A Compilation of Materials for a Study of the Early Theatres of Montana (1864-1880)

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The University of Montana
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The Early Theatres of Montana (1864-1880)

by

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CHAPTER I

"COURAGEOUS THESPIANS"
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"COURAGEOUS THESPIANS"

During the early years of the Civil War, many of the residents of far western America were listening to exciting rumors, not of national strife, but of new land and easy wealth. The discouraged miners in the now nearly exhausted gold fields of California heard reports of gold and jewels in the unexplored gulches of the recently created Montana Territory. The same news leaked down the western branches of the Missouri River to St. Louis, a route soon to be dotted with small steamboats loaded with pioneers and fortune-seekers in the new land. "Oh, you ought to go to Montana, that is the place to get rich." This was the impelling cry that drew thousands to Montana from 1862 to 1880. In less than two decades these newcomers were to develop an unknown area into a State of financial and cultural importance. For with their hope of getting rich quickly, they wanted in their new community homes social institutions paralleling those they had left behind them.

The Montana Directory of 1879 records that two symbols of a mining village's attempt "to put on city airs" appeared in Virginia City, Montana in 1864. In November the "1st Church in The Territory was dedicated" and by December the "1st Theatre in The Territory" opened.

Theatrical history, in this case at least, cannot be written without a glimpse at the customs and manners of the people for whom pioneering stage productions were to be given. Western America's early theatre was made possible by groups of "undaunted actors", unafraid to drop in on any small community, perform on any improvised stage. These actors "like gypsy crews, moved over the country, following the trail of the pioneers, often abreast of them" --- Courageous Thespians.

Before discussion of the activities of this first theatre and later Montana theatres, as this paper intends, the society in which it was built needs brief consideration. Montana in 1864 was an almost unheard-of section of America. Lewis and Clark in 1805-6 had laboriously managed to push their way through the multitudinious mountains of the region. Trappers and Indian traders had silently wedged into the virgin land in the thirties and forties; minor exploration parties had wandered around in what was then part of the Indiana Territory between 1852 and 1854; scattered camps of miners must have existed

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to start the rumors of gold; but no one had seriously thought of permanently living in Montana until word of the financial successes at Bannack was spread abroad by the "lucky few".

Even "astute bankers were to be drawn by a fantasy which described the fields of Montana as sown so thickly with jewels that the dazzle of light was almost unbearable when the sun shone. Their experts were sent to view the sight, and came back announcing that diamonds could be picked up out of seams in the rocks with the fingers, rubies and emeralds and sapphires scooped up by the hatfuls."

The 1864 arrivals found mining camps and trading posts centered around the scattered fourteen mines that were at that time active. By 1884 two hundred mining communities in the same area spoke for the speed with which the pioneers had rushed to

4. Rev. D. S. Tuttle, Reminiscences of a Missionary Bishop, (Thomas Whittaker, New York, 1906) p. 119. "Montana may be said to have first become a dwelling place for white inhabitants in 1862. Lewis and Clark's famous expedition through it had taken place in 1805-6. In the years afterwards a few hardy explorers and some scattered hunters, trappers, and fur traders visited the region now embraced in its limits. In the '40s Jesuit missionaries to the Coeur d'Alene and Flathead Indians may have penetrated its borders. In the '50s some settlers were in the Hell Gate Valley near what is now Missoula; and James Stuart and his brother Granville had come to Deer Lodge. But Montana as an abode for whites really dates from 1862. In the summer of that year gold was found in Grasshopper Creek, near what is now the town of Bannack...."

the remunerative "gulches". By 1867 Bishop Tuttle wrote this of his wide-spread territory, "Montana has an area of 145,000 square miles, and (had) a population of about 30,000 when I entered it. It had two large towns, Virginia City and Helena, and some smaller ones, Bannack, Blackfoot, Deer Lodge, Missoula, Bozeman, and Fort Benton."

Virginia City, both the most interesting and in many ways the most typical of all these settlements, had come to life after the phenomenal rewards of Bannack "gave out". Picturesque it lay "a crooked irregular strip of log houses, winding for nine miles down Alder creek, environed by mountains crests dotted with a few lonely cedars." The real heart of the town was within a hundred yards of the "diggings," the settlers there believing that Alder Gulch would keep faith with them in being the "richest gold deposit ever found". The crowded streets, the business that welcomed each newly established store, the wagonloads of foods and household equipment arriving more and more frequently from the East, all these conditions promised a great future for a "town less than one year old... in the heart of the Rocky Mountains" in 1865. Money was plentiful, gold dust remaining for years the "typically representative and sole medium of exchange in this new land."

6. Tuttle, Bishop, p. 119.


8. Ibid., p. 478-479.

"Many new and important gold discoveries...at Prickley Pear, Last Chance, Silver Bow, and Ophir" were stimulants to increasing prosperity in young Virginia City in its "primeval wilderness." Mail and stage service was established between Virginia, Bannack, and Salt Lake City, Utah, and "a weekly stage from Virginia to other towns in the Territory carried mail and passengers." The "diggings" often yielded a daily fifty dollars to each man. Quite naturally the citizens of the new metropolis wore "gay, smiling faces". "The bright weather, the crowded streets, the long row of ox and mule trains arriving; the busy merchants, the discovery of new gulches, and the magnificent quartz daily found in our vicinity, have made things lively," reports the first newspaper in the Territory.

One young woman, however, upon entering Virginia City after a long wagon journey from the East, was not pleasantly impressed by the settlement as she saw it for the first time in 1865. "It is the shabbiest town I ever saw, not a really good house in it," she wrote despondently.

Here we are camping in the suburbs of the city, in Alder Gulch, where the miners are at work. How I wish my descriptive powers were adequate to making those who have never seen gulch-mining see as I see, and realize the impression made upon me as I first looked into the gulch at the miners at work. There is a temporary bridge (very shaky) across the gulch that wagons may pass over. Standing on this bridge,

10. Stout, Biography, I p. 22.
11. Montana Post, August 26, 1865.
12. Herndon, Road, p. 262.
in the middle of the gulch, looking up and down, and even beneath my feet, the scene is a lively one. So many men, it seems they would be in each other's way. They remind one of bees around a hive. And such active work. It seems that not one of that great multitude stopped for one instant shoveling and wheeling dirt, passing and repassing each other without a hitch . . . .

The best home this girl and her family could find was none too pleasant, though it had advantages: it was a cabin "on the corner of Wallace and Hamilton Streets, next door to the city butcher;" it had a dirt roof; there was a floor in it, "and that is better than some have;" it was neat and clean, "which was a comfort"; and "men had not bached (sic)" in it.

From her seemingly sordid surroundings this little lady could hardly look ahead to the 1880 days in Montana's capital city, Helena. She could hardly foresee that that city was to be called "the second Denver" with its impressive Broadwater Hotel and gala Ming Opera House. She could, however, read in the hand-set type pages of the Montana Post a THEATRICALS.-column which carried the production news of the "1st Theatre in the Territory". Besides that, she and her family were probably soon after their arrival closely linked to the other social activities of Virginia City; parlor entertainments by church, school or other local groups, minstrel shows, programs by resident or traveling "elocutionists' prize fights, or perhaps the "goings-on" at the Hurdy-Gurdy Houses.

The only theatrical history she could possibly have found behind such activities was the probably then unrecorded tale of what was undoubtedly the first dramatic performance in the Montana Territory—a spontaneous outburst years before her time:

In 1824, Alexander Ross was on a trapping expedition into the Snake River country of Montana. His party became 'discouraged, despondent and gloomy.' It occurred to Ross 'that if by some means he could manage to restore cheerfulness to the company he then eventually would succeed in his enterprise'. In the company was a fiddler, something of a genius, who had contrived a crude but apparently quite satisfactory violin and bow, while another had a drum. Ross announced that they would have a 'show' that evening. There was a large tent, in and about which gathered the entire party. With fiddle and drum for an orchestra, different members were each prevailed upon to add his little to the entertainment; a song, a dance, a story or a recitation. Probably many of the efforts were ludicrous. At all events, they were productive of much merriment and were continued well into the night. The morning found the gloom entirely dispelled, and with everyone in a good humor, the men went back to their gigantic task in earnest...

Fifty years passed and then a newspaper published not so very far from the scene of this outburst wrote in late nineteenth style of another:

Musical—There are in the life of individuals moments when they feel the inspiring pressure of enormities. This, no doubt, many of our fellow-townsmen were conscious of on Sunday night last, when the spirit of pandemonium descended into a number of jolly boys, prompting them to ride in disturbing the peace and quiet of the town a distressingly nitrogenous fire band. The celebration of Tom Purcell's marriage with

14. Will Cave, "First 'Show' in Montana", Missoulian, March 26, 1922.
Mrs. Christine Martin was the occasion, and an unlimited quantity of whiskey the stimulus of the charivari. . . . They went up town, and at the house of one of our prominent merchants let loose the heart-rendering and stone-softening harmonies of cow-bells, sleigh-bells, kettle-drums, tin cans, etc., mingled with the sonorous music of a well assorted menagerie . . . 15

Most local entertainments were more planned and more controlled, as the typical programs at the end of this chapter illustrate. During all its early years, Montana would stand its own quiet life just so long and then organize something for amusement. There were Reading Clubs, Literary Lyceums, Dancing Clubs, Ice Cream Festivals, Firemen’s Balls, Charade or Raffle Parties, concerts or "musicals"—both vocal and instrumental, or programs of tableaux and recitations. Each of these, as reported by a newspaper man of that time, seems to carry a gay nineties atmosphere:

The widow Coberly’s social hop, on the eve of St. Valentine, was, we are glad to learn, a great success. Over thirty couples jingled their pedal extremities to the dulcet harmony of fiddle-string vibrations. The supper, we are told, was simply exquisite; but this is no news because we know the hostess. . . . 16

or—

The Entertainment given by the ladies of St. Pauls church on Saturday evening last, attracted a very fair audience despite the inclement weather and the short notice at which it was given, the performance netting nearly $100 towards purchasing a bell for that edifice. Among the musical attractions we mention 'Old Kentucky Home'. . . 'Within a mile of Edinboro town'. . . 'Comin’ thro’ Rye'. . . 'Songs

of other Days' . . . 'Johnny Sands' . . . of the Tableaux, 'The Serenade', with Mrs. H. L. Hosmer as the practical mother applying a cold water theory from an upper window to the cure of the moonlight love-making propensities of a well-dressed troubador (couldn't tell which one of the boys he was) who seemed intent on correspondence with a young lady (Miss Sally Hosmer) at one of the bay windows. 'Taking the Veil', Mrs. Fay Harrington (A nun than whom none could have looked prettier) as the novice . . . the Bishop . . . the attend sisters,—a very impressive picture. 'Pekin, China', (peek in China) . . .-a sell. 'Country Courtship'. . . very laughable. 'City Courtship'. . . 'Practice makes perfect' . . . not (perfect)... 'Pocahontas saving the life of Capt. John Smith': Miss Sallie Hosmer (an excellent representation) as Pocahontas, Ed. Lyons as Smith, Baker as Powhatan, Hosmer as executioner -- loudly applauded. . . . During the evening J. A. Hosmer gave a recitation of 'Eugene Arain' . . . 'Changeable,' an acting charade, by Mesdames Strosburger, Hosmer, Deinsling and Messrs. Hosmer, English and Norton, was well received and well performed . . . . The stage adornments and tableaux are much in debt to the excellent taste and willing fingers of Mrs. John How. . . .

