



Jack and Bernice McGee. Bernice wrote in her scrapbook "Taken in May 1966. On Marlowe's front porch. The four of us were leaving for the J. F. Ranch to spend the day with the Martins—Bill Martin, Jr; his wife Helen and son George; Mr. and Mrs. Bill Martin, Sr." Photo probably by Clarence or Grace Mitchell in Queen Valley, Arizona. Source: Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, The Bernice McGee Collection.

Dedication:

Bernice McGee (1927-2009)

Jack McGee (1927-2003)

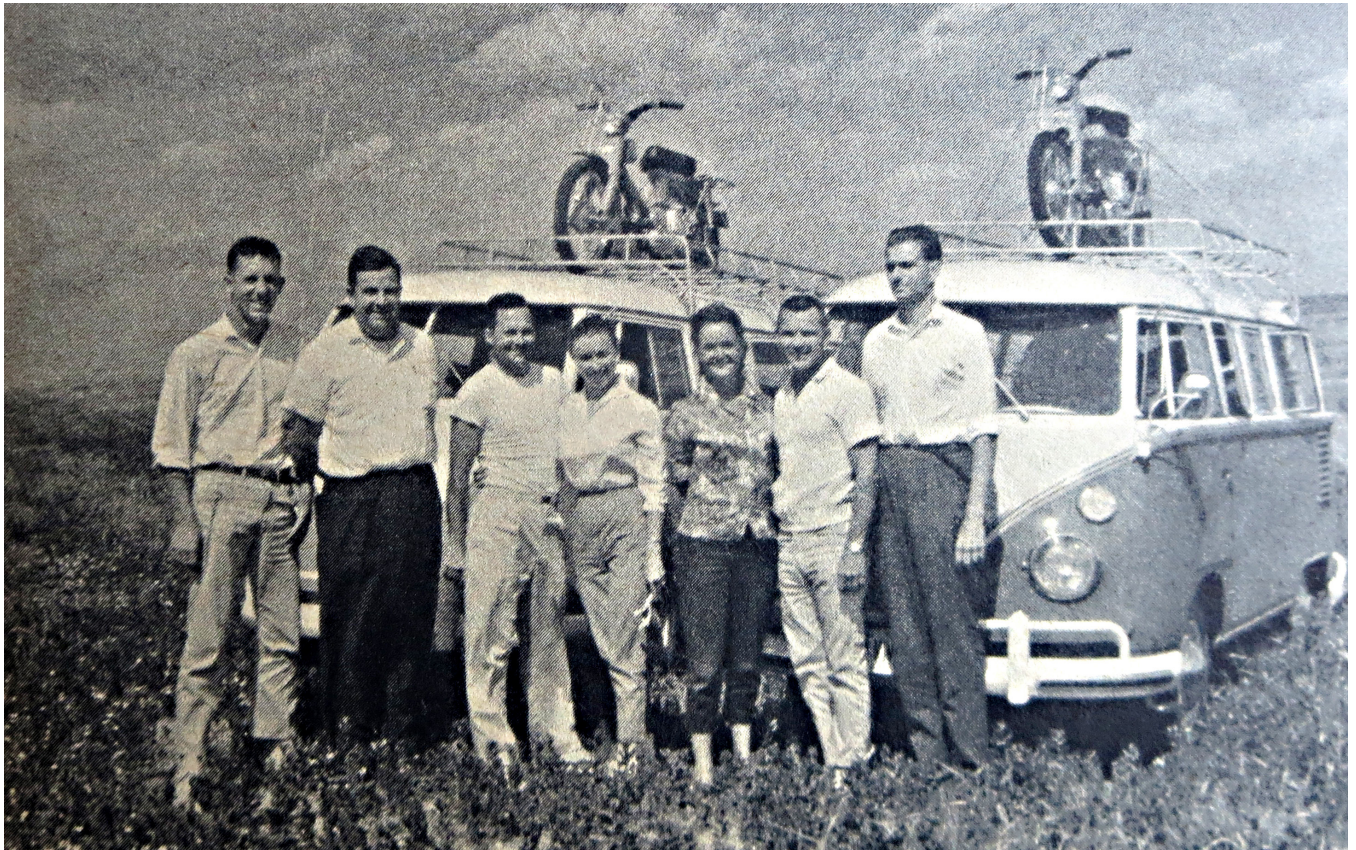
by Jack Carlson and Elizabeth Stewart

Bernice and Jack McGee are best known to readers of this *Journal* for their extensive travels and writings about the Superstition Mountains in the 1960s. Their backgrounds as childhood Hollywood actors and dancers prepared them for a fascinating life that put them in the center of discussions about the legends of the Superstition Mountains. Their correspondence with many of the well-known personalities of the time gives us an insider's perspective of those who searched for the Lost Dutchman Mine or were connected with the Superstition Mountains.¹

Exploring the Superstitions

Bernice and Jack McGee made their initial trips to the Superstition Mountains in 1958 and 1961. These were the precursor trips for their famous 1963 expedition into the Arizona mountains. That trip was organized as a scientific expedition—not a vacation—and it revolved around on-the-ground research and photography of everything about the mountains—people, history, geology, flora, fauna, and legends of the Lost Dutchman Mine. This was an optimistic goal for a two-week endeavor.²

Bernice and Jack were living in Fort Worth, Texas and selected their five expedition mates from the Fort Worth area. Former *Star-Telegram* staff writer Ed Johnson would take care of the initial publicity and



