson was once again partnered with Lanza, and portrayed an opera singer in *The Toast of New Orleans*, and performed the Academy-Award-nominated song "Be My Love". While shooting the *Madama Butterfly* scene in the film, Lanza kept attempting to french kiss Grayson, which Grayson claimed was made even worse by the fact that Lanza would constantly eat garlic before shooting. Grayson went to costume designer Helen Rose, who sewed pieces of brass into Grayson's gloves. Any time Lanza attempted to french kiss her after that, she hit him with the brass-filled glove. For the premiere of the film in New Orleans, she was a guest at an auction selling the film's costumes.

Grayson replaced June Allyson in the role of Ina Massine in 1951's *Grounds for Marriage*. She portrayed an opera singer with laryngitis, alongside Van Johnson who played her doctor and love interest. This was also her first non-singing role at MGM. Grayson's musical performances do appear in the film, but in the form of recordings. Grayson was next cast as Magnolia Hawks in the 1951 remake of the 1927 Hammerstein and Kern musical, *Show Boat*. *Show Boat* was the third-highest-grossing film of 1951, earning over \$5.533 million.

Grayson married twice, first to actor John Shelton and then to the actor/singer Johnnie Johnston. She was a Republican. Grayson adhered to Roman Catholicism. Shelton and Grayson eloped to Las Vegas, where they were married on July 11, 1941. The two had courted for 18 months, after meeting while making screen tests. In July 1942, Shelton moved out of their

KATHRYN GRAYSON CONTINUED

Brentwood home and into his own apartment. This came after a month of reconciliation after a judge dismissed their divorce suit. Grayson charged Shelton with mental cruelty. They divorced on June 17, 1946.

Grayson wed singer/actor Johnnie Johnston on August 22, 1947, in Carmel, California. Grayson and Johnston separated on November 15, 1950. On October 3, 1951, Grayson was granted a divorce from Johnston on the grounds of mental cruelty. Johnston's *This Time for Keeps* co-star, Esther Williams, claimed in her 1999 autobiography that while making the film, Johnston would read Grayson's intimate letters aloud to the girls in his fan club, including the "all-too-graphic details concerning what she liked about his love-making."



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FLYING ELEPHANTS. LAUREL & HARDY

Flying Elephants is a two-reel silent film from 1928 directed by Frank Butler and co-written and produced by Hal Roach. It stars Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy as a pair of battling cavemen.

The narrative unfolds within a Stone Age setting, where the ruler of the cave-dwelling populace mandates that all males aged 13 to 99 must secure a female partner or risk exile. Hardy embarks on a quest to find a spouse, enduring repeated blows from irate "husbands" in his pursuit. Eventually, he encounters a potential mate but remains unaware that Laurel, his companion, also seeks her hand in marriage.

As Laurel and Hardy vie for the same woman, their rivalry escalates, leading to a series of competitions to win her favor. In a pivotal scene, Laurel attempts to eliminate his competitor by luring him to a precarious cliff edge. However, his scheme is thwarted when a hostile goat intervenes, causing Hardy to plummet from the precipice. Seizing the opportunity, Laurel claims victory and the affections of the coveted bride-to-be.

Cast

Stan Laurel - Little Twinkle Star

Oliver Hardy - Mighty Giant

James Finlayson - Saxophonus

Dorothy Coburn - Gorgeous Wrestler

Viola Richard - Blushing Rose

Fay Lanphier - Blonde Cavewoman

Budd Fine - Hulking Caveman

Tiny Sandford - Hulking Caveman

Leo Willis - Fisherman

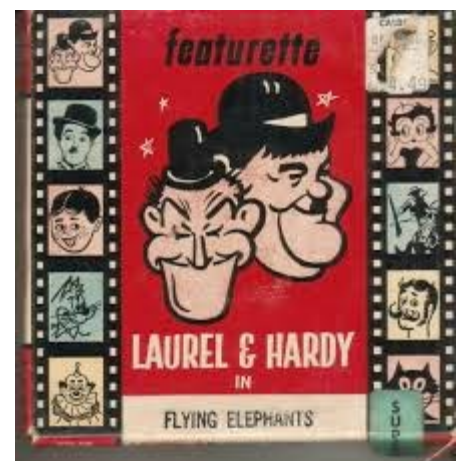


Although released in February 1928, Flying Elephants was actually filmed in May 1927, before the duo were established as a comedy team. As a result, the film lacks the Laurel and Hardy trademarks and consists mostly of solo performances by the two comedians.

Taking place entirely outdoors, the rocky desert locations were photographed in Moapa, Nevada. Some locations would later be used in 1940 for Hal Roach's prehistoric drama One Million B.C



The title Flying Elephants refers to a scene where Hardy's character points out three animated pachyderms flying up above in the sky.



BEST FREE COMPUTER CLEANING SOFTWARE

The best free computer cleaning software includes the built-in Windows Storage Sense, official software from Microsoft like Microsoft PC Manager and Malwarebytes AdwCleaner for malware, and powerful open-source alternatives like BleachBit. Other reputable free options include CCleaner, which is excellent for cleaning temporary files, and Wise Disk Cleaner, a user-friendly tool for disk cleanup.

Here's a breakdown of recommended options:

Built-in & Microsoft-Provided Tools

Windows Storage Sense:

This is the default tool included with Windows to automatically manage and clean up storage, removing temporary files and the Recycle Bin.

Microsoft PC Manager:

Developed by Microsoft, this tool provides a safe, integrated way to clean up PCs, boost performance, manage startup programs, and scan for viruses using Windows Defender.

Open-Source & Privacy-Focused Tools

BleachBit: A free, open-source, and highly effective tool that cleans more than just temporary files, including web browser histories and system logs, offering deep customization.

General-Purpose Cleaners

CCleaner:

One of the most well-known tools for cleaning temporary files, optimizing performance, and maintaining privacy, with options for both free and paid versions.

Wise Disk Cleaner:

A user-friendly and efficient free tool specifically designed for deep disk cleaning to free up space on your PC.

Specialized Tools

Malwarebytes AdwCleaner: This tool is specifically designed to detect and remove adware, potentially unwanted programs (PUPs), and browser hijackers.

Key Considerations

Safety:

For peace of mind, use Microsoft's official PC Manager or a well-known, reputable tool like CCleaner.

Depth of Cleaning:

If you need a more thorough clean and more control, BleachBit is a powerful choice.

Features:

Consider what you need most; some tools focus on junk file removal, while others offer more features like performance optimization or malware scanning.