

THEATRE AND SOCIETY IN LINCOLN COUNTY, KANSAS, 1886-1910

by

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When Dwight Eisenhower in 1909 played Launcelot Gobbo in his senior class play, a parody of The Merchant of Venice, he was praised as having exceeded professional comedians seen on the local stage for a generation.¹ This praise suggests that travelling companies of professional actors had been playing in Abilene for some time, and it also suggests the availability of the theatre more generally throughout Kansas, since touring companies require bookings in many places. It does not, however, explain the cultural and social significance of the theatre for Kansas at that time. Such general significance is indeed suggested by the following study of the theatre in Lincoln County, Kansas, about sixty miles west of Abilene, where the theatre, both amateur and professional, flourished in the years of growth of that frontier society from 1886 until 1910.²

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Productions in the city of Lincoln, county seat of Lincoln County, were presented by both amateur groups and touring companies. Among the amateurs were occasional groups from neighboring cities (Salina--January 19, 26, 1888; Beverly--March 17, 1892; Ellsworth--April 6, 1892),³ general groups of prominent local citizens who were enjoying themselves as they provided entertainment for others, and local groups sponsoring plays to raise money for themselves.

The touring companies visited Lincoln irregularly in the 1880s and 1890s; in the 1900s, however, they became much more regular, and before the end of the decade the managers of the local opera house arranged for regular seasons with "better attractions than any town of its size in Kansas" (January 21, 1909). During the 1908-09 season it was the manager's boast that every one of the eleven plays had played in Salina, and at least one of the productions (The Cow Puncher--February 22, 1909) came to Lincoln after playing at McPherson, Lyons, Larned, Great Bend, and Salina. One company, before reaching Lincoln, was said to have played in Omaha, Des Moines, Kansas City, and Denver (Faust--January 20, 1910).

A company with special interest for Lincoln was that of Mr. and Mrs. Will Locke, because Mrs. Locke was niece of "Grandma" (Mrs. H. S.) Buzick, the revered mother of a prominent local family. On one occasion (January 5, 1905) it had recently opened the new Logan, Kansas, opera house with a week's repertoire before its Lincoln appearance, and on another occasion the company, after

leaving Lincoln, appeared next in Abilene.⁴

Both amateurs and touring companies presented many kinds of plays: "military," or "war," dramas, usually with Civil War settings but at least once with a contemporary Spanish-American War setting; "westerns," set usually in Colorado or Arizona; comedy-dramas, comedies, and farce-comedies; romantic dramas; melodramas; and temperance plays. Also brought by the touring companies were the "tramp," "Swede," and "Tom" shows, as well as musical productions, including operas, and plays by famous authors, including Shakespeare. The descriptions of these plays in the local newspapers indicate that these varied types of plays had many similarities: they emphasized sentiment, including patriotic sentiment; a moral quality; stereotyped comic characters; often, a mixture of comedy and drama; action; music; and spectacle.

The usual military dramas were set during the Civil War, were strongly patriotic and sentimental, provided opportunities for much action and spectacle, and used stereotyped comic roles. For instance, the first play reported by the Lincoln Republican just after it began publication under this name, was also the "first military play ever produced in Lincoln," The Spy of Atlanta, presented February 18-20, 1886, by the Lincoln GAR. Included in the cast were a "fiery Southern rebel"; "General McPherson," presumably the man after whom McPherson, Kansas, is named, played in "genuine wartime style" with "all the coolness and bravery of the hero he represented"; "General Sherman"; "Major Wilbur," played with "dignity and dispatch"; "Colonel"; "Cpl. Ogden"; and "Sgt. Bates." The Colonel's battalion drill was reported to be one of the best features of the production. Other spectacles included "very fine" tableaux and a "flag presentation scene which awakened all the dormant patriotic feelings in the intensely interested audience." The "patriotism and love for the old flag" displayed by Farmer Dalton "seemed too real for mere acting and thrilled the audience," and the "simple childlike earnestness" of the Drummer Boy "brought tears to the eyes of the audience."

But laughter mingled with the tears. A Falstaffian character named "Jake Schneider" was "irrepressible" and "simple immense-- both bodily and in the amount of fun he created." "A 'colored gemman' made everybody laugh," and it was "worth more than the price of admission to see him and Farmer Dalton embrace." Also in the play were "irresistibly funny" songs.⁵

The Spy of Gettysburg, another military drama produced December 7-9, 1892, by the Lincoln City Band, included in its cast a Virginian, the "heavy villain"; a Mexican War veteran; a federal spy; a member of Lee's army; and "a true Northern girl" and her cousin. Apparently for the comedy of it the cast also included "an independent 'coon'," a "poor white," and a woman "with a mind of her own."⁶

The Blue and the Gray, presented under the auspices of the local GAR post on January 1 and 2, 1897, was reported to have been given six years before and to have drawn at that time the largest audiences of any amateur play ever given in Lincoln. The play itself had "the reputation of being one of the most pleasing war dramas ever written," with "many startling incidents, scenes full of pathos and sentiment, and glorious comedy." In its cast were a "Union spy" and a "loyal Southerner," as well as "Uncle Ned, an aged darkey" and a comic "Dutch recruit."⁷

The "thoroughly up-to-date" and "spirited" play Santiago, "a grand Spanish-American war drama," was presented April 7 and 8, 1899, under the auspices of the Eastern Star. It was reported to include "stirring scenes," including "battles, when Uncle Sam's heroes went fearlessly to death with a song on their lips, . . . [and when] brave women . . . went as nurses and faced the dangers of shot, shell, famine, and disease, with the boys in blue." It was also reported to have been "a little noisy in spots, perhaps, but a war drama is necessarily so." The cast included U. S. soldiers and sailors as well as Spanish soldiers, and the presence of Beverly, "a colored 'Cubian'," seems to indicate the opportunity for a bit of humor. The newspaper also mentioned "new scenery and new costumes."⁸

Many members of the cast of Santiago had appeared a few months earlier in Dixie, a war drama that "abounded in thrilling war scenes." Its cast included a "Northern volunteer," a "Southerner," a "loyal Northerner," and a lady who is "loyal to the core," as well as "Hans Schneider of 'Dot Sauer Krout Brigade'," and two blacks, Pete ("one of the bones of contention") and Mose ("likewise also").

For this play the newspaper printed a complete synopsis, which gives not only the plot but also a clear indication of the peculiar mix of sentiment, patriotism, comedy, action, music, and spectacle that was the war drama genre:

Act I.--The north at the opening of the rebellion. A peaceful scene interrupted by startling news. A quarrel. The broken vow. Lincoln calls for 75,000 men. Recruiting. Ike Long's company. The "Sauer Krout Brigade." Carrie's determination to become a hospital nurse. Mustered in. The flag presentation. The last goodbye. Off to the front. Beautiful tableau of "Secession."

Act II.--The Union camp. The attack and repulse. "kill the accursed Yankees!" Ready for the attack. The lonesome picket post. Dutchy's letter. The capture. Imminent death. Rescued. Jack Houck (a confederate lieutenant) a prisoner. His escape. On guard. "Speak dot Margarettree dree times." An

attack all along the line. Tableau.

Act III.--Dutchy a good forager. A hungry nig. "Surrender!" Dutchy's prisoner. The oath of allegiance. In the hands of the enemy. Guy "from the sunny South" declares himself a Union man, although he wears a Rebel uniform. Guy captured. Dora and Jack Houck. Jack's plan fails. Guy's innocence proved. Cook in the hands of Jack Houck. His rescue. Tableau.

Act IV.--After the war. The return home. A general reunion. Happiness and end.

Between the acts beautiful tableaux will be presented, and drills, camp scenes and army songs will enliven the progress of the play.⁹

"Westerns" were also popular. The western setting was the characteristic common to the genre; otherwise, "westerns" shared most of the characteristics of the "military," or "war," dramas: sentiment (without the strong patriotism, however); moral quality; stereotyped comic characters; a mixture of comedy and drama; action; and spectacle. Music tended to be provided before and between the acts rather than to be integral to the play.

Apparently the first of this type in Lincoln was The Parson's Claim, presented Sept. 24-26, 1891, under the auspices of the Lincoln I. O. O. F. Band Association. The Lincoln Republican described the play before its presentation as "chaste and beautiful, the scene of action being laid principally in the mining districts of Colorado, and...full of those exciting events incident to life in a mining camp." The writer continued: "Touches of deep, genuine pathos and flashes of bright humor alternate rapidly through a skillfully drawn plot, the surprising development of which must enlist the interest of the spectators to the end. A laughable Irishman, a blundering Chinaman, a simpering old maid and a conniving actor furnish an almost endless amount of fun."¹⁰

The same play was repeated Jan. 12 and 13, 1900, under the auspices of the Modern Woodmen of America, and it was reported to be "the event of the season." This latter review included more information about the play. The characters included the hero-lover and a villain, as well as Nuggett Nell and a "spinster of uncertain age." Also in the cast were Deacon Parson, "the feeble, broken-down old man," played by a young man with "trembling steps," "tremulous voice," and "back bowed down with age and infirmities"; a typical stage driver; a Toombs lawyer; a broken-down actor; and Ling Ling, a heathen Chinese, who "brought down the house every time he made his appearance." Music was provided by an orchestra and vocalist. This production was also presented with a "most laughable farce, My Turn Next."¹¹

Arizona was the setting for The Emigrants, presented April 17 and 18, 1896, under the auspices of the Eastern Star. It dealt with the "adventures of emigrants en route through that part of the country" and included capture by the Indians and a rescue by the settlers. Among the characters were an Indian chief, a "b-a-a-a-man," an outcast and wanderer, an outlaw's daughter, and Prof. A. B. Skipp, an itinerant scientist. Included in the production were "exceptionally fine tableaux." Also reported was considerable expense for new and special scenery and Indian costumes.¹²

