

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
ON MICROFICHE**

PART VI

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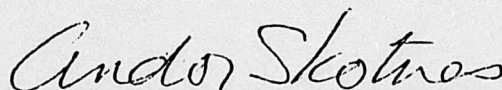
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Acting Director

#1422

PRCQ

HOLLYWOOD FILM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Anita Loos

Oral History Research Office

Columbia University

1985

Preface

The following oral history memoir is the result of a tape recorded interview with Anita Loos. The interview took place in New York City on July 14, 1971. It was conducted by Mr. Benton and Mr. Greene for the Hollywood Film Industry Oral History Project. It is one of a series of interviews documenting the history of the Hollywood film industry.

Ms. Loos was unable to review and emend this interview. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview with Anita Loos
In her New York apartment

14 July 1971

Anita Loos : I'm no good on dates, but you can ...

Q: Oh yes...

Anita Loos: Is this about right for me ?

Q: Well, we certainly don't want to put you into an inconvenient --

Anita Loos: No, no, but when I got to thinking it over, I thought I should call the Viking Press, because this is material that will be in a book of mine that's coming out, next spring. They weren't at all -- they didn't make any objections at all. But they said, "We're going to tell our lawyers exactly what it is," so he called up

Q: Fine. Well, they probably told you, we've already talked to quite a marvelous group of people. Of course, we're growing with this library. We've talked to Lauren Bacall and Bette Davis and John Lang and Adella Rogers St. John --

Anita Loos: She's intotown now, isn't she ?

Q: No, she's out there. We had our interview at Madonna Inn in San Luis Obispo. I think she lives there. And it's the most marvelous place.

Loos: Really ?

Q: And we found Mary Astor, to talk to her, about Bogart, primarily, and I could go on and on. Henry Hathaway and so forth. Max Steiner and -- so that gives you an idea of the people, stars, writers, directors and so forth. . We want to have them recall --

Miss Loos, please recall as you can, as you remember, your extraordinary entrance to Hollywood. I believe it began at --

Loos: -- 12 years old.

Q: You were 12 years old ? Can you tell us about that?

Loos: You see, I was practically born for Hollywood, because my father was a writer and I was a stage child, and I had writing and theatrical experience when I was 12, but beginning when I was about five, so I was , I became a film fan very early, as a child, and realized that they must have to have a story before they'd start shooting, so I wrote one, and I climbed up in the loft of my father's theatre and got the film can with the address of the Biograph Company on it, and I mailed my story to this address.

Immediately I got a check back for \$15 , which was about what I was earning as an actress by the week. So that started me, and I never stopped. I just kept turning them out.

I had written 200 produced films before sound came in. 200 silents. They gave a festival at the Museum of Modern Art, you know, dug up things I couldn't even remember when I saw them!

Q: You did a great deal -- and worked with Griffith.

Loos: Yes, I began with Griffith. It was Griffith who bought my very first play. And by the way, I wrote Griffith's very last movie,

"The Struggle, " yes, which was a complete disaster, as you know.

Q: I want to talk a little bit about that in a moment. Were there any particular screenplays of those 200 that you recall that were pronounced favorites of yours ?

Loos: Yes. There was one I called "The Little Liar " that got me a write-up by Vachel Lindsay in THE NEW REPUBLIC. Vachel Lindsay was the first film fan of any mentality . And he became my pen pal from that time on. So that stands out, because I had great experiences with Vachel, and that was with Mae Marsh.

Q: Then, before we get to the sound era, could you give me, I think I probably know but for the tape, what you feel, and when you were writing all these screenplays , the difference between writing a screenplay for the silents, a scenario I suppose, as opposed to writing for sound ? It must have been different.

Loos: There was a great difference, because we didn't put dialogue into our silent films very much. Most of the dialogue was put in after the film was cut, with subtitles. Then of course when sound came in, we had to put in dialogue scenes, and that was a great difference. But I had a big hiatus, because I left films in 1925 and , when they were silent, and I didn't come back till sound was in , well in. So when I came back to Hollywood, to Thalberg, sound was already established.

But I did have a picture which was , I think, the first picture that used sound in one single scene. It was "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, " and it was a silent picture except that they put one

scene in sound, and --

Q: Jim Walker, was it ?

Loos: Yes, Jim Walker, and Alice White. No, Jim Walker was the stage star. This was a fellow named, oh dear, I should remember the name but I don't at the moment.

