

Lorraine DeWood: “La Tirana”

Lorraine DeWood was born into La Crosse’s Syrian-American community in 1920. After leaving La Crosse as a child, the beautiful and talented DeWood had a modest career as an entertainer. But it was her personal life that thrust her briefly into the national spotlight shortly after World War II. “La Tirana Diabla” (“The Devilish Tyrant,” screamed the tabloid headlines) gained notoriety for her tangential connection to a love-triangle murder in Cuba.



Lorraine DeWood, 19 years old in 1939¹

(Internet Archive screenshot)

The first Syrian immigrants came to La Crosse about 1895. By 1915, 350 mostly Lebanese-Syrians lived in the Mill Street (later known as Copeland Avenue) area of La Crosse’s northside in what was known locally as the Syrian Colony.² These families became part of the fabric of the community, and many of the family names are still present today, including Abraham, Asfoor, Markos, Monsoor, Patros, Skaff, and Wakeen.³

Lorraine DeWood came from the Abraham family.

Her father, Albert R. Abraham DeWood, was a son of Michael Abraham.⁴ Michael’s wife, and Albert’s mother, was Elizabeth (Gannon) Abraham.⁵ DeWood was the family surname, but Michael Abraham,

being the oldest of his family, followed the Syrian custom of using his first name as the family surname.⁶ Albert retained DeWood as his surname, but his siblings used Abraham as their last names.

Michael and Elizabeth Abraham came to the United States in the 1890s. According to the 1910 Census, Michael and Lizzie Abraham came to the United States from Syria in 1895 when Michael was about 30 years old.⁷ The 1920 Census shows that Michael came to the United States from Syria in 1890, and his wife did not come until 1896.⁸ The 1930 Census stated that both Michael and Elizabeth came from Syria to the United States in 1890.⁹

Michael Abraham first shows up in the La Crosse city directory in 1903. He was a peddler living at 709 Mill Street.¹⁰ This was in the Syrian Colony of La Crosse.

Available records for the next 25 years show Michael and Elizabeth moving frequently and Michael engaged in various occupations. He was working for one of railroads in 1905 while living at 619 Mill Street.¹¹ They had moved to 216 N. 2nd Street by 1907. Michael had left the railroad job and was making his living as a fruit salesman.¹² The 1909 city directory lists Michael Abraham as a peddler. They had moved back to the Syrian Colony, residing at 813 Mill Street.¹³ They lived at 203 State Street in La Crosse in 1910, and Michael operated a fruit store. Although Albert would have been about 16 years old at the time, he was not living with his parents.¹⁴ They were still at 203 State Street in 1911.¹⁵ By 1913, Michael Abraham had changed jobs and residences again. He was proprietor of, and lived in, the Richelien Hotel.¹⁶ Page 513 of the 1913 city directory lists it as the Richelieu Hotel at 216 N. 2nd Street.¹⁷ This had been their residence in 1907, so the Richelieu may have been a house converted into a boarding house. Abraham was still operating the hotel two years later in 1915.¹⁸ But by 1917, Michael Abraham was back selling fruit from his home at 815 Rose Street.¹⁹ Two years later, the city directory shows Michael and Lizzie living upstairs above the restaurant they operated at 215 Pearl Street.²⁰ Michael's occupation in 1920 was operating a confectionary store at 215 Pearl Street.²¹ The 1922 and 1924 city directories indicate that Michael Abraham's establishment at 215 Pearl Street was a billiards hall.²² In 1930, they still lived at 215 Pearl Street, and Michael was the manager of a restaurant.²³

Curiously, Albert R. DeWood, Michael and Elizabeth Abraham's son, and the father of Lorraine DeWood, does not show up in La Crosse city directories from 1890 to 1924. Nor is he listed in the 1900, 1910, or 1920 censuses, either with Michael and Elizabeth's family or by himself. Albert first appears in the 1930 census after he and his family had moved to Milwaukee. Where was Albert R. DeWood in the early 1900s? Was Albert living with relatives in Syria, rather than with his family in La Crosse?

Primary sources provide a conflicting and muddled chronology of the early lives of Albert and Sophia DeWood and their arrival in La Crosse. According to 1930 census records, Albert R. DeWood was born in Syria in about 1894. When he was 19 years old, Albert married 16-year-old Sophia in 1913. Both of Sophia's parents had been born in Syria, but she was born in Minnesota in about 1896. They immigrated to the United States in 1920. But their first child, Edward, was born in Wisconsin in about 1916. Then they had four daughters born in Wisconsin: Marie, ca. 1919; Loraine [Lorraine], ca. 1920; Elenore [Eleanor], ca. 1927; and Lenora, ca. 1929.²⁴ On his 1938 marriage certificate, their son, Edward Adeeb DeWood, claimed that he was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1914, to Albert Robert DeWood and Sophie (Boureston) DeWood.²⁵ If all of this was recorded correctly at the time, it seems to indicate some movement back and forth between the United States and Syria early in their lives.