Before the theatres were built in the Territory, it was often a problem to find a place in which to stage such entertainments if neither a school nor a church was its sponsor. An interesting postponement took place in Helena in 1867:

The drawing-room entertainment which was to have been given by Mr. Kelley, the violinist, at the Court Room, on last evening, had been postponed until tomorrow evening. This change was made necessary on account of the court room being occupied by the jury in the case of the late shooting affray. .

17. Montanian, May 2, 1872.
A customary public diverteisement in early Montana was the dance-hall or Hurdy-Gurdy House. In October, 1864, two months before the first theatre was built in Virginia City, "Hurdy-Gurdy Houses" were "all the go and the only places of amusement for the boys."

As soon as the men have left off work, these places are opened and dancing commences. Let the reader picture to himself a large room, furnished with a bar at one end—where champagne at $12 (in gold) per bottle, and 'drinks' at twenty-five to fifty cents are wholesaled (correctly speaking)—and divided, at the end of this bar, by a railing running from side to side. The outer enclosure is densely crowded . . . with men in every variety of garb that can be seen on the continent. Beyond the barrier sit the dancing women, called 'hurdy-gurdies'. . . . On one side is the raised orchestra. The music suddenly strikes up, and the summons, 'Take your partners for the next dance', is promptly answered by some of the male spectators, who, paying a dollar in gold for a ticket, approach the ladies' bench and — in style polite or otherwise according to antecedents — invites one of the ladies to dance. 19

Half the ticket price went to the lady partner and half to the proprietor of the establishment. The latter could most often be found dealing "monte" with a revolver at his belt and feeling fairly sure that between nine o'clock and daylight he would make a good one hundred dollars. Publicly he was observing all the necessary laws of decorum; from his point of view he was serving the poor miners, who had perhaps not seen a feminine face for six months. It mattered little to him if Puritanical members of the community spoke of his "hurdies"

as "tawdry, bedizened women" who represented only too vaguely and too disgustingly the "tenderness and sacredness of their sex." One writer even went so far as to say, "The dance which is most attended is one in which ladies to whom pleasure is dearer than fame represent the female element, and, as may be supposed, the evil only commences at the dance house."

On the other hand opinions among "old-timers" differ on the moral influence of these establishments. In the very earliest days they were evidently respectable places. Often a married woman of fine reputation whose husband was perhaps having an unfortunate "run" in the mines, would for the sake of the money she could earn as a "partner" be a participant at the Hurdy-Gurdy dances every night. As lawlessness grew, the number of the "Honkie-Tonks" increased and the entertainments that some of them offered sank lower and lower:

Hurdy-Gurdy houses are getting quite numerous in our town, and seemingly making money fast, if we can judge from the crowds nightly in attendance at these places of nocturnal amusement.

Moral or immoral these businesses were a part of the frontier life, answering as they did the "desire for novelty and excitement, which is the ruling passion of the mountaineer."

22. Montana Post, Nov. 12, 1864.
one visitor in Virginia City found them in 1865 an even more 24.
popular form of amusement than the theatre.

It is impossible to determine the extent to which vaudeville and variety acts were staged in these dance halls. solo dances and songs there must have been occasionally but no records of any kind were kept of the activities in these amusement places.

The revelers at Honkie-Tonks were also fond of prize fights. 1864 brought a stirring battle to Virginia City:

PRIZE-Fight.---Between Riley of Virginia City and Foster of Bannack is we understand to come off on Saturday Sept. 17 when the fellows will try their metal, one against the other . . . The committee of affairs are sports of the city, and we believe every precaution will be taken by them to have everything go off in ship shape. We see by the cards of admission that no weapons of any kind are allowed around or outside the enclosure.25

On the appointed day the crowd "at an early hour . . . commenced to roll in to town from all directions, afoot and in all kinds of conveyances. The streets were soon blocked up, and had it not been for our indomitable sheriff, Niel Howie, they soon would have been impassible. For hours he could be seen riding up and down, directing the crowd of wagons and soon held them in passable condition."26

Then after the fight the Post carried two and a half columns on the front page reporting the affair. (The front page position was never given to any theatrical performance.)

"GREAT FIGHT BETWEEN
JOE RILEY AND TOM FOSTER
for
\$750.00 a side in gold."

A special corral had been constructed for the occasion, about two miles above the town.

The attendance was very numerous, every available spot being occupied with eager spectators. Strict precautions had been taken to prevent any persons with arms entering the corral . . . . The ground was well-chosen, being a nice level spot among the hills. In the centre of the corral a most substantial ring was formed . . . . Every means had been taken to ensure a fair fight . . . . The crowd passed the time in the way usual on such occasions; namely in betting and chaff, the greatest good humor prevailing . . . . A photograph of the 'toute ensemble' would have been one of the best and most varied pictures of mountaineer costume that ever the pencil of the artist portrayed.

. . . Throughout the entire proceedings, the spectators behaved better than we ever remember to have seen on similar occasion. There was no confusion and no ill-feeling . . . .

Riley's colors were green and he wore the stars and stripes around his waist. Foster hoisted blue stripes on a white ground with blue and red spots . . . .

Precisely at thirty-one minutes past three Foster shied his castor into the ring. He was speedily followed by Riley. Both men then proceeded to divest themselves of their superfluous toggery, and sat patiently awaiting the call of the Referee . . . .

THE FIGHT . . . Rounds 12, 13, and 14.---These rounds were all much of a muchness. A little sparring, some light tapping, Riley rapping away at close quarters, and Foster slipping down . . . . Round 21.---Heavy exchanges on the mug. Foster putting in the right on Riley's chin, and administering rib-roasters with the left . . . . Round 24.---Hot work from scratch. Riley administering in the neighborhood of the brain pan . . . .
Twenty-six rounds in twenty-eight minutes is very quick work—too quick to allow much skill being displayed by the contestants. 

Hiley won by decision of the Referee.

There may have been some theatre folk watching this very fight. Wagon camps of pioneers on their way to Montana had once at least noticed in their midst a little group of men and women with a "subtle difference, not easy to explain" in dress, manner, and personality:

'Town dudes' we called them for want of a more adequate term. We were soon to learn that they were a troupe of play folk from Chicago on their way to the mining camps, where their talent would insure them an eager welcome. 

After a succession of tedious days on the journey, these "dudes" proposed one evening to "put on a show . . . to liven things up a bit while we're all together." The suggestion was greeted with enthusiasm.

Soon all was bustle in the two corrals. Camp equipment in our corral was put in the wagons or shoved underneath so as to leave the enclosed space clear. Logs were cut in convenient lengths and placed in the 'pit' forward of the entrance for the audience to sit upon. Meanwhile a stage was in process of construction out of materials at hand. A platform was built of loose boards from the blacksmith's shop laid upon supporting timbers. Sheets salvaged from somebody's store of linen and strung on wires served for curtains; blankets hung at the sides and the rear of the 'stage', made effective interior walls. A square of 'boughten' carpet, a couch improvised from a cedar chest, with pillows and drape; an engraving or two; a table with a lamp upon it, and two or three easy chairs conveniently placed—- these completed the interior. A dressing


room, also of blankets, was provided at each side. By this time a great quantity of dry wood had been piled at one side of the corral for lighting purposes, when all was in readiness. . . .

When the audience, numbering two hundred or more, were all seated, the orchestra began to make itself heard. From violin and flute, supported by the mellow chords of guitars, were evoked harmonies which sent our thought racing far away . . . . Our corral was a corral no longer, but a finely appointed theatre, and we ourselves an eager first night audience.

The music ceased abruptly and the curtains parted for the opening scene of a short play in which a young girl, who was about to be forced by mercenary parents into a marriage that was hateful to her, succeeded with the help of her sweetheart in disclosing some embarrassing situations in the elderly suitor's past, and thereby won the parental approval . . . .

The next feature was a series of acrobatic stunts, at the end of which the heavier of the two men who were performing stood on all fours while his lighter companion danced a jig on his back . . . .

A ventriloquist now convulsed his audience by mimicking cat and dog fights, Irish and negro dialect, familiar sounds from the farm, etc., besides making various persons say things they hadn't intended.

Popular songs and instrumental numbers were rendered at appropriate places throughout the program . . . . In addition to these, a chorus from one of the old masters revealed the fact that there in this wilderness were assembled artists of no mean order . . . .

Such theatrical groups could perform in the mining camps only if they were willing to play in tents, in bar-rooms, in village stores (though the two were often one and the same), "In the midst of smoked ham and corned meats, red and blue

flannel shirts strung across a line, and mining implements stacked by a counter." California mining camps had cheerily improvised stages for theatrical companies there a few years earlier.

A small stage would be contrived at the end of a low room by boards set on saw-horses, or even by tying two billiard tables together, with woolen blankets hung in front for curtains. A few candles stuck in bottles glittered in front. 31

The first authentic notice of a theatrical appearance in Virginia City, Montana, is found in the first issue of the first newspaper in the Montana Territory, The Montana Post, for August 17, 1864. In keeping with the national popularity of the "Ethiopian opera" or minstrel show, Montana stepped into the accepted theatrical swing with its announcement of this entertainment. From 1842, the "massed musical effects" of men in "blackface" creating variations on "cornfield dances and plantation melodies" were the rage with audiences throughout this country. "Minstrel shows were very nearly the favorite form of entertainment in San Francisco, as in many other American cities in the '60's."

