

“Baby Helen” Badgeley “The Thanhouser Kidlet”

Born: Helen Badgeley (or Badgley); New Rochelle, New York; 1911 (or 1910)
Died: 1977



All together now – Aaaahhhh! (or, if you prefer – Aaarrggghh!!)

Source: The Silents Majority website

The Silents Majority website caption:

“The kidlet and the collie. Helen Badgley (1910-1977), known as “The Thanhouser Kidlet,” and “Shep, The Thanhouser Collie” charmed pre-World War I audiences; from the tearjerker “**A DOG’S LOVE**” (Thanhouser, 1914).”
- Diane MacIntyre

The Child Stars entry:

“Legal authorities took to task the parents of Baby Helen, Baby Doris’s contemporary, in 1915. Born Helen Badgeley, in New Rochelle, New York, in 1911, the petite artiste became known the world over as the “Thanhouser Kidlet,” after the company for which she starred in such epics as “**HER BIG SISTER**”, “**LITTLE MISCHIEF**”, “**A DOG’S LOVE**”, “**HELEN INTERVENES**”, “**THE BABY AND THE BOSS**”, “**FIRES OF YOUTH**”, and many more.

Like Baby Doris, she had begun her career in vaudeville, where her “I Don’t Care” song, her

imitations, her fund of rattling good stories, and her yodeling – which, it was said, would make a Swiss mountaineer turn green with envy – had built up a loyal following. In between films, the demure and dimpled entertainer continued her road appearances, and it was in Atlanta, on March 25, 1915, that she ran afoul of the recently enacted child labour law. Her stepfather and the local theatre manager were arrested and brought to court. The defense, in trying to show that Baby Helen's act did not constitute labour under the provisions of the law, called the performer to the stand as their main witness.

"Do you find your work hard or irksome?" attorney Van Astor Batchelor asked the tiny star. "Beg pardon, sir?" lisped Baby Helen.

"You don't dislike to work on the stage do you?" repeated the defense. "Certainly not," replied the witness. "But I'd dislike it if Mama wouldn't let me. I'd rather be on the stage than anywhere I know." The testimony, plus the fact that she earned \$2.50 a week, led the court to the conclusion that Baby Helen was an artist rather than a labourer. She was allowed to finish her engagement on condition the theatre book no children under fourteen in the future.

Bright stars in their time, Baby Doris and Baby Helen are now largely forgotten, along with most of the other top-rated child performers of the silent era."

FILMOGRAPHY			
Year	Age	Title	Role
--		HER BIG SISTER	
--		LITTLE MISCHIEF	
14	3	A DOG'S LOVE	
15	4	HELEN INTERVENES	
		<i>with Leland Benham</i>	
--		THE BABY AND THE BOSS	
--		FIRES OF YOUTH	