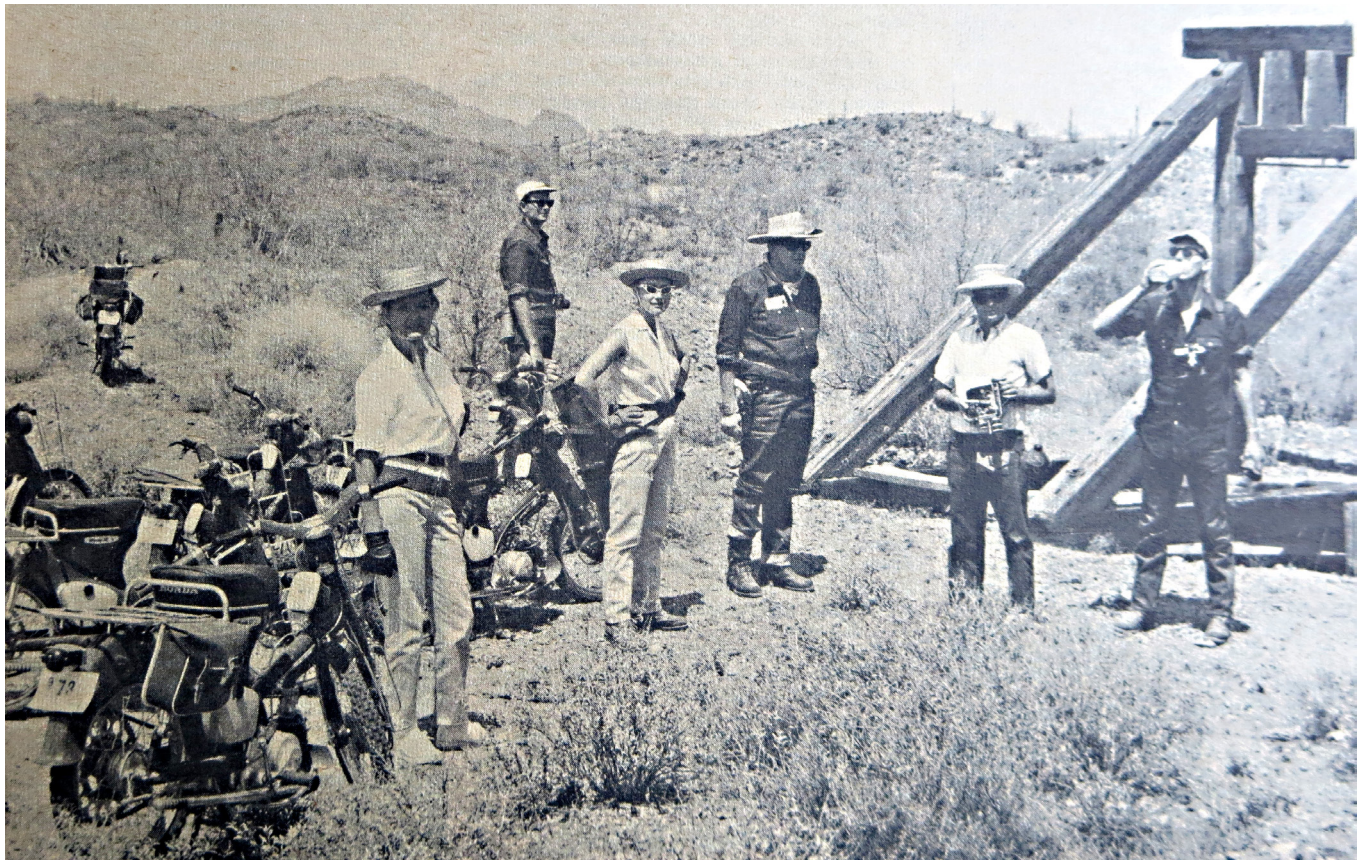
Members of the 1963 expedition. Left to right, Eberhard Jackh, Ed Johnson, Don Barnett, Darlene Barnett, Bernice McGee, Jack McGee, Karl Swoboda. Source: Bernice McGee, "The Other World of the Superstitions," Old West, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1964, p. 55.

field reporting. Commercial photographer Don Barnett and his wife Darlene would document the trip and support Johnson's writing with timely photographs of daily events. Two Texas Christian University students Eberhard Jackh and Karl Swoboda would supply the youthfulness and vigor needed in the tough backcountry along with an interest in entomology. In one newspaper story, Miss Narda Volinsky, a dietician, was listed as part of the expedition team, but later was only credited with planning the trip menu.³

The trip preparations were a group effort where time was spent with physical training, planning, and education about the mountains. Bernice would later write that "Our home suddenly turned into a gymnasium with everyone working out three nights a week, two hours a night. The other evenings it was a conference room, a school where we held classes on geography, topography and history. . . . We used our garage to learn basic mechanics to repair. . . . our trail machines. . . . We were given a talk by Dr. Earl Schraff on emergency treatment."⁴



The caption on this Star-Telegram photo reads, "This Isn't Gold—Jack McGee, right explains the nature of some of the rock formations to be found in the Apache country. Soaking up the lore are, left to right, Mrs. McGee [Bernice], Karl Swoboda and Eberhard Jackh. The group departs Friday." Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, April 28, 1963, p. 6, c1-3.



Members of the 1963 expedition at the Black Queen mining claim in the Goldfield area. Left to right, Bernice McGee, Karl Swoboda, Darlene Barnett, Ed Johnson, Don Barnett, Eberhard Jackh. Photo probably by Jack McGee. Source: Bernice McGee, "The Other World of the Superstitions," Old West, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1964, p. 57.