Wisconsin birth records show Loraine Farede DeWood was born on June 15, 1920, in La Crosse County, Wisconsin.²⁶ A 1938 *La Crosse Tribune* article states that Lorraine DeWood was born in the city of La

Crosse in 1920 to Mr. and Mrs. Albert DeWood, and they lived at 1100 Rose Street. The family moved to Milwaukee in 1925.²⁷ A later newspaper article stated that the DeWood family lived above the former Byron theater on 3rd Street, and the children attended a Catholic convent school before moving to Milwaukee in 1927.²⁸



Albert and Sophie DeWood supposedly lived on the northeast corner of Rose and Windsor Streets. Here is what the corner looks like today.

(Photo by Jeff Rand, 2030 May 30)

Albert DeWood worked as a wholesale jobber in Milwaukee.²⁹ In 1932, Albert and Sophie DeWood were living at 3701 W. Highland Boulevard in Milwaukee.³⁰ Albert and Sophia DeWood had moved to Kansas City, Missouri, by 1942, where Albert was an art and linen dealer.³¹ At the time of the death of his father in 1948, Albert DeWood was living in Los Angeles, California.³² Albert DeWood died in Los Angeles in 1973. He was interred in the Abbey of the Psalms Mausoleum in the Hollywood Forever cemetery.³³ Lorraine's mother, Sophia Bourestom DeWood, was 89 years old when she died in 1983. She was also interred in the Abbey of the Psalms Mausoleum in the Hollywood Forever cemetery.³⁴

It was written that Lorraine DeWood started in show business at the age of 13.³⁵ While living in Milwaukee, DeWood became a singer and dancer, as well as playing the piano and violin, all before she had graduated from high school. She sang on local radio stations.³⁶

When Lorraine was 18 years old in 1938, she was chosen queen of the second annual Syrian-American Midwest conclave in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. From a group of six finalists selected at the Midwest Federation convention in Milwaukee in August, movie star [Tyrone Power](#) picked Lorraine DeWood to

ride in the place of honor in a twelve-float parade on Sunday, September 4, and be crowned at a coronation banquet and dance that evening. Besides her crown, Lorraine was presented with a large trophy and a bouquet of roses. One thousand Syrian-Americans participated in the festivities.³⁷



(*La Crosse Tribune*, 1939 September 6, page 4)

Lorraine, along with her parents, and sister, Eleanor, returned to her birthplace on the following Tuesday, September 6, 1938.³⁸ She was scheduled for a singing performance at the White Front Night Club in La Crosse.³⁹ The White Front Tavern, owned by Louis W. Abraham, was located at 213 Pearl Street.⁴⁰ Louis was Lorraine's cousin.⁴¹ Bad weather delayed their arrival in La Crosse, so Lorraine DeWood performed on the evening of September 7 instead of September 6.⁴² Lorraine, her parents, and sister remained in La Crosse for a few days with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Abraham of 215 Pearl Street.⁴³



213-215 Pearl Street as it appears today

DeWood's grandparents operated a business at, and lived above, 215 Pearl Street
Her cousin operated a tavern at 213 Pearl Street

(Photo by Jeff Rand, 2023 June 6)

DeWood soon took her talents to more sophisticated venues than her cousin's tavern. By April 1940, 19-year-old Lorraine DeWood had moved to Beverly Hills, California, to be a professional singer. She had 24-year-old Maryland native Evelyn McFarling, who was a coat-check girl in a nightclub, as a roommate.⁴⁴

Lorraine DeWood crisscrossed the country for singing engagements in the New York City area, southern California, and points in between during the 1940s.⁴⁵ One publication described her as a "glamorous torch singer."⁴⁶ Prior to October 1945, she was a member of "The Blackouts."⁴⁷ One reviewer, noting that her act was "a smash hit," wrote that DeWood "really sells a number and has plenty [of] class."⁴⁸ She also did a little modeling on the side.⁴⁹ DeWood even made time to be the guest speaker for the Mercer (Wisconsin) Women's Civic Club in April 1944.⁵⁰



(*The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1943 January 15, page 7)

By June 1943, DeWood, the “Syrian Beauty,” had signed a movie contract with Columbia Pictures.⁵¹ She had an uncredited bit role in [Song of the Open Road](#) (1944) starring [Edgar Bergen](#) and his dummy, Charlie McCarthy.⁵² This 93-minute drama also featured [W. C. Fields](#) and [Jane Powell](#).⁵³ DeWood had another uncredited role as a “Spanish Girl” in the [Stan Laurel](#) and [Oliver Hardy](#) comedy entitled [The Bullfighters](#), which was released in 1945.⁵⁴ That appears to have been the extent of her movie career.

