



Interview with Dorothy Young

Under the Auspices of the
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Flora T. Higgins, Project Coordinator

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Name of Interviewer: Ms. Rhoda Newman
Premises of Interviewer: Ms. Young's home, Ocean Grove, NJ
Birth date of Subject: May 3, 1909

Ms. Newman: Now you've had an extraordinary life, Ms. Young. Could you tell us something about it and how long you have been in Ocean Grove?

Ms. Young: Well, I came to Ocean Grove the first time when I was three years old. My father was a Methodist minister, in fact, he was a fifth generation Methodist minister; and we would come here for the holidays. My earliest memory of Ocean Grove was my father lifting me up at Beersheba to have a drink of water.

Ms. Newman: That's Beersheba fountain.

Ms. Young: Yes. I had a brother and two sisters: Sherman, Roberta, and Helen. We went over to a shoe store where now the Shell Beauty Salon is, and my father was getting shoes for all of us. My sisters got the proverbial Oxfords. They were Oxfords with stockings. But, I always was a little different than the family. I often thought when I was growing up, I might have been exchanged at the hospital because I was completely different in my thoughts than my sisters. I didn't want to wear Oxfords, or stockings, I wanted to wear Little Mary Janes, the socks. So, my father always complied with my wishes. I was always Daddy's little girl until the very end of his life. I remember my mother and father were going to the afternoon concert at the Convention Auditorium, and we were all dressed for



Ms. Dorothy Young
in her home in
Ocean Grove, 1999

dinner. My older sister, Roberta, said, "Oh, we want to stay and be down at the ocean while you go to the concert." She promised my mother that, of course, that we wouldn't get wet. As you can imagine, by the time my mother and father returned, we were soaking wet. The waves would come up higher and higher. But my parents were never one to punish us for anything like that.

Ms. Newman: Where did you live during the winters?

Ms. Young: Where my father was pastor, where ever he was. And when I was about one or two, my father acquired the Elim Cottage at 5 Main Avenue from the Association, and it was his dream to be able to have ministers and missionaries come there free for two weeks every summer. And until it was paid, he used to spend most of his retirement paying for the people who couldn't afford to pay. It was a big lovely sprawling house. Now, there are six cottages where the Elim used to be. The name Elim came from the Old Testament. If you recall, when Moses led the people out of bondage of Egypt, they took so many over fifty years and more. And one time they were destitute on the desert. No food no water, and the people were getting really very upset with Moses. And they saw this beautiful oasis in the middle of the desert with the palm trees and a spring. And, it was called The Elim, which means Haven. It was a very beautiful thought of my father, a dream of his. And later in life, I had written a book, and I was going to donate all the proceeds to The Elim, but unfortunately my father died before that materialized. The whole family would come there. My sister was married. Both of them were married. I was married. So, the whole family would spend their summers there, and it was a very, very happy time and lovely memories for me. We continued to stay at The Elim until my father died.

Ms. Newman: When did he die?

Ms. Young: He was seventy-eight when he died. He was the first one in the family to die. Many years ago, when I was a child, I used to love to go to my Auntie Norton's house, where my father had a pastorate. And, some how or other, we got out of touch with her through the years. And, one day, my father came to The Elim and said, "Guess who is down on 5 Main Avenue?" I said I didn't know. And he said, "Your Auntie Norton." So, I came up here right away and that started a wonderful, wonderful friendship. She reminisced about many things I had forgotten; sitting on her knee when I would visit, and her spaniel had to be on the other knee. And, she was the only one that I would ever visit in my childhood. And, one fall I called her. Her family hadn't helped her in praying to get close to God, and I filled in that gap for her. The last time I saw her was when she was at the Grove. But, I had promised to go up to visit her at her home in Middletown where I used to visit as a child. But somehow or other, before I went to Florida with my mother, I wasn't able to go. But as soon as I came back, I called her. A nurse, or housekeeper with her. And she said, "I'm sorry, your aunt won't be able to come to the phone. She is very, very ill." And I said, "Would you please tell her I called, and I will call again." And I hung up. Then something inner

prompted me to call back. And the nurse said, "I am so thankful you called back, because she was heart broken not to be able to talk to you. Wait a minute and I will carry her to the phone." So, we had a lovely, lovely chat. Before I hung up, I prayed with her. And I said, "I will be out the first thing in the morning to see you." I went out and when I knocked on the door, Albert, her oldest son, answered and he had a dark suit on. And I said, "I'm Dorothy Young." I hadn't seen him since I was a child. I said, "I'm Dorothy Young, and I came to see your mother." And he said, "She died last night." And I said, "I talked to her yesterday and promised to come out." And he said, "I don't see how you could have because she was so very, very ill." So, later he got in touch with me and he said, "The house had so many, many happy memories. We have had so many weddings here and birthdays all through the years. It is necessary for us to sell the house because I have two daughters who are pregnant, and we will have to help with some money. So," he said, "I know my mother would hate to have this get out of the family, but I know if we have to sell it, my mother would love you to have it more than anyone." So, I gave them a check.

