

GEORGIE DEVOE

(1867-) Titan-haired American soubrette, banjo player and sketch performer Georgie Devoe established herself in musical comedy and burlesque in the USA and in London's West End, before teaming up with marionette artist Prof. Fred Davys. The pair toured Great Britain with Harry Rickards before coming to Australia with his New English Comedy Co in 1888. After she and Davys separated in 1893, Devoe teamed up with comedian Charlie Fanning to present a sketch act, while also working solo turns. They later toured internationally for six years before returning to Australia in 1908. Two years later they moved permanently to South Africa. After Fanning's death in 1915, Devoe moved to India before returning to the USA with their daughter Charlotte. She travelled extensively in later life and possibly retired in either the UK or the Bahamas.

1867-1887

Born Georgina Peabody Brundage in New York City (USA) on 4 October 1867, Georgie Devoe's father, Jessie Brundage, was the proprietor of the Peabody Hotel, situated at Union Square near the intersection of 14th Street and Broadway.¹ In an 1889 interview published in the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*,² Devoe recalls that her father's establishment was a "noted rendezvous for theatricals," a factor which no doubt provided her with the opportunity to start her professional career at the age of nine. That engagement, a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* produced by John P. Smith at the Grand Opera House (8th Avenue), saw her cast as Little Eva. According to the article, the young girl was considered the most successful Little Eva in the USA and led to her being engaged for five years in various roles by Smith and Mestayer and then Darrett and Palmer. It was during this period of her career that Devoe learned to play the banjo under the tutorage of George Dobson. She was also taught dancing by a Mr Hogan, the man responsible for teaching many of the leading soubrettes of America, including Lotta, Patta Rosa and Minnie Palmer (31 July 1889, 5).



Devoe further records that her last five years in the USA saw her engaged in musical specialties for Tony Pastor, James Donaldson, Harry Miner, G. W. Gilmore, Thomas Kelly, William Harris, Dr Dothrope, Messrs Hopkins and Morra. Her final appearance was as a singing soubrette in Rice and Dixey's production of *Adonis*. She was subsequently engaged by Dixey³ to join a company he had booked for a season at London's Gaiety Theatre (beginning 31 May 1886). During her four months with the company (*Adonis* ran for 110 performances), she was spotted by Harry Rickards who engaged her to tour Great Britain with his company for much of 1887. The contract was eventually extended to include a tour of Australia in 1888 (SBMJ: 31 July 1889, 5). Although Devoe makes no mention of Fred Davys (born David Davey Parkinson) in the 1889 interview, her grandson Michael Raynor believes that the couple may have begun their relationship either in the USA around 1885/1886 or while touring Great Britain with Harry Rickards in 1887. Raynor's research into his grandparents indicates, for example, that Davys (who also performed under the name Professor Davys) was working as a singer, dancer, comedian, acrobat and puppeteer in New York as early as 1883 and up until at least 1886 - a time frame that largely corresponds with Devoe's presence in the city. Among Davys' engagements established to date were the Opera House (ca. Oct. 1883); and the Summer Theatre (1885)⁴ and the People's Theatre (ca. May/June 1885). The latter theatre was situated in Gorman Street⁵ (5 Oct. 1944, n. pag.). Further evidence for Davys and Devoe's relationship having begun by mid-1887 is the fact that the couple's only child, Frederick Jessie Parkinson was born in early March 1888. His birth certificate (registered 10 Mar. 1888) records that he was born in Chatham, England and that his parents were Fredrick Parkinson (not David) aged 35, and Georgina Parkinson (nee Brundage) aged 21. Interestingly Raynor has not been able to locate a marriage registration for the child's parents in either the USA or the UK.

¹ Devoe's mother's name was Kate Elton Brundage (maiden name currently unknown)

² The same article/interview was published earlier in the *Queenscliff Sentinel*, *Drysdale*, *Portarlinton and Sorrento Advertiser* (and likely in other newspapers around the same time) which suggests the possibility that it originated as a press release.

³ Boston-born actor/comedian/dancer Henry Edward Dixey (1859-1943), first made his name in London as member of the Stock Company at the Howard Athenaeum (London) in the late 1860s. He worked his way up from romantic juvenile roles to become an acknowledged tragedian and comic-opera star. He was also reportedly a magician of consummate skill. His greatest success was playing the title role in *Adonis* (which he co-wrote with William Gill) for a record 603 performances on Broadway, along with 110 performances at the Gaiety Theatre, London in 1886.

⁴ *West Wyalong Advocate* 5 Oct. 1944, n. pag. This obituary also records that he was at the Teatro de Cataluna, Barcelona in July 1887.

⁵ *Lowell Daily Courier* 20 May 1885, n. pag.

1888-1893

Having been engaged by Harry Rickards to tour Australia with his New English Comedy and Specialty combination, Devoe and Davys sailed from England within a few weeks of Devoe having given birth. The company arrived at Albany, Western Australia aboard the R.M.S. Oroya on 21 April, and then continued through to Adelaide in time to open at the Theatre Royal on Saturday the 28th. Also making their first trip to Australia were Ada Delroy and James Bell. They similarly spent many years in the country over the coming decades. The company's opening night show included a production of the two act "musical absurdity" *On Guard*, in which Devoe played the character Miss Priscilla Jinks and Davys played Mr Longton (described in advertising as "a marionette"). While Devoe and Davys were engaged to work with other members of the company in burlesques, musical comedies etc, in addition to presenting their own solo specialty turns, Devoe also doubled as Davys' assistant during his marionette act.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

Arrival of s.s. Oroya to-day at Albany having on board

MR. HARRY RICKARDS
with his new Musical and
SPECIALTY COMEDY COMPANY,
who will have the honour of appearing at the
THEATRE ROYAL
on
SATURDAY, APRIL 23.