LOCAL NEWS . . . PREPARE FOR A RICH TREAT -- SIDE-SPLITTING ENTERTAINMENT IN THE FUTURE:— May's Ethiopian Minstrels are now in our city and have leased the Theatre Building, in the Post Office Block. This troupe has won golden laurels in the States . . . . their entertainments are chaste in character . . . the strictest order will be observed . . . the performance is yet chaste and interesting. 34

30. Rourke, Coast, p. 91.
31. Ibid., p. 91.
32. Rourke, Humor, p. 81.
34. Montana Post, August 17, 1864.
CHAPTER II

VIRGINIA CITY - 1864 to 1869
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VIRGINIA CITY - 1864 to 1869

May's Minstrels were well received and reviewed by the Montana Post on September 10, 1864 in the following words:

May's Minstrels.---Are now giving a course of entertainments to crowded houses with very general satisfaction to their patrons. On Thursday night we paid them a visit and were much pleased with the performance. The overture by the band was in good taste and well executed. The opening chorus which followed was a very spirited affair and well sung. The tumbling and gymnastic exercises was (sic.) creditable and amusing. The double jig, quite an artistic affair, took vastly with the spectators. Prof. Welch maintained his well earned reputation as a Ventriloquist, and the performance wound up appropriately with the Hi Daddy! Ho Daddy! Walk-around. on hearing which as walked off, well satisfied. 35

Occasionally a local citizen would contribute his talents to those of the troupe. Tom Duncan, perhaps a wrestler, a tumbler, or a juggler of previous experience in some part of the world, now living in Virginia City stepped forward after the Minstrel troupe had been in the city about two weeks. With this new addition to their show, the company probably hoped to draw the population time and again to performances that did not vary a great deal from night to night.

Look out for Tom Duncan and the balance of the minstrel troupe tonight and to-morrow night, 36

A week later it was "Dunk, the inimitable burnt cork performer who took hold of the Minstrel troupe and

...gave his first entertainment to a full house of Wednesday night. The singing and dancing by Kitty Nuttall was very fine, and by the repeated applause she received, we infer that she will become the favorite of Virginia, as she was the pet of the Denverites. Duncan sustains his reputation as a star minstrel, and the rest of the troupe are the best in the land. Go and see 'Dunk', and hear how he came to Virginia City. 37

Strange individuals arrived in town from time to time, one- man shows,

...monologuists or Mr. W. J. Kent, with his splendid Panoptique. He has exhibited in every place of importance from the Missouri river to this place, and the press everywhere announce it the best entertainment that ever(sic.) visited this part of the country. We hope he will open soon, for our citizens are anxious for a good exhibition.

Since the above was written, we learn that arrangements have been made by the proprietors of the Theatre Hall with Mr. Kent for a short season, and they will open on Saturday evening with a comic pictures (sic.). Everyone must get ready to go, as it will be well worth a visit. 38

These were the only big events for several weeks. On October 29th the Post groaned,

We are enjoying the dullest time in the evening amusement line, we have had the misfortune to witness since our arrival in this otherwise fast town. No theatre, no negro minstrels, no balls, no nothings. 39

37. Ibid., Oct. 1, 1864.
38. Ibid., Sept. 17, 1864.
39. Ibid., Oct. 29, 1864.
This perhaps stimulated action, for by the end of November the people of Virginia City were watching with pleasure the large building opposite the post office ... being transformed in a neat and comfortable little theatre, and will be opened with the best talent the country afford, about the first of December under the management of Mr. DeWitt Waugh, with Jas. A. Martin as stage manager. A place of innocent amusement where we can take our families without fear of insult is an absolute necessity. We are assured by these gentlemen that nothing will be presented on the stage or permitted in the house, that can offend the most fastidious. Strict order will be maintained. This city is large enough to sustain a regular theatre, and we hope the managers will receive a liberal patronage."

Before the excitement about the opening of the theatre, the Post had published the following letter:

To the Editors of the Post: Gentlemen:- You will oblige by inserting the following: Just arrived, Major Alberto and Lady from Europe, via Utah, dramatic author, poet, humorist, physiognomist, phrenologist, natural physiologist and scientific lecturer. He proposes casting nativity and giving phrenological charts. They also bring with them scenery and stage property and purpose running a first class theatre this season, and the Major promises to present from his own pen, the best series of dramatic works extant.

N.B.—Wanted: A few literary gentlemen and ladies to complete the troupe. Apply at Morier's restaurant.  

40. Montana Post, Nov. 26, 1864.

41. Ibid., Nov. 5, 1864.
when the Major's achievements were finally witnessed by Virginia City in January of the next year, the Post published the only sarcastic and fun-poking theatrical review ever found in its columns:

... All other performances, however excellent, (so far as mirthful effect is concerned) must yield the palm to Thursday's EXHIBITION. A certain Major Alberta (sic.) produced a five act rigmarole entitled 'The Untried Man' playing the leading role himself, (Major Alberta), in a costume of wonderful incongruity, dragoon pants, an overgrown black toga, and a hat combining the beauties of a coal-scuttle and a muff, ornamented with a small picket fence and a pair of asses' ears, (apparently) marked with a cross. All that Collins, Jack Martin and Miller could do was insufficient to make anything but a most ridiculous absurdity of this combination of wild and improbability and folly. The audience fairly screamed with laughter, and received the piece with cries of 'time,' 'foul,' as the text suggested the idea. Alberta took it all in earnest, as applause, and evoked a perfect furor of acclamation by a chaste salute, like the crack of a small revolver accompanied by a flourish of trumpets. At the close, the author seriously thanked the audience and warned any one that the play was copyrighted! The management deserve credit for their desire to please their patrons, at whose request the piece was performed, but the murder of the Queen's English and the 'exasperation' of the hitches by Alberta, were beyond anything ridiculous. His last thoughts were in England and the audience were in fits. ... N.B. 'The Untried Man' will not play. He has been 'tried' and found wanting.

By December 10, 1864 jubilant shouts were in the air for the opening of the Montana Theatre, first in the Territory. The residents of the town who were officially in the

42. Ibid., Jan. 21, 1865.
company were: De Witt Waugh, manager, scene artist, and orchestra leader; Jas. M. Martin, stage manager, actor; Wm. J. Norwood, machinist; John Jack, second lead; James Miller, comic songs; Davy Smith; John Heidlinger, also leader of the orchestra; Jack Speed; J. Babcock; Geo. Barclay; Alex. Olmense. Miss Mary Kendall, ingenue leads; Miss Emma Perkins, character woman; Mrs. Flora Caven, songs and dances. A Miss Millie Woods and a Mr. Collins joined the group later to play leads and a William Cowie seems to have played a male lead on March 18th only. Of this local company their first critic said,

As the company gets accustomed to each other, and opportunities of close study are afforded, there will be but little room for criticism on the score of exactness and perfect knowledge of the parts... so important in all histrionic delineations; especially in those not otherwise prominent.44

The paper also felt that this group of "cateres for the public amusement" would be helped by "being free from those immoral surroundings so objectionable in many theatres."

The Montana Theatre of Virginia City charged an admission fee of one dollar and a half. Their facilities a visitor in town described thus,

The drop curtain was of cambric; the stage, as large as a very small bedroom; five tallow candles served for footlights; and the orchestra consisted of four performers.45

The Montana Post review of the first week of

43. Montana Post, Dec. 10, 1864.
44. Ibid., Dec. 17, 1864.
45. Richardson, op. cit. p. 479.
The Montana Theatre.---On Saturday last, the opening of the Montana theatre was witnessed by a numerous audience. The night was intensely cold, but this did not prevent many of the fair sex from taking their places, long before the hour announced for commencing the performance. The entire arrangements were very creditable to DeWitt Waugh the manager, who appears to be a sort of Genius of the Lamp on a small scale; providing, as Robson would say, 'chiefly music, scenery, and all other needful substances.' Considering the small means at his command the scenery is a very praiseworthy effort of art. The building is comfortably seated, on the inclined plane principle, so that all can have a good view of the stage. Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, and the Spectre Bridegroom were the bill of fare, and under all the circumstances, we think highly of the performance. Mr. J. M. Martin played 'Ruy Gomez' with great spirit. Miss Kendall's conception of the boy king was remarkably effective. Miss Perkins did justice to the somewhat difficult part of the Countess. The costumes of the ladies and of Mr. Martin were well chosen. The Marquis of Santa Cruz was personated by Mr. John Jack. Don Pedro fell to the lot of Mr. W. J. Norwood and Gomez was supported by Mr. A. Olhausen. Though these parts were not in the first role, yet they were fairly represented and the curtain fell amidst loud applause. The superior music of the band tended much to enhance the enjoyment of the spectators. Miss Flora Caven sang Annie Laurie and Mr. James G. Miller gave Villikens and his Dinah, by way of interlude. Both were loudly and deservedly encored. Mr. Miller, as 'Diggory' in the farce was far ahead of most amateurs and will make a good low comedian in due time. As it is, a slight decrease of effort and a clearer articulation would render his comic singing excellent. The farce went off with eclat. On Tuesday, Love in Humble Life, followed by Keep Your Temper drew a good house and the acting was, on the whole, an improvement on that of Monday.  

From this earliest performance onward, a roaring farce and a well-selected drama were the regular theatrical fare for Montana audiences as they were for all of nineteenth-century America. On such a schedule the Montana Theatre continued to play three times per week, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, so that all in Virginia City might "forget for a few hours, that they are in the depth of winter and almost cut off from the rest of the world by the insurmountable barriers of snow." Instead they went to the "new and tastefully got up" theatre which the Montana Post was soon recommending to their patronage.

The most scrupulous pains are taken to make as good and to the public, as acceptable a selection of plays as can be got, and they are invariably well-produced. The parts are well studied and delivered and the acting leaves nothing to wish for. The comic singing of Mr. J. Miller brings down the house at the end of every one of his songs, and the masterly execution of Mrs. Flora Craven's songs, never fails to enrapture the audience beyond description. The music, under the leadership of Mr. Heidlinger is alone worth the price of admission. We have, in no place in this far western country, heard operatic music performed with more precision and accuracy than at the Montana. This company deserves credit (sic.) for their really unexceptionable performances, have given satisfaction so. . ., and cannot fail to be sustained by full houses every night. Give them a full house to-night. 48

The program for one of the last nights of the year 1864 consisted of La Tour de Nesle or The Chamber of Death and a farce called, Wanted a Widow. Of the first of these plays:

47. Montana Post, Dec. 17, 1864.
48. Ibid., Dec. 24, 1864.
the critic said, "The death scene would not have detracted from the fame of Booth or Forrest." 49

The closing of the year did not by any means put a stop to the activity of this amateur dramatic troupe in Virginia City. Catherine and Petruchio, the Jacobite, Orphan of Geneva and Don Caesar de Bazan were the heavier pieces listed for January production. Of the last of these the newspaper wrote, "No lover of the drama should be absent. Don Caesar de Bazan is a favorite at every theatre." 50 Some of the farces tried in this same period were Loan of a Lover, Married Rake, Trying It On and A Nice Quiet Day.

By the end of January the troupe was perhaps beginning to feel just a bit nervous about how well they were wearing with the people of Virginia City. As an additional inducement they advertised, "New scenery has been added to the attraction of this theatre, by the ar-artistic(sic.) hands of DeWitt Waugh. It is really worth looking at . . . ." 51 At the same time Mr. Waugh was running the following personal advertisement in nearly every issue of the Post.

