

# Annie People

The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter

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## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ANNIE!

Due to our new quarterly schedule of publishing *Annie People*, this is the first issue we have done which is dated October, the month of Annie's birth. Of course, there are several different versions over the years of how the date of Annie's birth was determined: In the early days of the comic strip, Annie's birthday was lost to history because the fire in the Orphanage in 1928 burned all the records relating to her. However, in the days of the radio show, one of the only surviving examples of the show available on record was dated October 18, 1935, and that show was about her birthday, so that seemed a logical date to use. Much later on, a story in the Harold Gray comic strip in 1963 involved Annie's being told by a psychic that she was born on a February 29th, resulting in the following panel being done on that date in 1964. (Is the fact Annie has a birthday only every four years one reason why she seemingly doesn't age?) Then, in the 1970s when Thomas Meehan wrote the book for the Broadway musical, he picked October 28th as Annie's birthday to coincide with that of his daughter Kate (whose name also got into the story as one of Annie's Orphanage friends). And finally, when the screenplay for the movie came out a few years later, the date reverted back to October 18th to relate back to the date as depicted in the radio show back in the 1930s. But no matter what the date of her birthday, Annie always seems to be eternally 11 years old (in 1985 in the comic strip, Leonard Starr said that she was entering seventh grade, which might be approximately correct for someone with an upcoming October birthday). Anyway, many happy returns of the day, Annie, from us at *Annie People* and from all your fans all over the world!



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**FOR SALE:** I have recently obtained from an antique store a small quantity of 1982 Applause *Annie* ceramic banks. They show Annie and Sandy and are 6-1/2 inches tall. These are the first ones I have seen in years and are quite possibly the last ones available *anywhere* in mint, in-the-original-box condition. \$15.00 each; price includes handling and first class postage. Satisfaction guaranteed; return in one week for full refund. A bank would make a perfect Christmas gift for your favorite *Annie* or *Annie Warbucks* fan or performer. Send check or money order to Jon Merrill, 517 N. Fenwick St., Allentown, PA 18103. (610) 740-0823.

# The New Jersey Premiere of Annie Warbucks WestRidge Productions, Inc.—September 30, October 1, 7, 8, 1994

by Tricia Trozzi, photographs courtesy Carolyn Newman



New Jersey's first Annie Warbucks—Nancy Braun

Even though **Annie Warbucks** has closed in New York, the story of the sequel is definitely not over, as community theaters all across the country will discover this entertaining show. Theater groups which have done **Annie** several times will no doubt be looking to produce the new show. I had the privilege of working on the New Jersey Premiere of **Annie Warbucks**, which ran for six performances. The theater group is called WestRidge Productions, Inc. and is led by Paul Goldie as producer and director. In addition to running WestRidge, Paul also runs Goldie Theatrical Dogs. He has three "Sandys"

(Brandy, Duffy, and Bundles) and one "Toto" (real name Molly), and has supplied them to over 40 productions of **Annie** and to many **Wizard of Oz** shows, as well as for several television appearances. Paul was very eager to have WestRidge be the first theater group in New Jersey to do the show, as he has been a fan of **Annie** on stage since the late 1970s. I had known Paul for several years through his support of The Annie People Fan Club and by seeing his dogs perform in many productions of **Annie**. When he asked me to be production stage manager for his show, I enthusiastically joined his production team of musical director Peter Candela and

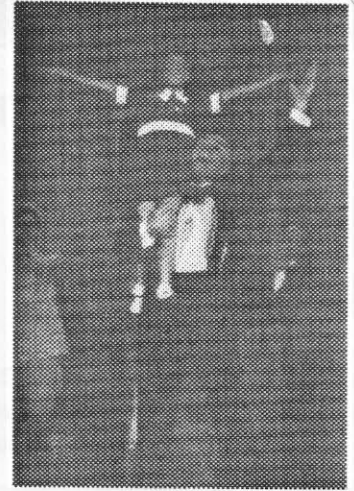
choreographer Jennifer Hanselman. WestRidge and two other groups elsewhere in America shared the top of the request list at Music Theatre International, which is the organization which administers the performing rights for both **Annie** and **Annie Warbucks**. The rights became available in early July, and Paul placed his audition notices in the papers immediately.