Q: Do you recall that scene at all, with the sound ?

Loos : I remember that it was a scene with the two girls in a restaurant, and they were ordering fish, and the reason why we did it in sound was that there was a play on the French word for fish which the girls took to mean "poison. "

So there was no way to do it silently with the subtitles, so they put that in sound.

Q: Tell us a little more about Mr. Griffith whom you worked with, and particularly getting into sound, and -- Lincoln too --

Woman: -- I don't think you wrote --
Loos:

Loos: No, I didn't do (crosstalk) that's right.

"The Struggle" was his very last film.

Q: And you did the screenplay for that.

Loos : I did it , and I hadn't seen him for years, and in the meantime, I had gone into the theatre as a playwright, and so I had written "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and we were widely separated, and he was living here at the Astor Hotel, and at that time he was an alcoholic, and his career was practically over.

Q: What year are we talking about ?

Woman : '31 ?

Loos: I can't remember --
(crosstalk)

Woman: That I think was 1931.
-- early --

Loos: Well, then, that's just -- and he sent
for me because I think I was the one writer he felt comfortable with.
He'd loved me from the beginning. He was a terribly shy man, and
terribly sensitive , and he sent for me to come to the Astor Hotel
where he was living in a small hall bedroom, and he told me he had
this wonderful idea for a film, and asked if I would write it.

Well, I would have done anything for him, because I adored
him, although I never saw him but I always felt he'd given me my
start. But when he told me this idea, it was the worst soap opera
you could imagine, and I didn't know what to do about it. But I
undertook the job. I said, "Yes, of course, " and I don't think it
was, I'm quite sure that he didn't offer to pay for it and I never
would have asked any pay for it.

Then I got the idea that it might be salvaged. It was
practically the story of the old song "Father, dear father, come
home with me now, " the little child waiting at the saloon door
for her drunken father.

I got a bright idea, that if he would make the hero Jimmy
Durante, and make a comedy of the whole idea, it might work, and
he listened to me, and he took it quite seriously for quite a while,
but then he got frightened. He was afraid. He said, "Don't
you think they'll laugh at it ?"

Well, I was hoping they would. And then he put in, I believe,

Jimmy Dunn, do you know ?

Woman: I don't remember. All I remember is the girl who was in it, Carol Dempster.

Loos: Carol Dempster, yes. And it was a terrible film. I think it still exists at the museum over here.

Woman: Was that, do you think, responsible for his final -- not making it in sound movies ?

Loos: Didn't he make it in sound ? I think it was made in sound.

Woman: But I mean, after "The Struggle, " he never did anything, did he ?

Loos: Oh, no. There had been a long period before he did "The Struggle" when he had done nothing, and he had really ended his career long before he did "The Struggle. " It was an attempt at a come-back, and it was attacked by the critics, who made fun of it. It was terrible.

Q: I don't know this, but Griffith's great era was --

Woman: -- it was in the teens, I guess.

Q: Late teens, "Birth of a Nation" and (crosstalk)

Loos: Yes, and then the pictures he did with Dick Barthemess^l and the Gish girls, those were his --

(crosstalk)

Q: -- in the twenties --

Woman: Then I guess he did very little in the twenties, that was when he was --

Loos: -- Yes, that was where, yes. I left him, you know, to go with

Douglas Fairbanks, and Douglas had been making movies with Griffith, and then the bankers in New York got the great idea that Douglas should leave Griffith, and so Douglas wanted me to go along with him.

I wouldn't have left Griffith, but Griffith himself advised me to, and he said, "Look, I don't do the kind of pictures that you write, and Douglas does, so I advise you to go with him. "

So that was when I left Griffith, and scarcely saw him from that time on.

Woman: You wanted to discuss Griffith and -- ?

Q: Yes, why not ?

Woman; I had read in, I think the Museum of Fine Arts book on Griffith mentions that when W.S. Van Dyke directed "San Francisco " which you wrote that the sequence of the mob scene, I guess after the earthquake, he called Griffith in to direct that sequence ?

Loos: I don't think so. No, because that is very clear in my memory. I was on the set every day, and Griffith was not there, and at MGM, George Cukor was always trying to get them to take Griffith. George was the one in the whole industry who tried to help Griffith. Everybody else turned against him, except of course Lillian Gish who was a staunch friend always.