Kansas was the scene for another western play, The Pioneers, presented in March 1900. According to the Lincoln Republican, it illustrates some of those exciting incidents which occurred to our early settlers during the time when the 'noble' red man roamed the prairies at will. It is a play full of startling incidents and strong dramatic situations, with a vein of comedy running through it which will be appreciated by all lovers of fun. The tableaux are exceptionally fine, and the Indian characters in their savage finery--fringed and feather-bedecked--lend an additional charm to the play." The characters included a hero-frontiersman; a ruffian; a U. S. Army Captain; a hunter and Indian fighter; an Indian chief, Blackfish; "Dan McCarty, from the Old Sod"; "a colored gem"; a heroine; a "little girl"; and "Katie, a true western girl, clear grit." The role of Katie included songs, "quite a feature of the entertainment," and the actor who played the "colored gen'man" "was a whole show in himself."¹³

Another noteworthy production of a western at Lincoln was The Lone Tree Mine, presented first by the Lincoln Cornet Band on Jan. 22 and 23, 1904, but repeated by request on April 9. It was described by the Lincoln Republican as both "thrilling" and "farical," but its setting in Colorado mining country definitely categorizes it as a "western." One of its characters was Chang, played to perfection for comedy; orchestra music and vocal solos were part of the entertainment.¹⁴

Another "stirring western drama" with "something to please everyone," including "comedy," "sentiment," and "pleasing specialties," was Golden Gulch, presented February 21 and 22, 1902, at Pickereil's Hall in Beverly, a town in Lincoln County eleven miles east of Lincoln. The cast provided an extensive collection of stereotyped characters; a government scout; "Gentleman George," an outlaw; an Irish judge "who runs the 'coort'"; Wing Lee, a Chinese, "celestial and sly"; Senator Juniper Toots, "a political coon"; Landlord of the Golden Gulch hotel; Broncho Bill, a stagecoach robber; Ikey Einstein, a Jew peddler; Chummy Litewait, a New York "blossom"; Taxicum Sniffles, a missionary; Old Magnus, a degenerate Indian; Jess Horton, a mad cap of the Sierras; Miss Matilda Corey, a faded flower; Mrs. Naggle, the landlord's wife.

A partial synopsis of this play underscores the quality of the characters and the nature of the action:

Act I.--The Golden Gulch hotel. The musical Chinaman. "Annie Rooney." "Me gottee clamp in stomach." A scheme. The festive dude and negro politician. The Jew peddler. "Gentleman George" makes a purchase....
 Act III.--...A comical Judge. Getting a jury. The dude objects to sitting on the jury with a negro. "Tut, tut, now, don't say a word." The trial. The judge presents the case. Some tough evidence. The verdict. The attempted murder. Wing Lee equal to the occasion. The end of "Gentleman George." Finale.--Tableau.¹⁵

This mixture of characters apparently conveyed to the public a cosmopolitan reality; at least it is this cosmopolitanism that is emphasized, along with the action, in the description of The Little Prospector, presented March 30, 1907, by a touring company in Lincoln:

Essentially a Western Drama... [it] deals largely with the characteristic phases of cosmopolitan life in the mining camps of the great west... [where] practically every race of human beings is...represented...all attracted...by the magnet of insatiate avarice, the great dominating passion of the human heart, and all joining with eager rivalry in the mad hunt for gold. The many varied and startling complications which unavoidably arise in such a heterogeneous community are faithfully interpreted....(March 14, 1907)

The other types of drama are better known and require less description as types. Comedies range from "farce-comedies" through "comedies" to "comedy-dramas." One of many farce-comedies was Wanted a Wife, presented December 29, 1909, by the Hodge Bros. National Stock Company, "an allstar company of ten supporting Mr. John Carroll, the popular western actor, in the biggest, best, and most laughable success of the season... [a] three-act Farce-Comedy... A continuous laugh from start to finish." Also emphasized was the music: the "latest song hits" and "high class specialties between acts" (December 23, 1909).

Another farce-comedy was set in the big city: Hogan's Alley, presented November 30, 1901, by Kurrell and Phillips Comedy Company. According to the Lincoln Republican (November 28, 1901), it depicted "the comical side of New York life, the principal events taking place in and around that famous acre of land known as 'Hogan's Alley'... clean comedy, bright and catchy songs, and pleasing specialties...."¹⁶

One of the "comedies" was The College Boy, presented

January 30, 1909, by the touring company of Chas. Riggs and Son. According to a letter by E. S. Bower, manager of the opera house, "you will laugh and enjoy every part of it and yet the most fastidious can find nothing immodest or unclean from start to finish.... Lincoln people are the best in the world and nothing is to good for them" (January 28, 1909).

A "comedy-drama" noteworthy for its sentiment and moral quality as well as its spectacle was Twixt Love and Money, presented by the local Joe McCanles band on February 3 and 4, 1905. This "charming domestic comedy-drama of the present day" was "laid in a little village on the coast of Maine, and the action is replete with dramatic situations. The story is intensely interesting and delightfully pure; while the moral--that love brings more happiness than does money--is plainly pointed without a single line of preaching....The dramatic interest is intense, each act being given a strong climax in situation and dialogue.... (The play is) one of those plays which takes hold upon the deepest sympathies of the human heart and holds one spell-bound to the end." The spectacle in the play included in the first act a full rigged ship sailing majestically into the harbor with a lighthouse in the distance.¹⁷

Also presented, on October 11, 1906, by a touring company was a "powerful comedy drama," What Women Will Do, adapted from Dickens' David Copperfield, and said to have been a great dramatic success for the past three years.¹⁸

Popular sentimental and romantic dramas may seem to involve as much comedy as romance. "Probably the strongest drama of the modern romantic style," An Affair of Honor, was presented by the local lodge of the Modern Woodmen of America on February 23 and 24, 1906. The description of this play from the Lincoln Republican indicates the use in this genre of the comic stereotyped characters and of patriotism as well as love, sentiment, and pathos:

It is a pure love story and its sentiments and pathos are of the sterling kind that appeal to every man and woman with a human heart. The leading characters, Horace and Imogene, are splendid types of an American man and woman, and the villain is a strong part. The remaining parts are all comedy and consist of a gypsy tinker, an eccentric artist, an Irish major, negro servant, a gypsy soubrette, an old gypsy woman and a giddy old maid. The stage business will be found extremely novel. The climaxes are all new and tremendously effective.

Act 1. The "George Washington," a country tavern in Old Virginia. An improptu wedding.

Act 2. Lover's leap. A Blue Mountain precipice. A darling rescue.

Act 3. The Courtleigh Place, plantation mansion.
A woman's folly.

Act 4. The mountain studio, a painter's paradise.
An affair of honor.¹⁹

Other plays in this category included the well-known Little Lord Fauntleroy (September 7, 1891), East Lynne (January 17, 1899; January 16, 1902), and Fanchon the Cricket (January 5, 1905), all of which were presented by touring companies. Little Lord Fauntleroy, according to the Lincoln Republican, involved the "portrayal of a mother's love for her son [which] would move any audience to tears." This play, dramatized by Frances Hodgson Burnett from her 1886 novel, involves an American boy claiming an English title, with conflict between the boy's English grandfather and his American mother.

East Lynne, dramatized from an 1861 English novel by Mrs. Henry Wood, involves "Intrigue among characters of high social rank" in which a wife runs off with another man, is hired back in disguise to care for her own children, and is reconciled to her husband on her deathbed.²⁰ The advertising for the 1902 production emphasized not only the "grand play properly presented by a powerful company" but also "a full set of scenery" and "elegant costumes."

Fanchon the Cricket had been made popular by Maggie Mitchell (1832-1918), who starred in it first in 1861 and who continued to play in it for the next three decades. The play, an adaptation of a dramatization of George Sand's story "La Petite Fadette," concerns "a laughing, elfin-like girl suspected by her superstitious fellow villagers of witchcraft. . . [who] is rescued, however, by the hero and wins both his heart and, eventually, that of his rich father, who consents to their marriage."²¹ According to the Lincoln Republican in the announcement of a week-long series of performances, no one since Miss Mitchell's time "has achieved greater success with the inimitable role of the 'Cricket' than Miss Freda Slemons," the star of the touring company bringing the production, whose "artistic work and natural methods" are emphasized.

Less frequently presented, but still represented, were the melodrama and the temperance play. The "Lincoln high school library" presented Driven from Home; or, A Father's Curse in February 1903 (February 12, 26, 1903), and a touring company presented "the powerful melodrama" The Power of Truth on November 1-3, 1906. Emphasized in the advertisement for the latter play were the "beautiful costumes, elegant scenic effects, and splendid specialities" (October 25, 1906).