July 23 was a hot, humid summer day when we began the **Annie** and **Orphan** auditions. About 35 girls came to sing and learn a dance combination. Those who made the first



1:2 Commissioner Doyle (Kathy Monaghan) tells Oliver Warbucks that he's mistaken if he thinks he is "Above The Law." Miss Clark (Tricia Trozzi) looks on.

cut were given a chance to read from the script opposite Tom Newman, who had been cast as Oliver Warbucks. As the field of talent was narrowed with each cut, the choice became harder, as the finalists were all very good. Finally, the production staff chose Nancy Braun, who was only 8-3/4 years old at the time of casting. Other talented girls became Molly, Pepper, Tessie, Duffy, July, Peaches, and C.G. Paterson. The turnout for the adult roles was surprisingly light. It was perhaps a combination of the summer rehearsal schedule and the fact that since not many people are familiar with this show, they may not know what roles are available to try for. Nevertheless, the full cast assembled on August 1st for the read-through. This is a great time to start to get to know the people you are going to be working with, and to hear



Act I: Scene 1 "Annie Ain't Just Annie Anymore"—Tom Newman and Nancy Braun celebrate



1:3 Warbucks tells Annie that "Changes...that's what life's about" as Grace Farrell (Cynthia McNerney) watches.



1:4 The Orphans (l to r, Christina Ryan, Sarah King, Nicole DeFranco, Elizabeth Donegan, Deidre McEnerney and Amanda Johnson) tell Annie to "watch out for the other woman."





Left: I:5 Grace is offered a job at the White House. Annie tries to distract her while Drake (Steve Sizer) and Mrs. Pugh (Jennifer Hanselman) eavesdrop while polishing the silverware.

Right: I:6 Annie, Drake and the staff embarrass Grace with their none-too-subtle hints in "That's The Kind Of Woman."



them start to find their characters' "voices."

There was a lot of laughter at the read-through, since just about everyone was hearing these lines for the first time, although a few of the cast had seen the show Off-Broadway.

Because of the rather short rehearsal time (two months), a lot of teaching had to be done very quickly. Peter would begin with teaching the songs to one group of actors, while Jennifer would take a group into another room and teach the dances. While these components were still coming together, Paul would stage, or "block" a scene, and I would record the notes on the blocking in my script. As with any production, there are rehearsals where you think "wow, nice!" and some where you wonder if the "All Dolled Up" production number is ever going to stop looking like human bumper cars (P.S., it did).

Part of the fun for me at rehearsals was hearing the actors discover the material and make it their own. I had seen the Off-Broadway production twelve times, so I was quite used to hearing certain lines being read in a certain way. Since they hadn't seen the show, our cast had no pre-conceptions about how lines should be said or how characters should behave, although everyone used the Original Cast Recording for basic reference. For the most part, our actors did justice to the material, and when they would stray off, Paul would give them



I:6 "She's a lovely thing/and don't I know it/she belongs in the arms of a younger man."

a suggestion. Some were also extremely talented singers who made our performances stand well above the average community theater level. Another large task I had during early rehearsals was a by-product of being the **Annie** fan you all know me to be. I carefully went through the libretto (script) and vocal parts and found many errors and discrepancies from what I had remembered seeing Off-Broadway. The libretto is dated March 25, 1994, and some of the individual orchestra parts were dated June, so it seemed that the material was rushed into release and not carefully checked over. I was able to provide the assistance to make



I:7 At the Department of Child Welfare, Mrs. Sheila Kelly (Vicki Smith) tells her story of "But You Go On" to Grace, Warbucks, and attorney Simon Whitehead (John DeBenedetto).

WestRidge's production as faithful and accurate to the original New York show as possible.