Q: Which brings us into -- let's talk about your association in many different ways of course with musicals. Here we are with "San Francisco " which is not a musical, but you have worked with Jeanette McDonald.

Loos: Yes . Yes.

Q: And Nelson, I guess, in "I Married an Angel. "

Loos: Yes.

Q: Can you tell us anything, do you recall anything about them and that picture ? Because of course we want to cover the ^{musicals of the} thirties, and they were an important part of the musicals of the thirties.

Loos: Well, Jeanette was a fabulous creature, you know. She was the one who inspired the gag man on our lot to use the term "Iron Butterfly. " That's what he called her. And she was a woman of great strength and ambition, and Nelson (Eddy) was a darling. He never spoke up or made any demands at all, so Jeanette just carried the picture through on her own terms.

Q: I see. Was "I Married an Angel " their last picture together ?

Loos: It might have been. It was a big failure. It was a big disappointment.

Q: Is that because, I can think of all kinds of reasons -- and did it on the stage, I recall.

Loos: Yes.

Q: Were Rodgers and Hart around at all with you during the making of that ?

Loos:Yes, they were. I don't think they did anything much. The score was complete so there was nothing for them to do.

Q: Let's return just a bit back to "San Francisco, " which is a fine movie classic now. Where did that story originate and so forth ? Of course you had the Earthquake. You had to work around it.

Loos: Yes. It originated in the love I have always had for San Francisco, where I was a child, and the gag man on the lot came from San Francisco, and he had been a messenger boy on the Barbary Coast, and we were great pals, and we got to talking about the old days in San Francisco, and thought it would make a good movie, and the two of us wrote it together. So --

Q: Who was that gag man ?

Loos: His name was Bob Hopkins. Everybody called him Hoppie, and he was one of the great colorful characters of Hollywood. EVerybody knew him, and I think Hoppie invented dozens of words that are in our vernacular now.

Woman: Could I ask a question here ? When you talk about the gag man, what does that mean ? Does he write gags ? or he's the funny man on the lot ?

Loos: No. Hoppie was engaged to wander about where needed, and go on the set when a thing was getting soggy, and gag it up . And that was Hoppie. And he saved many a picture, because the director could easily see where a scene was bogging down, and there would be a call go out for Hoppie, and he would go down to the set, and he would say, "Well, have them say this. "

Q: In "San Francisco, " in a screenplay like that, would you complete the screenplay before shooting began, I assume, and if so what kinds of changes would go on during the making of that particular film ?

Loos: When you wrote for Thalberg, as we did, although the picture was

shot after he died, but we had written it for Thalberg, you wrote a complete script. Everything was there. An idiot could have taken one of Thalberg's scripts and gone out and shot it, because everything, motivation, characterization, dialogue, everything -- and the hardest thing Thalberg had to do was to get those different directors to keep the characterization. And stupid they were. There were no great directors in those days.

Woman:

Q: Were other directors like Thalberg in their demands on a script writer in that way ?

Loos: I don't think anyone was as thorough as Thalberg was.

Q: Did you report essentially to him ?

Loos: Yes. We worked under his supervision.

Q: As a writer, did he affect writing at all ? Was he , did he work like a good editor at Viking or something ?

Loos: He worked like a good editor. He never intruded, but he would guide and direct you, and to my way of thinking, he was one of the real geniuses of the whole industry.

Q: Was Mayer around at that time ?

Loos: Yes. Mayer was.

Q: OK, Judy , have we forgotten anything ?

Judy: It's interesting that everybody who talks about Thalberg talks about him in the same way. He was really a giant, and there aren't many books out about him.

Loos: There is one book. But you see, he never allowed -- he never put his name on a picture. He never allowed any publicity to go out about him at all. And it's terrible to say this, that a man could be that great, and because he didn't have a public relations man, nobody knew him, . And nobody knows him today.

Q: He wanted it that way, I suppose.

Loos: He wanted it that way. Yes.

Judy: A rare bird.

Loos: He was indeed.

Judy: Really.

Q: Before we get off of this, you wrote the screenplay for "Pirate, " I see, is that correct ?

Loos: Yes, I did. But I did it, I believe, from New York, and I didn't do a very complete job. I was living here, working here, had some kind of a show on, didn't want to do it and got trapped into it.

Q: I see. Did you have to go to the Coast to work ?

Loos: I went to the Coast, but I didn't stay very long. I didn't really see it through.

