

About the CWPEA films

NAISSANCE

[*Birth* with English subtitles]

Made in France in 1956, this documentary was used as part of the training received by women preparing for painless childbirth using the psychoprophylactic "Lamaze" method.



Brought to the Midwest US by Flora Hommel (founder and director of the Detroit-based Childbirth Without Pain Education Association—CWPEA), the film was widely shown throughout the 1960s to 1980s. It summarizes the development of the Method, the science behind its success, the Lamaze classes attended by expectant parents, and features a live birth experience.

Flora accompanied each film showing with a **commentary**, pointing out, for example, that the scenes of a woman running track are intended to compare the training of an athlete to that of training for birth... but that running track is not part of the Lamaze training!

- The birthing scene begins with the last contraction of First Stage of labor and most of what we see is the much shorter Second Stage (the pushing stage). The Third Stage, the expulsion of the placenta, is not included.
- Flora explains the role of each person on the team... the woman is aided by doctor, monitrice, nurse, and husband (at a time when husbands were banned from most American delivery rooms). Other conditions in the Paris clinic would not be typical in a US setting: the use of oxygen, the replacing of sterile cloth, etc.

Directed by Jean-Pierre Marchand and Dr. Pierre Vellay, *Naissance* was published by Cinétest in 16mm format, Black & White, switching to color for the birthing scene.

English subtitles are by Claudia Hommel, based on the translation Flora wrote and spoke during her public film showings.

Flora's print is at the Wayne State University Archives in Detroit, along with physical copies of the film at Bibliothèque de l'Université Laval, Québec, and at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

NAISSANCE:

[without English subtitles]

Documentaire sur la méthode psychoprophylactique d'accouchement sans douleur introduite en France par le Docteur

Fernand Lamaze. Evaluation de l'importance de cette méthode dans le monde. Les cours de préparation physique et les méthodes de relaxation pendant l'accouchement.



AMERICAN NAISSANCE: Journey with a Friend

Note: this film was digitally converted in 2015 from a deteriorated print. The sound and visual aspects are greatly improved after 2:30 minutes.



The making of this film was inspired by the French film ***Naissance*** and the need for an English-language film to show the Lamaze Method as taught in the US.

Flora Hommel (first seen at 3:00) co-produced the film with filmmaker Wil Berg in 1970. Wil and his wife Edith are also the subjects of the film as they attend Lamaze classes in Cleveland and prepare for the birth seen in the film. The film was shown widely over the next two decades.

THURSDAY, JULY 30
5 P.M. - 7 P.M.

Walter P. Reuther Library
5401 Cass Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202
Wayne State University



FLORA HOMMEL
A Labor of Love

The 2015 celebration of the life and work of
Flora Hommel (March 16, 1928-May 15, 2015)



FLORA HOMMEL

A Labor of Love

Speakers include Director of Archives Erik NORDBERG, Senator Carl LEVIN (speaking on behalf of his wife Barbara with whom he attended CWPEA classes for the birth of their children), Wayne State medical historian Marsha RICHMOND,

CWPEA alumna and teacher Judith CAWHORN, social activist Michele ARTT, daughter Claudia HOMMEL with written greetings from Congressman John CONYERS, Gray Panthers' representative Randy BLOCK, and Wayne College of Nursing classmate '58 and CWPEA monitrice Jeanette CONRAD.

Excerpts of the film *American Naissance: Journey with a Friend* including the birthing scene were shown during the event and are included in this film.

PROMOTING the LEGACY of CWPEA and the FUTURE of the LAMAZE METHOD

- A pioneer for painless childbirth, Flora Suhd Hommel brought the Lamaze psychoprophylactic method of painless childbirth to the United States (along with Marjorie Karmel in New York and Dr. Bonstein in Cleveland), establishing in 1958 an important teaching organization in Detroit that became the Childbirth Without Pain Education Association (CWPEA).
- She championed the rights of women to control childbirth, creating a grass-roots movement contemporaneous with the women's movement of the 1960s-1970s. Teaching over 18,000 students, training many hundreds of instructors in workshops around the country, and spawning dozens of similar organizations, Hommel and the CWPEA were important catalysts in establishing childbirth organizations and teacher-monitrice accreditation programs across the United States and Canada.



Childbirth Without Pain Education Association

A MICHIGAN NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
DEDICATED TO THE TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF THE
LAMAZE-PAVLOV (PSYCHOPROPHYLACTIC) METHOD OF CHILDBIRTH

- After an uphill battle to promote the rights of expectant parents, Lamaze is now a common word used to reflect the right of women to be actively engaged in their own birth experience, and the right to have birthing partners by their side. For her outstanding contributions in the field Hommel was recognized within the obstetrical profession by election to the National Board of the International Childbirth Education Association (1964-1968), and was inducted to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 1994.

- Flora Hommel brought the Lamaze method of painless childbirth to Detroit after returning from Paris in 1953 where she had studied with Dr. Fernand Lamaze.
- In order to promote the method, she graduated from Wayne University with a BS and nursing degree in 1958.
- In the course of her career, she personally monitriced (coached) a thousand births.



- Its national reputation recognized by inclusion in *Dorland's Dictionary of Medical Acronyms*, **CWPEA** is no longer active. However, the Flora Hommel Papers, now housed at the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University in Detroit , are a critical resource for the study of the effectiveness of psychoprophylaxis in childbirth, and its future development.

Documents include training materials, class outlines, teacher and monitrice certification exams, three decades of monthly newsletters and correspondence, records of events, classes and projects, including the making of the film *American Naissance*—along with thousands of mother-written birth reports.

The finding aid is available at:
reuther.wayne.edu/node/9274

Flora Hommel's real headquarters is a picnic table in the dining room





Flora Hommel with daughter Claudia

This **website** has been created to gather more information about Flora Hommel and Childbirth Without Pain Education Association (CWPEA), in order to further the legacy, research and future of the Lamaze Psychoprophylactic Method.

Contributions, financial and other, are welcome to help defray the cost of producing and distributing these films, and to join in further research at

www.workinginconcert.org/CWPEA/FloraForm.html