

Mother To A Star

Through courtesy of Esquire, Inc., publishers of Coronet magazine, the Mail Tribune publishes today the first installment of "Mother To A Star," Sidney Carroll's personality sketch of Lela Rogers, mother of the glamorous film star, Ginger Rogers. Additional chapters of the sketch, published first in the July issue of Coronet, will appear Monday and Tuesday.

The article is of particular interest to Mail Tribune readers as the Rogers-Rogue River ranch is located only a few miles from Medford.

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919 N. Michigan Ave.,

Chicago, Ill.

(Coronet, July 1944)

Ginger Rogers is a singer, a dancer, a dramatic actress, and the winner of an Academy Award. She has been a movie star for 10 years, which is about three times as long as the average movie star's tenure of office. She is, moreover, the only actress in Hollywood who can play a 10-year-old girl and get away with it. She has made a great deal of money and will make a great deal more for a long time to come. She even owns a home in the Hollywood Hills, complete with a soda fountain, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, movie style.

But do not assume that such virtues always bring their own rewards and that the only thing responsible for Ginger's success is her talent. She did not rise to her present eminence simply because she was endowed with such abundant natural gifts. She got there because she did what her mother told her to do.

The world at large is well aware of the chronological facts in the life story of Ginger Rogers—how she entered a Charleston contest and won it, and from that humble beginning how she advanced on Broadway and Hollywood. The lesser known side of the story is the fact that Ginger Rogers has been chaparroned every inch of the way by a combination manager, coach, writer, cook and dressmaker, who also happens to be her mother. Ginger's mother's name is Lela, and Hollywood knows it well. Hollywood also knows that Ginger and Lela are inseparable and that you can not mention the daughter without ringing in the mother in the next breath. Hollywood knows that immediately after the daughter won the Academy Award for her performance in Kitty Foyle, the wise men of M-G-M came to the mother and laid 50 thousand dollars in her lap. "We want to make the life story of you and Ginger," they told her. The gentlemen of M-G-M were well aware of the fact that the life story of Rogers fills is synonymous with the Life and Times of Rogers mere. Lela Rogers refused that offer from M-G-M. She didn't think it would be good for Ginger.

Lela Rogers is the paragon of all stage mothers of song and story because she possesses to an ideal degree all the things the mother of an actress should have. These qualities are (1) unbounded faith in the daughter (2) a shrewd business head (3) iron nerves (4) colossal assurance (5) indestructible intestinal fortitude. But she does not look like the lay conception of the stage mother, who is commonly supposed to resemble a bloomer girl from the Amazon country. Lela Rogers, at 54, looks like her daughter's elder sister. She is small, blonde, chic. If you saw the daughter in The Major and the Minor you also saw the mother, for the blonde lady who played the mother in that film was Ginger's real mother. Although Lela Rogers is somewhere on the sidelines of every picture Ginger makes, The Major and the Minor was the only one in which she made a personal appearance. Her policy, by and large, has been to stick to the sidelines. She does not blush there completely unseen, for Lela Rogers is no shrinking violet, but she has devoted the last 20 years of her life to aiming the spotlight squarely at Ginger. She is the perfect impresario.

When Ginger, at the age of 14, decided that she wanted to go on the stage, her mother was writing a column for a Fort Worth paper, running a music publishing house on the side and managing a home. She dropped all three when Ginger got foot-light fever and took to the open road with her one remaining asset—a 14-year-old Charleston champ who was going to earn one hundred dollars a week. The saga of what happened to them from that point on was precisely what M-G-M was willing to pay 50 thousand dollars (as a down payment to put on celluloid.



Lela Rogers

In the beginning, Ginger simply danced. It was Lela who suddenly decided that Ginger could also sing. Ginger herself was flabbergasted by the idea, but Mama knew best. Mama took some of the popular songs of the day and re-wrote them to suit Ginger. She taught Ginger to sing in a piping recitative fashion that wasn't singing at all, but when she finished her number her audiences were hypnotized into thinking that Ginger was one hell of a vocalist.

Through all the vaudeville days, Lela would sit in the audience at every performance, making dozens and dozens of notes. After each performance she would lay the law down to the orchestra leader, to the master of ceremonies, then she would confer with Ginger. After that, Lela would write special dialogue, and special gags, and she would teach Ginger the small gestures that are known in the trade as "business." Each week, for each new show, Ginger would have a new dress. Store-bought dresses weren't good enough for Ginger. Mama made them herself.

