

FEBRUARY 20, 2019

White Wings - Filmed February 2 through 23, 1923. Retakes filmed February 27, 1923. Released May 13, 1923.

A Stan Laurel comedy produced by Hal Roach. Notice Stan's character is a completely different personality than the one he created with Oliver Hardy.

Katherine Grant - At the age of eighteen she won the Miss Los Angeles beauty contest and competed in the Miss America pageant. She made her film debut in the Our Gang comedy short *Saturday Morning* and was offered a contract with Hal Roach. In 1923 she appeared in more than a dozen films including *A Man About Town* and *Frozen Hearts* both with Stan Laurel. By 1925, she had become one of Hal Roach's favorite comedy vamps and he signed her to a new five year contract. Katherine worked with Oliver Hardy in *Wild Papa* and with Charley Chase in *The Uneasy Three*. She and Charley also performed in a vaudeville act together.

Marvin Loback - appeared in over 100 films during his career including those with Stan Laurel, Charley Chase, Paul Parrott, Snub Pollard and Harold Lloyd usually playing a heavyweight villain or comic foil. He is mainly remembered for his work with Mack Sennett and Al Christie.

George Rowe - Usually made his "cross-eyed" appearances in comedies with Snub Pollard, Paul Parrott, Charley Chase, Our Gang, Harold Lloyd and Laurel & Hardy. His Hal Roach Studio contract was terminated in 1925, after which he toured the west

coast in Vaudeville for a time. Rowe's film career ended with the advent of talking pictures.

James Finlayson - he worked as a tinsmith before pursuing an acting career. He emigrated to the United States in 1911 at the age of 24 with his brother Robert. He married Emily Cora Gilbert, from Iowa, in 1919 and became a United States citizen in 1942. In October 1919, he signed a contract with the Mack Sennett Comedies Corporation. In 1927, the Hal Roach All-Star Comedy series gave Finlayson equal billing with up-and-coming co-stars Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, comedian Edna Marion. Some studio publicity referred to Finlayson, Hardy and Laurel as a "famous comedy trio".

Duck Soup - Filmed September 20 through October 2, 1926.
Released March 13, 1927.

Between 1927 and 1974, *Duck Soup* was considered a lost film until a 35mm print with French and Dutch titles was discovered in a European archive. The original script written by Stan Laurel reflects the characters of Stan playing the part of James Hives while Oliver is playing the role of Marmaduke Maltravers. While not in their traditional attire, you can see the beginning formation of the characters of which we all became very familiar.

From March 1926 through September 1926 Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy were involved in many films at the Hal Roach Studios while never crossing paths on screen during this period. Stan was mostly working as a writer or director while Oliver was performing in supporting roles.

Originally, the part of Marmaduke Maltravers was to be played by Syd Crossley who had worked with Stan Laurel and others at the Hal Roach Studios.

The idea for this film came from a sketch titled *Home From the Honeymoon* written in 1905 by Stan Laurel's father, Arthur Jefferson. This idea was updated for the 1930 Laurel & Hardy comedy *Another Fine Mess*.

The opening scene with Stan and Ollie on the park bench was recreated at the beginning of their 1932 feature *Pack Up Your Troubles*.

Bob Kortman - was an actor mostly associated with westerns, though he also appeared in a number of Laurel and Hardy comedies such as *Duck Soup*, *Pardon Us*, *The Midnight Patrol* and *Beau Hunks*. He appeared in almost 300 films between 1914 and 1952.

Madeline Hurlock (Lady Tarbotham) - After attending college she moved to New York to be a dancer. In 1919 she made her Broadway debut in *The Rose of China*. Her big break came when Mack Sennett offered her a contract and she became one of his famous bathing beauties cast opposite the likes of Ben Turpin, Harry Langdon and Billy Bevan. Madeline was known for her poise and comedy timing, even under trying circumstances, such as, when pinned underneath a lion in *Circus Today* (1926). She appeared in dozens of comedy shorts where Sennett called her the "wittiest of the bathing beauties". In 1925, she was named one of the WAMPAS baby stars along with Olive Borden and June Marlowe. With her dark hair and exotic looks Madeline quickly

became a popular leading lady. Although she had a lot of success in silent films she decided to retire when sound films began.

William Austin (Lord Tarbotham) - His brother, actor Albert Austin, worked mainly with Charlie Chaplin. William came from a well-to-do English background. He acted for three years on the stage, before breaking into movies. Next he secured a five-year contract with Paramount in 1927, usually typecast as monocled upper-crust Britishers. His most memorable role as Monty Montgomery was in Clara Bow's 1927 feature "It". Laurel & Hardy fans remember him best as the happy-go-lucky Englishman in *County Hospital*. William Austin was also cast as Alfred the Butler in the Columbia Pictures' *Batman* serial in 1943.