Full particulars in future issues. x

South Australian Register 21 Apr. (1888). 1.

After closing his Adelaide season Rickards took the troupe to Sydney, where it opened at the New Opera House on Saturday 19 May. Between that season and early 1891 Devoe and Davys toured extensively throughout Australia for Rickards. On two occasions (in 1888 and 1890) the company also joined forces with the Cogill Bros to present double combination entertainments. In early 1891 the couple left Rickards to undertake an engagement with Lizzie Hastings and over the next year or so they worked for various firms, notably J. Billins' Representative Metropolitan Company (1891). They also formed their own touring combination. Billed as Davys' Bright Lights Company, it presented selection of variety specialties, pantomime and other musical entertainments. Among the initial artists engaged were Will Stevens and Lorrie St George.

PUBLIC HALL, EUROA.
MONDAY and TUESDAY,
June 1st and 2nd.

First Appearance in Euroa of
MR. FRED. DAVYS'
BRIGHT LIGHTS COMEDY
and
NOVELTY COMPANY.

Our Artists:

MISS GEORGIE DEVOE—The Charming Soubrette Song and Dance Artiste, and Instrumentalist. The only lady in Australia introducing a Banjo Song and Dance.

MR. FRED DAVYS—The great and only Irish Comedian and Champion Eccentric Dancer of England and America.

Mr. Will Stevens. Miss Essie Loon.
Mr. T. C. Parker. Miss Marie Farley.
Mr. Joe Mac. Miss Florrie St. George

And the Wonder of all Wonders, the
American
FANTOCCINIE & PANTOMIME!
introducing the
FUNNIEST CLOWN IN THE WORLD.

The Transformation Scene is a copy on a miniature Scale of the great Drury Lane Pantomime, with all the latest lime-light and mechanical effects.

This performance is a treat for the young as well as their elders.
Admission—3s, 2s, and 1s.

NEW OPERA HOUSE.
Lessee and Manager Mr. F. E. Hiscocks.
Acting Manager Mr. R. B. Wiseman.

NEXT SATURDAY, MAY 19,
GRAND OPENING NIGHT and FIRST APPEARANCE in
AUSTRALIA
of
**HARRY RICKARDS' NEW COMEDY and SPECIALTY
COMPANY.**
Sole Proprietor and Manager... .. Mr. Harry Rickards.

Mr. HARRY RICKARDS respectfully informs his Australian friends and patrons that he has spared neither time, trouble, or expense in engaging the very best Novelty Company of Star Artists that could be procured in England. This truly great Company of

12 ARTISTES 12
12 ARTISTES 12

will have the honour of making their appearance in several new and original MUSICAL COMEDIES, written and composed expressly to show their respective talents.

MOST IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENT of
Mr. WILLIAM WOODHEAD,
the MUSICAL MARVEL. WOODHEAD, the Wonder, performs on various difficult instruments, playing the cleverest musical selections. All lovers of music should hear him. Plays seven different instruments at one time.

Master ANTONIO, the Zither Interlocutor.
Professor DAVY'S WONDERFUL MARIONETTES.
The figures stand 4ft. high. The FUNNIEST ACT EVER SEEN.

Mr. JAMES BELL,
This gentleman is acknowledged to be one of the most refined and legitimate Negro Delineators now before the public.

Mons. PROVO,
the Demon Juggler Extraordinary. This wonderful artiste has just concluded a twelvemonths' engagement at the Alhambra Palace, London.

Mr. FRED TERRISS,
Principal Low Comedian, Irish Vocalist, and Dancer.
Miss KATIE LAWRENCE,
the fascinating Burlesque Actress, Vocaliste, and Specialte Dancer, from the Alhambra Theatre, London.
Miss ADA D'ALROY,
the celebrated Burlesque Actress, Tyrolean Singer—a Little Gem.
Miss GEORGIE DEVOE, Actress, Vocalist, Banjoist, &c.
Miss MARIAN CONSTANCE,
Character Actress, Vocalist, and Eccentric Dancer.
Miss KATE LEETE, the charming Burlesque Actress, Vocalist, and Serio-Comic Artiste (Sappho).

And yours to command,
Mr. HARRY RICKARDS,
the EMINENT VOCAL COMEDIAN, who will have the honour of introducing all the LATEST LONDON SUCCESSES.

OPENING NIGHT—SATURDAY, May 19.

Full particulars in future issues.
Agent for Mr. Rickards Mr. SYDNEY HALL.

Sydney Morning Herald 12 May 1888. 2.

The troupe is known to have toured regional NSW (including Broken Hill) and Victoria between May and July 1891 before setting for several months in Melbourne where they joined the Representative Metropolitan Company during its season at the Victoria Hall. After ending that engagement the Bright Lights troupe went back on tour through regional Victoria (ca. Nov/Dec.).

Between late January and November 1892 Davys and Devoe toured their company through New Zealand, with the biggest success of the tour being the 120 night season played in Wellington. Two of the higher profile artists to have joined the troupe for the Dominion tour were John Tudor and Tom Griffin.