Publicity was an essential part of the expedition planning. In April, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* featured four, mostly front page, stories of their preparations for the spring 1963 trip to the Superstition Mountains focusing on the explorers, the local history, the attire, and the equipment donations. These stories and photographs in the local newspaper allowed the group to obtain loaner equipment, clothing, food, and supplies. From the news stories, it was easy to see that Fort Worth was backing their champions in this extraordinary adventure.⁵

They left Fort Worth on May 3 for the 15-day trip in two borrowed Volkswagen buses—with six loaner Honda trail bikes—two on the roof. They made Kings Ranch Resort on the south side of Superstition Mountain their base camp where owners Tommy and Lucille O'Conner welcomed them. Their local guide was Joe Kelly.⁶

During their trip, writer Ed Johnson telephoned trip updates from the Arizona mountains back to the newspaper in Fort Worth, which printed the events of the day under the title "Mysteries of Apache Gods" and

listed the dateline as "IN THE SUPERSTITIONS." Apparently this was feature news for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* since six front-page stories were published by the newspaper that May.⁷

With only two weeks to explore the mountains, they packed more adventure and covered more ground than most modern-day hikers do in a year. Some of their destinations were a little beyond their reach such as Rogers Canyon Cliff Dwellings and the Black Top Mesa sunburst petroglyph.

After returning to Fort Worth, Bernice wrote "The Other World of the Superstitions," which was the culmination of their 1963 explorations in the Superstition Mountains. The story was published in the Winter 1964 issue of *Old West* magazine. They achieved their purpose of the trip by documenting and photographing "this neglected phase of Arizona history," which they certainly did in much detail.⁸ The story was written as a travelogue interspersed with history, legends, and interviews with the local personalities.



The caption on this Star-Telegram photo reads, "X Marks the Spot—Jack McGee points to a campsite on a map made by his wife [Bernice] of the Superstition Mountain range in Arizona. The couple has made several trips to the area to compile data for magazine articles." Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, January 30, 1967, p. B1, c3-8.

The Stone Maps

After writing *Superstition Treasures* in 1965, Travis Marlowe invited Bernice and Jack to “walk the Peralta Treasure Trail” with him—a trail which he had decrypted from the Peralta Stone maps.⁹ The McGees accepted the invitation since they were interested in answering unsolved questions of the mountains and to record them for others.¹⁰

In Arizona, Marlowe took the McGees on a Jeep tour of the Stone Map locations, which led to the Elephant Butte petroglyphs. From Elephant Butte, Marlowe only told Bernice and Jack that the trail led to Upper La Barge Canyon via Red Tanks Canyon. Marlowe indicated that the purpose of the Stone Maps was to show Enrico Peralta, Don Miguel’s son, the location of 18 mines. For Bernice and Jack, Marlowe seemed to have a credible story with maps and matching physical sites. It all seemed to make sense. Based on Marlowe’s findings both Jack and Bernice authored a second magazine story about the Superstition Mountains—“Invitation to a Ghost Walk,” which was published in 1966 by *True West* magazine. Travis Marlowe was a nom de plume and the McGees did not use Marlowe’s real name in the story. The “Invitation to a Ghost Walk” title refers to the ghosts of Don Miguel and Pedro Peralta who were “still roaming the mountains and canyons waiting for someone to release them from their surveillance over the treasure for which they paid the ultimate price.”¹¹

After many years of correspondence with others interested in the Superstition Mountains, Bernice and Jack wrote “Are the Peralta Stone Maps a Hoax,” which was published in 1973 by *Frontier Times* magazine. Their six year investigation began with a letter from a professional photographer, Marion Parsons, which depicted a relationship of the “Horse Map” with the Florence Quadrangle topographic map. Here they reconsidered some of their previous conclusions about the Peralta Stone Maps. The McGees discussed the unlikely possibility that the maps were carved as the Apaches were driving the Peraltas from the mountains. Then they described in mind-boggling detail how the hoaxsters used the Florence Quadrangle topographic map as an outline pattern with the words and numbers on the stones as part of anagrams and cryptograms. In the article, the McGees identified Travis Marlowe as Clarence O. Mitchell. They also identified Jack as Travis Tumlinson—an individual mentioned in Marlowe’s book *Superstition Treasures*. The McGees did not try



Bernice and Jack McGee. In her scrapbook, Bernice captioned the photo “Taken in front of our Crowley Apt. in Palm Springs, Arizona, near Apache Junction. We were all on our way to Lucille and Stoney Stone’s for cocktails, then the six of us went to Playboy Club in Phoenix.” Photo probably taken by Clarence or Grace Mitchell, 1966. Source: Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, The Bernice McGee Collection.

**“New, Clean, Sanitary”
Inviting**

☐ Briefly, these words tell about the New Firestine Bakery, Opening Saturday, Oct. 4, at 1126 Pennsylvania Ave., Corner Henderson St.

☐ You'll like our Fresh, Delicious Bakery Products, and our corner is conveniently located—PAY US A VISIT.

☐ At all times, a full line of BETTER Bakery Goods.

**BREAD, CAKES, PIES
HOT ROLLS—3 TIMES DAILY**

Free Delivery of Bread, Etc., Direct From
Our Ovens to Your Home

FIRESTINE'S BAKERY
F. H. FIRESTINE, Prop. 1126 PENNSYLVANIA

Advertisement for Firestine's Bakery, which was owned by Bernice's parents and grandparents. Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 3, 1924, p. 26, c. 1.



Bernice Firestine was an actor (autograph fan) in this 1948 RKO Radio Pictures movie *The Velvet Touch* that starred Rosalind Russell. Bernice is second from the left (dressed in white) and Rosalind Russell is third from left (dressed in black). *The Velvet Touch* was a noir murder mystery movie. Source: *The Velvet Touch DVD*, WB Archive Collection.

**FORMER PARIS BOY
ON NEW YORK STAGE**

PARIS, Aug. 12 — Jackie McGee, son of Mr. and Mrs. Woodson McGee formerly of Paris, has signed a contract to appear on the legitimate stage in New York. Jackie formerly doubled for Bobby Breen in motion pictures and recently had a part in the Bing Crosby picture, "Star Maker". He is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Emmett McGee, former owner of a grocery store here.

