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FLOYD WARD SCHOOL OF DANCING COLLECTION

The collection chronicles the Floyd Ward School of Dancing through newspaper clippings and photographs. Also included are notes on choreography for ballet, tap, and various dance routines.

[Complete finding guide available with the collection.]

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- BOX 1**
- 1-1 Ward family
 - 1-2 Advertising
 - 1-3 "Anchors Aweigh: Follies Afloat" – Kiwanis Club (1941)
 - 1-4 "From Oars to Orbit" – Children's Recital (1958)
 - 1-5 Miscellaneous brochures and notices
 - 1-6 Miscellaneous instructions, notes, correspondence (I)
 - 1-7 Miscellaneous instructions, notes, correspondence (II)
 - 1-8 Miscellaneous photographs
 - 1-9 Newspaper clippings (1927-1981)
 - 1-10 Revues (1937-1969)
 - 1-11 Revues (1970-1988)
 - 1-12 Exam Certificate (Virginia Ward)(Framed)
- BOX 2**
- Choreography and Dance Routines
 - 2-1 Baby ballet
 - 2-2 "Beth's routines" (Beth Morrison)
 - 2-3 Dancing Masters of America (3rd Annual Material Course)(1941)
 - 2-4 *Eighteen Graded Tap Successes* (Del Wright)(n.d.)
 - 2-5 Hoctor Routines – Index with routines A-L
 - 2-6 Ballet book #3
 - 2-7 Combinations
 - 2-8 Tap
 - 2-9 Toe dances

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FLOYD WARD SCHOOL OF DANCING

The Floyd Ward School of Dancing first appears in the city directory in 1931 at 416 Main Street in Lynchburg. Between 1922 and 1930, Miss Floyd Ward was listed as a dancing teacher, perhaps at her home at 903 Wise Street, Lynchburg.

The Floyd Ward School of Dancing did not place accent on careers, although some of its graduates have entered the field of professional dancing. The ideal of the school was “to develop students physically, and through healthy bodies and minds, to help them create for themselves love and appreciation of dancing and the related arts, and to attain, in a congenial atmosphere, poise and self-expression.”

Floyd Ward herself expressed the belief that children, talented or untalented, improve and learn to interpret music, coordinate better, and associate happily with other children, in dance groups. Special emphasis was placed on posture, physical development, rhythm, coordination and the development of self-confidence.

Methods of the foremost New York and European studios were taught and the schools were graded and accredited. Six years of dancing, representing 300 hours of work, are required for graduation.

Instructors in the schools met with the Wards each year for a week of intensive study of technique and the latest teaching methods.

Each year in Lynchburg, the Junior League sponsored the Floyd Ward Revue. Students from the very young to older performers demonstrated their skills in a variety of dance forms. The Ward dancers have performed at the Schubert Festival in Charlottesville, the Beau Arts Ball at the University of Virginia, the Fancy Dress Ball at Washington and Lee University, and for the Viennese Ball in Roanoke as well as having appeared with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra.

[Lynchburg City Directory 1922-1931, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Va.; Floyd Ward School of Dancing Collection, MS2105, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Va.]

(Continued)

MS2105

FLOYD WARD SCHOOL OF DANCING COLLECTION, Cont'd.

NATHALIE FLOYD OTEY WARD (1903-2002)

Nathalie Floyd Otey Ward, daughter of Anselm Lynch Ward and Nathalie Otey, was born at *Otterbourne* in Campbell County on 4 September 1903. She was a lineal descendant of the founding family of Lynchburg and of five Virginia governors. The family home on the Ward's Road had been owned by her father's family since the eighteenth century. Ward's Road itself was built by her fourth great-grandfather, Major John Ward.

Miss Ward showed talent for dancing at an early age and studied with Florence Barr in Lynchburg. Later she studied with leading dancers and instructors in New York. Her dancing school began through a request of Mrs. Fred Harper, her mother's cousin, who asked Floyd to teach dancing to half a dozen youngsters. The class was interrupted when Floyd's parents sent her to Georgetown Visitation Convent. Upon her return from school, she resumed her classes in Lynchburg.

From this beginning the Floyd Ward School of Dancing grew into twenty-two dancing schools at its peak, including schools in West Virginia and Kentucky, in addition to the large schools in Lynchburg and Roanoke. Although she had a remarkable talent in the art of dancing, she also had an unusual aptitude for teaching.

"Veronine Vestoff, one time partner of the late Pavlova, said Miss Ward could succeed at either teaching or dancing on the stage. He offered her a job in his school while she made up her mind which to choose."