After returning to Australia Devoe and Davis went back to Melbourne to take up another contract with J. Billin at the Victoria Hall. There they presented a festive season show billed as *The Merry Christmas Party*. Comprising most of the members of the Bright Lights Company along with several selected guest artists, the programme's highlight was Davys' "Merry Christmas Pantomime."

The following year, 1893, saw Davys and Devoe secure engagements with at least three companies - the Cogill Brothers New Minstrels (Melbourne), Hudson's Surprise Party (Adelaide and Broken Hill) and Harry Rickards (Sydney). Under Rickards management they appeared initially at the Tivoli Theatre and then transferred to the Alhambra Music Hall for the opening week of the entrepreneur's New Paragon Minstrels. With the first company the pair performed alongside such artists as George H. Wood and Harry Clay. The Alhambra line-up was equally strong, comprising such artists as the Leslie Brothers, Bovis and Franks, Arthur Farley and Harry Clay. However, this was very likely the couple's last engagement together before separating. Not only do their names no longer appear in connection with each other after the first week, but interestingly neither is listed in advertising for the remainder of the season. While few details have yet been located in connection with either performer over the next six months or so, it has been ascertained by Michael Raynor that Davys soon afterwards began a relationship with another younger woman Ida Lewis, and with whom he spent the rest of his life. By September the following year Devoe had also teamed up both personally and professionally with her future husband, Australian comedian Charlie Fanning.

1894-1899

Georgie Devoe's name next appears on the bill for Harry Barrington's Variety and Burlesque Company at Sydney's School of Arts beginning 4 August 1894. Among the high profile artists engaged for the debut line-up night were the celebrated W. Horace Bent, along with Martyn Hagan and Lucy Fraser, Priscilla Verne, Johnny Matlock and Florrie Forde. By September the company had been joined by several other prominent artists, notably Sam Keenan, the Leopold Bros, Neva Carr-Glynn and Charlie Fanning. It was not the first time that Devoe and Fanning had appeared on the same bill, however. The "Engagements Chronology" below indicates in this respect that Fanning had joined Harry Rickards company at the Tivoli on 23 September the previous year, the same night that Devoe and Davys made their reappearance at the venue.

SCHOOL OF ARTS HALL.
IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.
STILL MORE NOVELTIES.—NEXT SATURDAY
NIGHT, Sept. 1, First Appearance in this hall of
CHARLIE FANING,
Australia's Greatest Comedian and End Man, in Entirely
New Business.
Miss GEORGIE DEVOE, the Refined Specialty Artist.
SAM KEENAN,
Everybody's Favourite Comedian.
HARRY BENHAM, Business Manager.

Sydney Morning Herald 30 Aug. (1894), 2.

On 15 September both Devoe and Fanning returned to the Sydney Tivoli for Harry Rickards, presenting their own solo turns. The following week they appeared together for the first time as sketch artists.

Mr. CHARLES FANING
and
Miss GEORGIE DEVOE
in their New and Original Specialty entitled
THE TWO HUMPTY-DUMPTIES.

Sydney Morning Herald 22 Sept. (1894), 2.

From this point onwards Fanning and Devoe toured almost exclusively together, working both solo turns and their own sketch act, while also appearing with other performers in various specialty entertainments, musical comedies and burlesques and so forth. It's clear from advertising over the course of the remainder of the 1890s, however, that Fanning was regarded as one of the feature performers in any company he appeared in, despite being on the same bills as top-liners Charlie Pope and Irving Sayles, Will Whitburn, Priscilla Verne, Harry Shine and the Bovis Bros to name

just a handful. While Devoe and Fanning are known to have been engaged by a number of different management firms during the remainder of the 1890s, including the Cogill Bros, that five year period saw them mostly associated with Harry Rickards, and in particular his venues in Sydney and Melbourne.

1900-1910

In early 1900 Fanning and Devoe's daughter Charlotte was born in Melbourne. Soon afterwards they travelled to Western Australia to take up a contract with Jones and Lawrence at the Cremorne Gardens (Perth), where they made a huge impression on Perth audiences. Both were reportedly recalled time and again on a regular basis. The couple also likely toured the Murchison goldfield circuit during their time in Western Australia. Their next major engagement was with John Fuller and Sons, first in New Zealand, where they played seasons in Auckland and Wellington in late 1900/early 1901. Interestingly Fred Davys was also in New Zealand around the same time, but while Devoe and Fanning were on the North Island he was on the South Island with Percy Dix's company at Dunedin. Devoe and Fanning returned to Sydney in March 1891 and joined the Fullers at the start of their 12 months stay at the Empire Theatre. They later made their reappearance "after a prolonged absence" on 22 June, remaining with the company through until at least early July. By December that same year they were back in New Zealand, appearing at the Theatre Royal, Wellington but this time under the management of Percy Dix. John Fuller re-engaged them in 1902 as headline acts for his Polite Empire Entertainers. After making their debut at Launceston in late April, Fuller transferred them to Hobart's Temperance Hall in late May, possibly one of their last shows in Australia for almost six years.