50. Ibid., Jan. 14, 1865.
51. Ibid., Jan. 28, 1865
WAUTH'S
Brass and quadrille Band are now prepared to furnish music for
PROCESSIONS PARTIES DANCES
CONCERTS SERENADES
or in fact for any occasion when a Good Brass Band or Orchestra may be employed.

Headquarters on Cover, below Jackson Street
Davy Smith D. W. C. Waugh
Prompter. Director.

This is possibly an illustration of the many-sided life led by the theatre folk of that day. For Mr. Waugh's work as a scene designer at the Montana had been "much noticed" probably praise in his time).

The "new scenery" was quite likely for The Warlock of the Glen, A Sailor of France and Eton Boy frequently enough spelled Eaton Boy to bring up the question of whether or not anyone in the Territory had every heard of the English School.

Then on January 31st the program included Charles the Second, Monarch and a new farce, Simon Lulliby. These new plays and their reception were soon completely dwarfed by the approach of a "Great Night". The Montana Territory was to "tender a benefit performance" to one of its "leading" actors, quite in the usual nineteenth century style of showing appreciation and gratitude in a more lucrative way than applause.

We beg to announce that on next Thursday, February 2nd, Mr. E. R. Collins will take a benefit at the Montana, on which occasion will be produced the celebrated temperance drama of the

52. The Montana Post, Jan. 4, 1865.
53. Ibid., Feb. 11, 1865.
we bespeak for the gentleman a crowded house. 54

Mr. Collins, of course, took the lead on that his night. He also played "the colored gent" in the farce, Secret, chosen undoubtedly because it gave him still another chance to display his dramatic powers to his public. Then the evening wound up hilariously for the cast:

The corps dramatique, ably assisted by some sympathizing friends wound up the proceedings by partaking of a most recherché supper at the Star Restaurant given by Collins in honor of his benefit. 55

Next the Montana Theatre audience waited for "the debut of Miss Millie Woods, a lady of Nevada as 'Lucretia Borgia'." The review of her first appearances in Virginia City is explanation enough of her past.

We pledged our credit for her success and the loud, enthusiastic and repeated applause of the audience have endorsed our judgment. We do not believe that any novice had ever passed thro' the ordeal of this heavy and most trying piece so triumphantly. Mr. Collins deserves the thanks of the public and the profession for his exertions in preparing his pupil for her part. The affair was a brilliant success throughout and ended in a perfect ovation. Her acting is the more remarkable as it is evidently the result of native genius. In the scene where Lucretia is unmasked by the Venetian gallants, the frantic appeals of the Duchess were beautifully and intensely rendered. Her triumph over her husband, achieved by means of the antidote, was splendidly given and the death scene was really magnificent. . . . The house was crowded full, from the orchestra to the entrance. . . . The piece was repeated with marked improvement.

54. The Montana Post, Jan. 28, 1865.

55. Ibid., Feb. 4, 1865.
The threatened vengeance of Lucretia especially was announced in a most thrilling manner by Miss Woods and her pleading for life was very pathetic. . .  

The following Saturday, this up and coming young lady played the part of Parthenia in Ingomar. Encored again and again it was probably she who did a Highland Fling for her newly found public or a dance or monologue act called cachioula. New farces were being tried - To Oblige Benson, and Two Buzzards. Lucretia Borgia was repeated on the 14th, plus a farce called the Married Rake. The female lead in La Tour de Nesle was then shifted to Miss Wood's shoulders ("a part which suits her better than Lucretia") for the major part of the bill on the night of Mr. John H. Jack's benefit.

Mr. Jack is so well known to the theatre going community of Montana, that it would be superfluous to speak about his merits. A houseful from gallery to orchestra may be expected on this occasion. Mr. Miller will sing a new song, of a very popular mania, composed by a gentleman of this city. The play that night will be the beautiful five-act drama of The Wife (editors note:- changed as previously noted), and 57 conclude with the farce of the Virginia Mammy.

In the 23rd of February at the Montana Theatre, "Mr. Waugh's benefit drew a very large audience. The best thing of the evening was Mr. Waugh's guitar solo. The snare drum and the piano imitations were beautiful and the whole piece aptly

56. The Montana Post, Feb. 11, 1865.
57. Ibid., Feb. 11, 1865.
and beautifully executed . . . Miller's singing "quartz upon the Brain" drew a general encore." Mr. Miller repeated this favorite song about a week later on the occasion of his own benefit. At this time the newspaper carried the word that this song and others had been composed by our poetic friend Nat. Stein, of the Overland Express office in this city. It is useless to praise them, for their excellence is endorsed by all who have heard them. Thoughts or packages the author can express with equal facility and correctness." The plays performed the night of Mr. Miller's benefit were Rough Diamond, in which Miller played the part of Cousin Joe, and The Jacobite, in which he appeared as John Duck.

In between this performance and the February 25th night of Kotzebue's Stranger and Poor Pillicoddy, the piece Nick of the Woods, or The Jibbenainosy had been produced twice. "It is a fine piece," said its reporter. Worth a special note was "The descent of the Jibbonainosay"(sic.)"(Collins) in the flaming canoe was creditable to the machinist, Norwood."

Miss Kendall's benefit came off on March 3rd, a performance of the Honeymoon with her starring as Juliana, and a repetition

58. The Montana Post, Feb. 11, 1865.
59. Ibid., March 4, 1865.
60. Ibid., March 4, 1865.
of \textit{ston boy}. On the 4th, \textit{Nick of the Woods} and \textit{The Jacobite} were again shown. "As the 'Jibbonainosay,' Collins played with more force and justness of style than in any piece during the season . . . a marked improvement on the preceding performance."

On Monday night, the 6th of March, Miss Emma Perkins took her benefit, \textit{Marble Heart}, which "despite the very unpropitious weather drew a good house." Miss Perkins played Marco, and Mr. Collins, Raphael, "perhaps as difficult as any (parts) yet written."

The night of the 9th of March Mrs. Caven's benefit occurred. \textit{Jack Sheppard} "was produced with smoothness and general excellence of conception that insured the success it obtained." . . . It "was decidedly the most successful performance and the largest house of the season." Mrs. Caven was without a doubt a town favorite, and to add to the gayety of the evening, she and Miss Kendall both danced, besides the farce \textit{Poor Pillicoddy}.

On the 11th the troupe was planning to close its season in about a week. Mr. J. M. Martin, "the gentlemanly stage manager of the Montana" was to take his benefit the night of the 11th, at a performance of "Bulwer's celebrated play of the \textit{Lady of Lyons}. \textit{Irish Lion} was the farce of the evening. Then on Monday, the 16th, a theatrical benefit for Mr. J. G. Orem was

\footnotesize

63. \textit{Ibid.}, March 11, 1865.
scheduled, the only pantomine of the season was played with
them as "Stitch". The rest of his part in the program was a
gymnastic performance with the 35 pound clubs (which)
evidenced great skill and muscle, on the part of the
exhibitor, who was called before the curtain at the close
of the piece..."

On the night of the 16th "Miss Woods the talented debutante
of the season will receive a benefit..." *Still Waters*

_Run Deep_ will be performed, in which Miss Woods will play
Mrs. Sternhold. The lady deserves a good house."

On the 18th of March, 1865, the hand-set type of the
_Montana Post_ spelled out some sad news for those interested
in the theatre.

To-night is the last night of the season at the
Montana, when William Cowie will make his first
appearance as Julian St. Pierre, in the celebrated
five act tragedy of *The Wife*. We bespeak a crowded
house on the occasion. The zeal and energy of the
troupe demand a recognition at the hands of the
public. 66

Apparently the Montana Theatre was a lost cause. The
leader of the theatre orchestra left Virginia City to "take
charge of the Brigade Band of the California Volunteers."

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64. _The Montana Post_, March 18, 1865.
65. _Ibid._, March 11, 1865.
66. _Ibid._, March 18, 1865.
members of the troupe were scattering. The newspaper drops no hint or what the reason was for this exodus. Perhaps various members of the company had quarrelled or argued about policy, perhaps the town had grown tired of the same faces and business had fallen away. Possibly it was the time of year to close out a theatrical season. No one today can really explain what was the cause.

The interesting fact is that after several members of the original company had either left town or severed their connections with the troupe, the theatre again was opened.

... This popular place of amusement will open on Monday (This on Saturday, April 8, 1865), under the management of Collins and Co. The great moral and sensational drama of Uncle Tom's Cabin, is to be performed. There will be a full house, and those wanting tickets must apply early. As a means of innocent amusement, the Theatre should be supported. 67

It rather looks as though there had been some sort of a rift in the first group. The play they opened with is also a suggestion that the type of thing formerly produced was not thought by some to meet the needs of the community. With Mr. Collins in his attempt to re-establish the Theatre were T. C. Duncan, J. H. Jack, W. J. Norwood, Mr. Martin, Mr. Ohlhousen, Master Hosmer, Miss Woods and Miss Perkins.

(A full review of the evening can be found in the Appendix to this Chapter.)

67. The Montana Post, April 8, 1865.
the come-back evidently was not successful. The newspaper
has no further notes of any activity at the Montana Theatre.
Every once in a while its columns carried word of what had
happened to some of Virginia City's favorite actor-friends.

John Jack in Ophir City writes from there that
he is off for a 'through trip on 'The Cutter'.
We wish him luck, and no greater necessity for a wig
than appeared on a casual surveu(sic.) of his
poll, in times gone by.68

Or an item from Helena, Montana at the end of July in 1865 said,

Mr. E. R. Collins, the former manager of the
Montana Theatre in Virginia, informs us that
in less than six weeks, he will have his new
theatre in running order, and will entertain 69
the citizens of Helena with nightly performances.

Nothing of a theatrical nature took place in Virginia
city from April until June. On June 11th the Montana Theatre
held the exhibitions of the Keystone Troupe - a traveling
group of "athletes, Dancers, and Negro Melodists". "There
was not a single performance which could be called mediocre."70
But the Theatre was not really large enough to allow the
artists to display the most startling of their talents.
They fitted up J. A. Nelson's Leviathan Hall and then were
able to add to their list of attractions the "feats on
the Corde Volante and Trapeze." Socially the use of this

68. The Montana Post, July 7, 1865.
69. Ibid., July 29, 1865.
70. Ibid., June 17, 1865.
71. Ibid., June 24, 1865.
building for a theatre raised a new problem. The "gentlemen"
could use the entrance through the Bar on Wallace Streets
but a side entrance had to be arranged for the fairer sex.