Ms. Newman: Were you married at the time?

Ms. Young: Yes, I was married. And my husband did not approve of my getting the house because he was used to very large spacious homes. He said, "You know I can't stand small houses. You know I can't stand low ceilings." And, it was a shame. Albert sent back \$500.00 because he said we didn't have an agent. So, since my husband didn't want it, I had a little on the side. He told his lawyer about it. And he said, "Dorothy has never asked you for anything. That's the least you could do." So we bought it. There was an older man here named Doc who was working for me. He was very happy to get the work, and he and I spent a month scrapping and caulking the living room downstairs and painting it. And then when my husband saw it he said, "We'll renovate it." Well it's a pity, because our house had original hand made gingerbread. It was beautiful. I have a picture of it. So anyway, we had it all redone, and as you can see, the rooms are large, very spacious for Ocean Grove. And, then when my husband passed on in 1992, we were living in New York City, and I had to chose whether to remain there or come down here to live. And I chose Ocean Grove, and that was the best decision I had ever made in my life. I am so happy here. I belong to everything. I do charitable work. I am a member of Saint Paul's. I was on the Board of the Mental Health at Fitkin Hospital for thirty years, until it merged with three other hospitals. And, I am an Eastern Star, and a DAR. I belong to the Women's Club, and I go faithfully to church, Saint Paul's. It is a wonderful, wonderful church. That is my story more or less of Ocean Grove, personally.

Ms. Newman: You had an unique experience in your teens. Can you tell us about that?

Ms. Young: Well, my father was a minister, and it is strange how God works in our lives. All my brother and my sisters were brilliant, brilliant students. But

sometimes when father would change churches I skipped two grades, very, very important grades, the second, and the sixth. Since I was the last of the family, somehow or another, they didn't help me make up the work, so therefore, I didn't enjoy school. I did the eight grades in the six years, and the high school in three. Even though I really wasn't good at school and did not enjoy it, I was going to Beaver College Prep School.

Ms. Newman: Which high school did you graduate from?

Ms. Young: Beaver, Pennsylvania. I went to Beaver for a semester. It was necessary for us to go to a concert for up to four credits, and I saw the great Anna Pavlova, Russian ballet dancer, and I knew then, I had to be a ballet dancer. And my father, as I said, I was very close to him, and I guess he understood the plight. And at that time in my life, my father was retired, and really couldn't afford to send me to ballet school, and my grades weren't good enough to have any help from the college. But when I saw Anna Pavlova, and told my father I had to be a dancer, he arranged for me to take ballet lessons. I never was a ballerina, but I took ballet and knew ballet. My father always believed that children should work in the summer to help pay for their college. I was too young to work, so I took ballet lessons at a place called Ned Wafturn in New York. It's funny, in one of my interviews, this is many, many years ago, I mentioned him in my interview, and he wrote me, sending a wire. It said, "Thank you so much for remembering me." So, my father would take us all to New York to check us in at the YWCA, called Laura Spellman, down I think on 12th or 13th Street. And, he got the girls jobs at General Electric, which was around the corner, and I would take my lessons. Well, I would look at Variety, and when I was sixteen, I answered a call at Earl Carroll Vanities. He was the one who took the place of Ziegfeld, and I went and was chosen with the girls, and we went up on the roof and took movies. There are pictures of us dancing and Earl Carroll signing up pictures of six of the beauties. When my father came to take us home, I told him about this, and he said, "No way, no way." So, I went back to Beaver. Then, the next year when we went, I answered another ad in Variety. And it said, "Girl dancer wanted for Broadway show and tour of the United States." Well, I went. That surprised me because, I was sort of a timid little girl.

Ms. Newman: And you were how old at this point?