This 1939 newspaper story from Paris, Missouri indicates that at age twelve Jack McGee was pursuing an acting career. Source: Moberly Monitor-Index and Democrat, Moberly, Missouri, August 12, 1939, p. 3, c

to identify the hoaxsters or the motivations of those associated with the Stone Maps.¹²

While the McGees were writing the "Are the Peralta Stone Maps a Hoax" story, their correspondence with Clarence Mitchell and his wife Grace continued—although it was somewhat interrupted by the Mitchells' frequent moves. On December 16, 1970, Grace wrote to Bernice and Jack "Bernice, you can write any thing you want about the maps, etc. you mentioned some time ago. Go to it."¹³ In an e-mail to Garry and Carol Cundiff, Bernice wrote about the returned and unopened copy of their article they sent to the Mitchells. She said "We felt like back-stabbing dogs by writing the expose re their maps. . . . We didn't want them to think we went behind their backs doing this story . . . so sent a copy to them as quickly as Western Publications released them to us. Think they were P.O.'d at us and rightly so. To this day I feel some guilt."¹⁴

Not everyone agreed with the McGee's conclusions about the Stone Maps, but they were respectful. An excerpt of Glenn Magill's March 20, 1973 letter reads: "Bravo! Your story on the "stone maps," which appeared in *Frontier Times*—May issue, took guts and courage and conviction! I'm very proud of you both, although—as you know, I disagree with you!!! The entire story was beautifully written—and from the heart! Anyone who knows Jack—and especially Bernice, knows they don't pull any punches!"¹⁵

Cryptograms and Cryptoanalysis

Interest in uncovering the meaning and origin of the Peralta Stone Maps was not the only mystery the McGees investigated. They wrote about the Oklahoma Heavner Runestone in the Winter 1969 issue of *Old West* magazine. It was titled "Runestones and Tombstones." And *True West* magazine published their story "Mystery Tablet of the Big Bend" in the July-August 1972 issue.¹⁶

These two articles probably set the stage for the "Are the Peralta Stone Maps a Hoax" story, which was published a year later in 1973. Solving the Peralta Stone Map cryptograms seemed to be the challenge that they enjoyed the most rather than uncovering the authenticity of the stones, although both were discussed in their article. Without the experience of the runestone and the tablet investigations, we wonder if the McGees would have tackled the difficult task of decoding the Peralta Stone Maps.



Jackie McGee was an actor in this 1942 Universal Studios movie *What's Cookin'* that starred the Andrew Sisters. Source: "What's Cookin' (1942)," <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

Bernice's Family

Betty Bernice Firestine was born on August 15, 1927 in Fort Worth, Texas to Elmer R. Firestine and Jewell Beatrice Burns.¹⁷ Bernice's grandparents moved from Missouri to Arizona for her grandmother's health. A few years later, her grandparents moved to Fort Worth, Texas and in October 1924, they opened Firestine's Bakery on Pennsylvania Avenue at the corner with Henderson Street in Fort Worth. Both of Bernice's grandparents had previous experience in the baking business.¹⁸

In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, Bernice's family moved to California where her father worked as a bakery cook. Her father enrolled her in dancing classes in Los Angeles and at age 6 she began as a tap dancer with the major Hollywood movie studios.¹⁹ Her sister Beverly also made an early appearance in film as a three-month-old baby in the 1936 movie *Ramona* by 20th Century Fox.²⁰



Bernice Firestine was an actor (autograph fan) in this 1948 RKO Radio Pictures movie *The Velvet Touch* that starred Rosalind Russell. Source: *The Velvet Touch* DVD cover; WB Archive Collection.



Jackie McGee was an actor in this 1939 Universal Studios movie *The Star Maker* that starred Bing Crosby. Source: "The Star Maker (1939)," <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

Bernice's father, Elmer, was about 14 years old when his family moved from Missouri to Arizona. In her *Old West* magazine story "The Other World of the Superstitions," she wrote that Elmer had spent that time in Arizona by hunting, hiking, and exploring the Superstition Mountains. When she was young, he entertained her with stories of the Dutchman and the Indians. Almost 30 years later, those stories sparked her interest to explore and write about the Superstition Mountains.²¹

Jack's Family

John "Jack" McGee was born on May 30, 1927 in Shelbina, Missouri to Woodson Pearl Marion McGee and Lutie Frances Creasman. In 1937 Jack's grandparents and parents opened the McGee's Style Shop in Mexico,

- Let's Sing Again (1936)
- Rainbow on the River (1936)
- Make a Wish (1937)
- Hawaii Calls (1938)
- Peck's Bad Boy with the Circus (1938)
- Scandal Street (1938)
- The Star Maker (1939)
- Foreign Correspondent (1940)
- What's Cookin' (1942)
- Best Foot Forward (1943)
- Meet the People (1944)
- Sweet Genevieve (1947)
- Good News (1947)

Filmography for Jackie McGee. Source: Child and Teen Actors in Films and Television, 1895-Present, (Jackie McGee), <http://www.gnothe.net/mothlist.htm>.