Q: With Minelli and Garland and and so forth. You didn't get to work on the set much at all ?

Loos: Not much, no. I was back and forth during the shooting.

Q: Did you have anything to do with Cole Porter in relation to that screenplay ?

Loos: Of course, he (crosstalk)
wrote the music --

Q: He

Loos: -- no, no --

Q: So his music was inserted into the script.

Loos: Yes.

Q: Of course it was the Lunts' play originally, wasn't it /?

Loos: Yes.

Q: OK. Any other musical that I've overlooked ?

Loos: Well, "Gentlemen. "

Q: Yes. Let's get to "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes. " Incidentally, did you see the amusing comment of Vincent Canby's two weekends ago in regard to that ?

Loos: Yes. I was furious. I'll tell you why I was furious. I think that is an excellent transcription of Mann's book, and I came right out of the theatre and walked across the street and bought the paperback and came up here and read it.

Q: I guess Conte had done the job.

Loos: They did a beautiful job, I think. And when Canby said that it was a bad job of filming, I disagreed.

Q: Oh, no , he was, I was referring to his remark about you

in his review.

Loos: Yes. Well, I overlooked that. I didn't think about that. I just thought about the criticism of the movie.

Q: OK. Tell me, there have been two screen versions or is it three ?

Woman: Two, I think --

Q: -- of "Gentlemen, " and June Walker did it on the stage and we don't remember who did the first version on the screen. It would be difficult, but perhaps you can recall Monroe's performance, versus maybe the first Lorelei. You've seen many Loreleis ?

Loos: Yes, I have. I wish I could think of that girl's name because she is now alive and around and doesn't look much different . Her name is Mrs. Zuckermann now. She married right after the film. She married a millionaire and lived out Lorelei's life, off stage. And she's still here, and her son I believe is a motion picture director or screenwriter. I'll think of it before we get through.

Q: Is it easy to recall, is there a comparison between that lady's performance and Marilyn Monroe's or were they pretty much the same ?

Loos: As a matter of fact, that was a silent performance, you see, and it's awfully hard to compare a silent performance with a --

Q: All right, let's talk about ,in the Monroe version, did you do the screenplay or did somebody else do the screenplay ?

Loos: No, Charles Ledderer did it, and I think he did the most marvelous job, because it has very little to do with the book, but he kept the whole spirit of the book, and it's one of, I think, one of the best transcriptions I've ever seen.

Q: He's done a lot of good things. Was he Marian Davies' son ?

Loos: Her nephew. He's her nephew and heir. She left him almost everything

Q: Really.

Woman: What did you think of Marilyn Monroe's performance ?

Loos: Oh, I thought she was excellent.

Q: Were you on the set at all ? Did you go out for the filming of that particular version ? Who directed that ?

Woman:

Loos: Howard Hawks directed that. He directed the film version of "Gentlemen. "

Loos: Oh yes, the musical. Yes, the musical. Oh, the silent one was Mel, what was his name ? Very good director, one of the big ones.

....

Q: We're talking about , Monroe and, were you on the set at all our out there for any of that filming or do you recall ?

Loos: No. I just sold the script. I just sold the property and ran.

Q: Of course prior to the film there was the Carol Channing musical.

Loos: Yes.

Q: OK, I don't have anything else on "Gentlemen Prefer, " do you ?

Woman: No, except, did you know Marilyn Monroe ?

Loos; I knew her very vaguely, because I had left Hollywood when she came up, and then I never went back, and the only times I ever saw her

was walking up and down 57th St.

Q: OK, well, from one lovely blonde to another, let's get into ask you a few questions about Jean Harlow, whom you did quite a number of things with.

Loos: Yes. I did the first comedy that Jean ever appeared in, and I think it was due to Thalberg alone that she became a great star, because she was playing the femme fatale in very second rate films, and when he decided to put her into "The Red Headed Woman, " which was a comedy, she had never done anything like that before, and there was a big question of whether she could get away with it or not, and she certainly proved that she could, and it made her a star, but instantly, and she never faltered from that time on. But she had her whole career under the influence of Thalberg, and he protected those stars. He never let them do one thing that wasn't right for them. So her whole career was there as a Thalberg star.

Q: After "The Red Headed Woman, " where I guess she was put in by Thalberg, did Thalberg then in turn say, "She can play these things, get us more properties, " or what happened there ?

