



An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Women in Early American Films: 1895-1930

Denise Lowe

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Examine women's contributions to film—in front of the camera and behind it!

An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Women in Early American Films: 1895-1930 is an A-to-Z reference guide (illustrated with over 150 hard-to-find photographs!) that dispels the myth that men dominated the film industry during its formative years. Denise Lowe, author of *Women and American Television: An Encyclopedia*, presents a rich collection that profiles many of the women who were crucial to the development of cinema as an industry—and as an art form. Whether working behind the scenes as producers or publicists, behind the cameras as writers, directors, or editors, or in front of the lens as flappers, vamps, or serial queens, hundreds of women made profound and lasting contributions to the evolution of the motion picture production.

An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Women in Early American Films: 1895-1930 gives you immediate access to the histories of many of the women who pioneered the early days of cinema—on screen and off. The book chronicles the well-known figures of the era, such as Alice Guy, Mary Pickford, and Francis Marion but gives equal billing to those who worked in anonymity as the industry moved from the silent era into the age of sound. Their individual stories of professional success and failure, artistic struggle and strife, and personal triumph and tragedy fill in the plot points missing from the complete saga of Hollywood's beginnings.

Pioneers of the motion picture business found in *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Women in Early American Films* include:

- Dorothy Arnzer, the first woman to join the Directors Guild of America and the only female director to make a successful transition from silent films to sound
- Jane Murfin, playwright and screenwriter who became supervisor of motion pictures at RKO Studios
- Gene Gauntier, the actress and scenarist whose adaptation of *Ben Hur* for the Kalem Film Company led to a landmark copyright infringement case
- Theda Bara, whose on-screen popularity virtually built Fox Studios before typecasting and overexposure destroyed her career
- Madame Sul-Te-Wan, née Nellie Conley, the first African-American actor or actress to sign a film contract and be a featured performer
- Dorothy Davenport, who parlayed the publicity surrounding her actor-husband's drug-related death into a career as a producer of social reform melodramas
- Lois Weber, a street-corner evangelist who became one of the best-known and highest-paid directors in Hollywood
- Lina Basquette, the "Screen Tragedy Girl" who married and divorced studio mogul Sam Warner, led The Hollywood Aristocrats Orchestra, claimed to have been a spy for the American Office of Strategic Services during World War II, and became a renowned dog expert in her later years
- and many more!

An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Women in Early American Films: 1895-1930 also includes comprehensive appendices of the WAMPAS Baby Stars, the silent stars remembered in the Graumann Chinese Theater Forecourt of the Stars and those immortalized on the Hollywood Walk of Stars. The book is invaluable as a

resource for researchers, librarians, academics working in film, popular culture, and women's history, and to anyone interested either professionally or casually in the early days of Hollywood and the motion picture industry.

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