Dorothy Young

Ms. Young: Seventeen. And, I went to the Longacre Theatre up at 48th Street and Broadway, and when I arrived the stage was full of girls auditioning. I saw two men down in the Orchestra viewing the audition. I had no idea who they were. One was Houdini and the other was his manager, Mr. Smith. I was about the last one to audition. I did a Charleston. And they chose me right away and took me over to their lawyer over on 44th Street. I called Mrs. Houdini "Mrs. H." Sometimes an interviewer would say to me, "When you are so close, why do you call her Mrs. H?" I said a seventeen year old girl is not about to call a mature woman by her first name. So, she was always Mrs. H. to me. She took me over to choose material to make my outfit, my costume, and then I signed the contract. I dashed to my father and said, "I'm going to dance on Broadway," and he said, "No way." I went to Houdini. They must have been flabbergasted because they were to open in one week, and they had gone through these auditions. Anyway, I told them my father and mother wouldn't allow me to. They asked to speak to them, and they convinced my parents that they would look after me as their very own daughter, which they did. It was a wonderful, wonderful year. Mrs. H. was a second mother to me. She taught me how to sew and put on makeup. We spent our days together. I've done five documentaries about Houdini. One thing they never put in is that I say Houdini was a very kind, compassionate man. They liked to picture him as egotistical and temperamental. And, my year with them was really, really wonderful. Another thing they never put in: he had been famous for about thirty years, but his dream, his project dream was to always star in his own production on Broadway, and this was his dream come true. Well, we opened, and my father arranged for me to live with a widow with two daughters for the week I would be in New York, before leaving to break in the show at Hartford, Connecticut. And, one of the daughters said, "Oh I'm going to a party tonight, and would you like to go?" I said, "Surely." I remember it was the day I had my costume fitted up at 103rd Street at Houdini's home.

Ms. Newman: Can you describe the costume?

Ms. Young: Oh, I have pictures of them. They were very, very scanty. I'll show you a picture of them later. And, Mrs. H., who was a wonderful designer, always made all of hers.

Ms. Newman: Where they silk? And what colors?

Ms. Young: Oh, beautiful bouquets and metallic. So, after I had my costume fitted, I jumped in a taxi at 103rd Street. A young girl and I went down to The Village where the party was to be. The girl introduced me around. We danced in a club. I met this man. He seemed very, very sophisticated to me. I guess he was around thirty. He said, "Oh you are so young to be in New York all by yourself."

You need a big brother to take care of you." I didn't care for him. So, he was smart enough not to ask for my phone number, but he asked the girl I was staying with for her phone number. And he called up the next day and took us both to lunch. For the whole week, he took me to all the best places in New York City. And during the whole year I was with Houdini, he called me once a week. On the way to Hartford, I still didn't know who Houdini was. They had a drawing room and I had the parlor. Houdini came out with a deck of cards and he did all of his card tricks for me. And then he proceeded to tell me a lot about his childhood, which was very interesting. Well, when we arrived at Hartford, it was on a Sunday night. And Rachmaninoff had a concert there, and we went directly to the theatre to unpack. I remember I stood in the wings and listened. And I was so thrilled. And when he came out, I guess he wondered why a young girl like that would just be standing there listening the whole time. It is a very happy memory having had a visit with Rachmaninoff. He was very tall and slender. I remember when he said goodbye, he patted my head. After I fulfilled my year contract, of course, Houdini wanted me to stay on.

Ms. Newman: What did you do as part of the Houdini act?

Ms. Young: At first they had a very beautiful curtain made of mementos of things they had been given in Europe, and this curtain was very beautiful. Mrs. H. was dressed as Marie Antoinette, and I her escort. Mrs. H came out on one side and I the other. We joined in the center and did a little minuet, and pulled back the curtains. Then a big stage was there, and a black back drop and Houdini came out in his magnificent entrance. Two years ago, Harvey Cartel, an actor, I didn't know who he was, he was doing an impersonation of Houdini, and he sent his limo down for me to go up and have dinner with him, and I did Houdini's entrance for him about twenty times, and he studied the mannerisms. Houdini was not a tall man. He was very muscular, and the way he carried himself, you didn't think of height. He was dressed in full dress, immaculate. And the jacket was designed that he could remove the sleeves from the elbow down so that while he worked, you could see that he wasn't concealing anything. Well, the show opened with the proverbial magic thing with the scarves and the birds and all that. Then Mrs. H. had her famous, famous trunk trick. It's now called "Metamorphosis." Houdini purchased it when they were young in Coney Island for \$25.00 from a retiring magician, and now that has become so famous. And Mrs. H. must have been almost, I bet she was, no she must have been at least fifty or fifty-two, but from the back of the stage she looked like sixteen, the way she was made up in her little gown. She kept herself beautiful. My first number was a Radio Girl. Collins and Vickory, his two assistances, would bring out a large table. Houdini would go in back and show nothing underneath the table, no mirrors or anything like that. Then Collins and Vickory would bring out a big radio. And Houdini would open the doors, would prop them back and show there was nothing inside. He'd lift out a panel like tubes and things. Then he would close it up and tune in like, for instance, Pittsburgh would be KDKA, and it's say, "KDKA, Ms. Dorothy Young