Missouri on the corner of East Promenade and South Jefferson Streets—referred to by the family as "style corner." It was a full service store selling dresses, suits, shirts, blouses, and furs. His father opened another store in nearby Centralia in May 1955, but it closed after a short time in December 1956. The Mexico store was still in business in 1962 and probably was open up until a few years before Marion died in 1970.²²

Jackie McGee in Hollywood

In the mid-1930s Woodson and Lutie McGee moved their family to Los Angeles, where Woodson found work as an auto dealership parts manager. In Hollywood, Jack pursued his dancing and acting career and was often known as "Jackie" in the movie business.²³

Harris Lentz who researches celebrities in the performing arts wrote that "McGee began his career as a stunt double for child actor Bobby Breen in the 1930s, and had a small role in Breen's 1937 film *Make a Wish*. He was also featured in the films *Scandal Street* (1938) and *Star Maker* (1939). He was an original dancer with The Jivin' Jacks and Jills dance group and appeared in the films *Best Foot Forward* (1943), *Meet the People* (1944), *Sweet Genevieve* (1947), and *Good News* (1947)."²⁴

Rusty Frank, author of *Tap!: The Greatest Tap Dance Stars and Their Stories*, wrote “When The Jivin’ Jacks and Jills were first put together, the kids were far from amateurs, despite their ages. Although the composition of the group would vary slightly from picture to picture, the initial aggregation consisted of a stellar lineup of youthful tap veterans: Jack McGee, Roland Dupree, Bobby Scheerer, Joe “Corky” Geil, David Holt, Dolores Mitchell, Dorothy “Dottie” Babb, Jean and Jane McNab, Grace McDonald, Donald O’Conner, and Peggy Ryan.” The members of The Jivin’ Jacks and Jills tap dance group were generally not individually credited in the fourteen Universal Studios movies that were made between 1942 and 1944—Donald O’Conner and Peggy Ryan were the exceptions.²⁵

Newspaper stories from 1939 to 1941 note that Jackie McGee was pursuing an acting career. He was signed on contract to act in New York theater,²⁶ appeared as a tap dancer in Madison, Missouri,²⁷ and was described as a “magnetic young actor” in a Los Angeles play.²⁸

Jack and Bernice in Hollywood

Bernice wrote in an e-mail to Garry and Carol Cundiff “My ‘Darlin’ [Jack] and I met at aged 16 on the set of a movie at MGM entitled *Meet the People* with Lucille Ball and Dick Powell. Jack and I had both worked in films a long time before that. I was in *Our Gang* comedies (now *Little Rascals*), at the age of five. I was a tap dancing fool. Ha! Jack was about 8 when he doubled and did stunts for Bobby Breen, the boy wonder soprano; a protege of movie star Eddie Cantor. . . . We were in the business about 18 years, and I am delighted to say we were in the Golden Era of musicals during the 30s, 40s, up to 1951.”²⁹

From an interview with Bernice, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* writer Bettye McAden wrote “The couple began their adventurous life together in Hollywood, where both were dancers under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios. . . . The [Firestone] family had moved there from Fort Worth during the Depression. Jack was recruited from Hannibal, Mo., about the same time,

PRE-EASTER SALE

MARCH 27 thru APRIL 1st

McGee's Make This Special Offering Just In Time for Easter

Batiste BLOUSES "Tee" SHIRTS Plaid SHIRTS Peasant BLOUSES	198 each	Suits and Shorties Entire Stock Reduced. Big Savings During This Sale — Most All Colors and Sizes.	New Easter Hats 298 to 798 Lovely New Bags 298 and 500 Plus Federal Tax
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Lots of Lovely New Skirts—Square Dance & Dress—1.98 to 7.98

Sun Back Dresses First Shipment Several Styles Pre-Shrunk - Fast Colors 298 and 398	— DRESSES — Navys - Prints - Pastels All New Spring Stock Especially Priced For This Sale. SIZES 9 to 24½	200 Wash Dresses Fast Colors - Pre Shrunk Reg. 2.98 Values—Now 198 or 2 for 376
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Winter Dresses—Just 22 of Them—Originally Priced 10.75 to 19.75. All Solid Colors—Your Choice, 2 for \$13.50

FOR THAT SPECIAL EASTER GIFT—MISS ELAINE LINGERIE—OR TRIRAY HOSE IN NEW SPRING SHA DES—YOU CAN'T MISS PLEASING.

Use Our Convenient Lay-Away Plan If You Wish — It Costs No More

McGEE'S STYLE SHOP

(ON STYLE CORNER IN MEXICO)

Pre-Easter Sale advertisement for the McGee's Style Shop in Mexico, Missouri. Source: Mexico Ledger, Mexico, Missouri, March 27, 1950, p. 5, c. 1-3.

McGEE'S STYLE SHOP

Offers Up To \$125.00

FOR YOUR OLD FUR COAT AS A
Trade-In Allowance

On The Purchase of Any New Fur Coat
 During Their 2 DAY

Pre-Winter FUR SALE

FRI. & SAT. — OCT. 28 and 29 ONLY

Special Low Prices — Many Tax Free!

Take advantage of this once a year opportunity
 . . . USE OUR LAY-AWAY PLAN . . . it costs no
 more.

McGEE'S STYLE SHOP

Promenade and Jefferson

Pre-Winter Fur Sale advertisement for the McGee's Style Shop in Mexico, Missouri. Source: Mexico Ledger, Mexico, Missouri, October 28, 1949, p. 4, c. 7-8.

McGee's Studio of Dance

ANNOUNCES

The Opening of Their Summer School

New Classes Now Forming
In Ballroom and Tap!



Students Accepted Age 2½ years old and over,
either class or private.

- Teen-age Ballroom Class and Adult
Ballroom Class Now Forming!

DANCE FOR HEALTH and PLEASURE

- Day and Evening Classes
- Convenient Hours for Out-of-Town Students

Enroll NOW—Big Revue to be held in July!

CALL — WRITE OR COME IN

Studio Hours—10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Sat.

SPECIAL HOURS BY APPOINTMENT!