DeWood’s exotic beauty was an asset as an entertainer, but it may have also deflected from her singing talent. She was described as the “sultry singer.”⁵⁵ Even though she was of Middle Eastern descent, an advertisement for one of her performances in Washington D.C., carried the tagline, “Latin and How!”⁵⁶ In describing the popularity of the Copacabana in New York City of the early 1940s, *Billboard* magazine mentioned performer Lorraine DeWood as “a black-haired looker with a chassis that protrudes in the right places.”⁵⁷ When DeWood was a last-minute substitute for an ill [Dorothy Dandridge](#) for a 1945 show at the Club Donroy in Hollywood, a *Billboard* reviewer began by describing DeWood as an “eye-filling, husky-voiced thrush” before praising her vocal ability.⁵⁸ Even more crass was columnist Allen Rich, who wrote: “Memo to Earl Wilson, who last week described some New York nite club cutie as ‘The Bosom of the Week.’ You ain’t seen Lorraine, yet!”⁵⁹

It was almost inevitable that that the personal life of a beautiful young entertainer would provide fodder for the gossip columnists. Walter Winchell mentioned “the dashing senator from Panama giving the rush to Lorraine DeWood the thrush” in 1941.⁶⁰ Two years later, Winchell quoted a conversation in a New York nightclub between “an admirer” and DeWood. When the man said, “Gee, I pity the poor guy who gets you!” DeWood reportedly replied, “Never mind the poor guy . . . I pity the rich guy who gets me.”⁶¹ And what could it mean when Dorothy Kilgallen wrote in 1943, “Arthur Brown and lush thrush Lorraine

DeWood are knocking the local air-conditioning silly.”⁶² Kilgallen also asserted that DeWood was involved in a serious traffic accident in 1943 with “a famed West Coast figure (married)” in which she suffered “a broken jaw and the loss of most of her teeth.” Because of the California man’s power and influence, Kilgallen claimed, the badly injured DeWood was transported away from the scene before law enforcement arrived and the incident was hushed up.⁶³

But it was a love triangle played out with tragic consequences in Cuba’s Havana harbor that brought Lorraine DeWood to national attention.

John Lester Mee, son of a prominent physician in suburban Chicago, was an accountant and lawyer based in Chicago. His professional path was as varied as his talents. Mee flunked out of Northwestern University in 1933 for failing English composition. He was a barker and hawker at the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago before working as an insurance investigator. Mee spoke Spanish, French, and Italian. He was an expert dancer who had once danced professionally in Chicago and was later a dance instructor. He was a music composer and piano player who wrote a ballet featuring the tango and rhumba. Mee hoped to open a theater cabaret in Mexico City. In late 1946, a book of his poems, some written during his Navy service during the war, was published under the title *Tirana Diabala*. He was also working a novel.⁶⁴

John Mee had been commander of a PT (patrol torpedo) boat in the Pacific Theater during his Navy service in World War II. Mee and a war buddy, Charles Jackson of River Forest, Illinois, bought a war surplus PT boat for \$750 and converted it into a yacht they christened “La Tirana.” Mee and Jackson’s boat departed from Chicago on December 3, 1946.⁶⁵

By the beginning of 1947, Mee and Jackson had anchored “La Tirana” in Cuba’s Havana Harbor. On January 16, a woman called Satira took up residence on the boat with them.⁶⁶ Satira was the stage name a 21-year-old exotic dancer from Toledo, Ohio, named Patricia Schmidt, who was performing in Caribbean nightclubs. Schmidt and Mee shared a cabin, and the relationship was going so well that the 72-foot boat was soon rechristened “Satira.” Schmidt later said, “We were terribly in love,” and Mee promised to marry her. But in mid-March, Schmidt happened to pick up some letters that revealed the 33-year-old Mee was already married. Inevitably, arguments and tension ensued, and Schmidt claimed that Mee beat her. On April 8, 1947, Mee was struck down by a single bullet that almost severed his spinal cord. He died on April 13. Schmidt was charged with murder, and 27-year-old Charles Jackson was held for “concealment of facts.”⁶⁷

More details came out as reporters flocked to interview the femme fatale. Schmidt claimed she had met Mee a year prior in Chicago while dancing in a night club, and Mee had promised to marry her at that time. She had interrupted a Latin American night club tour to live with Mee on his boat. Their quarrels over his existing marriage and their future came to a head on April 8 when Mee ordered her to pack her things and get off the boat immediately. When she protested, Mee struck her twice, knocked her down, and threatened to kill her. Mee threw things around the cabin and left briefly. When he returned, Schmidt thought Mee was holding something in his hand that he would use to kill her. She felt trapped because he was blocking the only exit. Schmidt picked up a .22-caliber revolver and “blindly” fired one shot into Mee’s head. After Schmidt hollered for Charles Jackson to come help her, she rushed back to Mee. According to her, he said, “Kill yourself. I’m going to die and I want you to die in my arms.” Schmidt put another bullet in the revolver, intending to fulfill Mee’s Shakespearean tragedy scenario, just before Jackson rushed in and took the gun away from her. Mee was taken to a hospital where he later died.⁶⁸



SHOOTING VICTIM John Mee is shown dancing in nightclub with his blond wife while he was in the Navy. *La Tirana* says that she did not know Mee was married until she received a letter from Mrs. Mee. "She told me that I was the only woman she ever feared, though she knew her husband had many others."