About the first of September the amusement possibilities
of Virginia City showed signs of resuming their former
racyety. A Mr. Kidder wrote the Post that his Pioneer
Dramatic Troupe "embracing the first talent of California
and New York" could be expected "on the 10th instant".

The Chapman Troupe actually arrived ahead of Mr. Kidder's
group, during the week of September 16th. Mr. Kidder personally
put in an appearance towards the end of October, evidently
determined this time that nothing should stand in the way
of his company's coming.

Mr. C. W. Kidder, agent of the Pioneer Dramatic
Troupe, is now in town, making arrangements for
the opening of a theatre here. He has secured
Nuthall's Leviathan Hall, (this building
had evidently changed hands in the last few
months), on Bridge Street, which he is fitting
up, at great expense, with seats, stage and
stage properties. . . "73

Whether it was the Pioneer Dramatic Troupe or the Chapman
Company that was approaching Virginia City, the Post customarily
had this type of reserved welcome and encouragement.

Bellykelly law—fair play, and help to everything
genuine, is the rule in the mountains; but everybody
is judged 'on the merits'.74

72. Post, Sept. 10, 1865.
73. Ibid., Oct. 28, 1865.
The Chapman Troupe which arrived in Virginia City on September 18th to play until late October, every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, "had traveled through the mountains repeatedly since 1851." After many years in California, they had finally bored the miners there, "though they were no unaccomplished players." They had headed northward over rough corduroy roads in a wagon hoping for less sensitive audiences and more leisurely gestures in the direction of hip pockets." George Chapman himself was probably a good low comedian. Mrs. Chapman played most of the "leads". In Virginia City Mrs. Caven and Miss Perkins were picked up to assist her. The male members of the group were Harry Taylor, Edwin Clark, Sam H. Chapman, Mr. Barley, Dick Johnson, Joe Rielly. Mr. Olehausen was added locally to round out the company, and DeWitt Waugh again led the theatre orchestra.

In the Appendix to this Chapter some of the reviews received by the Chapman Troupe in Virginia City are given in full. The enthusiasm of the newspaper seems genuine. The Montana Post apparently backed this theatrical company throughout its stay in town. Time and again remarks like the following ones can be found in the Local News columns.

Jack Sheppard, tonight at the Montana Theatre. First come first served, at the ticket office. Go and see Jack Sheppard to-night. 76

75. Rourke, op. cit., p. 126-127.
76. The Montana Post, Sept. 23, 1865.
Go and see the French Spy at the Theatre to-night and don't forget Mrs. Chapman's benefit on Monday. She will appear in her original character of Judy O'Trot, played by her, with immense applause, in New York and all the principle eastern cities. During the week will be presented, Madelaine the Foundling of Paris and The Robber's Wife.

One other interesting clipping about them is the following:

Great amusement has resulted from the appearance of small posters bearing the inscription, 'look out for the Rag Picker'. This announcement, which was intended to call the public attention to the benefit of Harry Taylor, at the Theatre, was supposed to be some mystic intimation from the 'Vigilantes', and was eyed with reverential awe by not a few of the sojourners in Virginia.

From September 13th to October 29 in Virginia City (and from early November onward) the Chapman troupe played the following repertory:


77. The Montana Post, Sept. 27, 1865.
78. Ibid., Sept. 30, 1865.
It is amazing to note how many of these plays had previously been produced in the Montana Theatre by the local acting company. Many companies in the future years were to do over and over again the same popular pieces of the period. Virginia City "selfishly" regretted the absence of the Chapman company when they went to Helena in November and according to the newspaper was even more stunned when they established themselves firmly in Helena early in December and showed no signs of ever returning to Virginia. It was with their exit also that the Montana Theatre, the "neatest, most comfotable and pleasant place of the kind in the territory" disappeared as a center of activity.

For by January 13, 1866, a new theatre was opened by the ambitious Dick Johnson. He first fitted up the hall over the Montana Billiard Saloon on Wallace Street and called it the Peoples' Theatre. He faithfully promised there would be no Sunday performances, realizing the "profanation of the Sabbath" felt strongly by some of his would-be patrons. Later Mr. Johnson moved his Peoples' Theatre to a larger building, the one next to the Rocky Thomas Gambling Saloon. This structure was seventy feet by twenty-seven by twenty. There was a parquette, a gallery and wings. The stage was sixteen feet wide at its proscenium arch, and the ceiling was over fourteen feet high. Johnson daily made improvements

79. The Montana Post, Feb. 17, 1866.
Tony Ward, actor, standing in front of the remains of the Peoples' Theatre, Virginia City, Montana.
on the building. The gallery eventually seated 200 persons, the whole building was lined with cotton, and the attempt was made to make the wooden seats as comfortable as possible. Of the lighting a contemporary reporter says, "The col red(sic.) lamps on each side of the stage are very handsome. The footlights are much more effective than formerly, and the hanging lamps, at the side, give a sufficient light all over the parquet." The enclosure of the orchestra by a railing was hailed as an excellent improvement. All in all the rather disreputable wooden structure, of which a picture still remains, was called an "ornament to our city" by the citizens of Virginia City during the spring of 1866.

Dick Johnson, the manager, was also an actor and comedian. With DeWitt Waugh as designer and Paul Bolon as orchestra leader a group of local names of some theatrical reputation, W. J. Norwood, Edwin Clarke, Billy Sheppard, Mrs. Caven, Miss Perkins, and Miss Millie Woods, performed occasionally in the Peoples' Theatre from January 13th to 29th in 1866. Their first program consisted of The Maid of Croissy, Betsy Baker, and singing and dancing numbers. Then they did a "comedietta, Who Speaks First, then The Robber's Wife, Jenny Lind and Love in Humble Life.

On January 29th in 1866, Manager Dick Johnson stepped in front of his curtain at the Peoples' Theatre to announce

80. The Montana Post, March 3, 1866.
81. Ibid., Jan. 13, 1866.
Looking towards the stage and towards the balcony in the ruins of the Peoples' Theatre, Virginia City, Montana.
...to his patrons that he "had entered into an engagement with Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Irwin, and Master Harry Rainforth" to appear before the Virginia City public in *Honeymoon* in February 7th. "The heartiest applause" greeted this announcement. The repertoire that this actor and his "talented wife" would bring with them, probably consisted of the dramatic pieces they had been performing at the historic playhouse in Salt Lake City. Montana audiences awaited them with anticipation.

Besides Mrs. and Mr. Irwin and Harry Rainforth, a Charles Graham reached Virginia City early in February 1866. The following local actors supported them throughout their season which lasted until the end of April:— Edwin Clarke, Billy Norwood, Dick Johnson, Miss Millie Woods, Miss Perkins. In a period of less than three months nineteen dramas and nineteen farces were produced.

**Dramas:**— *Honeymoon, Lady of Lyons, Black-eyed Susan, Stranger the Hunchback, Nick of the Woods, Mistletoe Bough, Peoples' Lawyer, Pocahontas, Coleen Bawn, Jessie Brown, Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady, Marble Heart, Still Waters Run Deep, Camille, Retribution, Spy of the Potomac, Octoroon, and Lucretia Borgia.*

**Farces:**— *The Fool of the Family, Swiss Swains (Swiss Cottage), Sketches in India, Crossing the Line, Grist of the Mill, A Day in Paris, Betsy Baker, Perfection, Who...*
Speaks First, Morning Call, Chimney Corner, A Day After the Wedding, Female Gambler, Loan of a Lover, Serious Family, Satan in Paris, Life of an Actress Our American Cousin, In and Out of Place.

Mrs. Irwin's talents were evidently best expressed through a series of costume changes. In A Day In Paris she wore five different costumes varying from the character of a French Officer to A Ymkee Girl. For In and Out of Place, as Letty the stage-struck chambermaid, she again impersonated five different characters with songs and dances for each one. The nineteenth century demands made on actors who customarily played both a heavy drama and a farce in the course of an evening are illustrated by the casting of the leading parts on the night of the Irwin's opening at the Peoples' Theatre. In Honeymoon, Juliana was played by Mrs. Irwin, Duke Aranza by Mr. Irwin, the Count by Charles Graham, and Lopez by Harry Rainforth. In the farces, The Fool of the Family which was performed the same night, Zeb Brighton was played by Mr. Irwin, Betty Sanders by Mrs. Irwin, Sanders by Mr. Graham, and Gumption by Mr. Rainforth.

Several typical reviews of the Irwins' theatrical work in Virginia City can be found in Appendix B to this Chapter. If the town newspaper is to be believed, they nearly always were enthusiastically applauded. When they left for a

83. The Montana Post, Sept. 8, 1866.
84. Ibid., Feb. 3, 1866
professional tour in other towns of the territory early in May, it was with plans to return to Virginia City again in July which they did. On one of the last Saturdays the Irwins were in Virginia City, the weekly Post was most apologetic about its lack of support:

Peoples' Theatre.— Owing to the extreme pressure of matters of Territorial importance, we are unable to give more than the briefest notice of the performance at our Theatre this week. The play on Friday evening was a triumph. Camille is decidedly the finest piece of acting Mrs. Irwin has yet presented in these mountains. Mr. Irwin admirably supported the heroine as Armand Duval. Retribution was played for Dick Johnston's benefit, on Wednesday. The play Satan in Paris, gave Mrs. Irwin an opportunity of displaying her versatile genius to great advantage. The Life of an Actress is on the bills for tonight with Mrs. Irwin as Violet.85

There was some competition in the entertainment field of Virginia during this same spring of 1866. Harry Taylor and Sam Chapman (last noticed when they were performing with the George Chapman Company) opened up the old "Greer Saloon" on Bridge Street, "under the name and style of the 'Varieties.'" Here Harry Taylor "used to hold in silent attention and rapture, the motley crowd. . .while the piano, obedient to his touch, gave forth the stirring strains of 'Viva L' America,' the 'Marseillaise' or some sweet operatic morceau. . . ." High carnival was evidently held every night by several members of former theatrical companies - J. M. Miller, Harry Taylor, and even Mrs. Chapman were occasionally mentioned as among those

85. The Montana Post, April 21, 1866.
86. Ibid., Feb. 3, 1866.
who delighted the audiences "with wit, humor, singing, dancing, and playing."

Probably it was this same place of amusement where by April events like this were taking boredom from the shoulders of the Virginia populace.

Melodeon.--- Con Orem and Billy Sheppard are drawing large houses of honest miners and 'miscellaneous' visitors, to witness Billy's nigger business, and the dancing and performance of the troupe. The utmost hilarity 'pervades the hauidence' as we once heard a showman remark at Greenwich Fair in the days of our childhood. We should suppose that Con and his partner have 'struck it rich.' A gentleman of more zeal than fistic experience, and under the influence of the most democratic kind of whiskey, having made some remark(sic.) of a belligerent character accompanied by physical demonstrations, received something in the line of 'one two' from the champion, which had the effect of rendering his perceptions confused, and necessitating an instantaneous change of base. With this very trifling exception, all had gone smoothly and comfortably.