The famous temperance play Ten Nights in a Bar Room was presented by touring companies in January 1899 and December 1903 and by an amateur group at Beverly in April 1899.²² However, what was called "the greatest temperance drama ever published," Broken Fetters, was presented October 14 and 15, 1904, by Joe McCandles's Lincoln Cornet Band and their friends. Included in this five-act "play that

will please everybody" were "startling situations and thrilling incidents," a "great flight in the fourth act" between the "rich but honest" millionaire hero and a "New York dive keeper," "new scenery," and special music, including numbers by the band, a song that "brought down the house," and a cornet solo by the leader of the band. The actor who played the dive keeper was later reported to have been "out of sight," and the fight was so real that his head was "sore for a week." Adding presumably comic types to the cast were "a refined laundress" and the millionaire's servant Finnigan, acted by a man of whom the newspaper said, "We all know what Jim can do, but we can't tell it on paper." The plot was summarized as "the old old story of the social glass, the habit formed, the home wrecked and the better side of nature forgotten. Then came the reaction, the rebellion against the fetters, and the happy ending."²³

"Tramp" and "Swede" shows could generally be classified as "comedy-dramas," but they definitely were special sub-categories based on the characters in the play, and only special touring companies performed them. Typical of the "tramp" shows was A Chicago Tramp, presented June 7, 1902. It was called "one of the most successful of all tramp comedies and dramas" and was said to have "proved a winner in all the principal cities." It was further described in terms of drama, sentiment, comedy, and refinement: "The dramatic interest is intense, the appeal to the sympathy of the human heart powerful, and the company is as refined as it is successful in moving the audience to laughter, and the whole is interspersed with refined vaudeville acts" (June 5, 1902). In September, 1908, "Weary Willie Wayside" appeared in A Runaway Tramp (September 24, 1908), and Two Merry Tramps doubled the fun in November 1908 with a chorus of six dancing girls (Lincoln Republican and Lincoln Sentinel, November 19, 1908). The American Hobo, presented the next year (December 2, 1909), obviously added a patriotic appeal.

The "Swede" show also reached Lincoln, and, although, it is a type of comedy-drama, it is a particular type, as the advertisement for A Prince of Sweden makes clear: "the one great Swedish comedy drama...the best Swede show on the road today." This play, starring Carl Olson and presented December 13, 1909, was described as "a beautifully staged production, a continuous laugh from start to finish, all special scenery, seven up-to-date specialties, good singing and dancing" (December 9, 1909). Another "Swede" show was the last production for 1910: Ole Peterson, a "Swedish Dialect comedy" (December 8, 15, 1910).

"Tom" shows, touring throughout the whole period, were highly ballyhooed productions of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and emphasis was usually on the spectacle. One of the productions in the opera house occurred on November 21, 1887, when the Great Boston Uncle Tom's Cabin was presented in Lincoln. The newspaper's advance description emphasized both singers and spectacle:

A particular feature... is the eight plantation singers. They are the best in the country and will introduce the great plantation festival and Mississippi steamboat scene, the jolly coon quartette and South Carolina slave singers, and a host of new and original novelties characteristic of the south before the war. (November 17, 1887)

Another opera house production, preceded by a parade at 1:30, occurred on December 26, 1901, with a "good, clean company" and "special scenery." Accompanying this production was the "moving picture of President McKinley, taken at the Temple of Music, Buffalo, September 6, just two hours before he was shot. This film shows the president making his last and memorable speech" (December 26, 1901).

Most of the productions were in a tent. A typically "mammoth production under a waterproof pavilion" was advertised in May 1898 as having "more scenery than any company because opera houses are too small to handle it," and the Lincoln Republican on May 19, 1898, reported that the company that presented the show had been a "model one," involved in no cheating. The May 1903 company was advertised as the "Barnum of them all." The company of forty travelled, according to the front page advertisement in the Lincoln Republican (May 21, 1903), "in their own two Pullman cars." Also included were "ponies, donkies, bloodhounds, colored Jubilee Singers and Cake Walks." The company provided a parade at noon and a band concert at 7, with the doors open at 7:30 for the performance at 8.

The "Tom" show in September 1907, according to the Lincoln Sentinel for August 29, 1907, included seventy people performing a "grand spectacular production... under a palace pavilion theatre." The advertisement in the Lincoln Republican of the same date promised "more men, women, and children; more horses, ponies, and donkies; largest pack of Siberian blood hounds; big two-car city show; two concert bands and a symphony orchestra; street parade; two grand free exhibitions on the show ground." Also promised in the Lincoln Sentinel were "high class vaudeville artists consisting of Merry-Makers, Jubilee Singers, Dancers, Wire Walkers, Hoop Rollers, etc., introduced during the action of the play." The tent was said to be able to seat 2500. How many attended is not recorded, but the Lincoln Republican of September 12, 1907, indicated that there had been a good crowd if not a great show: "The big (?) Tom show which came this way last Thursday was just about an average for business as far as Tom shows go. The only big thing noticeable about it was the big attendance which can always be depended on for a Tom show."

Most of the major genres included music and spectacle, but musicals and operas emphasizing these two aspects of the theatre were presented in Lincoln occasionally throughout the period. Probably the biggest surprise today is The Mikado, presented March 3,

1888. Its composers and company were unnamed, but this "good opera," which attracted fifteen from nearby Beverly, including one of the pioneers of the county who had laid out and named the town of Beverly, and for which 133 tickets were sold on the first day of advanced sales, is probably the one by Gilbert and Sullivan, written only three years earlier.²⁴ The manager of the local opera house had been reported earlier by the Lincoln Republican (January 19, 1888) to be trying to "give the people of Lincoln a better class of entertainment than they have heretofore enjoyed," and he apparently succeeded. In 1893 an amateur company of "society people" from nearby Ellsworth brought Larks, "a pretty little opera" (April 6, 1893).

Most of the musicals and operas, however, were presented from 1907 through 1910. The "only opera" of the 1906-07 season was The Adorable Fritzie, presented February 20, 1907, by the Heywood and Jeancon Irma Comic Opera Company. This comic opera starred Miss Emma Abbott DeBold, "considered to be the best in the west," who came "from one of the oldest opera families of the American stage, being the only daughter of the well known opera star Emma Abbott, who delighted the audiences of this country half a century ago with the old Grau opera company."²⁵ The announcement in the Lincoln Republican of February 7, 1907, emphasizes music and spectacle, but plot and comedy are also mentioned:

Rich in tuneful music, lovely girls, and beautiful scenic and electrical effects. It does not need to depend on stage tinsel for its popularity. It contains an interesting plot, with just enough comedy to amuse the public, and has for its performers artists of merit. There is not a poor voice in the company, something which cannot be said for the majority of comic operas at the present time.

The plot is described in the next issue of the Lincoln Republican in more detail; an American opera company goes to Turkey (said to be "a popular setting for comic opera writers"), only to become financially embarrassed, whereupon they are "forced to adopt the Turkish consumes and play before the Sultan of Turkey." Provision is thus made for "lavish costumes and scenic effects." Also noted is the "comedy furnished by the two German comedians" and "Lena," the "Steine" girl, who "keeps the audience in a good humor from start to finish."

Another musical, combining most of the characteristics already found in the popular production in Lincoln, was A Girl From U.S.A., presented January 13, 1910. Its advertisement in the Lincoln Republican of January 6 emphasizes music, plot, sentiment, including patriotism, and spectacle:

Harry Scott Company's Musical Dramatic Novelty--
A Play of Today by Eunice Fitch. Brimful of Thrilling

Climaxes, Presented by a Mammoth Company of Dramatic Musical Artists, Augmented by a Male and Female Singing and Dancing Chorus. Tremendous Scenic, Electrical and Mechanical Accessories. Dazzling display of costumes! Musically new and tuneful! The largest and most elaborate song play extant. A Tribute to our Country. The Girl from U. S. A. A Winsome, Wistful, Chic and Coquettish Beauty, Who Wins all Hearts and sends Multitudes away Delighted at the Startling and Amazing Features in this Bewildering Spectacle!

Of the classical operas, Faust was the one that reached Lincoln during this period. It appeared first on November 5, 1908, presented by Porter J. White's Faust company, with Miss Olga Verne playing Marguerite. Emphasis was on spectacle, with the music receiving second place in the description of the coming production:

Positively producing the following startling effects: The Rain of fire, electric sword duel, electric fire flies, electric flower bed, electric morning glories, electric necklace, electric circle of fire, electric skull. Together with Electric Owls, Snakes, and many other weird and dramatic effects. Full choir for the Cathedral scene and Mendelssohn celebrated Quartette. 17,621 feet of electric wire; 300 electric flower plants. A ten piece orchestra.²⁶

The company was later reported to have "made good" and to have given Lincoln "the best play seen here for several years" (November 12, 1908). The following season, on January 22, 1910, the same company returned, "direct from the cities of the East." The advertisement in the January 20th issue of the Lincoln Republican still emphasized spectacle, but it added more information about the plot and the moral quality of the work:

Carload of Scenery. Trained choir. Complete Electrical Equipment. Great Stage Sermon endorsed by press and pulpit people as the theatrical event of the season. Most popular love story ever devised or executed. Same Big Company that this Season played Omaha, Des Moines, Kansas City, Denver. Played Here to the Biggest House of the season last year.

Famous plays and famous authors were also represented in Lincoln. In addition to those already mentioned should be named Quo Vadis and Monte Cristo, the latter by Dumas. Spectacle was emphasized in both. For the "grand scenic production of 'Quo Vadis'" the "stage will be cleared of all scenery belonging to the house, to

make room for special sets, draperies, perfect copies of furniture, utensils, etc., in use at that period of the Roman Empire. The costumes are historically correct, and the company a large and balanced one" (February 13, 1902).