doing the Charleston." And, that was my cue to put my foot out, then the other foot, then I'd kick them together, jump up and do a curtsey.

Ms. Newman: You were inside the radio?

Ms. Young: Yes. Then Houdini would take me by the waist and lift me down, and I would go into a Charleston. And, my other number was called the "Slave Girl." The big stage was empty and there was just a pole in the middle of the big stage. And Collins would bring me out with my hands tied behind me. And I had a little skimpy burlap costume. And, Houdini would say, she has been a naughty girl, so I have to tie her up. So they tied me up to the pole from my throat down to my ankles. And then Houdini said, she has been naughty, so we will have to put her in darkness. He would press a button, and the curtain would fall to the floor. And I would come out in a beautiful butterfly costume on my toes and do a ballet number. And then another number I did: there was a big cabinet, and Houdini would walk through it and turn it around to show it was absolutely empty. Then, he would say presto, and Mrs. H. in a very beautiful elaborate costume, and myself, and Julia, his secretary, in an elaborate costume, and Kosher, in an elaborate costume, would all come out. And once in a while when Mr. Smith's wife would be there, we would add her to it. And, then the very, very exciting thing was Water Torture Cell. I think it was sad the way they made the movie about him dying in the water. The whole movie was terrible. Houdini would turn over in his grave. It was terrible. Well, Mrs. H. always stood in the wings. They had this large cabinet and Houdini would come out in swim trunks. They'd lift him up by his feet and lower him head first with his hands tied behind him and lower him in the tank. And then, to make it more dramatic, the orchestra would play, "Asleep In the Deep," which made it very dramatic. I stood with Mrs. H. often, and she said only once in their life, did he have to give the signal to be taken out. And, when I appeared at any magicians' conventions they always want to know what the secret was, of course. I would tell them I was sworn to secrecy.

Ms. Newman: You were aware of the secret, but were sworn to secrecy?

Ms. Young: Yes. The last half of his act was devoted completely to exposing spiritualism. He felt spiritualism was wicked; it preyed on poor people who'd spend their last dollar to hear the voice of their loved ones. And, he had a person we called the Reva woman who would visit the entire spiritualist, the mediums, and card people in the city before we would play. And then she would come to report to Houdini. We never could eat dinner before the show because we had to be as thin as possible. So, we always, Mrs. H., Kosher, and Julia, and Mr. Smith, Houdini, and I always had dinner after the show. And, in all those years, I never remember once Houdini showing any anger or anything. Mrs. H. was a real cut up. She was a lot of fun, and she, when we were playing Buffalo, she suggested that we go to rent a limo and go over to Canada. We went through the Mist and everything.

Ms. Newman: Niagara Falls?

Ms. Young: Yes. She was a lot of fun. And just before we left the border, she said, "Let's get a bottle of liquor and see if we could smuggle it in." Well, that night at dinner, somehow we joked about it.

Ms. Newman: This was during prohibition?

Ms. Young: Oh yes, and Houdini snapped, "Do you realized the publicity we would have had if they had caught you bringing liquor in?" And that is the only time I ever heard him express anger. He was just the most wonderful compassionate person to work for. The last act involved a very famous medium called Marjorie. He dressed up, he put on a wig and a cane, and dressed up as an old man, and went to Marjorie and told them to get in touch with the spirit of a loved one. And he copied her séance completely in the last act of the show. He would ask people to come up who would invariably be interested in spiritualism. And, they would sit at a table, and they would ask to speak with a loved one. And then, Houdini would go through the seance, and it really was weird to see. And then after he did it, he broke it apart to show the whole audience how it was done.

Ms. Newman: He would show that it was a fraud.