SCENE OF SHOOTING was this boat, which Mee bought from Navy for \$750, but which tabloids called a yacht. He first named it *La Tirana*, changed to *La Satira* when Miss Schmidt moved aboard as his mistress. Miss Schmidt said their romance ran aground on quarrels over money and the fact that he was married.

John Mee with his wife, Mary Dixon Mee, and his yacht

(*Life*, 1947 May 5, page 44)

Lorraine DeWood was implicated in the story because she had ended a romantic involvement with John Lester Mee just months before he was killed.⁶⁹ DeWood said she met John Lester Mee in New York City in 1941 and fell in love with him. Mee gave her the nickname "La Tirana" (Spanish for "The Tyrant") in one of his poems. He also wrote about her in his diary.⁷⁰ The New York *Daily News* obtained that diary, and DeWood's love affair with Mee became fuel for the sensationalist press.⁷¹

In an April 22, 1947, interview in New York, DeWood said their affair ended in September 1946.⁷² DeWood, while in Winona for singing engagement, said her romance with Mee ended after she received a letter from his wife, Mary Dixon Mee, stating that she was betrothed to Mee and intended to remain as such. John Mee and Lorraine DeWood had known each other for six years at that point, but DeWood decided to break off the relationship and burned the 103 letters that Mee had sent her over the years.⁷³



(The Decatur Daily Review, 1947 April 15, page 8)

DeWood said, "It's terrible to realize John is dead, . . . but I feel awfully sorry for the girl. She's in a terrific spot."⁷⁴ She also said Mee was "the strangest and yet most wonderful man I ever knew. He was worth being in love with for a while. [But] I also felt that in him was another man---a man who could be cruel, even sadistic."⁷⁵

Former Local Girl Tells Of Love For Mee

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — There was no doubt in the mind of John Lester Mee's Milwaukee "Tirana" when she gave him her love, only to find that it was being betrayed . . .

That he had no more right to woo her than the girl who answered his betrayal by shooting him to death on his yacht in Havana harbor a few days ago.

Held for trial in Cuba is Patricia Schmidt, who says she shot Mee in self-defense in a battle over his decision to return to his wife.

(*La Crosse Tribune*, 1947 April 22, page 2)

DeWood also found herself in somewhat of a spot as an object of tabloid curiosity because of her past involvement with John Lester Mee. People flocked to see her perform in New York City's Greenwich Village Inn just days after Mee died. A reviewer noted "the craning necks and staring curious eyes" of the crowd who had come to see in person the love interest of a now-famous victim. Her looks and heritage added to her allure. The reviewer described her as "a fine figure of a woman," with "thick, raven hair off to one side, flashing dark brown eyes" that embodied an image for Mee's passionate diary entries about "The Tyrant." Her voice was described as "husky, full-throated . . . with a faint Oriental quality that might be traced to her Syrian ancestry." Despite the feverish attention, DeWood was described as relaxed and poised.⁷⁶

[Life magazine](#), one of the most popular and widely-read publications of the mid-20th Century, sent a reporter and one of their top photographers, [Ralph Morse](#), to her Greenwich Village show. In a two-page story in its May 5, 1947, issue, the somewhat sardonic text and photo captions marveled at the sudden fame of a hitherto-almost-unknown nightclub singer, who was performing in "a second-rate Milwaukee nightclub" at the time of Mee's death, plucked from obscurity by a New York nightclub promoter who "put her on display at \$1,250 a week." The article also noted that Mee's wife in Chicago, herself a blonde exotic dancer, had been in a love triangle with another exotic dancer, Patricia Schmidt, for the affections of John Lester Mee, "a neurotic young Navy veteran given to Freudian flights of fancy." The magazine said Mee's wife in Chicago had written a letter to Miss Schmidt proclaiming her marriage to Mee, and it implied that this was something she had found necessary to do on numerous previous occasions.⁷⁷



Lorraine DeWood performing at the Greenwich Village Inn, New York City

(Photo by Ralph Morse, 1947 April; courtesy of Life, Time Inc.)



Lorraine DeWood performing at the Greenwich Village Inn, New York City

(Photo by Ralph Morse, 1947 April; courtesy of Life, Time Inc.)

The May 5, 1947, edition of *Time* magazine had an even more sarcastic take. Calling it a “sultry little tale from Havana” that was blown up by the tabloid press because it was “the season’s spiciest mixture of sin, sex, and masochism . . . [that] the U.S. press tells only too well, and loves to tell.” A gaggle of reporters and photographers raced to Havana to interview and photograph Patricia Schmidt, a “sloe-eyed little belly dancer from Toledo.” *Time* said James Desmond of the *New York Daily News* and Norma Browning of the *Chicago Tribune* had used a boat to get out to Mee’s yacht and take his diaries. Both newspapers published excerpts of salacious prose that revealed his past lovers, and then reporters tracked them down, including “La Tirana,” Lorraine DeWood. [William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal-American*](#) did a story on DeWood under the headline “Mee Perfect Lover.”⁷⁸