The "magnificent scenery" in Monte Cristo, "one of the good old timers," included five different sets for a port, a fortress prison, a storm, a hotel ball room and conservatory, and a glade in the forest (January 16, 1905). It is, indeed, according to the next issue of the Lincoln Republican, "even a great play for those who cannot hear, but can only see, so bold and fascinating are all its scenes. Its outlines are so clear that the play can be enjoyed by sight." The first announcement of this production also provided the chance for editorializing on the value of drama and the way to stimulate good drama:

People who want to improve the theatre should go to the theatre. The demand creates the supply...There will be good plays and bad plays according to audiences attending. The play should teach the ethics of life by example. It can and it does. It appeals to our better instincts and our ideals. The cry today is that the play is not what it should be. Just how great it shall be rests primarily with the public that can come or stay away. If it allows the stage to be ruled by the vulgar and the licentious it will get that kind of plays. There's no need to say much about "Monte Cristo" is one of the "bully" good plays. (Jan. 16, 1905)

Shakespeare himself was not missing. As early as February, 1899, a production of Midsummer Night's Dream was presented "by the eminent stage performer F. Underhill"--evidently a staged reading, first announced in the Lincoln Republican of January 19. Later, during the 1899-1900 academic year, the Shakespeare Club was stimulating local professional and business men to write and discuss papers on Julius Caesar. The President was C. N. Poe, high school teacher and principal, and the Secretary was E. D. Smith, County Superintendent of Schools.²⁷ According to the first announcement concerning the club, three or four plays were to be studied during the winter, and membership was limited to fifteen "business and professional men who are desirous of a better acquaintance with the mighty poet" (December 21, 1899). The first papers on Brutus and Cassius provoked a "quite lively debate" (Jan. 11, 1900). The successful year's study concluded with a lecture on Shakespeare given at the Methodist Church in early May by Dr. H. A. Cleveland of Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina:

It was pronounced by some the most scholarly and able lecture ever delivered in Lincoln. It showed critical study and deep insight on the part of the speaker

and revealed beauties and truth seldom seen by readers of the world's greatest poet. The lecture was an intellectual feast to students of Shakespeare though perhaps not so interesting to those unacquainted with him. This lecture was the last meeting of the Shakespeare Club for the year. The club has held a number of interesting and instructive meetings during the winter and will likely be continued next year.
(May 10, 1900)

Not until 1907, however, was a full production of a Shakespearean play presented. On January 19 of that year Mr. Sanford Dodge and his company played Romeo and Juliet. And in early May, 1909, the company returned with Hamlet.

The former production of Romeo and Juliet, advertised as the "event of the season," was provided with "all special scenery" and "magnificent costumes" (January 17, 1907). "The eminent tragedian" Sanford Dodge and Miss Louise Marshall played the title roles, and Herbert Deguere played both Marcutio and Friar Lawrence. Curtain was promptly at 8:15 "owing to the extreme length of the play" and, one may assume, to its presentation in seven acts and fourteen scenes.

On Saturday afternoon, before the evening performance, the company was entertained by the prestigious Social Science Club at the home of Mrs. Nimmons, wife of a local businessman. The star, Mr. Dodge, gave a program of readings from The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Othello, and other Shakespearean plays. Punch was served and "social chat" was enjoyed.

After the performance the Lincoln Republican reported that this production was "one of the best plays put on in Lincoln in a number of years," and the paper also noted that "Lincoln people are under obligation [to the local manager] . . . , who is bringing this class of plays to our city" (Jan. 24, 1907).

Two seasons later, on May 3, 1909, the same company presented Hamlet to a "full house." Mr. Dodge also gave some Shakespearean readings for the high school and for one of the ladies' clubs. After the performance of Hamlet the Lincoln Republican noted that "they presented Shakespeare's master piece in a manner most acceptable to those who are acquainted with the play and have made a study of Shakespeare's writings. This same company did Romeo and Juliet two years ago and should they visit Lincoln again it is safe to say they will again be greeted by a large audience" (May 6, 1909). Again one finds evidence of community interest in, and knowledge of, Shakespeare--not merely in the production but in the groups before whom readings were presented and in the description of "those who are acquainted with the play and have made a study of Shakespeare's writings." 28

To see these plays, from "military drama" to Shakespearean tragedies, audiences in Lincoln County, Kansas, came in large numbers. All the types of plays presented in Lincoln in this period must, therefore, reflect the interests and values of the community, and they surely helped re-inforce those interests and values. Interesting action and spectacle may have been expected as characteristics of the drama of the period, but the sentiment, including patriotism, the mixture of comedy and "drama," the music, and the moral and educational qualities are equal in importance to plot and spectacle in the perceptions of the plays as reflected in the local press. These characteristics reflect many of the values that go back to the earliest American play, The Contrast, and they are found in plays appreciated by many Western men and their strong women.

II

This wide range of drama must have interested the audience in Lincoln County for reasons beyond the values reflected by the plays, although of course these values must have been congenial to the audience--an audience that evidently enjoyed life at many levels of action, sentiment, intellect, and fun.

Some of these additional reasons lie in the general social environment. The settlers perceived themselves as generally refined and educated. Those who settled in Lincoln County had begun to arrive in late 1865, and the county grew with Civil War veterans, "Easterners," and overseas immigrants. In 1870 the area was organized as a county in its own right, and in 1871 the town of Lincoln, also called Lincoln Center, was platted and organized.²⁹ Lincoln County settlers, just recently separated from Saline County into their own county, must have agreed with the writer in the Saline County Journal for March 16, 1871 (p. 2), when he wrote of "our pioneers":

Ye scoffers must not say that the pioneer lacks refinement, culture, education and a knowledge of the finer arts, for the best men of the country go to the border....

This perception is confirmed in several ways. The education at least of some of the leaders of Lincoln County is certainly reflected in the quality of writing and of language used in letters from Lincoln County settlers to the editor of the Saline County Journal, especially those concerning the county seat fight between Lincoln Center and Abram in 1871. This quality is well illustrated by the following excerpt from a letter by "Independent," published June 8, 1871:

As regards the county seat difficulty now raging here, we say to all, it need make no difference as an election will soon settle that; and an election will be held, and would have been ordered Wednesday last when the board

of county commissioners met in special session, to consider petitions with names far more in number than required by law, had not commissioner Wilde declared that he had decided the question more than a week ago that this county never should hold an election for the removal, or relocation of the county seat; and he, aided by a drunken counsel, broke up the meeting in dire confusion, by brute force.

We see it stated in the Lincoln County Gazette that both Abram and Lincoln Center claim the county seat. We beg the editor's pardon for informing him that such is a very grave mistake. We do not claim to have the county seat but that we intend to, provided we can get it fair, square and honorably.

Also, the use of the public press by Lincoln Countians to inform and persuade by means of long letters reflects in itself the education of the people. And at the beginning of the period directly under consideration in this paper, with the town booming as the railroad came through, the Lincoln Republican listed in consecutive weeks in the spring of 1886 (March 25, April 1) one of the advantages of the community as "an intelligent class of citizens" and "an intellectual class of people," and surely the citizens of the county perceived that the newspaper was correct.

Education was important from the beginning in Lincoln County. One of the leaders in public school education from the 1870s through the first decade of the 1900s was Mrs. Anna C. Walt, a teacher, organizer of teachers' institutes, newspaper editor, and leader of the woman's suffrage movement.³⁰ An institution of higher education-- Kansas Christian College--was founded by 1885 and did not close until 1912, and it certainly added to the quality of the community. Its library of 2,000 volumes "not surpassed in our state" was a particular boast in the early 1890s.³¹ Also indicative of the quality of community life was the establishment of the local library in 1888 (March 15, 1888; November 27, 1890).

Other reasons for the flourishing of the theatre, apart from the general social environment, lie in the local leadership, which provided a place for the presentation of the plays and attended and participated in the plays.

Most of the plays in Lincoln between 1886 and 1910 were performed in Bryant's Opera House. The early building of opera houses generally reflects the importance of theatre in community life in the towns of the west. For instance, Salina had its opera house by 1878, McPherson had an opera house by 1882, and Clay Center opened its opera house May 2, 1887.³² Lincoln's opera house, completed in 1886, was one of the finest buildings of the time, and its availability

surely contributed to the quality of cultural life in Lincoln.

Bryant's Opera House was built by the local druggist and physician, Dr. R. F. Bryant, who had arrived in Lincoln by 1873 and who left only in 1901, still keeping his opera house property for a few years.³³ The two-story opera house was built in the spring and summer of 1886 with dimensions of 50' x 85' and with the auditorium upstairs.³⁴ The Lincoln Republican noted approvingly that the opera house "will add greatly to Lincoln's attractions" and concluded that "a good hall insures first class amusements" (April 8, 1886).

The opera house opened October 11, 1886, with plays presented throughout the week by the Madison Square Company (October 14, 1886). Although the opening company did not gain rave reviews ("the talent is fair, the star being the poorest actor in the company, with one exception"--October 21, 1886), later in the season came the Clair Pattee Dramatic company, which the writer proclaimed "the best talent that has ever visited our city" (January 27, 1887).

Thus the place was available for the plays. After Dr. Bryant left Lincoln, he finally sold his opera house, and the new owners not only refurbished the scenery but also took advantage of the newly available electricity to install electric lights.³⁵ Then for four seasons, from 1906 into 1910, the new owners booked, not the earlier mix of professional and amateur productions, but a stream of touring companies that could be supported by the booming economy and that could often use the electricity to great effect in providing spectacle for the audience. In the electricity, however, lay the seeds of decline for theatre in Lincoln County, not only because of the new "electric theatre" showing moving pictures in Lincoln as elsewhere, but also because of dependency on electrical staging effects which could not survive a disaster at the electric light plant in February of 1910. Although electricity became available again by late fall, never again did Lincoln have the stream of touring productions that characterized the years from 1906 to 1910.³⁶ The opera house itself was not the grand building it had once been,³⁷ and, although amateurs and some professionals resumed their presentations in Lincoln, the presentations gradually shifted from the opera house.³⁸ But from 1886 to 1910, Bryant's Opera House starred in Lincoln as the site for theatrical productions.