Saturday's Hours 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

McGEE'S Studio of Dance

119a S. Jefferson — Phone 535 — Mexico, Mo

Summer school advertisement for McGee's Studio of Dance in Mexico, Missouri. Source: Mexico Ledger, Mexico, Missouri, May 16, 1951, p. 3, c. 7-8.

and the two appeared together in more than 200 movies, including the *Our Gang* series, *Good News* and *Meet the People*. Working at five major studios, they attended school on the lots with Shirley Temple, Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland.³⁰ Bernice and Jack were not credited in many of the movies where they worked—probably because they were part of the studio dance ensemble. Although, we found that Bernice was acknowledged as an autograph fan in *The Velvet Touch* (1948) and Jack was credited as Lucky in the Bing Crosby film *The Star Maker* (1939).³¹

Missouri Dance Studios

Bettye McAden wrote “At age 22, their careers were slowing down, since musicals were out of favor with moviemakers. The couple were married in 1948 and moved to Mexico, Missouri, to operate four [*sic* five] dancing studios.”³²

In Bernice's words, “After WWII, two things happened that made us retire from the movie business. Musicals were on their way out. And as SAG [Screen Actors Guild] and SEG [Screen Extras Guild] members, we guild members were getting screwed by the studios who found that during the war years they could hire people in Europe to work for \$1.00 a day instead of paying us our pay scale. We opened five dance schools in Missouri. It almost killed us physically. We came to Texas where my Jack worked and retired in 1984. We had a ball!”³³

The first advertisement for McGee's Studio of Dance appeared in the *Mexico Ledger* in February 1951. Part of their advertisement read “Why be a wallflower when it's so easy to dance all the modern steps—Let Jack'n Bernie show you.” One of their dance studios was located on South Jefferson Street a few doors away from the family's McGee's Style Shop.³⁴

Bernice and Jack were active in the social and business community and participated in many local events. In the spring of 1951 and 1952, Bernice modeled clothing at a Fashion Fiesta presented by the Beta Sigma Phi sorority.³⁵ Local merchants donated their outfits and we speculate that Bernice's outfit was probably from the McGee's Style Shop. For a 1951 Newcomers Club Christmas dinner, Jack McGee performed several dance numbers and was recognized as a “Hollywood movie dancer.”³⁶

McGee's Studio of Dance involved themselves and students in the various activities to support community events such as entertaining at socials and benefits by bringing their dance students to events at the VFW and

the Fraternal Order of Eagles. This was good publicity for the dance studio business and gave the students a chance to demonstrate their talent.³⁷

In the summer of 1951, Bernice's sixteen year old sister Beverly from Fort Worth was the guest dancer in the McGee's Studio of Dance's presentation of *The Enchanted Hour*.³⁸ The McGee's Studio of Dance presented the Second Annual Spring Musical in June 1952. That event may have been the last recital the dance studio presented since by 1954 they were living in Fort Worth, Texas.³⁹

Later Years

When the McGees moved from Mexico, Missouri to Fort Worth in the 1950s, Jack found work with Texas Electric Service Company. He was an adviser for Junior Achievement, which was sponsored by his company. He retired in 1984.⁴⁰

Bernice was active with the International Student Committee of United Church Women, which supported foreign students at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.⁴¹ She recruited two of those foreign students, Eberhard Jackh and Karl Swoboda, for the 1963 expedition to the Superstition Mountains.

ATTENTION

**Two New Ballroom Classes
Beginning This Week**

Room for a few more interested in taking Modern Ball Room Dancing. Also Beginners Class in Tap — Have openings for Private Tap. You are invited to visit our Studio at any time—Why be a wallflower when it's so easy to dance all modern steps — Let Jack 'n Bernie show you — Day and Evening Classes.

McGee's Studio of Dance

119 S. Jefferson — Mexico

Ballroom dance class advertisement for the McGee's Studio of Dance in Mexico, Missouri. Source: Mexico Ledger, Mexico, Missouri, February 6, 1951, p. 5, c. 2-3.

Jack died on April 21, 2003 in Fort Worth, Texas and is buried there at the Laurel Land Memorial Park.⁴² Bernice died on April 28, 2009 in Fort Worth, Texas and is also buried at the Laurel Land Memorial Park.⁴³ Their research and writings have added a new perspective on the history and legends of the Superstition Mountains.



Bernice Firestine and Jack McGee met in 1943 on the Meet the People movie set. The MGM movie starred Lucille Ball and Dick Powell. Source: "Meet the People (1944)," <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

Special Acknowledgment

Garry and Carol Cundiff organized and annotated Bernice and Jack McGee's correspondence and have made it available to everyone on the Internet. The collection consists of over 400 pages of the original typed and handwritten letters, newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, and notes. The Cundiffs added commentary to clarify and put in context the collection of information, which is organized by the name of the author of the letters. It can be viewed by searching the Internet for "The Bernice McGee Collection." See reference note 1 for the complete URL.

Steve Bowser printed a hardcover book titled *The Bernice McGee Collection, Selected Notes*. It begins with 20 pages of selected notes and includes the complete collection of 472 color documents that the Cundiffs put on the Internet. Our copy of his book, number 2 of 3, was a great resource in writing this dedication.