It all looks so



I:8 Annie decides to run away and tells the Orphans, "ain't got much/but I got me."

easy when it's being performed; the lights, sets, costumes, props. How did it all get there? For WestRidge, things were borrowed from cast members or from other theater groups, rented (like two painted backdrops) or made from scratch (like Annie's red dress). So in addition to my regular duties as a stage manager, I got to be property master and created the fake **True Modern Romance** magazine for the Orphanage scene, the opening scene's sign which reads "As You May Remember," and the map for the White House scene which pinpoints the locations where Annie was reportedly seen after she runs away. As in-jokes, I marked the map with all the cities the various versions of the sequel have

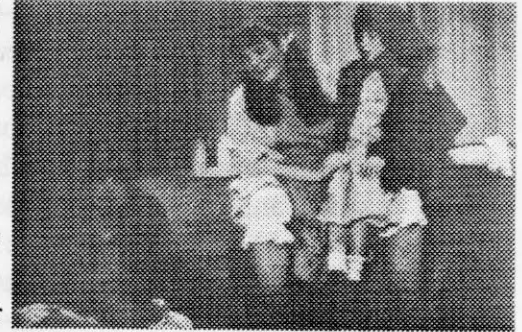




I:9 Annie and Sandy hop a freight train.

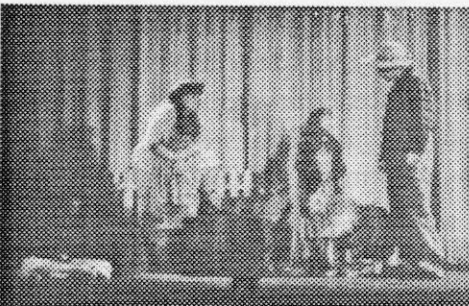
played, and used some former **Annie** stars' headshots to fill the folders of the "already-approved single women" which Commissioner Doyle gives to Warbucks!

In community theater, it's so important to have good volunteers, or the show just would not happen. Members of the cast pitched in to help make the show a success. For example, C.G. Paterson's father became my invaluable stage crew. As we rapidly approached the last week of September, that magical change occurred where this group of actors standing around reading lines became living characters you could believe in. We had our technical rehearsal one week before opening. This is also where my job as production stage manager really kicks into high gear. In case some of you don't know, let me take a moment to



Act II: Scene 1 C.G. Paterson (Jill Harrison) and Ella Paterson (Suzanne Rose) tell Annie about the meaning of "Love."

my script, and prompt the actors when they forget their lines and when actors are missing I get to stand in for them. We had many rehearsals during the summer where people were on vacation, so I had occasions to play Doyle, Gladys, Alvin T. Paterson, Drake, and even Annie! When we have our "tech," I figure out how the set changes are going to work—do we have enough time and people to move the required furniture around? Paul staged the show very well for



II:2 Alvin T. Paterson (Alan Bataille) and his family take in Annie and Sandy. Sandy is dressed for the occasion.

this; to oversimplify it we closed traveler curtains and set the next scene while the current scene

played, so the audience never had to wait for the next scene to begin. (Long waits for set changes are frequently a lowpoint for community theater.) Also during tech, our light cues were set and costumes and props are finalized. Is Mrs. Kelly still missing an umbrella to carry on her first entrance? Do Drake and Mrs. Pugh have enough silverware to polish dur-

ing Act I Scene 5? I take in all the casts' questions and problems and work them out with the director. One actor in particular tended to bark his concerns, and that was Paul's dog Duffy. Because Paul was also producer and director, he did not get to spend too much time training Duffy for the new tricks in this show, the hardest one being the bark in the empty beat of "Somebody's Gotta Do Something." But Duffy performed very well, and spent his off-stage time resting in his kennel underneath the prop table.



II:2 the White House staff lets it be known that "Somebody's Gotta Do Something."

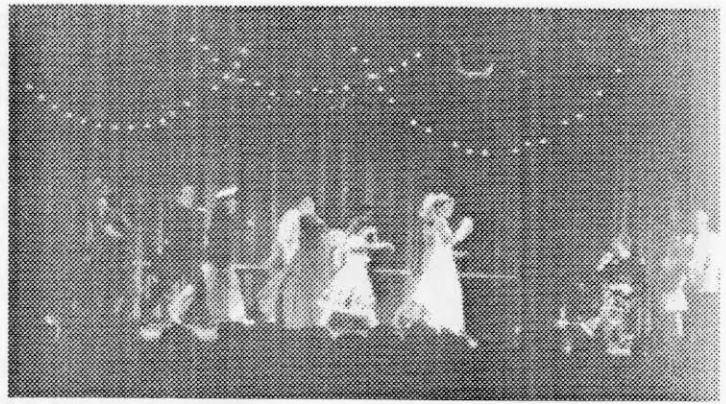


II:2 "Leave It To The Girls"— Commissioner Doyle and Mrs. Kelly plot more nastiness.