Ms. Young: Yes. Houdini was like a father to me, but never personal, you know. Before I left the show he said to me, "Dorothy, did you ever wonder why you were chosen over 200 girls?" I said, "No." He said, "Mr. Smith and I are opposite personalities, and you appealed to both of us. And we knew you were the one that we wanted." As I look back, I think it might have been in the first place all of those girls were typical Broadway girls, and they weren't going to have someone like that travel with them closely. It was a close unit. That is one thing, and the other thing, I was shorter than Houdini, and most of them were taller. That was my experience with Houdini.

Ms. Newman: So you had a year's contract and that was the end?

Ms. Young: Yes. And he died two months after. Two young boys were visiting him backstage. They had seen the show, and Houdini had had a pain and the doctor didn't diagnosis it right. His appendix was in the center rather than at the side. He had appendicitis, but the doctors didn't diagnose it that way. And then, one of the boys said, "You mean you could withstand a punch with all my might?" And Houdini said, "Yes." What the boy didn't realize was that Houdini had to prepare himself first, and the boy struck him, and his appendix burst. So, they rushed him to the hospital, but it was too late. He fought for a whole week. He thought he could lick it, but he couldn't, and finally he had to give up.

Ms. Newman: Did your father ever see you perform?

Ms. Young: Oh, yes, when we were in Pittsburgh, my father was in the audience, and Houdini asked him to stand up. And when I was in Chicago, my Grandmother Caldwell was there, and we were sold out. I don't know. Somehow or another, he got her a seat in the first row center. And when I took her back stage to meet Houdini, Houdini kissed her forehead and said, "Now I know where Dorothy gets her charm." (Laughs)

Ms. Newman: He does sound like a dear man. Were there other people traveling?

Ms. Young: No. We were a close unit. Collins was his main assistant, and Victory was his helper. Mrs. H., Houdini, Julia, Kosher, Mr. Smith, and I. That was our entourage.

Ms. Newman: And you went across the country.

Ms. Young: Oh, yes. And we played Broadway twice.

Ms. Newman: Were these one night stands?

Ms. Young: Oh, no, I think we played Chicago four weeks.

Ms. Newman: And you traveled by train?

Ms. Young: Yes, by train. I'd spend my day with Mrs. H. I don't remember what salary I had, but it must have been plenty, because I always stayed right in the next room to them, and I always had my breakfast sent in my room and I felt so sophisticated. I remember I had a black satin negligee with white marabous. And in those days, eating breakfast for one, they would wheel it in on a whole table. Now days if you had breakfast for one, they'd just bring it on a tray. I remember I would drape myself and feel so grown up.

Ms. Newman: What year was this?

Ms. Young: 1925 and 1926. So, that was my story with Houdini.

Ms. Newman: Was it a let down to come back?

Ms. Young: Well no, this Robert Perkins kept calling me all year.

Ms. Newman: The man you met down in the Village.

Ms. Young: I didn't want to get married because I wanted a career. But he kept at me and kept at me and convinced me I was in love with him. I was, I guess, and then I married him. My brothers came in. My father was in Florida, so my

brother came in. He was a professor at Drew University, and he came in and married us.

Ms. Newman: That was right after you got back?

Ms. Young: Yes, and we lived in the very lovely, brand-new 5th Avenue Hotel.

Ms. Newman: Oh, yes, I know it.

Ms. Young: Then we'd spend our summer and naturally my son was conceived there. Mr. Perkins was with the FBI, and it was a very, very hectic year for me because he was transferred from one place to another. Since I was pregnant, he asked my sister Helen if she would take a sabbatical year and be with me. And we would no sooner be at one place than he would be transferred to another. And I remember the very last time. It was the beginning of the ninth month. He was in Florida and thought he was going to be there for awhile. I had had a very hectic time the whole time of pregnancy. I remember my doctor said, "If you go, you must stay." Two weeks and he was transferred back, and so Helen and I came back and we were in New York and we were going to the theatre and we were hailing a taxi. And we took a taxi, and we were in an accident. Helen called the doctor right a way. And the doctor said, "Take her on down to the Infirmary." So, I had a very, very, bad time. I almost died. And he almost died. It was very traumatic.

Ms. Newman: Was this the New York Women's Infirmary?

Ms. Young: Yes. I had a woman doctor. My father got her. I think if he hadn't gotten a woman doctor, I would have had it without a doctor. So, anyway, at that time, it was time to come down to The Elim.

Ms. Newman: So the baby was born in New York and he was healthy?

Ms. Young: Well, yes. I mean he gained his birth weight in due time. He was a skinny little thing.

Ms. Newman: So was he premature?