Loos: Yes, then Thalberg immediately set about having things tailored for her, and --

Q: You subsequently wrote for her "Riff Raff" I see.

Loos: Yes.

Q: "Saratoga, " which of course was her last picture.

Loos: Yes.

Q: And

Woman: -- you didn't do the screenplay for "Dinner at Eight " ?

Loos:No.

Woman: Because that was a big comedy role that she did.

Loos: Yes.Yes. It was wonderful. But she was good in everything.

Q: I guess that most of "Saratoga" had been completed, had it not, before

Loos: It was. She had to be substituted in the last scene.

Q: The train scene.

Loos: Yes. Anyway, we got a blonde, turned her back to the camera, and finished the film.

Side 2

Loos: I got a letter this morning from a friend in Rome. Well, the things that are happening there are exactly the same as , if not worse, as what's happening here. New York is bigger than any other place, so it's got more of everything, which means more bad things ! But i's got more good things,more nice people than anywhere else.

Woman: Absolutely --

Q: And youknow, you can go anywhere you want in the world and there are going to be problems. You can't avoid it.

Loos: Not inthese days, you can't. You can't escape.

Q: And , as you suggest, there are more good things here , and we'll not think about it, we just love New York and so on, I'll tell you, we're staying, I don't care who's leaving. Are we back on ?

Woman: Yes, we are.

Q: Now, let's get onto, we might ask a few things about , you worked with Joan Crawford ?

Loos; Yes.

Q: In "Susan and God, " I think ?

Loos: Yes. Then of course, I turned into a film doctor, through the years that I was there. Working with Mr. Thalberg, I got to know so well what his requirements were, and so there was a long stretch before I left when I was working on almost every script, because I would be handed the script to put laughs into it. And so there were hardly any of those scripts that I didn't have my fingers in the pie .

Q: Some of them without credit, I guess.

Loos: Oh yes, many without credit.

Q: Crawford in "Susan and God, " I guess that was a fairly successful picture, wasn't it ?

Loos: Oh very, yes. It was a big success.

Q: It's interesting -- well, of course, you did it beautifully -- but when you think of contrasting her to Gertie Lawrence -- on the stage, wasn't it ?

Loos: Yes, it was.

Q: "Susan and God " was --

Loos: -- was Rachel Crothers .

Q: Yes, that's right.

Loos: Then I did a very successful, the only soap opera I ever wrote, for Greer Garson called "Blossoms in the Dust. " I got an award for that. And there wasn't a laugh in it.

Q: That was a darned good picture. That was the first picture that Garson had with Pidgeon, wasn't it /

Loos: Yes.Yes.

Q: How did you happen to do that^t screenplay? Because that's really not your , what you're mostly well known for . Well, maybe you are.

Loos: No, no. I've never done anything but comedy, and how they happened to come to me, I don't know. I think they'd had several scripts that didn't turn out, and so they said, "Well, "-- at that time I was practically a film doctor, so they handed it to me. And it just happened to turn out all right.

Q: Yes, I remember it well.

Woman: Talking about being a film doctor, you mentioned something to me on the phone about "The Women " ?

Loos: Oh, that was a very funny situation, because when Claire Boothe 's script went to the censor department, they cut out all the laughs. You see, in those days, there could be no laughs about religion or anything of that type, and it came back just the day before we were going to start shooting, with all the laughs cut out of it, and so Thalberg^t sent for me in a panic, and he said, "We've got this big cast, we can't postpone, we can't delay a day " because they had about ten female stars lined up, and he said, "I don't see anything to do but for you to

sit beside George Cukor on the set, and extemporize these things as they come up, one after the other, and put the laughs in, but so they can get by the censors. "

So the whole picture was shot that way. I reported on the set every morning, sat through the rehearsals of the scenes, put in what laughs I could, and the script was shot in that way. It was practically extemporaneous.

Q: You were the "Hoppie " on the set.

Loos: I was the "Hoppie, " yes.

Q: Cukor was quite a --

Loos: Cukor was a wonderful man, and I don't think he was ever appreciated at the studio, because he had taste that, aside from Thalberg, nobody understood, and after Thalberg died, I think Cukor was more or less thrown to the wolves.

Q: Yes. Since you were on the set with "The Women, " can you recall off hand any interesting scenes between the ladies and so forth ?

Loos: I don't --

Q: -- had quite a star cast there.

Loos: Yes. I don't think I can, because I was too busy tending to my knitting. I didn't know what was going on.