During three final dress rehearsals everyone worked on making everything just right. Cynthia McNerney, who played Grace Farrell, did everyone's hair in 1930s styles. Steve Sizer perfected Drake's "difficult" costume change—butler uniform with green gloves to butler uniform with white gloves. Alan Bataille, who had never tap danced before, perfected the tap routine he does as Alvin with Annie in "All Dolled Up." I was ready backstage; I was in headphone communication with the other "techies" and the actors finally started listening to me when I called "places!" But I had one additional little job very uncommon for a stage manager; I was also appearing in three scenes



as Miss Clark, one of Commissioner Doyle's employees at the Department of Child Welfare. That means I also had to get into costume and make-up, remember my lines AND run the show! At first I thought I would be too busy backstage to play the bit, and that I would not be able to do scene changes in costume (my usual attire for stage managing is black t-shirt, black jeans, and black sneakers) but Paul insisted. I'm very glad I did play Miss Clark because it was a lot of fun for me as an **Annie** fan to actually be onstage in a production



II:3 "Look at us, we're all dolled up."



II:3 "It would have been wonderful..."

of **Annie Warbucks**! Likewise, I insisted that Paul do the bit of "the man in the Stetson hat" who turns out to be Roosevelt's Vice-President Mr. Garner.

Finally opening night arrived, and the cast was understandably excited about having a real audience. Again, because this show is brand-new and not well-known yet, our audiences had no pre-conceptions about the show, and most of the audiences were enthusiastic in their responses. Although the saying goes that the cast is obligated to do the best job they can even if the audience is unresponsive, it's undeniable that an audience that laughed and reacted seemed to get a slightly better performance. In the original **Annie**, there is that moment when

you listen to the audience's murmur of recognition when Rooster as Ralph Mudge bumps into Grace in the Christmas party scene and says "oops, pardon me blondie" again. Backstage at **Annie Warbucks**, we would wait to hear if the audience gave a gasp of surprise and realization when Mrs. Kelly says to Commissioner Doyle, "Gee, thanks, MAMA!"

We performed in a beautiful old auditorium in a Catholic girls' high school, which had been recently renovated with modern theater equipment. The only problem with the auditorium was that it is on the third floor of the building, and cast and audience alike had to walk up two double-flights of stairs. (I won't even mention the monumental task it was to carry all of our furniture, costumes and equipment up and down the stairs!) The bathrooms were located one flight down from the auditorium, making the length of the intermissions almost impossible for me to control. The performances drew an average of 200 patrons a show, many



II:4 Annie is gloomy over the impending marriage to Mrs. Kelly, so Warbucks tries to cheer her up with "When You Smile."

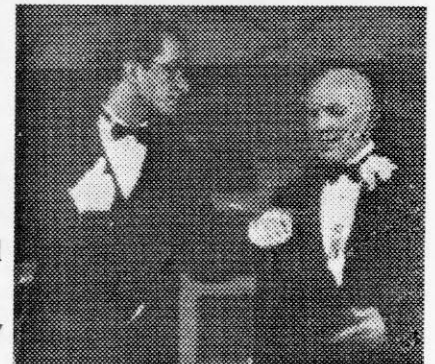
friends and relatives of course but also those who had seen our posters hanging in store windows in the neighboring towns or read the newspaper article that was written about us.

Our six performances went very well, even the evening shows on Saturdays, where you hope the cast has saved some energy after doing a matinee. Our cast made the production staff of Paul, Peter, Jennifer and myself quite proud of the work they had done and the enthusiasm and joy they brought to the performances.



II:4 Vice President Garner (Paul Goldie) congratulates Annie on getting a mother. FDR (Don Eaton) still doesn't recognize his V.P.

We all had a lot of fun performing in the show and we think we gave our audiences their proverbial "money's worth." On the technical end, everything worked smoothly, even when on the final night Vicki Smith as Mrs. Kelly and Kathy Monaghan as Commissioner Doyle skipped an entire page of lyrics in "Leave It To The Girls," which meant that we backstage folk had a lot less time than usual to set the Staten Island Ferry. I'm glad to say we got the set change



II:5 "Are you crazy, Drake? Stopping my wedding for a cablegram?" "I believe, sir, it is very urgent."