Ms. Young: Yes. I had a caesarean. I almost died. And, I had to have transfusions and everything. And I didn't know how sick I was, but I remember my father kissing me good night at the hospital, and I had forgotten what he said. But anyway, during the night, I went through what they call, "The Valley of the Shadow of Death." I can remember it as though it was yesterday. Anyway, I pulled through. I was not well, and I guess not happy. My father had befriended a very famous actor named Richard Bennett. He was very famous, but then his daughters, Constance and Joan, became more famous. He was down visiting us. The doctor said, "You know, it would be good for you to work." I had never

worked in anything outside of show business. So, the doctor said it would be good if I had something to do to get my mind off my problems. Mr. Bennett said, "Well, I'm booking, casting for my show to be opened in September, and there is a part in it for Dots." He called me Dots. So, I went. Bob was very generous. He made a lot of money. He knew Andrew Mellon's secretary. Kentuckians stay together sort of like Texans. And, this man's name was Mr. Sicksmith. He used to give Mr. Perkins tips on the stock market, so he was very successful in the stock market, and he was very, very generous to me. So, I bought a house in Allenhurst with my mother. It was ideal, because I couldn't have done it without my mother. Father had retired on a very small pension, and he really always used the pension. Otherwise, I couldn't have done it because I wouldn't have left my son with anyone outside of my family. I had a nice part to play in Jarnegan. It was also at the Longacre Theatres.

Ms. Newman: So you have the theatre in your blood by that time?

Ms. Young: Yes, by that time. And I did a lot of work in the daytime doing modeling, and doubling to earn extra money. I doubled for Gloria Swanson's legs. There was a picture, Peter Pan, and Betty Bronson was the star. And, she had a beautiful tiny little figure and she wore boots, but her ankles were bad. So, I did doubling for the ankles. I remember going to a trunk and getting things out. At the time, Gloria Swanson was the big, big star. She had just married The Marque, and they were showing them around. And I remember there was a big, big ball scene downstairs, and they just walked through. But when they came to the room where I was, they stayed quite a while and we chatted. It was very nice.

Ms. Newman: And your husband kept on traveling?

Ms. Young: Yes, he kept on traveling. The marriage never really had a chance. He died of cirrhosis of the liver. And in the meantime, I didn't want to go on the road with the show when it left in January, because of Bob, my baby, and so, they were having a big farewell dinner on the stage, catered you know. At the time when dance teams were very popular, only they were very Spanish. They were always Spanish. Mr. Bennett said, "It's funny. Dots has known me all her life, and she still calls me Mr. Bennett. And people know me ten minutes and they call me Dick." But, I always did, since very young. I had invited a friend, Mildred Miller, and she brought her date, and also an extra man. His name was Gilbert Kiamie. And, Mr. Bennett said, "You two would make an unusual dance team, you're opposites. And no one is like that." So, we tried and, it was good. He was a playboy. In the meantime, there was a manhole, and I stepped in the manhole and tore a ligament in my leg, and got water on my knee, and the other. And as I said, I still wasn't strong. The doctor said, "You know, if you could afford to go to a warm climate, it would do you good." So, Bob was all for it, and so my mother, baby, and I went down to Florida. And I spent the winter there. And, when I came back, I was having a hat made at 57th Street and 6th Avenue. When I came out, I ran into Gilbert. I hadn't gotten in touch with him the whole time. He was the son

of a what is called the Silk King. His father was very, very wealthy. His father had just died, in Europe. They were all inexperienced because in Lebanese, one man always ruled over a business. So, none of them really knew much about it, so the bank came and asked for the payment. They didn't have it, so they asked for the mortgage, took it and confiscated the business. It was thirty years before it was settled. The only thing out of it came the Kiamie Lien Law of New York State, which means, you cannot evict the person without the proper procedure. He had been brought up a wealthy family, and he was spoiled, good looking, and the women flocked around him. So, I didn't contact him. But when I came back, as I said, I came out of the hat shop, and there he just happened to be. So, we started rehearsing again. We had very good choreographers and orchestration. We worked very, very hard and became very, very successful.

Ms. Newman: What was your stage name?

Ms. Young: Dorothy and Gilbert. We made a big success.

Ms. Newman: Did you specialize in a certain kind of dancing?

