

## Today in Columbus History:

On July 2, 1914, the *Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun*, ran an ad for the American Theater highlighting "The Trunk Mystery" a film featuring Columbus-born actress Justina Huff playing Susan, the maid. She was the oldest daughter of Thomas Daniel Huff and Lucinda Salisbury. Her grandfather was Col. William L. Salisbury. Justina's younger sister Louise Huff was the more famous of the two Huff sisters and enjoyed a longer career on both the screen and Broadway stage.

Both girls were born in Columbus (Justina in 1893 and Louise in 1895) but moved to New York with their parents by 1908. Their father died in 1910 and the children needed to find ways to support themselves and their family. By 1912, Louise was part of a traveling theater company and Justina was teaching school. In 1913, they both moved to film.

Justina's first two movies appeared in Columbus without mentioning her involvement. Her first film was for the Edison Co. entitled "*The Diamond Crown*." It was a Kate Kirby mystery starring Laura Sawyer with Justina playing the maid. Her second film was *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, starring Minnie Maddern Fiske for Famous Players Studio where she played Liza Lou. Later that year, she and Louise moved to the Lubin studio near Philadelphia where she eventually took on leading roles, appearing in 40 movies there. Justina and Louise worked closely with Edgar Jones, an actor and director who married Louise in 1914. Justina married John P. Chapman a doctor in Philadelphia in 1915 and vowed to continue working afterwards.

The studio fell on hard times after a fire destroyed almost their entire film archive. Lubin went bankrupt in 1916, but not before Jones and Huff sisters found work at other studios. Justina joined Universal and made the film *The Man Inside* in 1916 before retiring to take care of her growing family. She had a son John in 1916 and a daughter Sally in 1918.

Justina's husband was a successful doctor and the medical examiner for the state board of narcotics as well as the medical director for several life insurance companies. Justina and her husband relocated to the Balearic Island of Majorca in Spain by the mid-1950s. Dr. Chapman died while visiting Ireland in 1968 and Justina remained in Majorca until about 1975, when she returned to Philadelphia.

She moved into the Saunders House nursing home where Clason Kyle interviewed her in November 1975 for his Kyle Style feature in the *Sunday Ledger Enquirer*. She died in June of 1977. Although her entire filmography appears to be lost, she wrote a letter in 1973 to one of her fans where is implied that she had an uncredited role in *The Prisoner of Zenda* in 1913. This film survives and might be the only example of her on screen in existence.

Today, the Columbus Museum maintains a collection of Louise Huff memorabilia and is co-sponsoring a project, through the Historic Columbus Foundation to erect a historical marker in front of the Huff sisters' childhood home in the historic district.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

*Our occasional snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.*

# 5c-AMERICAN-5c

The Coolest Spot in Town. We Have Four Large Exhaust Fans Installed, Which Changes the Air Every Forty-Five Seconds.

Featuring This Week

## REES, V. PROSSER

The Famous and Favorite Minstrel Soloist, Formerly With Geo. Evans' Honey-Boy Minstrels. Singing Today, "DEAR OLD GIRL."

Featuring Today

### "The Trunk Mystery"

A two-part Lubin Comedy Feature, featuring Justina Huff and Eleanor Blanchard.

#### "THE CLOCK WENT WRONG"

(And the Watch followed it.)  
Selling Comedy.

### KATHLYN FRIDAY

Chapter No. 11 of "THE ADVENTURES OF KATHLYN," in two reels.

Many exciting and interesting scenes. Kathlyn's daring escape from the burning building and many others. Only two more numbers after this of this wonderful wild animal melodrama. See them all.

Coming Thursday, July 9th, "THE MILLION DOLLAR MYSTERY."

The most wonderful and expensive motion picture ever conceived. A \$10,000.00 prize connected with this story.

Ad for "The Trunk Mystery" in the *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, July 2, 1914.



A scene from "The Trunk Mystery" showing Justina as the maid, from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1252347/>



**JUSTINA HUFF  
AT AMERICAN**

**Former Columbus Girl in a  
Two-Reel Feature There  
Tomorrow—Doc Baker.**

"A Son of His Father," two-reel Lubin Special Feature, featuring Miss Justina Huff and Florence Elmer, in leading roles, comes to the American Monday.

Will Temple, a gambler, neglects his wife and baby. One night he is a heavy winner and resolves to aban-

Photo of Justina Huff from *Wikipedia.org*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justina\\_Huff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justina_Huff) and a story from the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* January 25, 1915.

HOME OF EXCLUSIVE FEATURE PHOTOPLAYS

**5c---AMERICAN---5c**

FEATURING MONDAY

**"A SON OF HIS FATHER"**

A powerful TWO REEL feature of human interest, featuring

**Miss Justina Huff**

In leading role. (Miss Huff formerly a Columbus girl.)

Ad from the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* January 26, 1915.

**5c - THE BONITA - 5c**

There can be no better Pictures shown for five cents than we are now showing. If a theatre is cooler than the BONITA it is too cool to be comfortable.

Today--"Who Bears Malice"

Featuring the well known and popular Columbus actress  
**JUSTINA HUFF and EDGAR JONES**

A drama of the great North woods replete with thrills and heart interest

**CHARLES CHAPLIN**

The world's funniest and highest priced comedian in "KIDS AUTO RACES," another of his side splitting comedies.

Tomorrow, Extra Special—Clara Kimball Young in the wonderful play, "LOLA," a Shubert feature

Ad from the *Columbus Ledger* June 23, 1915.

**DREAM THEATRE**  
 ALWAYS FREE ADMISSION

TODAY                      FRIDAY                      TODAY

**EDWIN STEVENS** Supported by **JUSTINA HUFF**  
 by  
**HARRY BENHAM** and an all star cast

In the five-part Broadway Feature **"The Man Inside"**

A mystery Masterpiece depicting one of the most interesting detective stories ever made and is founded on the novel by Natalie Summers Lincoln.

Her last film "The Man Inside" for Universal 1916 from the *Columbus Ledger*, February 4, 1916.



THE CROSS ON THE DOOR

A scene from *The Man Inside* where Justina points to "the cross on the door" from *Motion Picture News* (1916), <https://archive.org/details/motionpicturenew131unse/page/260/mode/2up>.