Q: I think the ladies got on fairly well, didn't they ?

Loos: OH yes, Oh yes, there was very little trouble. And it was

And it was Rita Hayworth's first picture, you know.

Woman: What was she doing ? gee, I don't remember --

Loos: -- yes, and it was, George is responsible for more great casting. I think he is responsible for Rita Hayworth's whole career, because the only reason she was chosen was that there was a scene where she was supposed to dance, a ballroom dance type of thing, in a private house, nothing important, but he insisted on getting Rita Hayworth because she was a dancer, and that's the only reason they let him have her, because she was an unknown, she wasn't very pretty, she was too fat, but he trained her down, he got her into shape, and that was her beginning.

Q: She was in "Casino . "

Loos: "Casino," yes.

Q: Fascinating.

Woman: She didn't say anything about that the other night. Did you see her ?

Loos: I didn't see that show.

Woman: Not too good.

Q: Terrible. Well, did you have anything, working on "The Women, " was Claire Boothe Luce around ? She wasn't Mrs. Luce then, was she ? No. I guess it was Claire Boothe then.

Loos: I think she was Claire Boothe then. I remember, she was around a little while, but I don't believe she was there very long.

Q: All right. Now, do you have a question ?

Woman: Not about "The Women " , no.

Q: All right. Now, I wanted to ask you a couple of things about Garbo. Was Garbo a close or good acquaintance of yours when you worked on those thirties -- ?

Loos: I think she was as close to me as she was to anybody, except for ~~me~~ who was her great friend, and you could no more get close to Garbo than you could get close to a wild deer. You know. There just was no communication. And she was like an animal, that if you reach out your hand, it will go away, but if you pay it no attention at all, the first thing you know it's coming around and getting friendly. And that's , she's more like a wild doe than anything I can think of, anything I can say, and she has an enormous sense of fun, and no sense of humor at all, but she will laugh like a, well, like a maniac at somebody stubbing his toe or something like that, but as far as humor is concerned, there's nothing, and she is so fey,^{that's} ~~that~~ the only word I know that can describe her, and one day she sent for Adlous Huxley, who was there on the lot for a while, and said she had an idea for a film that nobody but he could write, so Aldous was curious, and flattered and everything else, and they made a date, and she told him what this idea was. She said, "I want to play St. Francis of Assissis. "

So it took Aldous a little while to adjust to that, and he stalled a little, and he said, "But you know, there will be a makeup problem because, " he said, "St. Francis is pretty well known , his look is pretty well known, and he had a little Van Dyke beard. "

And she said, "But that's all right, the makeup department can do that. " She was perfectly sincere about wanting to play

St. Francis !

And the ideas she had for pictures were absolutely and utterly fantastic. Then when she played a part, she played it with pure genius.

Q: Did you ever do anything on any of her scripts at all ?

Loos: No, no. Those were out of my category .

Woman: How did you happen to know her ? Just because you were there ?

Loos: Because I was there, and because I was a great friend of _____, and I lived on the beach at Santa Monica and she loved to walk on the beach, and she would often come to my house and she 'd ring the doorbell and say, "Is anybody in there ?"

If there was anybody around at all, she wouldn't come in. But if I happened to be alone, she'd come in and we'd walk on the beach, and she knew Huxley very well. I wrote an article about it. They, Aldous and Krishnamurti and Garbo, and Paulette Goddard and I spent -- it might have some material in it, if you want that. It was published by Harper and Rowe. And it was also, the article itself was published. It's a very good picture of the Hollywood of those days, because Christopher Isherwood was -- we all went on a picnic with Garbo, and it's a very funny story because Garbo told us about a wonderful spring. She said, "It's a wonderful place where you can go up and bathe in the waters and they come right out of the ground. "

So she got the whole troupe of us up to this place, and when we arrived at it, the spring was an old tin bath tub with a faucet hanging over it, dripping, and in the bath tub was a tramp

taking a bath ! And that was Garbo's great natural spring.

Q: Was she joking ?

Loos: No. Not at all. As I say, she's fey. And it isn't fakery. It isn't stupidity. It's just being fey.

Q: Do you ever see Garbo any more ?

Loos: Once in a while I see her, and she's a great friend of Mrs. Sherwood, Robert Sherwood's widow, and she will often come to Maddow's apartment and ring the bell and say, "Is anybody in there ?" If they aren't, she'll come in.