The spring months in Virginia City were full of conflicting theatrical rumors. First word was passed around that Miss Belle Douglass would soon play at the Peoples' Theatre. By March the city was afraid they were not going to see her. The same questioning went around about the local appearance of Julia Dean Hayne. Both of these ladies eventually reached Virginia City but not until after Walter Bray and his daughter, Flora Bray, had tasted the city's welcome for them.

Theatrical.--- We see that the Bray troupe have given their last representation in Salt Lake, before starting for Montana. Walter Bray travels

87. The Montana Post, Feb. 10, 1866.
88. Ibid., April 21, 1866.
in his own conveyance. . . . Miss Flora Bray, an accomplished danseuse and violinist of great personal attractions and aged only sixteen, will come with the troupe, we are told; and Miss McGinley with Master Bobby are determined to see Montana. We expect a gay time. 89

Before the Bray troupe arrived Dick Johnston and his group of food-old-standbys tried once more to attract the public to the Peoples' Theatre.

Peoples' Theatre.--- It is with great pleasure that we announce to the public the re-opening of the Peoples' Theatre under the management of Dick Johnston, as of yore. The bill tonight includes the third act of Othello, with Mr. J. S. Townsend, the talented tragedian as Iago, and Chas. Graham as Othello. Mrs. Caven will appear as Emilia (sic.) and as Jenny Lind. A fancy dance by this lady will also be a welcome feature of the programme. Billy Sheppard will be on hand in his own line. Mr. Townsend will likewise play Snoozle, in Madison Marton's farce of Unwarantable Intrusion, and Leatherlungs in Jenny Lind. Dick Johnston is to come out as Granby Gag. . . . 90

During the week of May 7th and of May 14th in 1866, Miss Belle Douglas was expected "in all probability" to arrive by the next coach. T. W. Lyne, a good tragedian, was also looked for immediately. Under the management of J. S. Potter, Miss Douglas came in time to play Lucretia Borgia for the Virginia public on June 2nd. Rough Diamond was the farce of the evening. Her supporting cast consisted of Tony Ward, Dick Johnston, J. S. Townsend, Chas. Graham, J. S. Potter, Billy Norwood, and Mrs. Caven. Before June 9th, this group had

89. The Montana Post, May 12, 1866.

90. Ibid., May 19, 1866.
performed *Wind and Whirlwind*, *William Tell*, *Damon and Pythias*, and a farce called *Peter White*. Mr. Lyne arrived in town and played the leading male role in *William Tell* and *Damon and Pythias*.

On June 9th, Martin the Wizard, another favorite of the West, made his first appearance in Virginia, at the Peoples' Theatre. The audience thoroughly enjoyed his tricks, "his fine specimens of ledgerdemain," and the "genuine humor of Martin himself." His performance with the "automatons was very clever, and the ventriloquism was most mirth-provoking." This ambitious trouper not only exhibited in Virginia City but also traveled to other Montana towns, Nevada, Summit, and Junction. He had some trouble with the civil powers of the region about his license to perform. The authorities sued him for $42.50. The Press and the public were evidently on the performer's side, looking on the matter as "too bad."

The Cosmopolitan Troupe, minstrels chiefly, also came to Virginia on June 9th but had to play in the Melodeon Hall, opposite the Theatre, which had been previously leased by Martin the Wizard. Their "laughable entertainments" were publicized in "small bills."

During this week of other excitements, Walter Bray had been in town, in advance of his troupe of eleven players, making final arrangements for his company every member of

which had "some distinguished speciality in the line of business which the company have followed with marked success for a long time." The city expected them to stay with them, and the newspaper promised that "there will be no backwardness on the part of our citizens in giving them the needful and well merited support which so stimulates actors and enhances the vigor and truth of theatrical performances."

The first appearance at the Peoples' Theatre by the Brays was an entertainment evening composed of singing, dancing, and a humorous afterpiece. These acts apparently lived up to the Press' expectations of performances of "first class character" which other "western men who have seen them" (the Brays) had predicted. By June 16, the paper was urging, "Go to the Peoples' Theatre to-night and see Flora Bray in Andy Blake."

About this time there was an interesting discussion over the price of admission at the Peoples' Theatre which merits quotation in full.

Dramatic Finances.—The play-goers of this city sometimes complain that two dollars is too much for a ticket. On conversing with the manager, we learn that he thinks the figure a high one, but cannot lower it because he would lose money every night by the operation. There is no doubt that more persons would attend, but not twice as many; and, at the slack season, a diminution of receipts would necessitate a closing of the Theatre. After a time, the price will be lowered, but now that so many patrons of the drama are temporarily absent, it would be financially inexpedient to make the change. 94

93. The Montana Post, June 9, 1866.
94. Ibid., June 9, 1866.
July brought Julia Dean Hayne to Virginia City. As Julia Dean she had "made a tremendous hit on the occasion of her debut at the Bowery, New York, May 18, 1845, as Julia in the Hunchback." She was "an immense favorite in the West in the early sixties," for after her marriage to Dr. Hayne, she had repeated her New York City successes in California. Chicago listed her as a "star" attraction, and Salt Lake City audiences adored her.

Mrs. Hayne's first Virginia City review even billed the former star Miss Belle Douglass as one of the supporting cast. Perhaps this was the idea of the new manager of the Peoples' Theatre, D. W. Clipperton who in every way seemed to be giving the town more general satisfaction than previous lessees by "engaging talented artists and having the legitimate drama represented." The whole locality looked to Mrs. Hayne to "introduce some new features in the drama on the boards of Montana."

95. Hornblow, op. cit., p. 348.
96. Ibid., p. 352.
97. Ibid., p. 348.
98. The Montana Post, July 14, 1866.
99. Ibid., July 14, 1866.
Several of Mrs. Hayne’s Montana reviews are given in Appendix B to this Chapter. Typical, perhaps, is the following clipping.

Peoples' Theatre.--- We had the pleasure of visiting the Peoples' Theatre on Thursday evening, and were delighted with the performance. On this occasion, Mrs. Julia Dean Hayne appeared in, Leah, the Forsaken. The play was well represented and the various characters splendidly personated. The evening's entertainment concluded with a farce entitled The Maid of Munster, which went off in fine style. The favorite dance by Mrs. Flora Caven was good; and Tony Ward, in his budget of comicalities, made perfect the performance. 100

In August this same Tony Ward had joined Selden Irwin who was again forming a company of actors to perform at the Peoples' Theatre: - Mrs. Irwin, Harry Rainforth, and several others. Miss Belle Douglass played with this group at Summit City, as did Edwin Clark.

Rumors were chasing each other around again about who was to manage the theatre. Some said that Selden Irwin intended to purchase or lease the Peoples' Theatre and remain permanently in Virginia City. Some insisted that Mr. Clipperton would retain the lease on the theatre and hire the talented artists above mentioned for the season. By the first of September the whole matter was settled.

The Peoples' Theatre is now under the management of Bella Douglass who, as the bills represent takes pleasure in announcing that she has effected an engagement for a limited number of nights with those talented artists the Irwins. 102

100. The Montana Post, July 21, 1866.
101. Ibid., Aug. 18, 1866.
102. Ibid., Sept. 1, 1866.
On this return showing in Virginia City, the Irwins played a completely different repertoire. *Fanchon the Cricket, Green Bushes, The Angel of Midnight, Corsican Brothers, Little Barefoot and Coleen Bawn* -- "all splendid new pieces."

Walter Bray and his "Dramatic and Concert Troupe" consisting of Walter Bray who himself did readings and monologues, Flora Bray, his starring daughter, Carrie Chapman, a dancer, Joe Mabbott, and Charles Johnson, musicians, and Ned War came from Salt Lake City to play in Virginia City during the week of June 16 to June 23. The trip between these two cities was no easy one though it was this same year, 1866, that a telegraph line was first completed across the mountains that separated them.

In the autumn of 1865 the gold that had been discovered in Last Chance Gulch, where the city of Helena eventually developed, began insidiously to affect the life of Virginia City in general and its theatrical life especially. "... In July, 1867, Helena, though not yet two years old, was already contending with Virginia City for the palm of chieftainty."

The mines of the first Montana town were wearing out. As the former flush-time population moved to the newly vigorous diggings at Last Chance Gulch, the theatrical companies followed their audience. So the closing performance by the Irwin company


company in Virginia City in the fall of 1866, was one of the last professional productions that this worn out mining settlement was to see for some time.

The Irwins announced September 5, 1866, as their last appearance at the Peoples' Theatre, Virginia City. The program included *Irish Assurance* and *Yankee Modesty* and *A Day In Paris*. Two years later Montanian still remembered this theatrical company and were glad to hear that they had found a theatre in Cheyenne, Wyoming, where they were giving dramatic entertainments.

Yet the Peoples' Theatre still stood in the town whose "dreary succession of straggling, empty log houses" bespoke its former gaiety. John Kelly and troupe of singers "met with success" there in July 28, 1865. Their entertainment of vocal and instrumental numbers, "a wonderful acrobat, in the shape of a very small Indian boy, who was captured from the Snakes last fall by Jeff Standiford" moved over to Helena for a series of performances after they had played at the Grand Masonic ball and festival of Virginia City on June 25th.

Performing chiefly in Helena by 1867 theatrical groups which made occasional journeys to Virginia appeared. In September 1867 the Langrishe and Couldock company which will

be mentioned more fully in the next Chapter, visited Virginia City. One visitor to the city in December of 1867 again notices the presence of the Langrishe troupe.

I have had a truce of a week with the mountains and mines, and devoted it to the sights, the fashions, the amusements and social enjoyments of the capital. The theatre, under the direction of the jolly Langrishe, has been running clever audiences. *Ignomar* has illustrated to the accomplished circles of Virginia the ways and tastes of the barbarians. Claude Melnotte has confirmed the old adage that the course of true love does not always run smooth. Pretty much everybody goes to the theatre; and the 'Pony' just opposite, clears the cobwebs out of the throats of the people between the acts. . .when the curtain falls the glasses rise, and are emptied between social greetings and commercial contracts. At the 'Pony' may be seen the dignitaries of the Territory and city, the members of the bar, the men of business, and around the inevitable ubiquitous 'bummers', all smiling together, and discussing Montana liquors, Indians, politics, and the last murder or prize-fight.*

In November 1868, the Langrishe company again played at the Peoples' Theatre, with the Waldrons this time. The repertoire undoubtedly included the pieces which the group had been producing in Helena. *Nick of the Woods* is one play that was surely performed on November 12, 1868. From Virginia City, Jack Langrishe continued his theatrical tour of the region by starting for Bear City.

