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'A family that strips together, sticks together,' laughed Mrs. Graham.

TIMES-DEMOCRAT Thursday, June 12, 1969
Davenport-Bettendorf, Iowa

Just A Normal Show Business Family

Gene Graham hands his wife the costume for her opening number at Royal American Shows on the levee showgrounds in Davenport. Daughters Amber (the brunette) and Paulette join their mother as show strippers.

By SHIRLEY DAVIS
Woman's Editor

When Paulette and Amber Graham were attending a Catholic boarding school in the south they often mentioned to the nuns that their parents were in show business. But they, purposely, avoided being too detailed in their description of just what kind of an act the family had.

What the nuns didn't realize was that Mother Graham was a redheaded stripper known as "The Red Hot mama Of Burlesque" and that during summer vacation she taught her daughters everything she knew — just like in the song from "Funny Girl."

Amber's been out of school five years now and is currently billed as "Amber Delight, the Chartreuse Goddess" in the Royal American Shows Club Lido, now on the Davenport levee showgrounds. Her finale leaves no doubt that Mama did her work well when she taught her daughter to strip.

And blonde Paulette, now known as Darlene Pearlette, the Undersea Enchantress, has her own number in the show, too.

"You're an exotic dancer until you take off that first piece of clothing," said Mrs. Graham. "Then you're a stripper.

"We're all strippers."

Graham acts as comedian for the current show, with his wife joining him in the act. "I got too fat to strip too far," she says, "so I turned to comedy."

As the "Misfit Sailor" of the current "South Terrific" production, Gene Graham takes a lot of abuse on stage. Backstage he admits to being happy in his profession. "We couldn't make as much money doing anything else," he said, admitting that the act makes more than $700 a week.

Graham has been known to whip up a costume or two on occasion, too. Mrs. Graham claimed in, "Mom teaches the girls to sing and dance, while Dad teaches 'em to cook and sew."

"That's right," echoed the sisters.

Do they like show business? "I think, I'd go crazy if I had to settle down to a regular job," said the blonde.

"I couldn't STAND an office," said the brunette, brushing her hair as she relaxed in the muggy heat of the dressing wagon.

Watching their daughters strip on stage doesn't bother the Grahams at all. "I don't think any more of my daughters taking their clothes off on stage than most parents would of their kids going to the beach," said Graham.

"A family that strips together, sticks together," laughed Mrs. Graham, who at 45 is a very attractive woman. She remembers being in Western movies with Lash LaRue and Ken Maynard.

The Grahams got pushed into burlesque 18 years ago when their live western show with a carnival ran out of an audience. They've worked summer fairs in Springfield and Des Moines, but admit this is their first Davenport appearance.

"If the girls ever get married, we'll just make the business a part of the act," joked Mrs. Graham. "For the moment we're happy all being together. And I always know where my daughters are. They're right out there on stage — stripping their clothes off."

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LEFTY FRIZZELL

Grand Ole Opry

Lefty Frizell joins members of the Grand Ole Opry for 3 and 8 p.m. performances at the Col Ballroom in Davenport on Sunday, June 15. Headlining the show will be Billy Walker, who can be seen on his own tv show Saturdays at 5 p.m. on Channel 6. Also coming to Davenport for the performance will be David Houston and the Pernsaders, Bobby Bare and Jimmon Curgil.

Movie Time Clock

BEL AIR — "Winning" (M) — 1:40 p.m. and 12:15 a.m. — "A Man Called Gannon" (M) — 10:55 p.m.
CAPITOL — "Hard Contract" (R) — 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 p.m.
CORONET — "Winning" (M) — 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.
RKO ORPHEUM — "Finian's Rainbow" — 1:20, 4, 6:35 and 9:20 p.m.

Key to rating guide movies released before the Hollywood rating system went into effect will not be rated:)

G — For general audiences
M — For adults, mature young people
R — Restricted, under 16 with parent
X — Under 16 not admitted

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