Although their whereabouts between their Hobart engagement in 1902 and 1908 is yet to be established, it seems that Fanning and Devoe spent much of that time, if not all, overseas. A letter from Fanning written in England in early 1903 (and published in several Australian newspapers)⁶ indicates that he had already played a successful engagement in South Africa by that time. Research undertaken by Michael Raynor has also uncovered a brief article published Perth's *Western Mail* on 27 September 1902 which reports that Devoe and Fanning had recently been performing in Cape Town. Raynor further notes the family, listed as Mr C. Fanning, Mrs Fanning and Master Fanning [sic] sailed from Cape Town on 8 October for Southampton, England, aboard the S. S. St Louis (Master Fanning was Devoe and Davys' son Frederick⁷). As "Charlotte was an infant," says Raynor, she was "not mentioned in the passenger list."

In his research document, dated 12 January 2012, Raynor writes that while Devoe was very likely still working professionally around this time he is yet to uncover any advertising or reviews with her name mentioned. What he has discovered, however, is that she and her daughter sailed from Liverpool to New York at least twice between 1903 and 1906. They left Southampton the first time on 7 March aboard the S.S. St Paul. The second trip saw them arrive back in New York on 15 February 1906 aboard the S.S. Majestic. "The United Kingdom Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-

1969 [available via Ancestry.com] records that the pair returned to England mid-year via Buenos Aires (having left on the Argentinean capital on 23 June. Fanning had earlier travelled alone from Liverpool to New York, arriving on 20 May before heading south the Argentina - presumably with, or to meet up with his wife and daughter. Raynor notes with some interest that the comedian listed his occupation at that time as a "theatrical agent."

Fanning is recorded as being back in New York in early January 1907, billed as the "Australian Comedian and the Man with a Voice" (*New York Morning Telegraph*, 8 Jan. 1907, n. pag.). Whilst the whereabouts of Georgie Devoe and Charlotte is again unknown, Michael Raynor believes that they would have also been working - either in Great Britain or the USA. What has been ascertained, however, is that Devoe and Fanning returned to Australia in 1908 under contract to Harry Rickards. They arrived in Perth on 2 October and 18 days later appeared with the entrepreneur's Tivoli Vaudeville Company for its opening night at the Palace Gardens. Later that year they toured the Western Australian goldfield towns, playing Kalgoorlie around Christmas/New Year. On 1 May the following year the Fannings opened at Melbourne's Opera House. Although the *Theatre* reports that the couple had signed a two year contract with the Tivoli organisation (Feb. 1909, 9), this must have been either shortened or undertaken on a casual



Charlotte Fanning
Theatre Feb. (1909), 9.

⁶ *Queenslander* 7 Mar. (1903), 514. See Charlie Fanning's entry in the AVTA to see a copy of this letter.

⁷ See "Historical Notes and Corrections" section for further details uncovered by Michael Raynor regarding Frederick Davys' movements around the early 1900s in relation to his mother and father.

basis as the "Engagements Chronology" below shows that they accepted a number of alternate engagements during their two years back in the country. Following the Melbourne season, for example, the family travelled to Hobart, where they opened on 29 May with Lucas' Grand Tivoli Vaudeville Co (no relation to Harry Rickards' organisation).⁸

LUCAS'S GRAND TIVOLI VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.

TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.
SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT OF CHARLES FANNING.
GEORGIE DEVOE. LITTLE SHARLOTTA.
MAY NARELL. LITTLE SADIE.
TREMENDOUS PROGRAMME TO-NIGHT.
 Special Engagement

JOE COWAN. JOE COWAN.
STELLA REID. STELLA REID.
GRAND MATINEE THIS AFTERNOON, 2.30.
PRINCE OF WALES'S BIRTHDAY, MATINEE, MONDAY AFTERNOON.
SPECIAL PROGRAMME.
THE GREATEST GALAXY OF TALENT EVER PRESENTED.
BOX PLAN AT FINDLAY'S. USUAL PRICES.

Mercury (Hobart) 5 June (1909), 6.

Over the next two years Devoe and Fanning played seasons with James Brennan in Melbourne (Gaiety Theatre) and Sydney (National Amphitheatre), Holland and St John (Bris) and Caroline and Humbert Pugliese (Alhambra Theatre, Syd). The *Brisbane Courier* records that two particular highlights of the Fanning/Devoe turn during their 1910 Empire Theatre season were their "*Romeo and Juliet*" burlesque (16 July 1910) and a motoring burlesque that "started off in an extremely fantastic fashion" (5 Sept. 1910, n. pag.). Although Fanning had initially indicated that he and his wife planned to remain in Australia, by 1910 they had made the decision to go back to South Africa. Before leaving Australia they played at least two engagements in Sydney and Brisbane.

1911 -1916

The Fannings spent five years in South Africa, and to all extents and purposes had made the decision to settle in the country. Sometime in 1915, however, Fanning's health began to deteriorate. According to the *West Australian* he died on 6 December that year, aged 52 (29 Jan. 1916, n. pag.). The news of his death took longer to make its way to the Eastern states, however, with *Australian Variety* reporting in its 5 January 1916 edition: "For many years Australia's foremost cornermen and blackface comedian... Charles Fanning is dying of consumption in Somerset Hospital, Cape Town (4). Michael Raynor's research into his grandmother indicates that after her husband's death she and Charlotte spent an unknown period of time living on the subcontinent. This information has been ascertained through shipping lists which show that the pair returned to the USA via Great Britain in 1920 (arriving in New York on 15th August aboard the S. S. Caronia). On the manifest Devoe stated that they had been living at 38 Theatre Road Calcutta, India with a friend C. L. Phillipps (this is how it is spelt on the manifest). Both she and Charlotte are also listed in the manifest as still being actresses.