There were lean days for them during the early vaudeville era, but Ginger never knew about them. Lela always insisted that they stay at the best hotels and eat the best steaks, even when there were no vaudeville jobs. When their funds were low, Lela had a reserve to draw upon, for there was a thousand dollars which she had saved for Ginger's college education which she drew from, rather wistfully, whenever times were bad.

(Continued Monday)

CONGRESS SPEEDS WAR SURPLUS ACT

Washington, Aug. 19—(U.P.)—After four days of hot debate, the house was geared tonight for passage not later than Tuesday of legislation settling up machinery to govern disposal of surplus properties.

Meanwhile, the senate military affairs committee rushed efforts to get a bill on the same subject ready for floor action. The senate bill is expected to have committee approval by the middle of next week, but lack of agreement by both houses on all details of the legislation may cause delay in final congressional action for at least another week.

"Milk Run" Planes Plaster Iwo Jima

Pearl Harbor, Aug. 19—(U.P.)—Seventh air force liberators, apparently beginning "milk run" bombings of the Bonin and Volcano Islands, less than 700 miles from Tokyo, blasted buildings and installations at Iwo Jima in the volcano Wednesday. It was announced today.

The Liberators took off for the 1200-mile round trip from bases in the Marianas. The same day fighters attacked Rota and Pagan islands, bombing and strafing gun positions and the air strip.

Disguised citizens of Massachusetts conducted the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

TOO LATE TO CLASSIFY

WANTED—Washing machine, any standard make in good condition. Phone 3480.

WANTED—3 or 6-room house on west side, close in, reasonable. Ph. 6523.

CABIN for rent, \$6 per week. 22 Rose avenue.

FOR SALE—4 cheap used trucks. Medford Auto Wrecking, 1618 N. Riverside.

FOR RENT—Mod. small apt. and sleeping room. Central hot water. Beautifully furnished. Well located for teachers. 1222 W. Main.

FOR SALE—Regulation army officer's shirt, size 15; gabardine trousers, size 31-32, cap size 7 1/4, one Hopi violin, new case, \$18; two brand new vanity sets. Phone 4173.

LOGGING truck insurance now available. See Carl Y. Tengwald Insurance Agency, Holly Theater Bldg.

FOR SALE—One acre Franquette walnut (crop pays good interest on investment), with 4-room house, bath, city water, near school, 4 miles from Medford on paved highway. \$3500. Phone 5691.

WIRE bicycle wheels, pre-war quality. Sims Bros.

FOR SALE—95 young turkeys, 50 head yearling ewes. Pat Maloney, Murphy, Ore. 6 miles on Missouri Flat road.

WANTED—A portable typewriter in condition and a wardrobe trunk. Ph. 3701 after 7 p. m.

FOR RENT—2-room and bath basement apartment. Private entrance. Close in. Phone 4068.

BICYCLE saddlebags. Three sizes. Sims Bros.

FOR SALE—Knox Out Fly Spray—actually kills will repel from one milking to next.

Earwormicide—treat your late roosting ears and be free from worms.

Earwig Bait—clean up these pests by a sure-fire method.

Government Wheat—bring your sacks.

Turkey Grower—a real buy, \$3.60 per cwt.

F. E. SAMSON COMPANY

FOR SALE—By owner, 4 1/2 acres, irrigated, modern 2-bedroom house, poultry house, 350 pullets, outbuildings, pressure system, family room, 2 cars, 25-20-35, 35 rifle \$25. McFadden, Lorier Lane.

FOR SALE—Oval quilting hoop, with stand. 9 E. Jackson.

FOR SALE—3 deer rifles and shells. 30-30, 35, 25-20 \$35, 35 rifle \$25. McFadden, Lorier Lane.

SCREEN DOORS—A good selection. Minton Building Supplies, Jacksonville Highway. Phone 2434.

INSULATION—Full-thickness Rockwool Batts. Call at Minton Building Supply. Phone 2434.

BARGAINS—Slightly used clothing for whole family. 318 E. Main.

FOR SALE—5-room house, large porch, garage, floor furnace, combination wood and gas range, electric refrigerator, electric washing machine. Price \$3,900, terms. Call Sunday. Owner, 20 Tripp.

MOVING—Padded van service for your convenience. Ph. 3694, City Transfer & Storage, 38 So. Fir St.

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