Audiences were not lacking for most of the productions, and attendance at plays was a regular part of community life. Several hundred persons could be accommodated in the chairs in Bryant's Opera House,³⁹ and full houses were often reported in this city of around 1,000 to 1,500,⁴⁰ either for single night stands or a week's repertory, from the beginning to the end of the period. Advance ticket sales were common and sometimes caused a rush: for the one-night performance of The Mikado in 1888 tickets sold so rapidly that 133 seats were taken on the first day of sale (March 1, 1888).⁴¹

Nor were Lincoln Countians restricted to their own towns for their attendance at plays. For instance, several Lincoln people were reported to have gone to Clay Center, some eighty miles northeast, for the opening of its opera house in 1887 (May 5, 1887). Also, fifteen people from Beverly, eleven miles east of Lincoln, were reported to have seen the performance of The Mikado in Lincoln in 1888, including one of the earliest settlers of the county and the founder and namer of Beverly, Volany Ball, and his wife.⁴² In 1892 (December 15), "a lot of people" were reported to have come up from Beverly and Tescott, the latter just outside the eastern Lincoln County line, "on a hand car" to see The Spy of Gettysburg. They were reported to have "had a peck of fun on the trip." Theatre-going thus was a regular part of community social and intellectual life, encouraged by the newspaper editors as well as by the example of leaders of the community.

Local leadership also provided the plays themselves by two means. The first and most obvious is the management required for booking the many available professional productions. Managers are noted throughout the period,⁴³ and they strove to bring the best attractions they could find for the "intelligent" audiences drawn from "the best people on earth"--Lincoln Countians--for whom "the best is none too good."⁴⁴ When the managers are not mentioned, they must still have provided the necessary effort to assure satisfactory arrangements for all.

The second kind of leadership came from the local organizations that sponsored many of the amateur productions, and the local citizens who directed, produced, and acted in them. These local organizations were central to the community. For instance, the local post of the GAR sponsored some of the productions, including the "first military drama" presented in Lincoln, The Spy of Atlanta.⁴⁵ As has been noted, Civil War veterans composed one of the significant groups of early settlers, including the six very first settlers, and at the time of its greatest membership there were 155 on the rolls of the local post of the GAR.⁴⁶ Even before Bryant's Opera House was available, this post arranged for a fellow veteran from Lawrence, "one of the finest actors in the state" (February 11, 1886), to star in The Spy of Atlanta as well as to direct it.

This post also provided many of the cast members for The Spy of Atlanta, and these GAR members, as well as others they attracted, were influential members of the community. For instance, A. G. Hardesty, who played Farmer Dalton in the play, was the Adjutant of the local post and an attorney in Lincoln who was reported that same spring to be "an old practitioner in Lincoln County and. . . [to have] succeeded in building up a good practice" (April 22, 1886). His wife, President of the Women's Relief Corps, the GAR auxiliary, played Carrie Dalton.

Among other GAR members who took roles were Capt. H. B.

Vennum, sheriff of Lincoln County at the time, who played General McPhearson; Mrs. Gragg, WRC Secretary, who played the Farmer's wife; and two with lesser roles, Mr. Gragg, the city police judge, and R. B. Gilkison, who had homesteaded in Lincoln County in 1877 and, after moving to Lincoln in 1881, opened a boarding and rooming house with his wife and operated his own harness shop.⁴⁷ The impact of this play was apparently great, and certainly those who led in its presentation were as important as the play itself in making the impact, as the review in the Lincoln Republican makes clear:

This, the first military play ever produced in Lincoln, was received with great favor by the citizens during the three nights of its rendition. Crowded houses awaited impatiently for the first rising of the curtain, and intense interest was manifested by the entire audience during the play. The amateurs performed their parts easily and naturally--many showing no ordinary degree of dramatic talent. Our "boys in blue," though not trained tragedians or comedians, evinced familiarity with the soldier's work in the drama that could only have been acquired by frequent rehearsals upon a grander stage where far more thrilling scenes were enacted. Lincoln should be proud of her home dramatic talent. (February 25, 1886)

The local GAR post also presented at least one other play, The Blue and the Gray. Another active group was the Lincoln Cornet Band, led by a former circus band member and trouper in a touring company, Joe McCanles. McCanles (1871-1937) had come to Lincoln as a small boy and became director of the Lincoln Cornet Band after his varied career as a young man. After graduation from Kansas Christian College in Lincoln in 1907 at age 36, he earned his LL.B. degree from the University of Kansas School of Law in 1909, and, as a result of his directing the University Band while he was a law student and of his years of official association with the band after his graduation until 1934,⁴⁸ he became known as the "Father of the Kansas University Band."

Other local groups sponsoring plays to raise money as well as to entertain were the I.O.O.F. Band Association, the City Band, the Eastern Star, and the Modern Woodmen of America.⁴⁹ Besides these organizations, presentations were given by informal groups of local citizens.

Whenever the cast members of any of the productions can be traced, many are prominent and established citizens or children of prominent families, although some were prominent for their talent rather than their families. For example, cast members not already mentioned in the first military drama, The Spy of Atlanta, included E. A. McFarland, lawyer, county attorney and city clerk at the time, who had come to Lincoln in 1883 upon a friend's advice in anticipa-

tion of the coming of the UP railroad in 1886, and who was just beginning decades of service as lawyer and banker in Lincoln County; and F. E. Hoover, owner of an agency that made farm loans, and later that year city councilman.⁵⁰

In the 1890s other names began to appear. One of the most noted is that of W. H. Pilcher. He had been in Lincoln County from 1880, having worked on Captain and Mrs. Wait's newspaper, the Lincoln Beacon, before moving to Sylvan Grove, a town in western Lincoln County, to become newspaper editor of the Sylvan Grove Sentinel at its founding in 1887. Meantime, in 1882, he had married Miss Anna Henderson, whose father, William Henderson, was a well-known early settler in Lincoln County. By 1891 he was travelling to Lincoln as manager-director and actor along with "some of our best local talent" in The Parson's Claim. He received specific praise as manager of this play in the Lincoln Republican of October 4, 1891. In the Lincoln Republican of December 15, 1892, he was singled out for comment in the review of The Spy of Gettysburg, in which he played the villain:

Lincoln people like Wallace Pilcher in comedy and always give him due and proper praise for his work. In the part of the heavy villain he does not reach his best by several degrees. Even in that character he is better than many of the people who make a business of it and do the smaller Kansas towns.

Later in the decade, when the Sentinel was moved to Lincoln in 1894, he moved also, although not as its editor, and by the beginning of the next year he was one of the two new editors of the rival Lincoln Republican.⁵¹ He continued to put his imprint on Lincoln theatre. On April 23, 1896, in a review of The Emigrants, he was graciously cited by the rival Lincoln Sentinel as "without doubt the best stage manager in western Kansas, and... an interpreter of the drama... [with] few peers in amateur circles." His abilities as a director were praised specifically in this same review:

"The Emigrants" is a thrilling piece from start to finish, and Pilcher's conception and bringing out of the whole in realistic manner was indicative of the artist within him, which was fully appreciated by the bushel of roses which was hoisted upon the stage the second night at the conclusion of his wonderful song act.

His abilities as an actor of comic foreign types were also praised; in The Emigrants he "was simply immense in his role as the Irishman," and in the farce presented each evening at the conclusion of The Emigrants his "charms as an impersonator were fairly visible in his portrayal of Dutch within the 'Persecuted Dutchman'."

Pilcher continued to act in Lincoln drama, appearing regularly in major productions, including Dixie, in which he exercised his comic talents for foreign types as Hans Schneider of "Dot Sauer Krout Brigade"; a second production of The Parson's Claim, in which he took the part of a Toombs lawyer and which he also directed; The Pioneers, in which he played Dan McCarty, "from the Old Sod"; Fogg's Ferry, in which he played Zeb Fogg, "who keeps the ferry"; and, finally, The Black Flag (February 13, 1902). His career in Lincoln ended only because he and his wife decided to move to the Seattle, Washington, area for their health.⁵²

Another actor of this period was Elias Rees, grandson of the man who established the local mill in 1871. His father owned the mill during this time, and Elias rented and managed the mill during the latter years in which he acted in the plays. He was associated with the Lincoln State Bank for many years, and around 1920 he became part-owner of the mill. Roles he played from 1896 to 1906 included Prof. A. B. Skipp, "an itinerant scientist" in The Emigrants; Ike Long, leader of a company, "who has left Polly to take care of old Brindle," in Dixie; Corny Dwyer, coachman and later a U. S. soldier in Santiago; Ling Ling, "a heathen Chinee... [who] brought down the house every time he made his appearance" in the revival of The Parson's Claim; Sol, a colored gen'man, "a whole show in himself" in The Pioneers; the Judge's manservant in Fogg's Ferry; Lem Lazarus, a money shark, in The Black Flag; and the comic gypsy tinker in An Affair of Honor.⁵³

Other early Lincoln families were represented in these amateur productions. B. F. (Boyd) Gilkison, son of the R. B. Gilkison who appeared in The Spy of Atlanta in 1886, appeared in The Parson's Claim in September, 1891.⁵⁴ Miss Myrtle Buzick, daughter of Ira C. Buzick, played a "true Northern girl" in The Spy of Gettysburg in 1892. Her father was a pioneer lawyer who located in Lincoln in 1870 and was elected in 1871 as the first person to represent the county in the State Legislature. His father, Henry S. Buzick, Sr., had come to Lincoln County at the same time and became one of Lincoln County's largest landholders. Myrtle later married John P. Lang, who was a prominent merchant in Sylvan Grove for 61 years, and her brother, A. R. Buzick, became District Judge of the area. Her aunt, Miss Maggie Buzick, played the role of her cousin in the same production.⁵⁵ In 1896 Miss Nellie Bryant, daughter of the man who built Bryant's Opera House, appeared as an "afflanced bride" in The Emigrants.⁵⁶ In the next two seasons Miss Clara (Clarissa) Greene appeared in The Blue and the Gray and in Dixie. She was the daughter of O. N. Greene, one of the earliest settlers of the county and founder of the town of Abram, the first county seat of Lincoln County.⁵⁷