According to the 1920 Census Devoe (who had by then reverted back to her maiden name, Brundage) was living in Fulton, New York. Her occupation is documented as having been a boarding house keeper. The following year (on 8 June) a Mrs. G. Devoe Fanning [sic] is listed on the passenger manifest of the City of Poona out of Bombay travelling to England via Cape Town. Raynor writes that Charlotte married Charles R. Drinkwater, and English Reverend in mid-1921 and surmises that Devoe had probably returned to England for the wedding. Charlotte and Charles had a son John born in Bath sometime between October and December 1923. Devoe returned to USA on 29 August 1924. The shipping manifest again reveals her occupation as actress and further indicates that she had been living at 102 Sydney Place, Bath, with her daughter and son-in-law.⁹ Charlotte is also listed in the same document (as Charlotta Drinkwater), travelling with the son, then 10 months old. Her husband did not accompany them. The following year Devoe travelled to Lacolle Junction, Quebec (Canada) arriving on 13 May. Recording her occupation as an actress, she was again travelling with her daughter (who describes her occupation as a housewife. Four years later (1929), a Georgie Fanning is recorded on the manifest of the S.S. Aquitania, which arrived at Southampton on 5 June. The aged 62 she did not list an occupation, but did indicate that her last place of residence had been Great Britain.

From this point onwards Raynor's research has been unable to locate any further details regarding Devoe. In his 12 January 2012 research document, he writes: "There are no further travel records in the names of Fanning/Devoe/Brundage between UK and USA after the arrival in 1929 [and] there is no registered marriage document in US, UK, Australia, Canada or South Africa for Fanning/Devoe/Brundage. There are no death records in those countries for Fanning/Devoe/Brundage," either. Raynor surmises that Devoe may have remarried (as she stated in the 1924 shipping manifest) and lived out her days near Charlotte in England. There is also the possibility that she may have retired to Bermuda, given that her daughter travelled there several times in the 1930s.¹⁰ Charlotte is thought to have lived out her life mostly in England, passing away in the Fenland district in 1987. Her husband had died in Huntington, also in the Cambridgeshire area, in 1967 (aged 73).

⁸ It is assumed that the artist billed as Little Sharlotta was in fact Charlotte Fanning.

⁹ Curiously the manifest also states that Devoe was married (Raynor, 2012 research document).

¹⁰ See "Historical Notes and Corrections" section (No 4) for details relating to Charlotte's movements in the 1930s.

SEE ALSO

- [Charlie Fanning](#)
- [Fred Davys](#)
- [Fred Davy's Bright Lights Co](#)

HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. Devoe and Fanning married in Sydney on the 19 January 1898. Please note, Fanning's name was spelled variously as "Fanning" or "Faning" throughout his career. The AVTA has decided on Fanning as a means of providing consistency.
2. Michael Raynor's research into his grandfather and father - respectively Fred Parkinson/Davys and Frederick Jessie Parkinson indicates that the latter he travelled to South Africa and England in 1902 with his mother and step-father Charlies Fanning in 1902, then aged 14 years. In correspondence with the *Australian Variety Theatre Archive* in January 2012, Raynor writes that his family had long been under the assumption that Georgie Devoe took his father overseas and that Fred Davys had to travel to England to bring him back to Australia. His research has so far failed to locate any shipping records that list either the names David Parkinson or Fred Davys travelling to or from Great Britain between 1903 and 1906, at which time Frederick was back with his father. Raynor points to a 1906 review in the *Otago Witness* (New Zealand) which records that Davys was working the marionettes in the Manly Shute with "his young son who shows promise of upholding the good name enjoyed by his farther" (7 April 1906, n. pag.). Davys also notes that Davys was touring fairly constantly around Australia between 1904 and 1906, making it somewhat implausible that he undertook a return trip to England (requiring a minimum of ten weeks at sea).

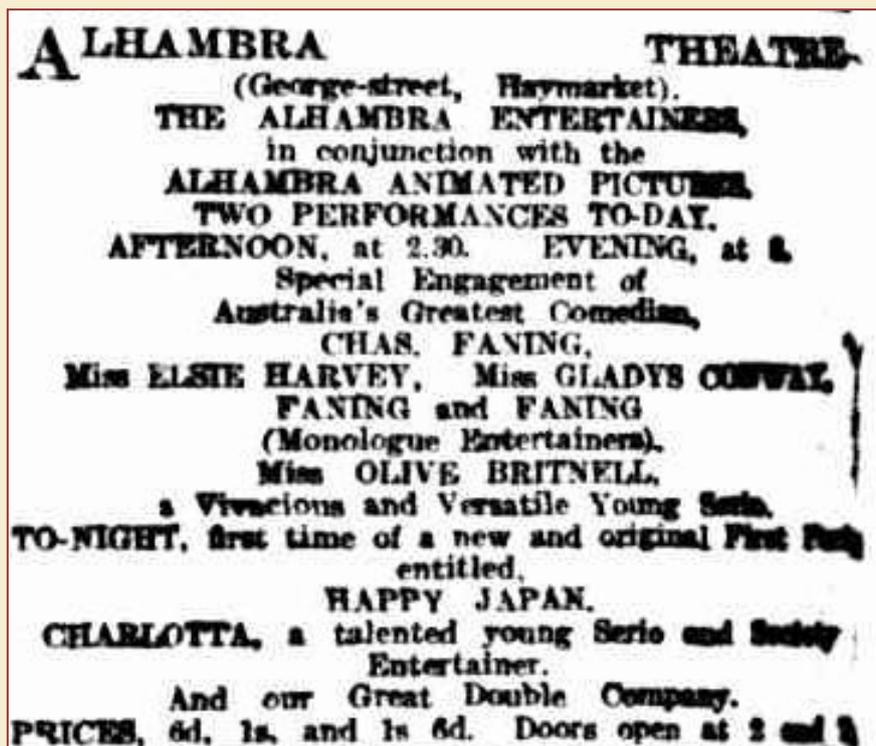
How Frederick came back to Australia is unclear. There is the possibility that Frederick could have travelled back to Australia on his own, being aged 16 to 18 between 1904 and 1906. It is also possible that he returned with either his mother or possibly, as Raynor posits, Charlie Fanning. While there are no records of him playing any engagements in Australia between 1904 and 1906 Fanning may have had family reasons for making the voyage home.