Reference Notes

1. Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, <http://www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gcundiff/LostDutchman/peralta/mcgee/McGee.htm>; Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection, Selected Notes* (Phoenix, Arizona: compiled and printed by Steve Bowser, June 2014), 1-472.
2. Bettye McAden, "Ex-Dancers Find New Adventures," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 30, 1967, sec. B, p. 1, c. 3-8.
3. Ibid.
4. Bernice McGee, "The Other World of the Superstitions," *Old West*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1964, pp. 2-15, 55-60.
5. "Party of Six to Explore Superstition Domain," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 21, 1963, p. 1, c. 4-6 and p. 6, c. 3-5; "Mysteries of the Apache Gods: S-T Writer to Join Superstition Trek," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 28, 1963, p. 1, c. 1-8 and p. 6, c. 1-3; "Helping Hands," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 30, 1963, p. 5, c. 5-6; "The Deadly Superstitions: Expert Helps Plan Expedition," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 1, 1963, p. 5, c. 3-6.
6. Ibid.
7. "Mysteries of Apache Gods: Explorers Head for Superstitions," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 5, 1963, p. 1, c. 2-3; "Mysteries of the Apache Gods: Desert Rat Joe Kelly, 75, Leads Explorers on Superstitions Hike," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 9, 1963, p. 1, c. 6-8 and p. 4, c. 1-4; "Mysteries of Apache Gods: Trip Up Creek Bed Finds Green Valley," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 13, 1963, p. 1, c. 4-5 and p. 4, c. 1; "Mysteries of Apache Gods: Nature Now Hides Indian Dwellings," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 14, 1963, p. 1, c. 3-4 and p. 4, c. 7-8; "Mysteries of Apache Gods: Group Plans Hunt of Lost Dutchman," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 15, 1963, p. 1, c. 3-4 and p. 5, c. 4-5; "Mysteries of Apache Gods: Rattlers, Monsters No Sweat but Bug Bites Really Smart," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 17, 1963, p. 1, c. 4-6 and p. 4, c. 5.
8. Bernice McGee, "The Other World of the Superstitions," *Old West*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1964, pp. 2-15, 55-60.
9. The Peralta Treasure Trail was not an actual trail, but it was the route between landmarks that Marlowe had decoded from the Stone Maps. They toured the landmarks by Jeep.
10. Jack and Bernice McGee, "Invitation to a Ghost Walk," *True West*, Vol. 13, No. 4, March-April 1966, pp. 6-17, 49-51.

11. Ibid.
12. Bernice and Jack McGee, "Are the Peralta Stone Maps a Hoax," *Frontier Times*, Vol. 47, No. 3, April-May 1973, pp. 6-13, 47-49, 52-57; Travis Marlowe, *Superstition Treasures* (Phoenix, Arizona: Tyler Printing Company, 1965), 1-64.
13. Grace Mitchell to Bernice and Jack McGee, December 16, 1970, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "McGee-Mitchell Correspondence."
14. Bernice and Jack McGee to Grace Mitchell, March 17, 1972, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "McGee-Mitchell Correspondence"; Bernice McGee to Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, e-mail, April 19, 2006, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "McGee-Mitchell Correspondence Background."
15. Glenn Magill to Bernice and Jack McGee, March 20, 1973, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "Glenn Magill and Bernice McGee Correspondence."
16. Bernice and Jack McGee, "Runestones and Tombstones," *Old West*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Winter 1969, pp. 12-18, 60-67; Bernice and Jack McGee, "Mystery Tablet of the Big Bend," *True West*, Vol. 19, No. 6, July-August 1972, pp. 10-15, 42-47, 50.
17. Bernice's great grandparents Herman and Rosuba Feuerstein came to St. Joseph, Missouri from Austria in 1886. Her grandfather, Frank H. Firestine who was also born in Austria was in the baking business. Frank married Myrtle B. Wells, a Missouri woman, on May 22, 1899, in Missouri. They had five children—Gladys, Elmer (Bernice's father), Mildred, Verta, and Edward; "Once-unmarked graves finally bear family name," *The Springfield News Leader*, September 17, 2006, p. 7B, c. 1-3; Frank H. Firestine and Myrtle B. Wells marriage (May 22, 1899), <http://www.ancestry.com>, Missouri, Marriage Records, 1805-2002; US 1910 Census, St. Joseph City, Buchanan, Missouri, (F. H. Firestine).

Bernice's grandfather Frank Firestine and grandmother Myrtle Wells came to Arizona from Missouri around 1919 for Myrtle's health—to treat her tuberculosis. Myrtle died in 1919 and is buried in the Phoenix Greenwood Cemetery. After Myrtle's death, Frank married Mattie Barnett on January 29, 1920, in Phoenix to help with the five children. The youngest daughter, Gladys Davis, died of tuberculosis in 1921 and she is also buried in the Phoenix Greenwood Cemetery; US 1920 Census, Phoenix, Maricopa, Arizona, (F. Firestine); Frank Firestine and Mattie Barnett marriage (January 29, 1920), <http://www.ancestry.com>, Arizona, County Marriage Records, 1865-1972; "Card of Thanks," *Arizona Republic*, May 10, 1921, p. 6, c. 7; Myrtle B. Firestine 1881-1919, Greenwood Memory Lawn Cemetery, Phoenix, Arizona, <http://www.findagrave.com>; Gladys Mae Davis, Certificate of Death, May 7, 1921, <http://www.genealogy.az.gov>; US 1930 Census, Fort Worth, Tarrant, Texas, (F. H. Firestine); F. H. Firestine, Certificate of Death, August 30, 1930, <http://www.genealogy.az.gov>.