Ms. Young: Oh, yes, a beautiful style, not like you see on television now. It was very beautiful. It had a ballet foundation. Very beautiful, artistic, nice. It was sort of like the Fred Astaire type. My gowns were gorgeous. The War was on and Gilbert knew he would be drafted, so he decided to enlist. And, so he was stationed here. First he went to boot camp and everything. And I had never worked except in the theater. I got a job at Fort Monmouth. I didn't know how to make a resume or anything, and anyway, I got the lowest salary. I got a job in crystals. I had to learn to cut the crystal on the XYZ axis, like a diamond. Gilbert was down at Camp Edison, but I happened to know a Colonel at Fort Monmouth, so he got Gilbert transferred to Fort Monmouth. And, Gilbert had a citation selling the most War Bonds of any person in the United States. I remember I didn't like cutting the crystals. I wore a lab coat and everything. So somehow I got the Army bus and went up to Red Bank. They had the headquarters there. God was with me again. I went to the Army Navy Headquarters. It was the creme d' la creme of Army, the Services. And luckily, the personnel man liked me very much and he arranged for me to have equivalent of a college degree through my extensive traveling, and I was able to take two courses. I took them when Rutgers would send their professors down twice a week. I took a course in electrical engineering, of all things, and I liked it so much. I took a course in Personnel Management. I liked that very much. But then I was assigned to shock absorbers. And, I have a friend, very active in the Houdini thing. He said, "Dorothy, all the things that you've done!" I wrote specifications for the shock absorbers of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. When I would go to the big meetings, of course, I would have a General on one side, and something on the other. And, I only knew my project. I had my book, you know, and I had my project. Of course, they knew everything. But, I remember Gilbert never wanted anything more than a Corporal. He didn't want to go to Officer's Training. He was

able to have his own hut. He became friendly with the general's wife. He'd have breakfast over there. Anyway, he was able to have his own hut. When he called for me one time, someone said, "You going out with a corporal?" I said, "Yes, but you don't know this corporal." And, so, anyway it was a year before he was what you called separated from the Army. We got married.

Ms. Newman: What year was that?

Ms. Young: 1945. We had an apartment at Twin Gates in Red Bank. We stayed there and I continued working until he was separated from the Army. And, then we moved up to Pelham Manor. And in the meantime, his uncle had died and left him a lot of money, he and his three brothers. He asked, "Should we put it in a string of dancing schools? (which were popular then) or in the family business?" Of course, I would have just enjoyed the dancing schools, but I knew it wouldn't make a man of him. It would be the worst thing on earth. So, he put it in the family business.

Ms. Newman: This is the silk business?

Ms. Young: Yes, silk lingerie, and real estate. And this brother was very jealous of Gilbert. He was a very good-looking fellow, the brother, but he was short and stocky, and Gilbert was tall and handsome. He had another brother, Sam, but Fred never would like them do anything. He wanted to make all the decisions like the father had done. But Gilbert would spend his time at the stockbroker and learn as much as he could and all that. And Fred was doing very wonderfully, amazing in real estate. They had closed the lingerie business and the lawyer came. It was such a big thing, that lawyer. They had a lawyer all the time on the premise. I remember he only had \$2,000.00 or \$3,000.00 when he came to the firm. But some how or other, Fred finagled into one of the best buildings as a Logan Park owner. Well, he was reported.

Ms. Newman: Where was the building?

Ms. Young: Oh, the buildings were 95 Madison Avenue.

Ms. Newman: Oh, in New York City.

Ms. Young: In the meantime, they had eleven buildings, big, big buildings. Very, very successful. And so someone reported Fred to the FBI and the IRS, internal revenue, and anyway, he ended up in the Country Club of Jails up in Westchester. But in the meantime, this lawyer thought those two nincompoops, the playboy and the other one, wouldn't be able to do anything, and he would take it from under their feet. But instead, Gilbert had grown into an astute businessman, and Gilbert proudly showed the check. He bought Marvin out for one million dollars, when a million was a lot of money. And Gilbert became

Chairman, President, and Executive at Large. And, worked very hard. I was very, very proud of him. We lived up in Pelham Manor.

Ms. Newman: Was your son from your first marriage with you?

Ms. Young: He was attending University of Virginia after the war.

Ms. Newman: And your parents?

Ms. Young: My parents lived most of the time in Palm Beach. And, my father was able to buy a place there through a very good friend and gave it to them for practically nothing.

Ms. Newman: And your son, Bob?