Il-5 Annie subdues Simon long enough for Warbucks to apprehend him. (And in the interests of realism, Nancy would REALLY stomp on John's foot in this scene.)

done and the audience never knew that there had been a mistake. There were occasional muffed lines but nothing really catastrophic happened, which isn't to say that we didn't come close. For example, Cynthia fell in the narrow steep stairway to the dressing rooms, but luckily was not seriously injured. Duffy had his tail stepped on during a curtain call and let out a loud yelp—a lock of his fur was pulled completely out. Suzanne Rose, who played Ella Paterson, couldn't leave her home in New York City because of particularly bad Friday rush hour traffic. For a while it looked like Jennifer, who played Mrs. Pugh, would be playing Ella as well. But Suzanne was able to catch a bus and made it in time for the curtain. That same afternoon Kathy was ill in a hospital emergency room, but she also made it in time for the curtain and performed just as well as always.

It seemed like the two weekends of performances were over far too soon. Once everything has become the best it can be, and everybody is really having a good time, the run is through, but that's the way it always is in community theater. The sets are taken apart (or "struck"), the costumes and



Il-5 "I always knew/knew that tomorrow would come true..."

props returned, the backdrops folded up and the scripts collected to be sent back, and I sweep the now-empty stage one last time. The cast party is held, and everyone goes their separate ways with hopefully lots of good memories of the show.

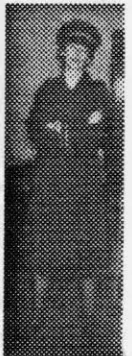
One unexpected aftermath of the show was that Paul received two separate letters complaining about the amount of swearing in the show! One woman wrote that since

the show was represented as "family entertainment," she was highly offended to hear the words "damn" and "hell" used. The original **Annie** also uses those words (for example,



Il-5 "Miss Farrell, marry me!" "Oh Mr. Warbucks, of course I'll marry you!"

Warbucks' phone call from Bernard Baruch, or the lyric in "N.Y.C."—"You might say that I'm square/ but damn/ I come alive."), and the movie version of **Annie** even uses "Goddamn" twice in 30 seconds. Considering the language that is allowed on television these days, and the precedent of the use of those relatively mild swears in **Annie** before, it seems very interesting to have **Annie Warbucks** singled out for impropriety.



Miss Clark in a typical pose.



the cast of the New Jersey Premiere of **Annie Warbucks**: I to r, back row, Terry Pollin (Fletcher), Alan Bataille (Alvin T. Paterson), Jerry Kamen (Senator Vandenberg), Ellie Hess (Dr. Whittleby). Standing: Suzanne Rose (Ella Paterson), Jill Harrison (C.G. Paterson), Vicki Smith (Mrs. Sheila Kelly), Cynthia McNerney (Grace Farrell), Nancy Braun (Annie Warbucks), Tom Newman (Oliver Warbucks), Kathy Monaghan (Commissioner Harriet Doyle), John DeBenedetto (Simon Whitehead), Steve Sizer (Drake). Sitting: Courtney Smith (Helen), Don Eaton (F.D.R.), Sarah King (July), Nicole DeFranco (Molly), Deidre McEnerney (Pepper), Duffy (Sandy), Amanda Johnson (Tessie), Elizabeth Donegan (Peaches), Christina Ryan (Duffy), Jennifer Hanselman (Mrs. Pugh).

All in all, it was a wonderful experience for me. I'm sure I will be seeing many other productions of **Annie Warbucks** in the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania area, but I'll never forget the New Jersey Premiere!



# ☆ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ☆

News from the mom of KATHRYN ZAREMBA and ELISABETH ZAREMBA

"We came out to Los Angeles in early March. Kathryn quickly started working. She performed as Tina in *Ruthless* April 16 - June 5 at the Canon Theatre in Beverly Hills. During that time she did a pilot called *Bringing Up Jack* for ABC which still may be picked up as a mid-season replacement. Matthew Lawrence played her brother, so we have become friends with the whole family including Joey and Andy.

"She also did a Camp Barbie commercial which has been airing in August and September, and several voiceovers for videos and *The Little Rascals* movie.

"Since June, Kathryn has been cast in recurring roles on *Full House* as Lisa on ABC and *Sisters* as Roxie on NBC. So far, she will be in four episodes of *Full House* and six of *Sisters*. On the Christmas episode of *Sisters* she gets to sing! She has had a lot of fun getting to know the Olson twins and all the casts of both shows.