The "cultivated, refined and substantial" society of Virginia did not let its theatre fade into nothingness. Early

113. Ibid., Feb. 11, 1869.
in 1863, George Pauncefort, Esq., turned his genius, talent, and enterprise into keeping dramatic entertainments alive. First he read Dickens, next he organized an amateur dramatic troupe. Easter week he "regaled" the denizens of Virginia City with some rare oratorios and other musical entertainments." The amateur group soon distinguished themselves, as the full review of their work in Appendix C to this Chapter shows. By the fall of the year a subscription campaign was under way in Virginia to help defray the expenses of the group's continuing through the winter at the Peoples' Theatre. The mayor, Dr. Daems, started the fund off well by contributing twenty-five dollars and the organization must have been able to press onward for in January a newspaper carried the following estimate of the group's achievements.

Virginia Items.—The Capital Times gives the theatrical troupe a raking down for want of discipline, and not being well posted in their parts in the French Spy and Man the Good For Nothing. It is also down on gags and sidejokes, more especially when the audience can't understand them. Meanwhile good plays are being brought out in rapid succession, and the theatre, we should judge well patronized.

One of the best ways of summarizing the theatrical activities of Virginia City is through the eyes of the veteran showman, Ned or Tony Ward, who not so many years ago

115. Ibid., April 1, 1869.
As far as my memory serves me, I will give a brief history of the theatrical stage in the early days of Virginia City. When I say early days I mean 1855 and 1865. The only theatre I knew of at that date, where prominent legitimate Thespian artists appeared, is still standing on Jackson street. . . and was then known as the Peoples' Theatre and was managed by Richard Johnson, succeeded by John S. Potter of Philadelphia, the father of Estelle Potter, of dramatic fame. Among the first attractions were Fanny Morgan Phelps, Mr. and Mrs. Irwin (Mrs. Irwin's stage name was Marie Rainforth), Julia Dean Hayne, Walter and Flora Bray, the Chapman Family, Matin the Wizard who afterwards went East and became quite prominent as an illusionist under the name of Martino, T. A. Lyne, a tragedian of the Forest (sic.) school. . . . George Pauncefort and Miss Fanny Morgan Phelps carried an excellent company, the main support being Lon and Ralph Phelps. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Selwin Irwin and her son by her first husband, Harry Rainforth, were great favorites with the Virginia City people and did an excellent business. Before they closed their engagement they were given a benefit and presented by their many admirers with a solid gold brick valued at $800. . . . Harry Rainforth was the comedian of the company. Although a young man he was quite funny and popular with the masses. Mrs. Rainforth was the greatest protean artist I have ever seen.

Julia Dean Hayne came to Virginia from Salt Lake City under engagement to John S. Potter. She was considered the Bernhart of America at that time. She had a good supporting company, among whom were Townsend, Mortimer, Shields, Graham, Clark, Norwood, Ward, Miss Belle Douglas, Lizlie Shields, Mrs. DeWitt Waugh, Miss Perkins, Mrs. Davin, Miss Martemor, and some others whose names I cannot readily call to mind. She played a good business here and in Helena also. In such plays as Griseldua (sic.) Leah, and Camille she had no equal in her time. . . .

Walter Bray and Flora Bray, his step daughter, gave a very enjoyable performance for the people of those days, as it was merriment from the time the curtain went up until the finale. It would be considered rather a unique performance for these modern times. The
curtain rose on a first part minstrels, Walter Bray on one end and Ned Ward on the other, with Joe Mabbit (sic.), a most excellent ballad singer as interloctor. Walter Bray was exceedingly clever in negro and Dutch delineations, and their first part was clean and amusing. The minstrels first part was followed by an olio in which the various members of the company appeared in specialities. The entertainment concluding with that good old musical comedy entitled the Loan of a Lover, which gave the beautiful Flora Bray a chance to display her ability in the character of Gertrude, and Walter Bray as Peter Speick, a broken-Dutch character in which he was hard to excel. I have seen many play the part but none like Walter Bray. The whole performance was very pleasing.

What old timer does not remember the Chapman family? Old George Chapman, the comedian particularly. Their entertainment consisted mainly of the most laughable of farces, Norton, with a Diversement. Mrs. Chapman and her husband, 'Uncle George', as they used to call him were great friends of Brigham Young, and played a successful engagement at Brigham's old Salt Lake Theatre.

T. A. Lyne, the tragedian,. . . was a noted star in his day, slow of speech and stage mannerisms of the old Forrest Type. 117

117. Clipping found without place or date of publication.
CHAPTER III

LAST CHANCE GULCH TO THE MING OPERA HOUSE
CHAPTER III

LAST CHANGE GULCH TO THE MING OPERA HOUSE

Last Chance Gulch later called Helena, Montana, grew more and more enticing to prospective miners and their families from 1865 onward. During 1864, 1865 and 1866 the arrival and departure, loading and unloading of freight trains, the rebuilding mania, the developing of slumbering resources, and the launching of all types and kinds of new enterprises, combined to give Helena "an air of rapid natural improvement and great commercial activity." Many businesses started in the high hope that Helena would soon become a "second Denver."

Theatrical activity progressed with the town. Actors cared little where in Montana they played as long as the reward of their audiences was lucrative. Helena offered dramatic troupes a new incentive when in 1865 a building owned by C. C. Huntley on Wood Street was turned into a Theatre. The earliest performances on this stage cannot be traced. The Minstrel Company from Virginia City played there in May, 1867; the "public spirited and enterprising young men composing the Helena Lyceum" brought a "grand public entertainment" to this Theatre Hall on the night when General Meagher delivered an

118. Helena Weekly Herald, May 13, 1869.
address and the Helena Glee Club favored the "occasion with
some of their soul stirring and admirable song."

The History of Montana published in 1885 credits Jack
Langrishe with having "instituted" this first theatre in the
last Chance Gulch settlement. Even though there are no news-
paper records to substantiate the appearance of Mr. Langrishe
in Helena until 1867, it may be well to touch here on the
life and personality of this man who was to be the instigating
voice in all theatrical activity in Helena and all Montana
for the next few years. In 1876 the New North-West printed
an article from the Colorado Register about Mr. Langrishe.
The whole article appears in Appendix A to this Chapter,

Every old resident of Colorado knows something
at least of Mr. John S. Langrishe the pioneer actor,
and his estimable lady, and a majority have known
him intimately. They were welcome guests in every
household, and on the stage they were always
received with applause. The uniform amiability,
scrupulous integrity, and dignified gentlemanly
bearing of the man on all occasions, his kindness,
charity, and unstained morality in all walks
of life endeared him to every class of people,
and in the early times when the rough element
predominated in all public assemblies, Langrishe
was always sure of their respect. It is well known
that while he prospered for a time and accumulated
considerable property, in those dark days when
misfortune visited the country, it fell upon
him with the rest and left him impoverished.
Then, with a small band of devoted followers,
he left the Territory and during the past
five years has played in nearly every section
of the Union. His great talents as an actor,


120. Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, A History of Montana (2 vols.,
CELEBRATED TRAGIC ACTRESS
MISS
FANNY PRICE,
WHO WILL APPEAR IN
LUCRETIA BORGIA,
SUPPORTED BY A
Powerful Cast.
First Appearance of
J. HARRY RICHMOND,
as Giannone, a soldier of fortune.
G. B. WALDRON,
as Don Alphonso D'Este.
LANGRISHE & MARTIN
in a Favorite Farce.
WEDNESDAY EVENING SEPTEMBER 8, 1869
Will be performed, the Favorite Farce, in Three Acts, entitled,
LUCRETIA BORGIA.
OR
THE POISONER
BENEICIA BOY.
ADMISSION TWO DOLLARS.
ISOA NIW AT 7, SATURDAY EVENING JANUARY 29
THE MAID OF MILAN
LOAN OF A LOVER!

Old playbills, photographed from the file in the State Historical Library, State Capitol, Helena, Montana.
combined with his no less distinguished social qualities, have won, let us hope, substantial rewards. 121

bishop Tuttle also spoke affectionately of Jack Langrishe and his wife saying that they "always came to church when they could," and though Langrishe was what the Bishop terms "Play actor to the World", the religious man's admiration and warm friendly feelings for one who tried to be "an honest and faithful play actor" are quite clear.

The building that Jack Langrishe is supposed to have had some hand in making into a theatre for Helena is described by the Helena Directory of 1868 in this fashion.

We will now glance at the theatre of Helena. It is located on Wood Street -- is a spacious and neat building -- and is easy of access. We have not the dimensions of this place of amusement at hand, but it is sufficient to state, that it will seat comfortably, an audience of three hundred persons. The light supplied is by aid of scores of coal lamps, so arranged, that the light produced is almost equal to that of gas, while it possesses the advantages of being safer. No accidents --- even the least trivial -- have occurred at this theater (sic.) from the use of these lights. The stage is well adapted for the representation of plays requiring the aid of machinery. The drip curtain is a gem of artistic skill, and reflects great credit on the scenic artist. There are two proscenium or private boxes fitted up in a neat manner... 122

It seems probable that Mr. Potter and troupe were the first to play there on June 18th, 1866. This troupe had "travelled through California, Oregon and Idaho," and had

121. New North-West, March 10, 1876
given "general satisfaction." Sometime during the theatre's first year Belle Douglass appeared on its boards, and there were "many others" according to the paper, who had gained renown in theatricals, seen in Helena. Late in the season, Mr. R. W. Phelps and his wife, he an actor of wide reputation, she, a star in the profession, joined John S. Potter's company. Julia Dean Hayne also added her fame as an actress to the roster of famous names employed by this manager of the Helena Theatre. Her first appearance there was on July 28, 1866.

She...delighted the citizens of Helena with her splendid renditions. Having withstood improved reputation and increased popularity, the ablest critical pens of the continent, she may now be considered independent of adulation on the one hand, and invulnerable of assaults on the other. In native histrionic art, none stands higher. Our citizens must feel very fortunate in witnessing her delineations on our mountains boards.

A complimentary benefit was granted this fair lady about the middle of August.

Lessee and manager, Mr. J. S. Potter, received a complimentary benefit on August 25th.