3. Raynor's research has also uncovered an interesting aspect relating to Charlotte Fanning's birth registration (No 5069). The child's name is listed as "Charl Edw Huya" Faning. As her father's name is similarly listed some sort of transcription error appears to have occurred on the record. As Raynor writes, "we have to assume the child was named Charlotte; the name she used all her life."
4. Charlotte is listed in a typed passenger manifest as having travelled from Hamilton, Bermuda to New York arriving on 24 May 1935. Although her surname was given as "Faning," Michael Raynor indicates that there is also a handwritten note which states that records her name as Charlotte Drinkwater (and that she was a housewife). Two years later, on 28 May 1937, Charlotte once again arrived in New York from Hamilton Bermuda on the Monarch of Bermuda using the name Charlotte Faning. On the manifest she claims she was naturalised as a US citizen in 1935 in the District Court, New York City and was living at 416 Madison Ave New York."

**CHARLIE FANING — THE ONLY
CHARLIE FANING.
TO-NIGHT New Empire. TO-NIGHT.
After 5 Years of Success in America and
England.
CHARLIE — FANINGS — GEORGIE
And the "CHARLOTTA FANING" Won-
der Child. Also THE ASTEENS (Contor-
tionists and Acrobats!!!!). Also Beau-
tiful Freda Cuthbert, in Salome Dances,
most artistic; Meymott, in Oriental
Occultism; Olga Montez, Superb Serie and
Toe Dancer (last night); 3000ft. New Pic-
tures. Matinee To-day, 1/-, 6d. Prices,
2/-, 1/6, 1/- (few seats 6d at 7.50).**

ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS

- Even standing room was difficult to find in the Agricultural Hall on Saturday night, so great was the crowd that found its way to Messrs J. Fuller and Son's place of entertainment. A new programme was presented, and met with great acceptance, encores being the order of the evening. Mr Charles Fanning was recalled four times in the first part and his "turn" in the second part with Miss Georgie Devoe also proved very popular. The latter, dressed in a uniform of Khaki, with a lancer's plumed hat made a very attractive interlocutrix (*Auckland Star* 15 Oct. 1900, 2).
- The nether part of Georgie Devoe's frock has gone out of business for this week, and a great joy hath therefore got hold upon us. The more we see of Charlie's plenteous partner the better we like her, and we would like her to go on as "Romeo" till the spring. The Fannings' second part with Georgie Romeo and Charley Juliet is about the last syllable in variety burlesque, and though Charles shall remain with us till "quarter past December" we shall not abate our smiles to himward nor our intense pleasure in Georgie's skirt that Isn't (TCH: 19 June 1909, 5).



Sydney Morning Herald 18 June (1910), 2.

ENGAGEMENTS CHRONOLOGY

(Incl. Georgie Devoe (1894-1910) and Bertha Fanning)

- 1888:** HARRY RICKARDS (Th Royal, Adel; 28 Apr - * > New English Comedy & Specialty Co, first season back in Australia) • (Lse/Mngr. F. E. Hiscocks > New Op House, Syd; 19 May - 30 June) • (Coogee Palace Aquarium, Syd; 24 May > Queen's Birthday only) ► HARRY RICKARDS/COGILL BROS (St Geo's Hall, Melb; 7 July - 14 Sept. > Cogill Bros Minstrel & Burlesque Co/Rickards' New English Comedy & Specialty Co) ► HARRY RICKARDS (Gaiety Th, Bris; 27 Oct. - *) • (Haymarket Music Hall, Syd; 19 Nov. - 31 Dec.) • (Coogee Palace Aquarium, Syd; 26 Dec. > afternoon concert)
- 1889:** HARRY RICKARDS (New Haymarket Music Hall, Syd; 1-26 Jan. > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) ► COOGEE AQUARIUM (Coogee Palace Aquarium, Syd; 19 Jan. > New English Comedy & Specialty Co - afternoon concert) ► HARRY RICKARDS (Adelphi Hall, West Maitland; 4-6 Feb. > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • (Mechanics Institute, Singleton; 7 Feb. - * > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • (Gaiety Th, Bris; 18 Feb. - * > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • (S of A, Rockhampton; 20-26 Mar. > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • (S of A, Charters Towers, ca. 13 Apr. - * > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • (St Geo's Hall, Melb; 8 June - 2 Aug. > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • (Garner's Rooms, Adel; 5 Aug. - * > New English Comedy & Specialty Co) • n/e (Criterion Th, Syd; 25 Dec. > Grand Vocal and Instrumental Concert produced by John Solomon) ► (S of A, Syd; 26-31 Dec. - * > New English & Irish Comedy Co) ► COOGEE AQUARIUM (Coogee Palace Aquarium, Syd; 26 Dec. > New English Comedy & Specialty Co - afternoon concert)

