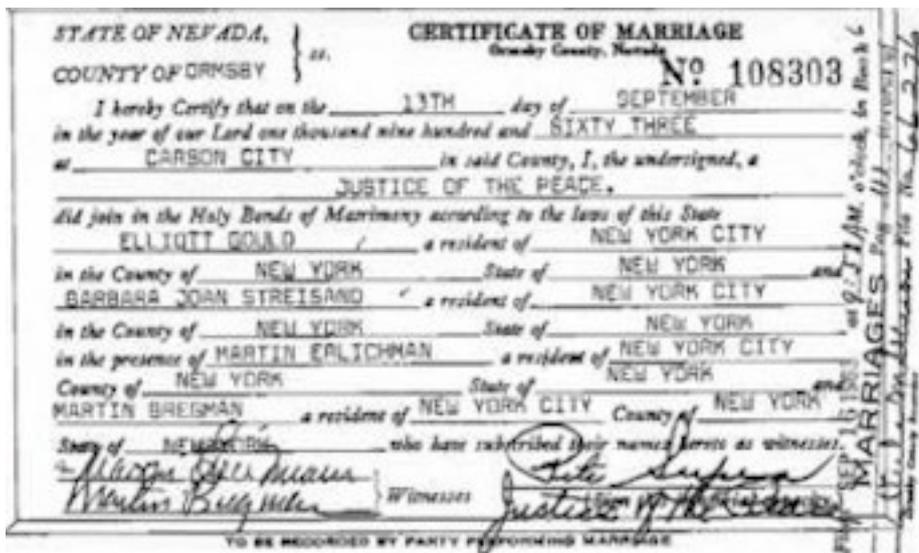


by Guy Rocha, former Nevada State Archivist



Everybody seems to know that actor/Academy Award nominee Elliott Gould and award-winning singer/actress Barbra Streisand once were married. Yet, virtually nobody knows--except Streisand's biographers--where the wedding was performed. Many claim the couple was married in New York City and others say Las Vegas. Neither location is correct. While both Gould and Streisand hailed from Brooklyn and their careers took them to Las Vegas, the nuptials actually occurred in Nevada's state capital, Carson City.

The two aspiring young entertainers first met while rehearsing for producer David Merrick's *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*, which opened on Broadway on March 22, 1962 and ran for some nine months. Gould, 23, born Elliott Goldstein, played the leading man. However, the 19-year old Streisand stole the show and the leading man in a minor role as a secretary. She won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for her comedy and singing performance.

"I must admit," Gould recalled in a *Playboy* interview in November 1970, "that the happiest memories I have of Barbra are when we were living together before we were married."

Streisand's career soared. She gained huge popularity in club and showroom appearances

throughout the United States, and on various television programs including the *Ed Sullivan Show* and *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson. Within two weeks of the release of her first album for Columbia Records in February 1963, Streisand was the top-selling female vocalist in the country.

On Monday, September 9, 1963, Barbra Streisand appeared as the opening act for piano virtuoso Liberace at Harrah's Lake Tahoe South Shore Room. She was touted as "the nation's newest singing sensation . . . who comes to Tahoe from a record-smashing engagement at Hollywood's Cocoanut Grove." In July, Streisand had first performed with Liberace at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas.

On Friday, September 13, Pete Supera, Carson City Justice of the Peace, presided over the secret wedding of Elliott Gould, 25, and the 21-year-old Barbra Joan Streisand in his office. Eleanor Supera had expected the wedding to be performed at her residence and was disappointed when the couple didn't show. The Certificate of Marriage was filed on Monday, September 16, at 9:58AM in the Recorder's office. The media failed to uncover the story. "There was no press, no spectacle," wrote biographer Randall Riese in *Her Name is Barbra* (1993). "Not even an announcement. After all, as far as almost everyone knew, Barbra and Elliott Gould had been married for at least six months."

Earlier in the year, Barbra had told a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter that she and Gould had gotten married (*Life*, *Streisand, Her Life*, by James Spada, 1995).

The two witnesses to the Carson City wedding were New York City residents Martin Erlichman--Streisand's personal manager who became a movie producer, producing one film, *For Pete's Sake* (1974), starring Streisand--and Martin Bregman, Streisand's business manager, who went on to produce films such as *Serpico* (1973), *Scarface* (1983), and *The Adventures of Pluto Nash* (2002), starring Eddie Murphy.

Barbra Streisand's name became a household word with her meteoric fame. Unfortunately, Gould's career did not keep pace and he understandably did not like being called "Mr. Streisand." A son, Jason, born to them in 1966 did not salvage the marriage. By 1969, their many issues, including his gambling and her extramarital affairs, led to a separation.

Gould received an Oscar nomination for his breakthrough role in *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice* (1969), filmed in part in Las Vegas; appeared as Trapper John in *M*A*S*H* (1970); and produced and starred in *Little Murders* (1971). His long-awaited success did nothing to heal the broken relationship. Gould and Streisand obtained a quickie divorce in the Dominican Republic on June 30, 1971.

"I was very young, she was very young," Gould later reminisced, "and we went as far as we could together."

Gould starred in *California Split* (1974), shot in Reno; and appeared in the remake of *Ocean's Eleven* (2001), filmed in Las Vegas; *Ocean's Twelve* (2004); and *Ocean's Thirteen* (2007). He was also regularly featured on the TV show *Friends*.

Barbra Streisand's career has been phenomenal. Few entertainers can boast that they have received at least one Grammy, Oscar, Tony, Golden Globe, and Emmy. The superstar has also produced, directed, and co-written feature films. Her concerts are consistently sold out in Las Vegas and elsewhere. Streisand is arguably one of the most powerful and independent women in show business.

And to think that Barbra Streisand and Elliott Gould once found their way to Carson City to get married.

Certificate courtesy of Carson City Clerk-Recorder (note spelling of Streisand's first name).

(Original version in *Sierra Sage*, Carson City/Carson Valley, Nevada, December 2002 edition)