James A. Marcus (Colonel Blood) - He appeared in over 100 films between 1915 and 1937. Marcus' most notable films include Raoul Walsh's *Regeneration*, *Oliver Twist* with Jackie Coogan and Lon Chaney and *Sadie Thompson* with Gloria Swanson and Lionel Barrymore.

William Courtwright (Butler) - His acting career began with Shakespearean plays. Before entering the film industry, he appeared in minstrel shows in a world tour that included performing before King Edward VII. Sometimes billed as Billy Courtright, he appeared in 68 films between 1912 and 1930. He worked with D. W. Griffith and in his later career at the Hal Roach Studios, where he appeared in several early Laurel and Hardy comedies. Courtright was still acting at age 80. An item in the October 28, 1928, edition of The Cincinnati Enquirer described him as "the oldest living motion-picture actor on the screen." His best-known role was Oliver Hardy's wealthy Uncle Bernal in *That's My Wife* (1929). His last film, the Our Gang comedy *Teacher's Pet*, was also his first sound film.

Another Fine Mess - Filmed September 22 through October 6, 1930. Added scenes were filmed October 27 and 28, 1930. Final editions shot November 4, 1930. Released November 29, 1930.

Unlike other films in 1930 and 1931 that were adapted for foreign release, *Another Nice Mess* was NOT. This was only filmed in English.

This film was made while Laurel & Hardy were in the middle of shooting their first feature film *Pardon Us*. They would alternate days of shooting this film with *Pardon Us*.

Interiors filmed on Stage 2 at the Hal Roach Studios

Stan's father did not like the filmed version of his sketch. He refers to the character of Lord Leopold Ambrose Plumtree as a "silly ass Englishman". His father would go on to say "I sent him (Stan) a little sketch of my own, which they filmed under the stupid title of *Another Fine Mess*, and I didn't like the American angle they got on it one bit."

Beverly (right) and **Bettymae** (left) **Crane** were paid \$15 each to do this opening scene. While they performed similar opening scenes for Charley Chase, Our Gang and The Boy Friends series, this was their only Laurel & Hardy film.

No such address as 1558 Poinsettia Avenue exists in Beverly Hills.

Thelma Todd calls her husband Leopold in some scenes and Ambrose in others. This was due to two different shooting scripts

that Thelma was using. To correct this problem, she calls her husband Leopold Ambrose later on in this film.

A newer version of the *Duck Soup* bathroom scene with Agnes the maid and Lady Plumrtree was scripted but never filmed.

Eddie Dunn - was best known for his roles in comedy films, supporting many comedians such as Charley Chase (with whom he co-directed several short films), Charlie Chaplin, W. C. Fields and Laurel and Hardy. He appeared in a 1950 episode of the TV series, *The Lone Ranger* entitled "Man Without a Gun". Dunn also appeared as "Detective Grimes" in several of *The Falcon* series of films in the 1940s which starred George Sanders and Tom Conway.

Gertrude Sutton - this was her only film with Laurel & Hardy although she had numerous other uncredited appearances with Charlie Murray, Jackie Cooper, Robert Young, Marie Dressler and Tyrone Power.

The end scene with Laurel & Hardy on a bicycle as an African Gnu is actually performed by Joe Mole and his brother Phil who were in vaudeville doing stunts on bicycles. They began this act as children and continued into 1950's.

Thelma Todd - was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts. She decided early on to become a schoolteacher. After high school she went on to college but at her mother's insistence entered several beauty contests and won the title of "Miss Massachusetts" in 1925. She began appearing in one and two reel shorts, mostly comedy, which showcased her timing and aptitude for physical comedy. She had been making shorts for the Hal Roach Studios when she was signed to Paramount Pictures.

Unlike many silent era stars whose voices didn't fit their screen persona, Thelma's bright, clear voice with a pleasant trace of an aristocratic, but not snobbish, New England accent made the transition to sound films easily. She also proved to be a smart businesswoman with the opening of "Thelma Todd's Sidewalk Cafe," a nightclub/restaurant that catered to show business people. It also attracted some shady underworld types. On December 16, 1935, Thelma was found dead in her car in her garage in Pacific Palisades. At only 29 years old, her death was ruled a suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning. This ruling has remained a controversial decision to this day.

Charles Gerrard - Already a favorite of Stan Laurel, he was the perfect choice for this role in Another Fine Mess. Not too long after finishing work with Laurel & Hardy, Charles was playing the part of Martin, trying to contain Dwight Frye as a sanitarium worker in Dracula from 1931.

REFERENCES:

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Laurel OR Hardy: The Solo Films Of Stan Laurel and Oliver "Babe" Hardy - by Rob Stone

Internet Movie Database

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