Others in the media also decried the sensational coverage of the love-triangle murder committed by an exotic dancer. Howard Fast of *The Chicago Star* called out Hearst Press for putting “. . . the intimate, confidential, not to say titilating [sic] details of Lorraine De Wood’s passionate romance with the murdered man” on page one of its newspapers, complemented by four more pages of the story, plus an additional page of “cheesecake” photographs.⁷⁹

Even after the media blitz had died down, Schmidt still had to face Cuban justice. Her Cuban lawyer, Rene Castellanos, said he had photos of 40 women that were found on Mee's boat. He set out to find and interview all of them as part of his defense based on Mee's "strange passions and unusual desires."⁸⁰ During Schmidt's testimony in the October 1947 trial, she said that Mee had spent a few months in a Navy mental hospital after World War II. She also testified that Mee used the term "Tirana Diabla" to signify his "goddess of love." In a strange twist during the trial, many girls in Havana started to wear their hair in the same style as Schmidt, which they called "Patricia mode."⁸¹

Patricia Schmidt's story that the killing was a case of self-defense did not convince a Cuban court, and she was found guilty of premeditated murder. A three-man tribunal sentenced her to 15 years in prison, \$5,000 restitution to the Mee family, and payment of all court costs. Millionaire hotel owner Amietto Battisti, who was described as "a good friend," promised to pay all costs of a new trial, obtain the services of the best criminal defense attorney in Cuba, and support an appeal to the Cuban supreme court.⁸²

Schmidt spent about a year in prison before being pardoned, in late 1948, by Cuban President [Ramon Grau San Martin](#). Her release prompted some spontaneous celebrations at establishments on the strip club circuit. Schmidt's former boss at the Silver Palm nightclub in Chicago vowed to seek "big bookings in New York" to capitalize on her celebrity. Harry Broshe, manager of the French Casino strip club on North Clark Street in Chicago, proposed that Schmidt collaborate on a strip-tease act with John Lester Mee's widow, Mary Dixon Mee, an exotic dancer who performed under the name Marilyn Drake. Drake quashed that idea by saying, "This night club isn't big enough to hold both of us . . . I don't have any hard feelings for that girl. But, after all --- !"⁸³ Yes, that woman had killed her husband, after all.

Even though that strip-tease doubleheader never happened, Patricia Schmidt resumed her career as "Satira," the exotic dancer.⁸⁴

Lorraine DeWood was probably relieved when the glare of the national media spotlight dimmed enough for her to resume a normal life. Unfortunately, there are few sources that give information on the next sixty years of her life.

On May 23, 1948, Lorraine DeWood married Harold Wadro in Greenwich, Connecticut.⁸⁵ Wadro was a physician in Manhattan, New York.⁸⁶ He was 33 years old at the time, and Lorraine was just shy of her 28th birthday. Dr. Wadro had been married to a woman named Miriam Seibel in about 1940. It is not known whether they divorced, or she died. On September 10, 1948, Lorraine (DeWood) Wadro gave birth a girl, Kathy Wadro. Harold and Lorraine had a son, David, born on April 1, 1952.⁸⁷ Another daughter, Cynthia Wadro, was born on January 10, 1956.⁸⁸

Dr. Wadro was also vice-president of a company called Endorsements, Inc., based in New York City, that provided live and filmed endorsements and testimonials for television.⁸⁹

Dr. Harold S. Wadro was a member of the medical staff at Manhattan General Hospital in New York City when he died suddenly on December 3, 1963. The medical board of the hospital called Wadro a distinguished member of the staff who was "held in the highest esteem by the members of the profession as well as patients and all hospital personnel."⁹⁰

In 1989, Lorraine (DeWood) Wadro married Thomas C. Sofia in New York City.⁹¹ She was a resident of Bay Shore, New York, in 1995.⁹²

Lorraine Fareda DeWood Wadro Sofia lived to be 90 years old. She died on September 28, 2010, in New York City. She was buried in Maple Grove Cemetery at Kews Gardens, in Queens County, New York, where she shares a grave marker with her son, David, one of her daughters, Cynthia, and a grandson.⁹³



(Find a Grave, photo by Carl Ballenas)



Lorraine DeWood, the Syrian-American girl from La Crosse, Wisconsin, who became famous, but not in the way she wanted.

(Find a Grave, photo by Helen Day)

Jeff Rand
La Crosse Public Library, retired

Sources & notes:

¹ “Home movie: 001224: 1939 California musical family attends performances,” *Internet Archive*, accessed 2023 May 24, https://archive.org/details/001224_202005. In this 16-minute, 40-second home movie backstage glimpse of live performers, DeWood appears for about 15 seconds at the 2:56 mark.

² Richard M. Breaux, PhD, “A Survey of La Crosse’s Syrian and Lebanese Community,” *Past Present & Future* (La Crosse County Historical Society) 43 (2022 February): 2-3.

³ “Head American Syrian Clubs,” *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1956 January 29, p. 10

⁴ “Obituary-Michael Abraham,” *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1948 April 5, p. 2.

