

# HAMILTON LODGE BALL DRAWS 7,000: Men Step Out in Gorgeous Finery of ...

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## Men Step Out in Gorgeous Finery of Other Sex to Vie for Beauty Prizes

One Simpering Male Describes Affair as "a Veritable Glimpse of Fairyland"—  
1931 Winner Leads Again

The sixty-fourth annual "drag" promoted by the Hamilton Lodge, No. 710, Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, held Friday night at Rockland Palace, was, to use the exact words of one of the muscular-shouldered, beautifully-gowned creatures present, "a gorgeous, thrilling spectacle—a veritable glimpse of fairyland. Whoops!"

While more than 7,000 persons jammed the spacious ballroom to witness and participate in Harlem's notorious one night of mad revelry, scores of reserve police officers from the entire Sixth Division battled an equally large crowd which gathered outside the place to await the arrival of New York City's male and female impersonators.

The frolic, which was respectfully called a "masquerade and civic ball," is the annual occasion upon which members of one sex who wish to impersonate members of the other group may throw off their inhibitions and assume the roles of their desire. It is also the occasion for Harlem's social elite, Broadway's thrill seekers, and all the pseudo-scientists of the metropolitan area to gather and watch the spectacle.

And, depression or no depression, Friday night's affair was no exception. Although Broadway and Harlem didn't turn out en masse as last year, there was little or no drop in the number of paid admissions which crowded the hall at \$1.50 each. The theatrical and social groups were represented by the regular thrill-seekers.

Here and there one could pick out an occasional celebrity or a group of well-known personages. Mingling with the crowd, or standing alone, one accosted Kent Douglass or Douglas Montgomery, the stage and screen star, Geraldyn Dismond, Alderman John J. Martin, who acted as one of the judges in the "beauty" pageant, and Harry Warrick.

At other times one might run into Broadway Jones, Caska Bonds, Harold Jackman, Jim Daniels, Selma Day, Edward G. Perry, Val Cook, Carroll Boyd, Nora Holt Ray, Edna Thomas, Olivia Wyndham, Dr. Marshall E. Ross, Minta Cato, Buddy Austin, Carl Van Vechten, Cecil Beaton, Edith Rophel, Hall Johnson, Juanita Hall, Clinton Moore, Joe Coleman, Mr. and Mrs. Hank Fuller, Blanche Dunn, Sandy Brown and scores of others.

**Gowns Less Expensive.**  
The only sign of the depression was visible among the impersonators themselves. For one of the first times in the last few years, the gowns and costumes were not as glamorous and expensive as might have been imagined. Framed with the background of mediocrity, however, the few really beautiful creations were accentuated and greeted with lengthy applause during the parade.

The "beauty" pageant started at 1:45 a. m. Bowing, throwing kisses, snake-hipping or Lindy-hopping as the mood struck them, nearly 100 of the more expensively costumed impersonators strode across an elevated platform and courted the favor of the crowd and judges. From this group a score of semi-finalists were chosen.

A few minutes after the judges selected Bonnie Clark, last year's prize winner, as the best dressed one of the whole group and awarded lesser prizes to fourteen others, several minor fights broke out among the few disappointed runners-up. These slight altercations were broken up by the firemen and police, however, before they reached the hair and wig-pulling stage.

Clark, who stated that he is a cos-

tume designer and that he created his \$50 prize-winning garment, was dressed in a red and white satin gown. The long waist and crepe de chine left arm of the dress were covered with rhinestones, while three yards of red satin-velvet were used in the flare skirt which was bordered with a feather hem. Thirty-three feathers were used in the exaggerated tiara which also had the rhinestone effect. Eighteen feathers graced the large fan, and an original Hilda Ferguson jewel arm adorned the right side of the garment. White rhinestone slippers and red and white imported China beads completed the outfit.

**Whites Better Dressed.**  
As was the case in previous years, the white masqueraders far excelled their darker competitors in the matter of makeup and costumes. Their gowns were more carefully selected and patterned, and they did not go in for the hideous shades of color and paint exhibited by the Negro female impersonators. Not all of the better dressed masqueraders marched in the pageant.

Among the costumes which won approval with the spectators was a gown of silver and black brocaded cloth with a diagonal shoulder effect. A thin ermine strap crossed the right shoulder and a ruby clip was used to pin the pointed neck. A silver cape, lined with ruby satin, ruby and silver earrings and black and silver slippers completed the outfit. The masquerader wore an iron gray wig.

**Offers Phone Number.**  
Another outfit, worn by an impersonator who would not give his name but willingly offered his phone number, was a white satin dress with a black velvet long wrap lined with white satin. The wrap had a white fox collar. The man's straight hair had been lacquered white.

The heavy-shouldered individual mentioned earlier in this account wore a black chiffon gown and bolero edged in silver sequins. Silver slippers, silver and black earrings and a cerise and white chiffon dance hankie finished his outfit. A companion of his wore an off-shade white crepe dress, a black fox fur, a white bunny jacket and a silver turban.

Other favored outfits were a black velvet dress, hemmed in wide white fox, a finger tip length jacket, and silver slippers; a black flat crepe with ermine shoulder straps and cerise satin opera pumps, and a red taffeta gown with cape collar trimmed in gold sequins. This latter garment had an off-the-shoulder effect and was worn with gold slippers.

**Carry on Flirtations.**  
Compared to affairs of other years, Friday's "drag" maintained an almost respectable air until the pageant was finished. After that, though, the lid blew off and the impersonators started making promiscuous "passes" at the spectators. Open, and often encouraged, flirtations were carried on; telephone numbers were passed; and broad shouldered bodies which would grace any football player or truck driver were rubbed suggestively against any man who happened to be standing near. In the same way, scores of masculine-looking women sought to touch the few unattached feminine spectators.

Scores of the thrill-seekers joined in the unorthodox orgies, and the revolting revel was on. It lasted until the early hours of the morning, when most of the masqueraders quit the place and hastened to the most noted of the local speakeasies.