Also well represented in these productions was the Herman family. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Herman and their first child had come to Lincoln County in 1873, first homesteading, then going into the grain business in Lincoln, and later operating the Lincoln telephone exchange

and a greenhouse. One of their sons, Virgil O., who later moved to St. Louis, Missouri, appeared in five plays, including The Blue and the Gray in 1896; The Parson's Claim in 1900, in which he played the hero's role; and Fogg's Ferry in 1901. He and his brother, R. F. Herman, later of Abilene, Kansas, appeared together in two plays during this same period (Dixie in 1898 and Santiago in 1899), and his brother also appeared in The Pioneers in 1900.⁵⁸

People connected with the local schools also acted in the plays. For instance, the County Superintendent of Schools, Horace Truman, appeared in 1896 in The Emigrants as an Arizona ranch owner.⁵⁹ Miss Aggie Paper, a Lincoln teacher, appeared in The Blue and the Gray in early 1897.⁶⁰ John S. Stover, who had come to Lincoln in 1896 from Beverly as a student at Kansas Christian College and as a mathematics teacher, and who became county clerk, "prominent educator," and organizer and cashier of the Farmers National Bank in Lincoln, appeared in at least seven productions, including Dixie (1896); Santiago (1899); The Parson's Claim, in which he had the villain's role (1900); The Pioneers, in which he had the hero's role (1900); The Black Flag (1902); Tennessee (1903); and The Lone Tree Mine (1904).⁶¹ Mary Smith, a student at Kansas Christian College, reported to be a "great favorite with the Lincoln audience," appeared in Dixie in 1898, in Santiago in 1899, and as the heroine in The Pioneers in 1900.⁶² Lizzie Hani, also a teacher during this period and later Mrs. George Moss, appeared in 1902 as the hetress in The Black Flag, which was said to be "one of the most successful affairs ever given by our local amateurs."⁶³

A wide range of business and professional men and women appeared in the plays. Included in this group were the local photographer, George Hutchinson, in The Parson's Claim (1891) and The Spy of Gettysburg (1892);⁶⁴ the "genial, accommodating, and universally liked" agent of the Pacific Express office, and later a grocery clerk, H. V. (Harry) Porter, in The Parson's Claim (1891), The Spy of Gettysburg (1892), The Blue and the Gray (1896), and The Emigrants (1896); Harry Porter's wife, who appeared with him in The Spy of Gettysburg (1892);⁶⁵ grocer W. D. Morgan in The Spy of Gettysburg;⁶⁶ owner of a millinery store, Miss Vaughn Harris, in Dixie (1896);⁶⁷ employee in and later owner of the lumberyard, J. D. Brockett, who lived in Lincoln nearly fifty years, acting as fire chief and then as councilman for several years, and who was noted at his death in 1937 as "one of the permanent community builder," in the villain's role in The Emigrants (1896);⁶⁸ plumber Archie Hazen in Dixie (1898) and Santiago (1899);⁶⁹ farmer on the Henry S. Buzick ranch and partner in a livery stable, Harley Moss, in The Spy of Gettysburg (1892) and The Emigrants (1896);⁷⁰ Jim Mulloy, employee at the Lincoln Farmers National Bank and a well-known vocalist in Lincoln throughout almost three decades until he moved to Salina, in Tennessee (1903) as Ike Long, in The Lone Tree Mine (1904), and in Broken Fetters (1904);⁷¹ and John McCurdy, who became a prominent and widely known Lincoln

attorney and later devoted much time to the memory of Kit Carson, in The Lone Tree Mine (1904).⁷²

Future wives of important business and professional men also appeared in the plays of the period. Myrtle Strawn, later Mrs. B. G. Hall, wife of the owner of Hall's Furniture Store, who was a member of a prominent professional family in the county, appeared in The Parson's Claim in 1891.⁷³ Pearl Brann, later Mrs. D. B. Marshall, wife of the President of the Saline Valley Bank in Lincoln, appeared as a "true western girl, clear grit" in The Pioneers in 1900 and "made a decided hit at Katie, a western girl. Her songs were quite a feature of the entertainment and were greatly enjoyed by all." She also appeared as Chip Fogg, the ferry waif, in Fogg's Ferry in 1901.⁷⁴ Bernice McBride, daughter of pioneer settlers Mr. and Mrs. William B. McBride and later Mrs. John McCurdy, wife of one of Lincoln's well-known attorneys, appeared in The Black Flag (1902) and, along with her future husband, in The Lone Tree Mine (1904).⁷⁵

The overwhelming support for theatre by the community certainly included the newspapers, whose editors provided information and comment on the theatre throughout the years, even though much of the advertising apparently was handled through posters and bills. Not only did the newspapers give favorable support for particular productions; they did not hesitate to uphold quality by exposing shabbiness in the production or the audience. For example, some of the earlier productions were not worth seeing, ranging from some tent performances by the circus or by a "Tom" company to performances by the company that opened Bryant's Opera House. And in such a situation, the newspapers did not hesitate to inform their readers, both before and after the event.⁷⁶

The Lincoln Republican also reacted with shock to an ordinance passed in 1890 levying a tax of from \$10 to \$50 on touring companies who wished to play in Lincoln. The effect of the ordinance, said the paper on February 6, 1890, would be to prevent most companies from coming to Lincoln. By the next week the council had "backed up some," so the city was saved for its place in the theatre annals of the west. Suspicion of these companies, however, was continually allayed by the newspapers with emphasis on the "clean," "model," and "refined" nature of the companies that had come or were coming.

Sometimes members of the audience lacked the refinement expected of them, and the Lincoln Republican did its part to expose them. In the October 1, 1891, issue, apparently on the basis of repeated offenses, the writer, having praised a local production of The Parson's Claim, was moved to editorialize:

Is there no way to prevent the "hoodlums" from making so much

noise before the beginning of the performance and also while the orchestra is playing between acts? Much complaint has been made about this by the patrons of entertainments here. The audience usually enjoy the music as much as the play, and it is a part of the entertainment and those who go to hear the music should be allowed their privilege.

The whistling and "cat calling" indulged in by one or two boys that go to entertainments here are very much out of place, are very annoying, and should be prevented.

We heard a boy over near the orchestra who at the conclusion of an act yelled out, "Rats, rats." Such boys should be led outdoors and kept away from such places.

A young man who certainly is entitled to a blue ribbon for politeness came in with a lighted cigar and regaled the olfactness [sic] of the ladies present, with the burn-feather fragrance of his "two-for" during the first act.

How long will it be before people who attend shows find out that whistling, stamping and such heathenish actions will not start the music, or send up the curtain a minute sooner than if they kept quiet?

There are some people who go to shows that are just too green to be classed with the cucumber or pumpkin.

But the most notable disturbance and response occurred about fifteen years later when Sanford Dodge, "the eminent tragedian," was playing Romeo and Juliet (January 24, 1907). Mr. Dodge stopped the play to rebuke an offender "in a way that he should not soon forget." The Lincoln Republican in reporting the incident also chided the "thoughtless selfish wretch" who interrupted a performance that several hundred others wanted to see and hear.

The theatre in Lincoln County, Kansas, from 1886 to 1910 was indeed a vital part of community life. Almost the whole community supported it, attracted to plays that reflected and continued to mould community values. As prominent, long-time Lincoln attorney Theodore M. Metz said, in recalling the past at Bryant's Opera House, "The opera house was an important institution in every town before the turn of the century, but with the advent of other forms of entertainment it has practically disappeared along with other things that made life interesting during those early years."⁷⁷ The importance of the theatre

confirms that this maturing frontier society had interests beyond struggling survival, rough justice, and economic growth, and the record of these theatrical events confirms that these interests were perceived by the people of the time to be intellectual and artistic.

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NOTES

¹Delmar C. Homan, "Dwight Eisenhower and William Shakespeare," Heritage of Kansas, 9, 1 (Winter 1976), 16.

²This study is based on 102 different engagements by 35 amateur and 67 professional groups that played in Lincoln County from 1886 through 1910. More productions than 102 were offered during this period, because some professional companies presented two or three different plays when they spent up to a week in Lincoln. A few of these productions were played by amateurs outside Lincoln. Probably the list is incomplete; finding the references in columns of brief local items is not easy, and one can never be certain he has found every notice. Also, Lincoln papers may not have listed all productions given outside Lincoln but in Lincoln County. Yet the list of 102, I feel confident, is relatively complete. Although a complete listing, let alone discussion, of all these productions is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper, I believe my choices for examples in this paper fairly represent the theatre in Lincoln County during these years.-- The dates also seem satisfactorily inclusive. Certainly some travelling companies reached Lincoln before 1886; for instance, the Supplement to the Lincoln Argus, December 10, 1879 (vol. 1, no. 2)--available at the Kyne House, the Lincoln County Historical Society's Museum in Lincoln--notes briefly the "first rate" entertainment that the Pardey Comedy Company gave at the courthouse the preceding Friday and Saturday evenings, and their presence in Lincoln did not seem to be novel. Although the Lincoln Argus and other newspapers provide a record of events in Lincoln for most of the time from 1873, on, the Lincoln Republican, for which microfilm is available in the Lincoln, Kansas, Carnegie Library, as well as in the Kansas State Historical Library in Topeka, began publication in 1886, and it soon recorded the presentation of the first military drama in Lincoln. The reason for the choice of 1910 as the cut-off date will become obvious in the second part of this article.

³Dates given throughout the text refer, unless otherwise noted, to the issues of the Lincoln Republican (hereafter abbreviated LR) in which information appears concerning the productions, NOT to the dates on which the plays were presented. Other Lincoln County newspapers that may be cited include the Lincoln Sentinel (hereafter abbreviated LS) and the Lincoln Sentinel-Republican (hereafter abbreviated LSR), both of which are also available on microfilm in the Lincoln Carnegie Library and the Kansas State Historical Library in Topeka.