Not long ago, she was roaring with laughter, and this is amazing, because it's almost a sense of humor . She had come down the street to Maddow's apartment house, wearing slacks and a big floppy hat, and several little boys were playing on the sidewalk and one of them spoke up and said, "You'd better look out, lady, or you'll get drafted !"

And Garbo saw the fun of it and was laughing when she came in. Of course, the boys had no idea who it was. Had never heard of her.

Woman:

Q I'd like to ask something about , very personal -- we are hoping perhaps in the series to do a volume on Garbo.

Loos: Oh yes.

Woman : Do you think she would talk about films ?

Loos: No. No. And if she would talk, it would be gobbledegook. It just wouldn't (crosstalk) -- but you know, there was a young man wrote a very good book on Garbo.

Q: (crosstalk)

Loos: Yes, have you read it ?

Q: Oh yes, I have indeed.

Loos: And it's a funny thing, I'm responsible for that book. He came to see me once. He was working on a profile of Fleur Coles^w. And in talking about Fleur we got on the subject of Garbo, and we never got off the subject of Gabo^y, and the next day he called me up and said, "I'm dropping Fleur Coles^w for Garbo, " and he went to Sweden, he went to Hollywood, he really tracked her down, as well as anybody ever can, I think.

Q: But she never personally talked to him, I gather.

Loos: I don't know. (crosstalk) If anybody -- the people she sees are the Rothschilds. I think she's off with them now on a yacht. But the people she sees are perfectly safe. They'll never write anything.

Q: Right. I don't know if you can answer this, but when she sees them, I wonder if they talk about the old days at all ? Does she ? Does she like to be reminded or talk about her old films ?

Loos: I don't think so. It's just persiflage. Just light chatter.

Q: Yes. Fascinating.

Woman: That's interesting, because I thought perhaps if we wanted to photograph her she might object, but maybe now after so many years, she might be willing to talk about it.

Loos: When I had a play I wrote of Colette's, "Cheri, " she went to

see it, and she called me up, and that's the first time she'd ever called me. She doesn't call anybody .She called me up and she said, "You've ruined my day. I won't be able to sleep. I had never read that story of Colette's, and now I know what it's about and I'm devastated. "

Q: Did she imply that she would have loved to have played -- ?

Loos: No, no, she doesn't want to play anything. She really doesn't want to.

QWoman: There are all these rumors that she might, you know, play --

Loos: -- it's wishful thinking. Somebody will get a property that she would be great in. I think, if she ever did anything for anybody, it would be for George Cukor. But George knows too much to ask her.

Q: Yes. Oh, another property of yours, and a marvelous one too, which got converted to a movie classic is "Gigi. "

Loos: Yes.

Q: Of course, that was _____ who did the music --

Loos: -- yes, he did the musical, yes.

Q: And Audrey (Hepburn) was in the play .

Loos: Yes, Audrey was in the play . It broke Audrey's heart that they didn't put her in it (the movie.) They took Leslie Caron, and why, I don't know, because Audrey was so right for it.

Q: Had Audrey met _____ or ?

Loos: Oh yes, she had already done "Roman Holiday " which was a great success, and I just don't know why it was that they chose Leslie Caron. She was all right, I suppose. I never saw the film.

Q: Oh, really ? That's interesting. It's an interesting picture. It's the picture I remember in which, as a musical, it has some lovely songs in it.

Loos: Yes.

Q: Every one with the exception of one song, "Gigi" had the curious characteristic of sitting down. They were in a chair.

Loos: Really ?

Q: Yes, everybody sits in a chair or a park bench, like " Thank Heaven for Little Girls. " You can go all through the thing, people are sitting down singing.

Woman: You know, maybe they didn't have Audrey Hepburn play those scenes -- I think maybe it was a little before the time they started hiring actors who couldn't sing in roles of singers.

Like "My Fair Lady, " Rex Harrison, Doolittle --

Q: -- caron doesn't have that (crosstalk)

Loos: -- no, she doesn't have a voice.

Q: And they were certainly familiar with dubbing voices in, because even Rita Hayworth had dubbed voices, long before *Marnie* Nixon or whoever it was, used to do all her singing.

I think this completes the questions, doesn't it Judy ?

Loos: You know who dubbed the Italian version of Garbo's films ?

Q: No.

Loos: Mrs. Lodge, John Lodge's wife, Francesca.

