

GLORIA JEAN - BIOGRAPHY

REAL NAME: Gloria Jean Schoonover	HEIGHT: 4 feet 11 inches
BIRTHPLACE: Buffalo, New York	WEIGHT: 85
BIRTHDATE: April 14, 1928	EYES: Blue
NATIONALITY: American	HAIR: Sandy brown

When Gloria Jean, age 15 months, lay in a crib at her Scranton, Pennsylvania home, she hummed "Little Annie Rooney" from start to finish.

At three and one-half, billed as "Baby Schoonover," Gloria sang "When I Take My Sugar to Tea" with a radio-vaudeville act. At five she scored a definite hit with a rendition of the difficult "Eili, Eili" at a Jewish festival in Scranton. At the same age she had many stage, radio and church appearances to her credit, including a performance that packed Scranton's Capitol Theatre.

At eleven Gloria made her first screen appearance in Joe Pasternak's Universal production, "The Under-Pup." Before this, Gloria's mother, Mrs. Eleanor Schoonover, steadfastly refused to "push" the child's talent until the little girl was old enough and strong enough for a career.

Gloria was born in Buffalo, N. Y. on April 14, 1928, where her father, Ferman H. Schoonover, was a welding instructor. When Gloria was six months' old, the family moved to Scranton and her father became a piano salesman.

At six years she attracted the attention of Paul Whiteman. He offered her a contract, but Mrs. Schoonover refused, believing Gloria too young.

The decision proved sound. At seven, Gloria suffered her first and only serious illness. Complications followed a tonsilectomy and Gloria was a year in recovering. At this time her ambition was to become an opera singer, and her greatest fear during the illness was that she would lose her voice. However, on her recovery she sang more beautifully than ever.

In 1938 a small New York City opera company engaged Gloria, and she became the youngest member of an opera troupe in the country. When the company began a nation-wide tour, Mrs. Schoonover removed Gloria from the troupe because of strenuous rehearsals and traveling.

At this time Pasternak was induced by Larry Waterman, an assistant to President Nate Blumberg of Universal Pictures, to interview Gloria. After hearing her sing, Pasternak believed he had found the ideal title player for "The Under-Pup."

Gloria came to Hollywood with her mother in December, 1938, to undergo a five-months' orientation period before she was even tested for the screen.

Her only lessons aside from school were singing lessons with Charles Previn, studio musical director. She became acquainted with Grover Jones, screen writer, and Director Richard Wallace, both of whom injected as much of Gloria's own personality as possible into "The Under-Pup." This followed a Pasternak precedent set in five Deanna Durbin hits.

As a result, Gloria's first picture received critical acclaim and audience approval. A new star was born.

Gloria is one of four Schoonover daughters. Oldest is Sally, 15, a Pennsylvania champion swimmer. Lois, 10, is Gloria's stand-in, and Bonnie, 4, has displayed singing talent of her own.

The only singers in Gloria's family were her maternal grandmother and her "Uncle Jack," John A. Davies of Scranton, both

amateurs.

Gloria is of Welsh-Dutch descent. She stands 59 inches tall and weights 85 pounds, has blue eyes and sandy brown hair with a reddish tint.

Her likes and dislikes are those of any normal American youngster. Her favorite food is ice-cream, her pet aversion spinach. She prefers "fussy, frilly" dresses. Her favorite color is blue. She reads stories of the operas, fairy tales and biographies of music composers. She learned to ride and swim at the family's former vacation site, Lake Sheridan, Pennsylvania.

Gloria is quick to learn her lines. She studies them the night before with her sisters, each taking a part.

She states that the "low period" of her life was during her illness, the "high point," her coming to Hollywood. Following completion of "The Under-Pup," she and her family toured the United States and Canada, a trip climaxed by homecoming and world premiere ceremonies at Scranton, attended by 80,000. The reception accorded Gloria and her first picture indicates that her exodus to Hollywood was a "high point" for motion picture fans as well as for the youthful coloratura and actress.