

Maid of the Wild. Three-reel drama (815m). **Balboa Amusement Producing Co.**, Released, Oct. 9, 1915, by Pathé Frères. Cast: Baby Marie Osborne, Marguerite Nichols (Lucy Bingham), Gordon Sackville (*James Sterling*).

Commentary: Baby Marie Osborne appeared for the first time in this movie, though her name did not show in the credits. According to Tony Scott, Baby Marie made 28 five-reel films and 2 two-reel films, and some claim that she performed at Balboa till 1919, though most probably she was already making movies in Glendale at the Diando Studios by that time (“*Southern Exposure*” 132). Of the 30 movies with Baby Marie, only 8 have been conservatively listed as ones made at Balboa Studios: 1915, *Maid of the Wild*, *Should a Wife Forgive?*; 1916, *Joy and the Dragon*, *Little Mary Sunshine*, *Shadows and Sunshine*; 1917, *Sunshine and Gold*, *Told at Twilight*, and *Twin Kiddies*.

Ankerich explains in *Broken Silence* that Baby Marie always accompanied her parents who played bit parts at Balboa Studio. Unexpectedly, Marie was asked one day to play a little boy, since no boy was available the moment production was scheduled to begin. Marie told Ankerich, “I had a Dutch bob, and when they put little boy’s clothes on me, I was the little boy they needed” (225). In this way, Baby Marie’s career was launched with this film. According to Ankerich, both the public and Pathé liked her performance. At the height of her acting career during the silent era, Baby Marie was reportedly making as much as \$1000 per week.

In addition, the French title for this film is *La Jolie fille des bois*. *De Pathé Frères à Pathé Cinéma* explains that this movie was reviewed in the *Bulletin Pathé*, New York, No. 24, Sept. 10, 1915, and was announced in *Ciné-Journal*, No. 346/42, Apr. 1, 1916, first released in France at the Omnia Pathé, Paris, Apr. 21-27, 1916 (64).

Summary: The maid was the wife of a trapper in the mountains. There, she lived happily with her husband and two children. A neighboring trapper, Clarice Driscoll, fell in love with her after her husband was killed by a bandit. He begins to court the widow, but a “city feller” arrives on the scene, James Sterling, a wealthy bachelor. In leaving the city, Sterling left behind Clarice Driscoll, a society girl who loves him. The city slicker had come to the mountains under doctor’s orders to recuperate from the wild life he has been leading in the city. He too fell for the pretty widow and married her.

After the marriage, Sterling takes Lucy and the children back home to the city and introduces her to his friends. Unfortunately, her country ways make her the laughing stock of her new husband’s friends. At a dance she drinks too much spiked lemonade, and it goes to her head. Her husband yells at her in a burst of rage, because she has humiliated him. She decides she would be better off back in the hills, so she takes her children and runs off. Her husband chases after her and arrives on the scene just as the neighbor has managed to save her from committing suicide. Together in the mountains they rekindle their love for each other and become reunited. The couple make up as a beautifully colored sun sets behind them (*Variety*, Oct. 8, 1915, p. 23 & Marie Osborne’s scrapbook).

Review: *Variety* felt that this was a drama without much punch and that the story had been told too many times (23).

Works Cited:

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