Q: I'll be darned. Fascinating.

Loos: Yes.

Q: She had some acting background, I believe, didn't she ?

Loos: Yes, she did. And John Lodge did too. He was a leading man before he went into politics.

Q: Right. Well, there was a wonderful Harvard reunion about 15 years ago . It was the 25th reunion of some class, and there were three great ladies of sorts, three great wives rather, and they all showed up with their husbands. Mrs. Lodge of course had made a name for herself. They must have all been in the acting profession, because Gertrude Lawrence was another, and then there was a third lady. It was quite a reunion.

Woman: We had an interesting story told to us by James Wong Howe about Garbo, the cameraman you know, about Garbo. This is the only one that I know of where she was considered for a movie, this was after she retired, something called the "Duchess of _____" (crosstalk) Were you familiar with that, why she wasn't ?

Loos: No. I don't -- you know, it 's a strange thing. Garbo's pictures only made money in Europe. She was not a good bet from the studio's point of view, and she was too good for the public at that

time, the movie public, to dig her.

Q: That's interesting.

Judy : Perhaps that's why they tried to change her image in "Two Faced Woman" so that --

Q: -- and that was her last picture and she just did no more. Clark Gable, one last -- you certainly worked with him ?

Loos: Oh yes.

Q: Can you tell us any little bits about him, your experiences with him ?

Loos: Well, Clark was a darling. He was less self-conscious than anyone I ever knew. I ran into him in the alley one day, and he was at a water faucet getting a drink, and he straightened up, pulled out his teeth and/said ^{looked at me and} to me, "Look, American's Sweetheart!"

Q: That's grand.

Judy : Were there other stories you wrote for him, besides the one he did with Harlow, "San Francisco " ?

Loos: "San Francisco. "

Q: When you wrote "San Francisco, " did you have or were you given, you obviously knew the stars and did you know the priest was going to be Tracy, did you have any idea ?

Loos: I can't remember whether we knew that or not.

(crosstalk) Yes, we wrote it with Clark in mind, and we wrote it about a real life character named Wilson Meisner, that we had both

known from San Francisco.

Judy: It's interesting, the San Francisco writers, you could almost do a book on them, in the Adella Rogers St. John tape she talks about San Francisco being the great starting point for writers, and she mentions Francis Marian came from San Francisco.

Loos: Yes, and Gertrude Atherton.

Judy: Didn't Mary McCarthy ?

Loos: I don't know.

Judy: I thought she did, it seems to be a --

Q: All right, I --

Loos: -- Jack London, for heaven's sake.

Q: Of course. OK , have we got anything else ?

Judy: I don't think so. I think we have really quite a lot.

Q: Wonderful stuff. I guess we can turn off the machinery at this point.

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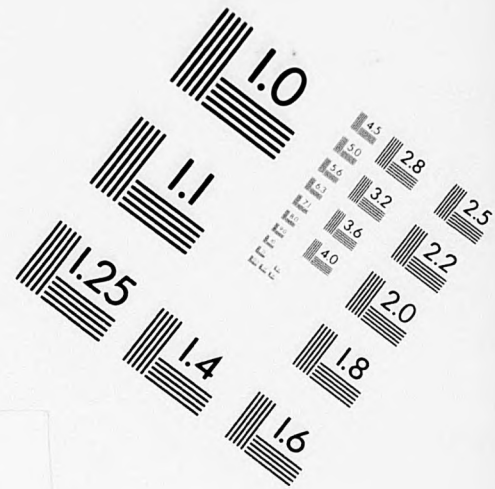
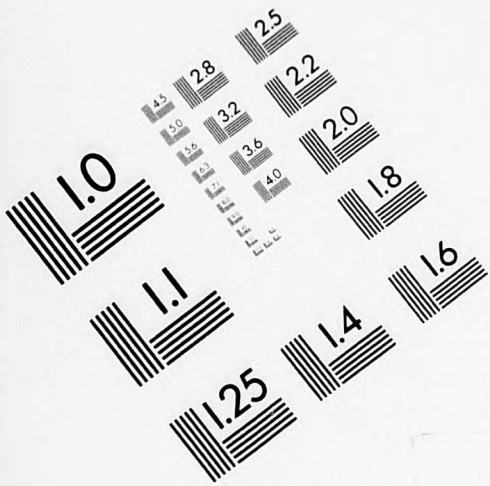
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