⁴For the latter notice, see the LS, Dec. 12, 1907. On the Locke company's appearance at Logan, Kansas, in October 1904, see Esther Suhr, "It Was a Magnificent Opera House," Kanhistique, IV, 11 (June 1978), 2; repr. from Logan Republican, March 10, 1960.

On Mrs. Buzick, see her obituary in LR, Aug. 27, 1908.--Another actress from Lincoln County, Miss Florence Davis, was one of the leading ladies in the Maude Atkinson Company, which toured in the 1890s (LS, Sept. 13, 1894).

⁵LR, Feb. 11, 25, 1886.

⁶LR, Dec. 1, 15, 1892.

⁷LR, Dec. 24, 31, 1896.

⁸LR, March 23, 30, April 13, 1899.

⁹LR, Dec. 15, 22, 1898.

¹⁰LR, Sept. 17, Oct. 1, 1891.

¹¹LR, Jan. 4, 11, 18, 1891.

¹²LR, April 9, 1896; LS, April 23, 1896.

¹³This production of The Pioneers, announced in the LR for Feb. 22, 1900, was presented March 2 and 3. Because of bad weather, it was also presented March 24, as announced in the March 8 issue of the LR, and it was reviewed in the March 29 issue. The first quotations are from the Feb. 22 issue; the last, from the March 29 issue.

¹⁴LR, Dec. 3, 1903; Jan. 7, 28, April 7, 14, 28, 1904.

¹⁵LR, Feb. 13, 1902. Star of this production was J. H. Horry, the local postmaster, who as the Irish Judge O'Gooligan was "simply immense" (Feb. 27, 1902).

¹⁶Cf. the comment on this play by the LS in note 76, below.

¹⁷LR, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9, 1905. On Joe McCanles, "Father of the KU Band," see note 48, below

¹⁸LR, Oct. 11, 1906 (including an article in the Supplement).

¹⁹LR, Feb. 22, 1906.

²⁰Brief summaries of both Little Lord Fauntleroy and East Lynne are conveniently found in The Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature, ed. Max J. Herzberg (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962).

²¹Notable American Women 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary, ed. Edward T. James, II (Cambridge, Mass.: Belnap Press, 1971), 551-2.

²²LR, Jan. 12, April 13, 1899; Dec. 10, 1903.

²³LR, Oct. 5, 13, 20, 27, 1904. On Jim (Mulloy), see note 71, below.

²⁴LR, March 1, 8, 1888. Also see note 42, below.

²⁵LR, Feb. 14, 1907; also see Jan. 31, 1907. The Emma Abbot whose biography appears in Notable American Women 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary, ed. Edward T. James, I (Cambridge, Mass.: Belnap Press, 1971), 1-2, is indeed an opera singer who toured the West for thirteen seasons from 1878 until her death in early 1891, but she had her own English Opera Company, beginning in 1878, and had no children, according to this biography. Since this description of Emma Abbott DeBold comes from an advertisement for the opera, one wonders who is mixed up and why.

²⁶LR, Nov. 5, 1908. Also see LR, Oct. 29, Nov. 12, 1908.

²⁷Reference is made to Poe in the LR of May 1, 1900, and May 23, 1901. His obituary is found in the LSR for April 6, 1950. On E. D. Smith, see Dorothe Tarrence Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas (Lindsborg, Kansas: Privately printed for the author, 1979), p. 79.

²⁸See also LR, April 29, 1909. This company did not return to Lincoln. Probably the greatest exposure of the community to Shakespeare was yet to come, in 1915 and 1916. On these Shakespearean festivals, see D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, pp. 183-185.

²⁹The following should be consulted on Lincoln County history: Elizabeth N. Barr, A Souvenir History of Lincoln County, Kansas (n.p., 1908; repr. Lincoln County Centennial Committee, 1961), esp. pp. 21, 43, 66; Christian Bernhardt, Indian Raids in Lincoln County, Kansas, 1864 and 1869 (Lincoln, Kansas: Lincoln Sentinel Print, 1910; repr. Salina, Kansas: Consolidated Printing and Stationery Company, 1971); Adolph Roantgk, Pioneer History of Kansas (n.p., 1933; repr. Salina, Kansas: Consolidated Printing and Stationery Company, 1973); Dorothe Tarrence Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas (Lindsborg, Kansas: Privately printed for the author by Barbos' Printing, 1979). I have had privileged access to the manuscript and notes for the latter book before its publication, and my wife's personal knowledge of Lincoln County's people also was a source of information during the writing of this paper.

³⁰On Mrs. Watt, see, for example, the story in the LR of April 1, 1909, concerning her biography in Margaret Hill McCarter's One Hundred Kansas Women. Mrs. Watt's obituary is found in the LR for May 11, 1916. On Lincoln County's effect on woman suffrage, see LR, Nov. 23, 1905: "Equal Suffrage Meeting." Also see D. T. Homan,

Lincoln--That County in Kansas, Index v. "Wait, Anna C." and Equal Suffrage."

³¹Barr, Souvenir History, pp. 104-106; LR, Sept. 21, 1893 (on the college course and library); LR, Feb. 8, 1912 (last reference to the college as a teaching institution); LR, April 17, 1913 ("End of the College"); D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, pp. 100-101. For one play production sponsored by the college Philomathean Literary Society, see LR, April 15, 22, 1886.

³²Excavation on the Salina Opera House had begun in 1877 (Salina Journal, June 26, 1877, p. 4: "Good Old Days"). The Saline County Journal in late March and early April 1878 has articles on the first company to play in the opera house. On the Clay Center opera house, see the article on Lincoln Countians who attended its opening (LR, May 5, 1887). McPherson apparently had an opera house by 1882, in which the Bethany College performance of The Messiah was performed (Emory K. Lindquist, Bethany in Kansas; The History of a College [Lindsborg, Kansas: Bethany College, 1975], p. 155), although the present opera house dates from 1888 (McPherson Sentinel, June 8, 1978, p. 1).

³³Concerning Dr. Bryant, see LR, March 16, 1899 (a story describing all businessmen in Lincoln); July 25, 1901 (the selling of his business); Feb. 27, 1902; Nov. 18, 1920 (obituary). Also see LS, Dec. 9, 1915 (N. B. Rees, "To the Old Settlers of Lincoln County"), for memories of the building of the opera house. Also for a history of the opera house, see "Memories of the Bryant Opera House," LSR, Dec. 20, 1951. Another story about the Bryants and the opera house, including Mrs. Bryant's invention of an egg poacher, and memories of the opera house by Theodore M. Metz, prominent local attorney, is found on p. 5 of the LSR, Dec. 31, 1959 ("Eggs Inspired Local Woman to Secure First Patent on Use"). The building that had once been the opera house was severely damaged by fire December 28, 1961 (LSR, Jan. 4, 1962), and it was finally razed (LSR, April 26, 1962).

³⁴LR, April 8, May 13, June 3, 1886.

³⁵See LR, March 10, 1904, for the first attempt to organize a light plant. See LR, Jan. 18, 1906, "Lincoln as Others See Us" (repr. from the Topeka State Journal), for the comment on Abel and Bower, new owners of the opera house, as part of the story on Lincoln's booming economy.

³⁶LR, Feb. 24, Oct. 6, 1910.

³⁷In fact, the LS, in its issue of April 4, 1912, called it a "trap," a "hole," and a "disgrace to the community." The owner-manager, E. S. Bower, responded in the May 2, 1912, issue of the LR

that the opera house was safe.

³⁸For example, high school class plays were presented without electricity in the spring of 1910 (LR, April 14, May 19, 1910), and a professional company presented Ole Peterson, a Swedish dialect comedy, on Dec. 12, 1910 (LR, Dec. 8, 15, 1910). An "airdrome" was being remodelled in August 1911 in order to make the presentation of Red Acre Farm by the Lincoln Dramatic Club "as good as in the opera house" (LR, Aug. 3, 1911), and the dramatization of Margaret Hill McCarter's The Price of the Prairie was performed in 1912 in an outdoor theatre (LR, June 6, 1912; also see LR, April 25, 1912).

³⁹LR, Sept. 29, 1887: "every chair taken" during the engagement of the Clair Pattee Company; LR, Jan. 24, 1907: "several hundred" wanted to hear the performance of Romeo and Juliet.

⁴⁰According to LR, Nov. 24, 1887, in a report on Lincoln County, the population of Lincoln on March 1, 1885, was 470; in 1886, 966; and "today" a "low estimate" is 2500. Either that number was inflated or the population decreased rapidly. In the LR for Oct. 10, 1895, Lincoln's population is listed as about 1200, and in the issue for March 16, 1899, as 1400. In the LR for July 30, 1903, Lincoln's population is listed as 1250, and by Aug. 8, 1907, in a charge that Lincoln has "too many churches," the LR lists the population at 1400 again. In the LR for April 20, 1911, Lincoln's population for 1910 is listed at 1508 and is compared with 1262 in 1900.

⁴¹Attendance was not invariably large. For example, a "fair audience" was noted for Maude's Peril, an amateur production brought to Lincoln from Beverly (LR, March 17, 1892), and such a "slim" crowd showed up for a highly recommended production of Poor Mr. Rich that the Broadway Stock Company refused to perform (LR, Dec. 11, 18, 1902).

⁴²LR, March 8, 1888. On Volany Ball and Beverly, see LR, July 22, 1886, and May 2, 1912 (obituary). Also see D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, p. 103. Others who were reported to have come to this performance from Beverly included "Dock Adamson and wife, Dr. Pratt, and Mr. and Mrs. Tyler.... [who] enjoyed the show as did our people."

