

# She Wanted to Be Governor



Gail Patrick poses in Hollywood for The Tribune's new color camera.

By MAE TINEE

"Wagon wheels, wagon wheels!  
Keep on rollin', wagon wheels!"

**B**ACK in 1934—Oct. 18, to be exact—a "western" called "Wagon Wheels" came to town.

It was a good "western," featuring Randolph Scott and a girl named Gail Patrick.

She was a slim, dark girl with a lovely face and voice and an arresting personality. A girl who reminded me of—whom? For the life of me I couldn't think of the name of the woman she so much resembled—though I could see her plain as day with my mind's eye. A star of silent pictures she had been.

"What other actress DOES Gail Patrick remind me of?" I besought readers in the review of the picture. "Her resemblance to someone whose name persistently escapes me is driving me nuts. . . . Help!"

Help was immediately forthcoming from all sorts of quarters. But the first letter I received essaying to shed light was from none other than Gail Patrick herself.

"Could it be, I wonder, that it is Florence Vidor you are thinking of?" she asked.

Florence Vidor it was.

And Gail MUST be a lot like Florence, for everybody who wrote in offered Miss Vidor as the solution to my problem.

A "panther woman" contest, conducted by a major studio, proved Miss Patrick's "open sesame" to the movies.

She'd always liked pictures and been interested in screen players, but had never thought seriously about becoming one herself. The announcement of the contest intrigued her interest.

"You take swell pictures—why don't you enter the thing?" a friend suggested.

## But "Panther Woman" Contest Started Gail Patrick on Film Career

"Why not?" countered the lady, and forthwith got busy.

Within two weeks she was acclaimed the winner, and within two weeks she was winging her way to Hollywood.

Arriving, she competed in the "finals," winning a long-term contract with Paramount instead of the prize role in "Island of Lost Souls."

Now, you'd never think it to look at her, but this slender, soft-spoken southern girl once aspired not only to be a great lawyer BUT—to be elected governor of Alabama! She had been unusually successful in college, where she was graduated with a bachelor of arts degree.

She was captain of the girls' university basketball team, a member of the Delta Zeta sorority, and had been prominent in Campus theatricals.

In 1931 she was chosen for College Humor's hall of fame.

Miss Patrick's father hails from Ireland. Her mother is a southern woman. And she liked her name, Fitzpatrick, very much.

But studio executives shook their heads over it.

"Too long!" they said.

So Margaret Fitzpatrick went into the silence and thought for a long time very, very hard. Finally she decided that she could get along without the Margaret and without the Fitz—but part with the Patrick she never would.

"Well, I guess we can use

the Patrick if we can think up a catchy first name," said the bosses leniently.

"I always thought Gail was a pretty name," hesitantly suggested the little girl from 'way down south.

And so Gail it has been since that time.

While "Wagon Wheels" is the first picture in which Miss Patrick really, to my way of thinking, got over in a big way, she has had roles in a number of productions. Let's see—she was in: "If I Had a Million," "The Mysterious Rider," "Murders in the Zoo," "To the Last Man," "Pickup," "Gambling Ship," "Big Executive," "Mama Loves Papa," "Cradle Song," "Death Takes a Holiday," "Murder at the Vanities," "One Hour Late," "Rumba," "Mississippi," "Torch Bearers," "No More Ladies," "Big Broadcast of 1935."

"My Man Godfrey" and "The White Hunter" are her latest releases.

She was working on the picture "Love Trap" when that Mr. Robert Howard Cobb's importunities became irresistible, with the result that she took a run-out powder, leaving studio executives frantically searching for her.

Next thing they knew, down zoomed a plane with news from Tia Juana. Their wails were changed to the tune of "Here Comes the Bride." The last strains were still making the welkin ring, so to speak when—the bride DIDN'T arrive. Further dispatches stated that bride and groom had landed at San Diego—and disappeared.

Ain't love grand—and eccentric?

Speaking of airplanes, Miss Patrick is quite an air enthusiast. She studied aviation for a long time, but kept her activities along this line very dark until she had made a number of flights at the controls of an open monoplane. Then she announced proudly to her friends that she was trying for a pilot's license.

One of her hops was to Boulder dam, where, they tell us, she was the first woman ever allowed to go down in the cavernous tunnels. This feat is one the lady talks about with pride and joy.

You see, dam workers and merchantmen sailors have the same idea. They think it's unlucky to have a woman around. How Miss Patrick persuaded the hard-boiled gentlemen at the dam that she was no hoo-

doo she doesn't say. Anyhow, they did let her make the rounds of their tunnels.

This year the chambers of commerce of both Memphis, Tenn., and Little Rock, Ark., invited Miss Patrick to be guest of honor at their respective cotton carnivals. So away she flew.

Upon her arrival in Little Rock a member of her police escort, in response to her interested queries about the town, said:

"Wouldn't you like to make a little tour of the town in my side car?"

It being a little ahead of time for festivities, etc., Miss Patrick replied that she'd be delighted. AND started forth in high fettle.

But the side car ride was most impromptu, you see. When the authorities looked about, smiling, for their fair guest, lo! she had disappeared!

"Kidnaped!" somebody croaked. Frantic calls were issued on the police short wave—the while the lady and her blue-coated escort skimmed along the avenues.

During this vacation away from Hollywood Miss Patrick visited her home in Birmingham for the first time in three years. She tells with a break in her voice how her father, for the first time in those three years, unlocked the door of her room—in which he had turned the key when she left for the west.

Devoted to her family—Miss Patrick. She's putting her brother through a training school in San Francisco to qualify him for Annapolis. She lived in Hollywood with her mother till her marriage. Just couldn't persuade her father to leave his beloved Birmingham.

She believes the number nine exercises a special influence on her career—what with her signing contracts on the ninth of the month and having a 9R9 car license.

- Her real name is Margaret Fitzpatrick.
- She was born June 20, 1911, in Birmingham, Ala.
- She's 5 feet 7 inches tall, weighs about 125 pounds, has black hair, brown eyes, and a dimple in her chin.
- Favorite dish is fried chicken and corn pone.
- Her only marriage occurred at midnight Dec. 16, 1936, in Tia Juana, Mexico. The lucky man is Robert Howard Cobb, president of a restaurant corporation in Hollywood.
- Her most successful role she considers was in "My Man Godfrey."
- She admires ex-King Edward and thinks the treatment which resulted in his exile "barbaric."