⁵ “Mrs. Michael Abraham,” *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1945 January 9, p. 8. Her full name was given in the obituary of her daughter, Eva E. Abraham Garvalia, *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1994 November 5, B-4. See also: “Former Local Girl Crowned Queen of 1938,” *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 6, p. 4.

⁶ “Former Local Girl Crowned Queen of 1938,” *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 6.

⁷ 1910 U.S. census, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, population schedule, La Crosse city, p. 4B, dwelling 74, family 83, Michael and Lizzie Abraham; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2023 June 1); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1716.

⁸ 1920 U.S. census, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, population schedule, La Crosse city, p. 2A, dwelling 19, family 22, Michael and Elizabeth Abraham; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2023 June 1); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1992.

⁹ 1930 U.S. census, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, population schedule, La Crosse city, p. 1A, dwelling 3, family 3, Michael and Elizabeth Abraham; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2023 June 1); citing NARA microfilm publication T626.

¹⁰ *Philippi’s Directory of the City of La Crosse Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names . . .* (La Crosse, Wisconsin: L. P. Philippi Co., 1903) 84, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹¹ *1905-1906 Philippi’s Directory of the City of La Crosse Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names . . .* (La Crosse, Wisconsin: L. P. Philippi Co., 1905) 85, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹² *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1907 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1907) 191, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹³ *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1909 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1908) 196, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹⁴ 1910 U.S. census, La Crosse Co., Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 4B, dwell. 74, fam. 83, Michael and Lizzie Abraham.

¹⁵ *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1911 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1910) 192, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹⁶ *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1913 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1913) 175, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹⁷ *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1913 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1913) 513, for “Richelieu Hotel.”

¹⁸ *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1915 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1915) 165, for “Abraham Michael.”

¹⁹ *Wright’s Directory of La Crosse for 1917 Containing A General Directory of Citizens, a Classified Business Directory, a Complete Street Guide and Miscellaneous Information* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1917) 131, for “Abraham Michael.”

- ²⁰ *Wright's La Crosse City Directory 1919* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1919) 172, for "Abraham Michael (Lizzie)."
- ²¹ 1920 U.S. census, La Crosse Co., Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 2A, dwell. 19, fam. 22, Michael and Elizabeth Abraham.
- ²² *Wright's La Crosse City Directory 1922 Containing an Alphabetically Arranged List of Business Firms and Private Citizens . . .* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1922) 158, for "Abraham Michael (Lizzie)." Also: *Wright's La Crosse City Directory 1924 Containing an Alphabetically Arranged List of Business Firms and Private Citizens . . .* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1924) 158, for "Abraham Michl (Lizzie)."
- ²³ 1930 U.S. census, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 1A, dwell. 3, fam. 3, Michael and Elizabeth Abraham.
- ²⁴ 1930 U.S. census, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, population schedule, Milwaukee city, p. 11A, dwelling 35, family 67, Albert R. and Sophie B. De Wood; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2023 May 23); citing NARA microfilm publication T626.
- ²⁵ Iowa State Department of Health, "Return of Marriage to Clerk of District Court," image, (<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), entry for Edward Adeeb DeWood (1938 September 6).
- ²⁶ "Wisconsin, U.S., Birth Records, 1812-1921," database, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), entry for Loraine Farede Dewood (15 Jun 1920). This record shows her first name with just one "r" but it was commonly spelled "Lorraine" in later years.
- ²⁷ "Former Local Girl Crowned Queen of 1938," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 6. City directories from that time do not show 1100 Rose Street as an address. The 1922 and 1924 city directories show the closest residence was 1108 Rose Street owned by Sol A. Skaff.
- ²⁸ "Former Local Girl Tells Of Love For Mee," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1947 April 22, p. 2.
- ²⁹ 1930 U.S. census, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 11A, dwell. 35, fam. 67, Albert R. and Sophie B. De Wood. There is another word after "Wholesale" that would tell us what Albert was a jobber for, but that word is unreadable on the census sheet. It might be grocery, or grain, or something else.
- ³⁰ *Wright's Milwaukee (Wisconsin) City Directory, Volume LXXIX, 1932*, (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1932) 408, database, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), entry for DeWood Albert R.
- ³¹ "United States World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," images, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), card for Albert Robert Dewood, serial no. U780, Local Draft Board 16, Kansas City, Missouri.
- ³² "Obituary-Michael Abraham," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1948 April 5.
- ³³ *Ancestry, Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), memorial 132060150, Albert Robert DeWood (1893-1973), Hollywood Forever cemetery, Hollywood, Los Angeles County, California; photograph by Romper90069.
- ³⁴ *Ancestry, Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), memorial 132060151, Sophia Bourestom DeWood (1893-1983), Hollywood Forever cemetery, Hollywood, Los Angeles County, California; photograph by Romper90069.
- ³⁵ Lew Sheaffer, "Brooklyn and Broadway Night Life," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1947 April 25, p. 6.
- ³⁶ "Former Local Girl Crowned Queen of 1938," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 6.
- ³⁷ "Syrian-Americans Will Parade Today," *Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Gazette*, 1938 September 4, p. 7. Also: "Former Local Girl Crowned Queen of 1938," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 6.
- ³⁸ "Former Local Girl Crowned Queen of 1938," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 6.
- ³⁹ "You Are Cordially Invited to Visit the White Front Night Club," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1930 September 6, p. 7.
- ⁴⁰ *Wright's La Crosse (La Crosse County, Wis.) City Directory 1939* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Wright Directory Co., 1938) 597, for "White Front Tavern."
- ⁴¹ "Present Flags To 2 Families," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1945 July 22, p. 10. Louis's only son, Arnold Abraham, was killed in action in the Philippines during World War II. Arnold's grandfather was Naif Abraham of La Crosse. Naif Abraham and Albert R. DeWood were brothers. See: "Mrs. Michael Abraham" obituary, *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1945 January 9, p. 8.
- ⁴² "Due To Bad Weather and Late Arrival," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 7, p. 9.
- ⁴³ "Lorraine DeWood," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1938 September 8, p.8.