Floyd Ward studied dancing in its various aspects in New York, Washington, Hollywood, and Bermuda. She also studied ballet at The School of American Ballet, with Daganova, Vilzak-Shollar, and other noted ballet notables. She studied modern dance in classes under Martha Graham. She approached this form of dance through studies earlier with the Denishawn School and with the Weidman-Humphrey instructors. Spanish and tap specialists under whom she studied included the Cansino family, Carlos, and Jack Manning. Ballroom instructors under whom she studied were Arthur Murray, and Fred Le Gourne, among others.

Her sisters, Virginia, Dorothea, and Mary Dearing, were associated with Miss Ward in the operation of the school. Mary Dearing Ward, an artist and writer, often designed the sets for the dance revues.

In addition to teaching dancing, Miss Ward was also interested in the welfare of the very old and was involved for a number of years as a member of the Lynchburg Committee for the Aging. A philanthropic, civic-minded individual, as well as a dedicated teacher, Miss Ward for many years donated the proceeds from the dance revue in Lynchburg and Roanoke for community and cultural projects.

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FLOYD WARD SCHOOL OF DANCING COLLECTION, Cont'd.

In 1960, the Woman's Club of Roanoke began sponsoring the annual revue in that city. A fund established at the Eye Bank of Virginia was operated with the proceeds raised through the sponsorship of the recitals. It was established to provide assistance for the cost of eye surgery for indigent children coming from the western part of Virginia. In 1975, Miss Ward was honored when the fund was named the Floyd Ward Children's Fund.

Miss Ward was also a founder of the Lynchburg Visiting Nurses Association.

Nathalie Floyd Otey Ward died at her home in Lynchburg on 4 December 2002.

[Newspaper clippings, obituary, Floyd Ward School of Dancing Collection, MS2105, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Va.]

MARY DEARING WARD (1897-1991)

Mary Dearing Ward, daughter of Anselm Lynch Ward and Nathalie Otey, was born 21 September 1897, at *Otterbourne* in Campbell County. She attended Notre Dame Academy in Baltimore, Maryland, and the Art Students League in New York City.

Miss Ward was a writer and had a residence in New York as well as in Lynchburg. Though primarily a playwright, she was the author of satirical verses and essays, and had works published in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Forum*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and other publications. She wrote "Virginia is a State of Mind", a play which was privately produced in 1941 and enthusiastically received in Lynchburg.

Miss Ward was partner with her sisters in the Floyd Ward School of Dancing. She painted sets and designed costumes for the school's productions and frequently participated in presentations of the Lynchburg Little Theatre.

Mary Dearing Ward died 29 December 1991 at her home in Lynchburg and was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery.

[Obituary, *News & Daily Advance*, 31 December 1991, Sect. B, p. 2, col. 3, Floyd Ward School of Dancing Collection, MS2105, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Va.]

DOROTHEA HENRY WARD GILFOYLE (1909-1979)

Dorothy Henry Ward, daughter of Anselm Lynch Ward and Nathalie Otey, was born in Lynchburg 17 March 1909. She was a member of Holy Cross Catholic Church, the Colonial Dames of Virginia, and the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Daughters of the

American Revolution. She was partner with three sisters in the Floyd Ward School of Dancing.

The wife of Robert Edmund Gilfoyle of Lynchburg, Mrs. Gilfoyle died 28 April 1979 and was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery.

[Obituary, *Lynchburg News*, 28 Apr. 1979, p. 11 col. 1, Floyd Ward School of Dancing Collection, MS2105, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Va.]

VIRGINIA OTEY WARD LITTLE (1912-1997)

Virginia Otey Ward, daughter of Anselm Lynch Ward and Nathalie Otey, was born in Lynchburg 1 March 1912. She attended Vassar College and Randolph Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg. She also studied ballet and mime with the Royal Ballet in London and in Rambouillet, France, and with several well-known instructors. She was partner with her three sisters in the Floyd Ward School of Dancing.

In 1953, Virginia Ward traveled to England to attend a teachers' conference at the Sadler's Wells Ballet School in London. She also traveled to County Galway, Ireland, to visit Lynch family relatives.

In 1986, Virginia Ward married Col. Donald C. Little, who was a classmate of her brother, Peter Otey Ward, in the class of 1931 at the United States Military Academy. She moved to Fort Belvoir at that time.

Mrs. Little was a member of the Colonial Dames of America and a former member of the Junior League of Lynchburg.

Mrs. Little died on 23 February 1997 at her home in Fairfax County. She was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery in Lynchburg.

[News article, *Daily Advance*, 1 October 1953, Sect. II, p. 4 col. 1; Obituary, *News & Daily Advance*, 25 February 1997, Sect. B, p. 2 col. 2, Floyd Ward School of Dancing Collection, MS2105, Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Va.]