Elmer Firestine (Bernice's father) married Jewell Burns sometime in the 1920s and had two daughters—Betty Bernice in 1927 and Beverly Beatrice in 1936; US 1940 Census, Fort Worth, Tarrant, Texas, (Elmer, Jewell, Bernice, Beverley Firestine); US 1930 Census, Fort Worth, Tarrant, Texas, (Edward [Elmer]. R., Jewell, Betty B. Firestine).
18. Advertisement, Firestine's Bakery, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 3, 1924, p. 26, c. 1.
19. Bettye McAden, "Ex-Dancers Find New Adventures," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 30, 1967, sec. B, p. 1, c. 3-8.
20. "Beverly Firestine, biography," and "Ramona (1936), Full Cast and Crew," <http://www.imdb.com>; "Guest Star of The Enchanted Hour," *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, July 24, 1951, p. 4, c. 6-7.
21. Bernice McGee, "The Other World of the Superstitions," *Old West*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1964, pp. 2-15, 55-60.
22. Jack McGee's father often used his middle name Marion in place of his first name Woodson. Jack's grandparents Emmett and Minnie McGee owned a grocery store in Paris, Missouri in the 1920s; US 1930 Census, St. Louis City, Missouri, (Jackie McGee); Advertisement, McGee's Style Shop, *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, October 28, 1949, p. 4, c. 7-8; Advertisement, McGee's Style Shop, *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, February 3, 1950, p. 4, c. 7-8; "Marion McGee to Open Dress Shop in Centralia," *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, May 31, 1955, p. 6, c. 4; Advertisement, McGee's Style Shop, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 10, 1956, p. 5, c. 5-6; "Yesterday in Mexico, Thursday, March 8, 1962," *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, March 8, 1972, p. 4, c. 3; Advertisement, McGee's Style Shop, *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, December 31, 1954, p. 14, c. 4-5; "Marion McGee," *Moberly Monitor-Index and Democrat*, Moberly, Missouri, May 18, 1970, p. 4, c. 8.
23. US 1920 Census, Jackson, Monroe, Missouri, (Woodson P. McGee); US 1930 Census, St. Louis City, Missouri, (Jackie McGee); Child and Teen Actors in Films and Television, 1895-Present, (Jackie McGee), <http://www.gnothe.net/mothlist.htm>

24. Harris M. Lentz, III, *Obituaries in the Performing Arts, 2003: Film Television, Radio, Theatre, Dance, Music, Cartoons and Pop Culture* (Jefferson, N. C.: McFarland & Co., 2004), 268.
25. Rusty E. Frank, *Tap!: The Greatest Tap Dance Stars and Their Stories, 1900 - 1955* (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1994), 202-203.
26. "Former Paris Boy on New York Stage," *Moberly Monitor-Index and Democrat*, Moberly, Missouri, August 12, 1939, p. 3, c 8.
27. "Madison School Gives Operetta," an excerpt of article reads "Between acts of the operetta Jackie McGee, 12-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Woodson McGee of Hollywood, Cal., presented a skit and two tap dances. Jackie is a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Ves Creasman of Madison." *Moberly Monitor-Index and Democrat*, Moberly, Missouri, April 3, 1940, p. 7, c 2.
28. "Juniors Please in Play," *The Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1941, Part II, p. 9, c. 1-2.
29. Bernice McGee to Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, e-mail, no date, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "Introduction."
30. Bettye McAden, "Ex-Dancers Find New Adventures," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 30, 1967, sec. B, p. 1, c. 3-8.
31. "*The Star Maker* (1939 film)," <http://en.wikipedia.org>. "*The Velvet Touch* (1948), Full Cast and Crew," <http://www.imdb.com>.
32. Bettye McAden, "Ex-Dancers Find New Adventures," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 30, 1967, sec. B, p. 1, c. 3-8. In an e-mail to the Cundiffs (Note 33), Bernice wrote that they had five dance studios, so we added [*sic*] to correct the number that McAden used.
33. Bernice McGee to Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, e-mail, no date, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "Introduction."
34. Advertisement, McGee's Studio of Dance, *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, February 6, 1951, p. 5, c. 2-3.
35. The caption excerpt from the *Mexico Ledger* newspaper reads "Spring Dresses Shown at Sorority's Fashion Fiesta.—Mrs. Jack McGee [Bernice] . . . as she appeared in the fourth Fashion Fiesta presented by the Beta Sigma Phi sorority. . . . Mrs. McGee's dress was of navy stripes, growing wider as they go round and round horizontally on smoke white silk, with solid navy at the waist line for minimizing. Her costume was complete with a small straw hat." *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, March 20, 1951, p. 5, c. 2-5; "99 Models To Show Spring Styles In Fashion Fiesta," *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, April 1, 1952, p. 4.
36. Excerpt from the article "Newcomers Club's Christmas Dinner Dance Thursday" reads "Special entertainment for the evening were three selections by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Covington . . . and dance numbers by Jack McGee, guest, former Hollywood movie dancer." *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, December 14, 1951, p. 4, c. 6.
37. "Eagles' Auxiliary Clears \$25 at Social," *Moberly Monitor-Index and Democrat*, Moberly, Missouri, July 23, 1952, p. 4, c 8; Advertisement, Parcel Post Sale, *Moberly Monitor-Index and Democrat*, Moberly, Missouri, November 11, 1952, p. 2, c 5-6.
38. "Guest Star of The Enchanted Hour," *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, July 24, 1951, p. 4, c. 6-7.
39. Advertisement, McGee's Studio of Dance, *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, June 11, 1952, p. 4, c. 1-2; "Home from Trip," *Mexico Ledger*, Mexico, Missouri, May 12, 1954, p. 2, c. 8; "More About Tornadoes," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, August 31, 1954, p. 2, c. 3.
40. "Bath Item Being Sold by Magco," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, November 28, 1966, p. 10C, c. 5. This newspaper article describes the soap holder that the Junior Achievement Company designed and marketed. Jack McGee was an advisor to the group. His company, Texas Electric Service Company, sponsored them.; Bernice McGee to Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, e-mail, no date, in Garry Cundiff and Carol Cundiff, *The Bernice McGee Collection*, "Introduction," In this e-mail, Bernice wrote that Jack retired in 1984.
41. "Foreign Students to Get Honorary Citizenship," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 13, 1964, p. 12, c. 5-8.
42. Jack M. McGee, Obituary Notice, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 24, 2003, <http://www.legacy.com>.
43. Betty Bernice McGee, Obituary, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 28, 2009, <http://www.legacy.com>.