1890: HARRY RICKARDS (S of A, Syd; 1 Jan. - 17 Feb. > New English & Irish Comedy Co) ► COOGEE AQUARIUM (Coogee Palace Aquarium, Syd; 3, 4, 11, and 15 Jan. > New English & Irish Comedy Co) ► HARRY RICKARDS (Gaiety Th, Bris; 21 Feb. - * > New English & Irish Comedy Co) ► COOGEE AQUARIUM (Coogee Palace Aquarium, Syd; 22 Mar. > New English & Irish Comedy Co - afternoon concert) • (Gaiety Th, Melb; 5 Apr. - 2 May > New English & Irish Comedy Co) ► COGILL BROS (St Geo's Hall, Melb; 3-27 May > New English & Irish Comedy Co - with Cogill Brothers Minstrels) ► HARRY RICKARDS (St Geo's Hall, Melb; 28 May - 13 June > New English & Irish Comedy Co) • (Bijou Hall, Launceston; 17 June - * > Comedy Comic Opera and Specialty Co) • (S of A, Syd; 2 Aug. - 17 Nov. > New Musical Comedy Co) • (New Th Royal, Bris; 22 Nov. - *) • St Geo's Hall, Melb; 26-31 Dec.)

NB: The Cogill Bros season at St George's Hall was already underway when the Rickards company was engaged

1891: HARRY RICKARDS (St Geo's Hall, Melb; 1 Jan. - * > New Musical Comedy Co) ► LIZZIE HASTINGS (Gaiety Th, Syd; 14 Mar. - * > Lizzie Hastings' Picnic Party) ► GORDON'S (Sydney Harbour; 29 Mar. only > New Musical Comedy Co - for Gordon's Elite Concerts and Harbour Excursions) ► FRED DAVYS (NSW/Victorian regional tour; ca. May-July * > Davys' Bright Lights Co) ► J. BILLIN (Vic Hall, Melb; 14 July - ca. Sept.* > Representative Metropolitan Co) ► FRED DAVYS (Victorian regional tour; ca. Nov/Dec. * > Davys' Bright Lights Co)

NB 1: Davys' Bright Lights Co first tour of NSW/Victorian tour incl. Broken Hill (ca. May) • Euroa (Public Hall; 1-2 June) • Warrigal, Vic (Public Hall; 5-6 June) • Sale (Victoria Hall; 8-9 June) • Bairnsdale, Vic (Payne's Th; 10-11 June) • Traralgon, Vic (12 June - *)

NB 2: The Bright Lights Victorian tour later in the year included Tatura (Mechanics Hall; 16 Nov - *) • Kilmore (Oddfellows Hall; 7 Dec. *)



Barrier Miner 27 May (1891), 2.

1892: FRED DAVYS (New Zealand tour; ca. Jan. - Nov. * > Davys' Bright Lights Co) ► J. BILLIN (Victoria Hall, Melb; 26-31 Dec. > *The Merry Christmas Party* - incl. Davys' Bright Lights Co)

NB: Davy's Bright Lights Co New Zealand tour incl. Auckland (Op House; ca. Jan. - 6 Feb.) • Thames (Assembly Rooms; 9-11 Feb.) • Gisborne (Th Royal, 28 Feb. - 3 Mar.) • Napier (Th Royal; 5-9 Mar.) • Wanganui (Oddfellows Hall; 17 Mar. - *) • Fielding (Assembly Rooms; 21 Mar. - *) • Foxton (Public Hall 12-13 Apr.) • New Plymouth (Alexandra Hall; 22-23 Apr.) • Hawra (26 Apr. - *) • Wellington (Exchange Hall; ca. 23 May - 24 Sept. > 120 nights) • Blenheim (Ewart's Vic Hall; 4 Oct. - *) • Nelson (Th Royal; 8-11 Oct. - *) • Timaru (Th Royal; 14 Nov. - *)

1893: J. BILLIN (Vic Hall, Melb; 1 Jan. - * *The Merry Christmas Party* - incl. Davys' Bright Lights Co) ► COGILL BROS (St Geo's Hall, Melb; 28 Jan. - * > Cogill Bros' New Minstrels) ► TOMMY HUDSON (Bijou Th, Adel; 1 Apr. - * > Hudson's Surprise Party) • (Th Royal, Broken Hill; 29 Apr. - * > Hudson's Surprise Party) ► HARRY RICKARDS (Tivoli Th, Syd; 10 June - ca Oct.*) • (Alhambra MH, Syd; 21-27 Oct. - * > New Paragon Minstrels and Vaudeville Co)

NB 1: The Tivoli bill for 23 September indicates that Devoe and Davys were making a re-appearance. Charlie Fanning also joined the company from that date.