- ⁴⁴ 1940 U.S. census, Los Angeles County, California, population schedule, Beverly Hills city, p. 12B, household 377, Lorraine DeWood; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2023 June 1); citing NARA microfilm publication T627, roll 221.
- ⁴⁵ "West at Rancho," *Oakland Tribune*, 1940 October 6, p. 30. Also: "Lorraine DeWood," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1943 January 15, p. 7. Also: "'Syrian Beauty' Lorraine DeWood for a limited engagement before going to Hollywood to fulfill her movie contract with Columbia Pictures," *Charleston (West Virginia) Gazette*, 1943 June 13, p. 5. Also: Ruth G. Davis, "Going Places," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1943 July 16, p. 8. Also: T. E. Y., "With the Lamplighter," *Daily News (Los Angeles)*, 1945 October 16, p. 17.
- ⁴⁶ "'Yours for Fun' Opens Fourth Big Week Today," *Hollywood Citizen News*, 1943 November 18, p. 8.
- ⁴⁷ Allen Rich, "As I See It," *San Fernando Valley (California) Times*, 1945 October 11, p. 19. "The Blackouts" was probably a nod to wartime blackouts of cities that were intended to thwart possible bombing raids over the United States.
- ⁴⁸ Allen Rich, "Entertainment As I See It," *San Fernando (California) Valley Times*, 1945 October 25, p. 13.
- ⁴⁹ "This is a charade," *Oakland Tribune*, 1940 September 1, p. 26. This photograph shows DeWood posing with another singer and two baseball players to promote a semi-pro baseball tournament. Also: "Ship Ahoy," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1941 August 14, p. 18. This is a photo of DeWood modeling a dress at the Montauk Yacht Club. Also: "Thanks, Syria!" *Nebraska (Nebraska City) Daily News Press*, 1943 December 27, p. 6. DeWood is shown in Los Angeles wearing a swimsuit that almost looks like a 1960s miniskirt.
- ⁵⁰ "Mercer Woman's Club Has Meet Monday Night," *Ironwood (Michigan) Daily Globe*, 1944 March 15, p. 7.
- ⁵¹ "'Syrian Beauty' Lorraine DeWood for a limited engagement before going to Hollywood to fulfill her movie contract with Columbia Pictures," *Charleston (West Virginia) Gazette*, 1943 June 13, p. 5. This is an advertisement for her singing engagement at the Club Continental in Chesapeake, Ohio.
- ⁵² "Song of the Open Road," *Internet Movie Database*, accessed 2023 May 24, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0037297/fullcredits/?ref=tt_q1_1.
- ⁵³ "Song of the Open Road (1944)," AFI Catalog of Feature Films: The First 100 Years 1893-1993, *American Film Institute*, accessed 2023 May 24, <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/24174>.
- ⁵⁴ "The Bullfighters," *Internet Movie Database*, accessed 2023 May 24, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0037563/fullcredits/?ref=ttexr_q1_1.
- ⁵⁵ Harry McArthur, "After Dark," *The Evening Star* (Washington, D. C.), 1947 January 9, p. B-10.
- ⁵⁶ "A Lavish New Show," *The Evening Star* (Washington, D. C.), 1947 January 10, p. B-18.
- ⁵⁷ Michael Turback, *What a Swell Party It Was: Rediscovering Food & Drink from the Golden Age of the American Nightclub* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2018); digital images, Google Books (<http://google.com/books> : accessed 2023 May 24).
- ⁵⁸ Lee Zhitto, *The Billboard*, 1945 October 20, p. 37; digital images, Google Books (<http://google.com/books> : accessed 2023 May 24).
- ⁵⁹ Allen Rich, "Entertainment As I See It," *San Fernando (California) Valley Times*, 1945 October 25.
- ⁶⁰ Walter Winchell, "On Broadway," *The Waterbury (Connecticut) Democrat*, 1941 November 3, p. 5.
- ⁶¹ Walter Winchell, "In New York," *The Waterbury (Connecticut) Evening Democrat*, 1943 July 29, p. 5.
- ⁶² Dorothy Gilgallen, "Voice of Broadway: Gossip in Gotham," *The Mercury* (Pottstown, Pennsylvania), 1943 August 14, p. 4.
- ⁶³ Dorothy Kilgallen, "The Voice of Broadway," *The News Herald* (Franklin, Pennsylvania), 1947 May 16, p. 4.
- ⁶⁴ "Mee Was Author, Dancing Teacher," *The Decatur (Illinois) Daily Review*, 1947 April 15, p. 8.
- ⁶⁵ "Mee Was Author, Dancing Teacher," *The Decatur (Illinois) Daily Review*, 1947 April 15. The most famous commander of a PT boat during World War II was future president of the United States, John F. Kennedy.
- ⁶⁶ "Mee Was Author, Dancing Teacher," *The Decatur (Illinois) Daily Review*, 1947 April 15.
- ⁶⁷ "Dancer Admits Shooting Mee," *The Decatur (Illinois) Daily Review*, 1947 April 15, p. 8.
- ⁶⁸ Francis L. McCarthy, "Mee Recanted On Marriage Pledge, Says Dancer Held For His Slaying," *The Knoxville (Tennessee) Journal*, 1947 April 17, p. 13.
- ⁶⁹ "Tells of Romance," *The Knoxville (Tennessee) Journal*, 1947 April 25, p. 14.
- ⁷⁰ "Former Local Girl Tells Of Love For Mee," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1947 April 22, p. 2.
- ⁷¹ "Fame Comes To 'La Tirana,'" *Life*, 1947 May 5, p. 43.