Ms. Young: And my son, Bob, was always so very, very close. I went through so much to have him, I guess had almost an abnormal love for him. He went to school in Allenhurst, and graduated from high school when he was sixteen. They promised the mothers that if the mothers would sign for the boys when they were seventeen, they wouldn't send them overseas. He was in college at sixteen, and his birthday was in December 26. And, all the boys were in the services. So you'd think the world would come to an end if he didn't get in. So, I told him, if he would finish one semester at Rutgers, be a full-fledged fraternity man with good grades, that I would sign for him. Well, they promised the parents they wouldn't go overseas until they were eighteen. And you know, he was in boot camp for six weeks instead of eight and he was shipped over to the Philippines in the middle of the big push. You can imagine how hard that was on me. So, I never thought of marrying Gilbert because number one he was a playboy, number two, he didn't care for children. And I didn't want him to have any jurisdiction over Bob. So, during the War, I lived with Helen on Rumson Road, and she was principal of the school, Sea Bright School. And she was well loved and one-in-a-million principal. She helped. In the summer time, Seabright is an affluent community, but in the winter, it is full of divorced people and drunkards, and what not. They loved Helen very, very much. Bob and I lived with them until he went into the Navy. And it was hard worrying about him. It was terrible him being over there in the Philippines. They talked about Hiroshima. Well, if it hadn't been for that, I wouldn't have a son. Another young boy and Bob had signed up to go into Japan, and they would never have come back.

Ms. Newman: So he saw combat in the Pacific?

Ms. Young: Yes, in the Navy. So I received a letter from Bob, and I still have it, when he wrote, "Mother, you're always thinking of other people. And if you think you want to marry Gilbert, I want you to marry him." So, I married Gilbert while he was in the Army. And we lived in Pelham, and he would commute. Anyway we were married for forty-nine years.

Ms. Newman: So it lasted?

Ms. Young: Yes, it lasted.

Ms. Newman: Now, did you have any further theatrical experience?

Ms. Young: Just after my dancing, no. Oh, well, God works in my life every time. When we moved to Pelham, Gilbert was engrossed in his business. A friend said to me, "I am going up to take an art lesson from a wonderful French woman. Why don't you come with me?" So, I went and I started taking lessons, and I took lessons straight for fifteen years.

Ms. Newman: Were these painting lessons?

Ms. Young: Yes. All of this work here is my art. She had a very professional studio with lights and everything. And people who knew me, all of her students, would come back and ask me questions if she was busy. The teacher asked me if I would join her and own half of the studio. And I said, "No, I'm married, and I just want to paint when I can." Well, I painted, as I said, four days a week for forty years, no thirty. I became one of the Fifty American Artists, which was a prestigious group. Winston Churchill and Eisenhower were honorary members. And you had to paint at a certain price and get a certain price for certain quality in order to show. And this person, Margaret McDonald Phillips, who was president said, "Dorothy, you're ready to be launched in a big way. I will do it at cost because it will be good for the Fifty American Artists." So I told Gilbert, and he said he wouldn't do it. It was such a measly two thousand dollars, and he wouldn't do it. And still he was so proud. And he was proud of the DAR, and proud of my painting. People say he was proud of me, but he didn't want me to be too big.

Ms. Newman: He didn't want you to be a star.

Ms. Young: So, then I was, just sort of. The irony of it, I met Nathan Strause, who was Housing Administrator under Roosevelt, who was on one of our trips once, and he loved my dancing. And then I was going to New York to meet Gilbert for dinner. We went to all the best places all the time, you know, and I won't go into the other side. And, then I was going downtown to have dinner with Gilbert, and Nathan Strause was on the train. I saw him, but I went two aisles further. He saw me and he came up and sat. And he said, "What have you been doing?" And I said, "Art and so on." And he said, "When you are ready to be launched, let me know." But you know what that meant. So I never did anything about it. After I decided to be here, it was the best decision I ever made.

Ms. Newman: When did you come back to Ocean Grove?

Ms. Young: When Gilbert passed on in 1992.

Ms. Newman: Is Bob in the area? Do you see him?

Ms. Young: Bob was a vice president of Young and Rubicon Advertising Agency, and he became very successful. We are very close.

Ms. Newman: Now does he enjoy Ocean Grove with you?

Ms. Young: Oh, yes. He lives with me six months of the year and he lives in Florida the other six months. All of my four grandchildren and my eight great grandchildren love Ocean Grove. This is home to them.

Ms. Newman: Well you certainly have had a very remarkable life with so much creativity in so many areas.

Ms. Young: Yes, it has been a very full, happy life.

Ms. Newman: Well thank you, thank you very, very much. I really appreciate it.

Ms. Young: It was a pleasure.