⁴³They include John Thompson (LR, Sept. 16, 1886), L. F. Hoops (LR, Dec. 29, 1887; Jan. 19, 1888), Fred Latto (Jan. 24, 31, 1907), and E. S. Bower (LR, Jan. 28, 1909--a letter concerning The College Boy).

⁴⁴This is a composite quotation from reviews or advanced notices in the LR for Jan. 27, 1887; Jan. 28, 1909; and Dec. 3, 1908.

⁴⁵See note 5, above.

⁴⁶LR, April 6, 1922. These figures were provided by O. N. Greene for a short history when the founding of the local GAR post was celebrated.

⁴⁷A partial listing of GAR members is found in LR, Dec. 22, 1887. Stories on the Gilkisons are found in LR, Jan. 13, 1887; LS, Nov. 30, 1900 (obituary James M. Gilkison); LSR, Sept. 19, 26, 1940. Elected officials are regularly listed in the LR.

⁴⁸LSR, Dec. 2, 1937 (obituary). McCanles was not associated with the band from 1919 to 1921, but in his latter years he was also instructor in the School of Fine Arts at KU.

⁴⁹At least one production by each of these organizations has been discussed in the first part of this article. For information concerning these productions, beginning with The Blue and the Gray, see notes 7, 14, 10, 6, 8, 12, 11, and 19, above. Also produced by the Lincoln Cornet Band were Fogg's Ferry (LR, Feb. 7, 1901) and Tennessee (LR, Nov. 26, 1903).

⁵⁰On McFarland, see LR, March 16, 1899, and LSR, Sept. 7, 1939 (Thelma J. McMullen, "Hats Off to the Builders of Lincoln County"); on Hoover's business, see LR, April 22, 1886.

⁵¹On Pilcher's move, see LS, July 12, 1894, "Sylvan Grove Ne News Items"; on his editorship, see LR, Dec. 27, 1894, as Tell Walton says good-bye to the editorship. Also see D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, p. 164. --On The Emigrants, see note 12, above.

⁵²On the first four productions mentioned in this paragraph, see notes 9, 11, 13, and 49, above. The Black Flag was described as a "beautiful drama in five acts. . . one of the best productions of the modern playwright." The cast included a stepfather who is a convict; a stepson who is rich; "Flash Jack," son of the rich stepson; a sailor boy; a captain of the smuggler ship; a traitor; an heiress; landlady of the "Red Lion" Inn; and convicts, guards, and sailors. Pilcher was "Scarum on a tour of the country" (LR, Feb. 13, 27, 1902). --On Pilcher's leaving Lincoln, see LR, Sept. 25, 1902. For his biography, see LSR, Jan. 18, 1940. --At least once, in early 1896, Pilcher was called outside Lincoln to Lucas, 22 miles west of Lincoln and just outside Lincoln County, where he was reported to be visiting "for the purpose of drilling the home talent actors for an amateur show in the near future" (LS, Feb. 6, 1896; repr. from the Lucas Advance).

⁵³On Elias Rees and the mill, see LR, June 29, 1922; October 22, 1925. On these productions see in addition notes 12, 9, 8, 11, 13, 49, 52, and 19, above.

⁵⁴LR, Sept. 17, 1891; see also notes 10 and 47, above.

⁵⁵On the production, see note 6, above. On the Buzicks, of whom much has been written, see, for example, William E. Connelley, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, V (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 2574 ("Ira C. Buzick"), 2643 ("A. R. Buzick"). On Ira C. Buzick, also see his obituary, LR, Nov. 17, 1904. On Myrtle Buzick's husband and brother, see LSR, Oct. 13, 1955 (obituary, John P. Lang). For identification of Maggie Buzick as one of the children of Henry S. Buzick, Sr., I am grateful to her grandnephew, Dr. Paul S. Andreson. Also see D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, pp. 104-106.

⁵⁶On the production, see note 12, above, esp. LS, April 23, 1896. On Nellie Bryant, see note 33, above, esp. LSR, Dec. 20, 1951. Also see LR, Oct. 14, 1912, "Stars in Grand Opera" (her successful debut in Ulm, Germany, after five years of study in Germany).

⁵⁷On the productions, see notes 7 and 9, above. For O. N. Greene's obituary, see LR, Dec. 28, 1922. Clarissa Greene, later a leader in the two Shakespearean summer festivals in Lincoln in 1915 and 1916, left Lincoln in the early 1920s and became a well-known newspaperwoman in Miami, Florida (LR, May 24, 1923).

⁵⁸On the Herman family, see LSR, Oct. 5, 1939 ("Hats Off to the Builders of Lincoln County: Frederick William Herman"). On the productions, see notes 7, 11, 49, 9, 8, and 13, above.

⁵⁹On the production, see note 12, above.

⁶⁰On the production, see note 7, above. Miss Peper is listed as a teacher in a Teachers' Institute list in the LS in August 1894.

⁶¹On Stover's activities as student and teacher, see LS, Feb. 27, 1896; LS, March 12, 1896 (Vice-President of the Philomathean Literary Society). On his later achievements, see his listing in "Thriving Lincoln," LR, March 16, 1899, and his obituary in LSR, Dec. 3, 1942. Also see William E. Connelley, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, V (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 2591.--On the productions, see notes 9, 8, 11, 13, 52, 49, and 14, above.

⁶²On the productions, see notes 9, 8, and 13, above. Mary Smith, a member of the Kansas Christian College class of 1901 (LR, May 23, 1901), had appeared during her college years.

⁶³On her teaching, see LSR, Feb. 3, 1955 ("Early Teachers Honored"); on The Black Flag, see note 52, above.

⁶⁴On the productions, see notes 10 and 6, above. Also see George Hutchinson's listing in "Thriving Lincoln," LR, March 16, 1899, and his brother Jesse's listing in "The New Woman: Some Leap Year Pointers for Her Guidance," LR, Feb. 20, 1896.

⁶⁵On Porter's job, see LS, July 12, 19, 1894; on the productions, see notes 10, 6, 7, and 12 above.

⁶⁶On Morgan's job, see LS, Nov. 22, 1894 ("Early Closing"); on the production, see note 6, above.

⁶⁷On Harris's business, see LS, March 12, April 11, 1895. Also see her listing in "Thriving Lincoln," LR, March 16, 1899.-- On the production, see note 9, above.

⁶⁸LSR, June 10, 1937 ("Death Takes Two Pioneer Residents"). On the production, see note 12, above.--In the year of the production of The Emigrants, an article in the LR reported that J. D. Brackett belongs to Lincoln's 400 and rides the bicycle, plays crokinole and sells lumber" (Feb. 20, 1896: "The New Woman: Some Leap Year Pointers for Her Guidance").

⁶⁹On the productions, see note 9 and 8, above. On Hazen's occupation, see D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, p. 174.

⁷⁰On Moss's occupation, see LR, Feb. 20, 27, 1896 ("The New Woman: Some Leap Year Pointers for Her Guidance"); on the productions, see notes 6 and 12, above.

⁷¹On Jim Mulloy's occupation, see LSR, May 17, 1928, and July 14, 1932. On the productions, see notes 49, 14, and 23, above. In Broken Fetters, he is the one of whom it was said, "We all know what Jim can do, but we can't tell it on paper."

⁷²On the production, see note 14, above. The people of Lincoln know that John McCurdy was sought out as a lawyer by a very prominent Kansas City business family and that he is buried inside Kit Carson's lot in the Taos, New Mexico, cemetery. For his obituary see LSR, May 8, 1958; also see LSR, Dec. 28, 1961, p. 2 (article on a biography of Kit Carson), and D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, pp. 257-258.

⁷³On the production, see note 10, above. According to the Catalogue of Kansas Christian College for the school year 1897-1898 (available at the Kyne House, the Lincoln County Historical Society's Museum, Lincoln), she was a member of the KCC class of 1895 and was a music teacher in Lincoln in 1897-98.

⁷⁴On the productions, see notes 13 and 49, above.

⁷⁵During this period McBride was cashier of the Farmers National Bank; her resignation after fifteen years is reported in LR, Jan. 6, 1916. That number of years seems to be in error, however, since the bank was organized only in 1903 (D. T. Homan, Lincoln--That County in Kansas, p. 175). For her obituary, see LSR, April 4, 1963. On the productions, see notes 52 and 14, above.-- Many other people appeared in these productions, often in several productions, and sometimes in productions within a few months of each other. A complete account of the occupations of all the actors and actresses during these many years, however, is beyond the scope or requirement of this article. Nevertheless, I believe that those identified in this article are fully illustrative of the significant support given to theatre by the leaders of the community.

⁷⁶On the draggie-tailed circus, see LR, Aug. 19, 26, 1886: "a decidedly snide and tame affair... [with] a rattle-trap old band wagon drawn by four half starved looking plugs and containing six musicians that blew forth from their battered instruments outrageous sounds... [After this camel] four sore-eyed, sad-looking goats that were subjected to the degrading performance of dragging a wagon over the city containing a cross between a monkey and a baboon, minus a tail... Fifteen boys are now giving a better circus entertainment for admission price of ten pins." On the "Tom" company, see LR, Sept. 12, 1907; on the Madison Square Company that opened the opera house, see LR, Oct. 31, 1886; for the LR's statement that it "never recommends a snide affair," see LR, Jan. 27, 1887 (announcement about the Clair Pattee Dramatic Company). Also see LS, Dec. 5, 1901, on Hogan's Alley: "full of ridiculous fun with just a thread of thought to hold the attention. While there was nothing in the acting particularly objectionable, the general atmosphere and influence was not elevating nor refined." For a contrary statement about Hogan's Alley, see note 16, above.

⁷⁷See note 33, above.

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