"In May she sang the National Anthem at a Dodger game and in July performed the anthem in Pittsburgh for the world premiere of Disney's *Angels In The Outfield*.

"On November 5th in Oklahoma City, Kathryn will be awarded the 1994 Ambassador of Goodwill in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. She will be performing songs from *Annie Warbucks*.

"In late April the *Broadway Kids Sing Broadway* CD was done and will hopefully be out by the end of the year.

"Elisabeth has been back and forth between (our home town in Oklahoma) Broken Arrow and Los Angeles. She is performing at numerous benefits and shows in Tulsa. In June she was the featured singer at the Miss Oklahoma pageant and performed *Annie Warbucks* numbers. Just this week she won the lead role in a musical version of *Miracle On 34th Street* for Theatre Tulsa. She's having so much fun in her sophomore year at school with her friends in drama, musical theater, football games, and flying to LA once a month.

"Back here in LA, Harve Presnell and Marguerite MacIntyre are auditioning, so we see them occasionally. When *The Sound Of Music* tour came through, we got to have Ashley Pettet's family and Jeff Markowitz (*AW* stage manager) for two weeks.

"It was exciting news a few months ago when Kathryn was nominated for Outer Critics Circle Outstanding Debut of an Actress, for *Annie Warbucks*."

Other former New York *Annie Warbucks* performers are busy as well this fall: **LARISSA AUBLE** is on Broadway in *Show Boat*, which opened to rave reviews in early October. Larissa plays Young Kim and is thrilled with the experience of being in the show. She plays several ensemble roles also, so she is on the stage a lot. She is pleased to be playing alongside Broadway *Annie* veteran **DOROTHY STANLEY** in the show. *Show Boat* is at the Gershwin Theatre, formerly the Uris, where *Annie* finished its run on January 2, 1983. **ASHLEY PETTET** is understudying Marta and Gretl in the national tour of *The Sound Of Music* which is traveling around the country with Marie Osmond in the lead role of Maria. More news of *Annie* stars around the country: **AILEEN QUINN**, having just graduated from Drew University in New Jersey last spring, is currently playing Bet in *Oliver!* at the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, NJ. Absent from show biz during her college years, Aileen is very happy to be back on the stage, and we hope to be seeing a lot of her in the months and years to come! Also in *Oliver!* are **NANCY BRAUN** and **AMANDA JOHNSON**, fresh from the New Jersey premiere of *Annie Warbucks* as reported elsewhere in this issue....**MARCIA LEWIS** recently finished up her run in *Grease* on Broadway....**BILL BERLONT**'s dog Buggy was in *Two Gentlemen Of Verona* in Central Park over the summer....**ALLISON SMITH** was recently in the *Indiana Jones* TV movie recently aired on the Family Channel....**ALYSSA MILANO** stars in the new movie *Double Dragon*, an action film based on the popular video game....**BERNADETTE PETERS** is the speaking and singing voice of Rita the cat on the Warner Bros. animated cartoon series *The Anamaniacs* on Fox Network....**CAROL BURNETT**'s recent TV special *Men, Movies, And Carol* aired recently on CBS-TV....**ROBERT FITCH** writes that he did *Sugar Babies* at Harrah's in Lake Tahoe this summer.

## Attention Collectors!

Is your original white "Annie - A New Musical" Broadway show T-shirt faded and worn from countless wearings and washings? Is your Broadway show tote bag ready to fall apart at the seams? Here is a rare chance to replace both of these classic souvenirs from the original Broadway production with brand new ones, still sealed in the original manufacturer's clear plastic bags. Actors' Heritage, a store in New York specializing in theatrical memorabilia, has found a small supply of T-shirts, tote bags, and the 2-inch black pinback button with the *Annie* "2" logo on it, and is holding some aside expressly for *Annie People* readers. The tote bags are \$10.95, and the T-shirts (only x-large is available) are \$16.95. Actors' Heritage is conveniently located in the heart of the theater district, and they will also do mail order. When you stop by the store or give them a call, make sure you tell them "the Annie Fan Club" sent you!



### ACTORS' HERITAGE

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Little Orphan  
**Annie**