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- ⁷² "Tells of Romance," *The Knoxville (Tennessee) Journal*, 1947 April 25.
- ⁷³ "Ex-La Crosse Girl Once Mee's Friend," *Winona (Minnesota) Republican-Herald*, 1947 April 23, p. 6.
- ⁷⁴ "Former Local Girl Tells Of Love For Mee," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Tribune*, 1947 April 22.
- ⁷⁵ "Fame Comes To 'La Tirana,'" *Life*, 1947 May 5.
- ⁷⁶ Lew Sheaffer, "Brooklyn and Broadway Night Life," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1947 April 25, p. 6.
- ⁷⁷ "Fame Comes To 'La Tirana,'" *Life*, 1947 May 5.
- ⁷⁸ "The Press: Satira, Tirana & Mee," *Time*, 1947 May 5.
- ⁷⁹ Howard Fast, "State of the Nation: Hearst and mortality," *The Chicago Star*, 1947 May 3, p. 8.
- ⁸⁰ "'Tiranas' In John Mee's Life Sought By Dancer's Attorney," *The Knoxville Journal*, 1947 May 9, p. 10.
- ⁸¹ "Love Cooled, Says Dancer," *Oakland Tribune*, 1947 October 17, p. 15.
- ⁸² "Satira Receives 15 Years in Yacht Slaying," *The Salt Lake (Salt Lake City, Utah) Tribune*, 1947 December 23, p. 5.
- ⁸³ "Chicago Bistros Plan Welcome For 'Satira,'" *Rushville (Indiana) Republican*, 1948 October 1, p. 6.
- ⁸⁴ "Patricia 'Satira' Schmidt Gets Into Limelight Again," *The Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, Pennsylvania), 1949 August 2, p. 15. Schmidt was named in a lawsuit brought by Cleveland housewife and mother of three who claimed her husband had been keeping Schmidt as his mistress in various cities around the country. The lawsuit was later dropped.
- ⁸⁵ Connecticut State Library, "Connecticut Vital Records—Index of Marriages, 1897-2001," database, (ctatatelibrarydata.org/marriage-records/ : accessed 2023 May 30), entry for Harold Wadro and Lorraine DeWood.
- ⁸⁶ "Wadro—Harold S., M.D.," *The New York Times*, 1963 December 4, p. 47.
- ⁸⁷ "Harold S Wadro MD Facts," database, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2023 May 20).
- ⁸⁸ *Ancestry, Find A Grave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/249352572/lorraine-farede-wadro-sofia#view-photo=266766410> : accessed 2023 May 30), memorial 249352572, Lorraine Farede DeWood Wadro Sofia (1920-2010), Maple Grove Cemetery, Kew Gardens, Queens County, New York; photographs by Helen Day and Carl Ballenas.
- ⁸⁹ "The 1963 Film Daily Year Book of Motion Pictures (1963)," *Lantern*, accessed 2023 June 7, https://lantern.mediahist.org/catalog/1963filmdailyyea1963wids_0403.
- ⁹⁰ "Wadro—Harold S., M.D.," *The New York Times*, 1963 December 4.
- ⁹¹ New York City, New York, "Marriage License Indexes, 1907-2018," database, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), entry for Lorraine F Wadro, license number 3841.
- ⁹² United States, "Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1," database, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2023 May 30), entry for Lorraine F Sofia [Lorraine Wadro].
- ⁹³ *Find A Grave*, memorial 249352572, Lorraine Farede DeWood Wadro Sofia (1920-2010), photographs by Helen Day and Carl Ballenas.