1894: HARRY BARRINGTON (Alhambra Th, Syd; 4 Aug. - * > Harry Barrington's Variety & Burlesque Co) ► HARRY RICKARDS (Tivoli Th, Syd; 15 Sept. - ca Nov.) ► COGILL BROS (Oxford Th, Melb; 10 Nov. - 31 Dec. > Cogill Minstrel & Burlesque Co)

NB: All entries from 1895 onwards are for Georgie Devoe and Charlie Fanning unless otherwise noted)

1895: COGILL BROS (Oxford Th, Melb; 1 Jan. - * > Cogill Minstrel & Burlesque Co) ► HARRY RICKARDS (Tivoli Th, Syd; 19 Jan. - *)

NB: See also SMH adverts. June - October.

1896: HARRY RICKARDS (Qld tour; ca. Oct/Nov.* > Incl. Charters Towers, 30 Oct.)

1897: HARRY RICKARDS (Tivoli Th, Syd; ca. Jan.*) • (Op House, Melb; ca. 13 Mar. * > See also adverts in A: Apr. - July) • (Tivoli Th, Syd; ca. 31 July*)

1898: HARRY RICKARDS (Tivoli Th, Syd; ca. 22 Mar.*) • (Op House, Melb; ca. 28 May*) • (Op House, Melb; ca. 13 Aug.*) • (Tivoli Th, Syd; ca. 24 Sept.*) • (Op House, Melb; ca. 24-31 Dec.*)

1899: HARRY RICKARDS (Op House, Melb; 1 Jan. - *) • (Bijou Th, Syd; ca. 6 Feb.*) • (Tivoli Th, Syd; ca. 4 Mar.*) ► Benefit (Parramatta TH, Syd; 18 Apr.) ► CHARLES FANNING (Op House, Syd; 4 Nov.*) ► CHARLIE FANNING (Prot Hall, Syd; 23-31 Dec.* > Fanning's Minstrel & Burlesque Co)

- 1900:** CHARLIE FANNING (Prot Hall, Syd; 1 Jan. - * > Fanning's Minstrel & Burlesque Co) ► JONES & LAWRENCE (Cremorne Gardens, Perth; 29 Jan. - 26 Mar.) ► JOHN FULLER (Agricultural Hall, Auckland, NZ; 10 Oct. - * > Fuller's Bijou Co) • (Choral Hall, Wellington; 1 Dec. - * > Fuller's Bijou Co)
- 1901:** JOHN FULLER (Empire Th, Syd; ca. June/July * > Fullers Empire Co) • (Th Royal, Wellington, NZ; 24-31 Dec.)
- 1902:** JOHN FULLER (Th Royal, Wellington, NZ; 1 Jan. - *) • (Empire Th, Launceston; 22 Apr. - 30 May > Fullers Polite Empire Entertainers) • (Temp Hall, Hobart; 31 May - * > Fullers Polite Empire Entertainers)
- NB: 1902-1908:** Fanning and Devoe spent the years 1903 to 1908 overseas, playing engagements in Great Britain, the USA, South Africa and possibly Argentina. Among the theatres they appeared in while in England were: the South London Palace of Varieties, Oxford Palace (Middlesbrough), Barnard's Palace of Varieties (Greenwich), Royal Standard Music Hall (London). See TT: Jan. 1909, 15 and Feb. 1909, 9).
- 1908:** HARRY RICKARDS (Palace Gardens, Perth; ca. 20 Oct. - 13 Nov.) • (Western Australian Goldfields tour; incl. (Cremorne Gardens, Kalgoorlie, WA; ca. Dec. *)
- 1909:** HARRY RICKARDS (Western Australian Goldfields tour ; ca. Jan. - incl. Kalgoorlie (Cremorne Gardens, ca. Dec. *) • (Tivoli Th, Adel; 29 Mar. - *) • (Op House, Melb; 24 Apr. - *) ► M. LUCAS (Temp Hall, Hobart; 29 Jan. > Lucas' Grand Tivoli Vaudeville Co) ► JAMES BRENNAN (Nat Amph, Syd; 18 Sept.* > See TT: Oct. 1909, 22-3) • (Gaiety Th, Melb; 13 Nov.*) ► n/e (New Empire Th, Launceston; 25-31 Dec.)
- NB:** The 25 December Launceston show was a special Christmas concert.
- 1910:** n/e (New Empire Th, Launceston; 1 Jan. - 3 Feb.) ► C.F. & H. PUGLIESE (Alhambra Th, Syd; 18 June - *) ► HOLLAND & ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 2 July*) ► C.F. & H. PUGLIESE (Alhambra Th, Syd; 24 Sept. - *)

FURTHER REFERENCE

"[Miss Georgie Devoe.](#)" SBMJ: 31 July (1889), 5. [see also [QSDA: 13 July 1889, 3](#)]

Raynor, Fred. "Georgie Devoe." Research document emailed to Clay Djubal (AVTA) 12 January (2012).

○○○

The AVTA would like to acknowledge the contribution to this biography by Michael Raynor (grandson of Georgie Devoe) and in particular his research into her life and career prior to coming to Australia in 1888 and for the post-1910 years. Michael has also provided the AVTA with invaluable research into his grandfather, Fred Davys.

First published: 23/06/2012

NB: The URL for this PDF will change each time it is updated. If you wish to cite or link to this record please use the following:
Australian Variety Theatre Archive • <http://ozvta.com/practitioners-d/>