The beneficiary is an old pioneer in the mountain regions, and it has been his constant aim to present before the public the best theatrical talent that could be procured in this country and produced the Hunchback instead of Romeo and Juliet as announced. But owing respect to the excellent performance of their respective

123. Montana Post, Aug. 4, 1866.
124. Tri-weekly Republican, July 26, 1866.
125. Rocky Mountain Gazette, Aug. 11, 1866.
CREATES! BILL OF THE SEASON

MONDAY NIGHT
MDM. SCHELLE

Don Caesar de Bazan
SWISS COTTAGE
On Monday Evening August 31

Don Caesar de Bazan

Old playbills, photographed from the file in the State Historical Library, State Capitol, Helena, Montana.
parts, by Miss Fanny Morgan Phelps and Miss Julia Dean, and the enlivening entertainment at the close by Walter Bray's troupe, the audience seemed to overlook the manager's fraud on them; and we will pass by the many defects and glaring blunders of supers. When called before the curtain, the reasonable(?) Potter endeavors to create sympathy, in his own behalf, by abusing somebody whom he dared not name, and partly his own troupe, whom he would not pay. The effect was not a success in any respect. On Monday evening a slim assemblage awaited the performance of that beautiful play, entitled Madeleine, and again the manager 'bilked' his audience and substituted the Love Chase.

The records of this year 1866 are too vague and scattered to make it possible to determine in more detail the kind of theatrical trouble that Mr. Potter was having.

He may have had some competition, for during these same months of 1866 there are some notes of a mysterious "Irwin Theatre" or "Bridge Street Theatre." Mr. and Mrs. Selwin Irwin had evidently been in Helena long enough to make it feasible to offer Mrs. Irwin a benefit on June 16th, in order to break up "the dull monotony of this week's candle hours" at the Irwin Theatre.

On this occasion was presented the beautiful play of The Wife, A Tale of Mantua. ... and on which occasion Harry Taylor broke over his resolution to not go on the boards again in Helena, and voluntarily gave his services. Mrs. Irwin performed the part of Marianna charmingly. Her blending of the happy and wretched state, was the quintessence of fine acting, and during the play she received frequent and well deserved applause. At the end of the piece, a valuable gold watch and chain was

125. Tri-weekly Republican, Aug. 28, 1866.
presented to her by her numerous admirers in this city. .. not only for her worth as an artist, but also as an ornament to the stage and an exemplary woman of society. .. 127

A summary of the activities of a week at this Irwin theatre is found in a "Helena Letter" signed "Everywhere" that appeared in the Montana Post (Virginia City), June 21, 1866.

On the evening of the 21st inst., at Irwin's Theatre, Mrs. Nuthall received a $800 house (theatrically speaking) and a find(sic.) set of jewelry. On the 23rd, Harry Rainforth received ditto, 'barring' the jewelry, and had the honor of being the beneficiary of the most pleasing performance of the season. On the 26th inst., the Bray Troupe gave their first performance at Irwin's and were greeted with the same overflowing house that has recently assembled on Theatre nights at the upper end of Bridge Street. .. 128

The following quotations give evidence of still another kind of theatrical performance in Helena in 1866:

The Varieties Theatre was opened on Thursday evening according to announcement. Although the night was stormy, we learn that the house was crowded, and that the performers were all on their 'mettle' and each one performed to excel. The singing was said to be excellent, as was also the 'manager in search of talent'. .. Last night again a new bill was produced, and we understand elicited rounds of applause. 129

.. Mr. Charley Fuller will take the benefit at the 'Varieties' on Monday evening next. -- Charley is a young man who, although he will present new songs, new dances, and new faces. .. 130

Dramatic. -- As near an approximation of Godfrey's

127. Montana Radiator, June 16, 1866.
128. Montana Post, June 30, 1866.
130. Ibid., Feb. 17, 1866.
The final consummation of earth's good drama, as could be produced upon the boards of the Varieties Theatre, was enacted on Wednesday afternoon in lieu of *The Judge's Own* and *Poverty vs. Riches*, as announced in the bills for the evening. Our solemn Scudder went 'interferin' 'round' at the usual hour, and instead of the price of the printing bill, returned with an enormous big flea in his ear. Benches, props, braces, stage lumber, bar, counter, shelves, and everything pertaining to the profession except the painted scenes, which were reported locked up in a warehouse — lay a confused heap of debris and rubbish in the middle of the street, with the author of the mischief who — unreasonable as it may appear had grown tired of waiting for his rents — there stood, the very impersonation of Marius at the ruins of Carthage, and like other conquerors musing upon the fearful ruin he had wrought. Salem retraced his steps with saddened mien.

There were active and dull weeks at the Helena Theatre:

Theatricals.— There has not been much done in the theatrical line in this city through the past week, if an (sic.) except Tuesday evening, on the occasion of Walter Bray's benefit, at the Helena Theatre, when the house was crowded to its utmost capacity by the elite of our city. *Arrah-Na-Pogue* was the piece chosen. It was well put on the stage, and excellently performed. Miss Flora Bray's rendition of *Arrah-Na-Pogue* (*Arrah of the Kiss*) was faultless and true to life. *Shaun the Post* was enacted by Walter in his usual faultless style. The minor characters were well taken by Mrs. Bray, Miss Carrie Chapman, Joe Nabbott, Ned Ward, etc. Thursday evening Charles Graham had a benefit, when Mazippe was put on the stage for the first time in this city. Mrs. DeWitt Waugh taking the part of Mazippa well, though not to the satisfaction of the bulk of the audience, her line being too much in the 'clothes-line' and not enough in the style a-la-Honker to suit them. She

Carrie Chapman received a benefit the same week, performing a "burlesque of Mazeppa (sic.)."


132. Ibid. Sept. 1, 1866.
The actors were evidently preparing to leave Helena early in September, so the last week of August and the first week in September were a series of benefit night. Dick Johnson was so honored with Miss Julia Dean, and Walter and Flora Bray supporting him in "the great romantic play, founded on the history of France - The Massacre of St. Bartholomew or Be Just and Fear Not - the first production of this play in Helena. A joint benefit for Mabbot and Ward was also the last appearance of the Bray Troupe. Julia Dean (Hayne)'s farewell was a presentation of the "beautiful comedy She Would and He Wouldn't."

The citizens of Helena followed with interest the future careers of these actors and actresses who had once appeared on the boards of their city. They watched Miss Dean as she performed Camille in Diamond City. They were sorry that her engagements in Montana had not proved as lucrative as she had expected.

... but there are several causes for this, chief among which was, that her former engagements in Salt Lake City, and in Walla Walla, Boise and Portland, the majority of our citizens had witnessed her delineations. Her partial success need not discourage other talent from visiting us.

Helena was crying out to all traveling acting companies and Eastern stars with San Francisco engagements, that the "route by way of Denver, Salt Lake and Boise cities, and cities

133. Rocky Mountain Gazette, Sept. 1, 1866.
134. Montana Radiator, Sept. 8, 1866.
135. Ibid., Sept. 8, 1866.
of Montana, thence to Walla Walla and down to Columbia and Portland, would be safe and pleasant, and might be profitable."

The theatres, along with horse-racing and visiting the Hot springs were one of the main diversions of "people seeking amusement and relaxation from business cares" in Helena.

An interesting rumor was circulated early in January, 1867, about the Helena favorite, Flora Bray:

It is announced in a private letter received in this city, that this pleasing young actress and great favorite among the cavaliers of Montana, consummated a matrimonial engagement with Sam Greer at Omaha recently. We plead guilty to feeling that philosophical impossibility of a vacuum near our watch pocket, but misery loves company, and we have it.

The rumor was not exactly correct and later was restated thus:

Matrimonial - It turns out that we were mistaken in our announcement that Mr. Sam Greer had lead Miss Flora Bray to the...altar at Omaha recently, or that the gentleman who wrote the letter was, but we derive no consolation from this piece of news, since the telegraph only furnished a change of bridegrooms and leaves us as hollow-hearted as before. We have the consolation to know, however, that it was a Montanian that made the conquest, and since it is all in the family, we will smother our repinings. The lucky gallant is George M. Privny, U. S. Marshal of Montana Territory - or so says the telegraph.

137. Rocky Mountain Gazette, Nov., 10, 1866.
138. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1866.
139. Ibid., Jan. 23, 1867.
140. Ibid., Feb. 16, 1867.
After the Irwins, the Brays, and Mrs. Hayne left Helena in the fall of 1866, theatricals were few and far between for the rest of the year. There was an attempt at one time to organize a new company at the Helena Theatre but organizer-manager Dick Johnson was headed for a position as Manager of a Theatrical Company of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Ned Ward and Sam Lewis were practically the only Professionals remaining in Helena. These two gentlemen were evidently lucky in hitting on a form of entertainment that met with the town's approval.

The mixed character of the entertainment is mucy(sic.) better adapted to the tastes and requirements of the place than heavy tragedy and the more elaborate display which has heretofore been attempted at this house. The audience seemed to think so. The house was well filled.

The most exciting appearance of 1867 at the Wood St. Theatre was to be that of a "dramatic company from Denver under the charge of J. S. Langrishe". For this coming event Mr. J. H. Gardner was busily "Engaged in refitting the new theatre", and the press and public cried, "It is pretty nearly time we had some sort of public amusements inaugurated in this locality".

141. Montana Radiator, Sept. 8, 1866.
143. Montana Post, Oct. 6, 1866.
144. Helena Herald, May 9, 1867.
145. Ibid., May 9, 1867.
"Jack" Langrishe and Company did not finally arrive until the first of October of that year.

Helena was amused, however, as they waited for this "troupe of the profession". The Metropolitan Concert and Dramatic Troupe which had been winning "golden laurels in the different towns throughout the Territory" arrived in Helena early in June 1867. The company consisted of the "irrepressible Ned Ward,"; "Miss Daisy Dean, an excellent singer," and a Mr. Foss as headliners.

Two weeks later,

"John Kelly and his troupe of singers moved on to Helena from Virginia City. The entertainment that his company offered was one of vocal and instrumental music, assisted by a wonderful acrobat, in the shape of a very small and youthful Indian boy, who was captured from the Snakes last fall by Jeff. Standiford."145

Kelly himself was "undoubtedly one of the finest violinists of the day". For several nights "Kelly's concert was well attended, and all were pleased with the entertainment".147

The appearance of the Langrishe company was the excitement of the theatrical year. "We believe, in fact we know, that the company is by far the best that has ever visited Montana. The stars--Mr. and Miss Gouldock, Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe...Mr. Mortimer--are all supported by the balance of the company, instead of being obliged to do all the acting and prompting, themselves, as have some of the principal performers who have previously given us theatricals on the one-horse-power principle."

145. Helena Herald, June 26, 1867.
147. Helena Herald Supplement, July 10, 1867.
This "almost perfect rendering of the secondary parts" is spoken of again and again in the newspaper reports of the company's performances. The first program produced at the Helena Theatre was "The Post Boy"—"uniformly well spoken of especially those portions of it which were rendered by Mr. and Miss Gouldock"—and the farce "House for the Holidays" which kept the house in "a roar of laughter and was remarkably well brought out". The rest of the repertoire of the company was composed of such serious dramas as Richelieu, The Willow Corpse, The Jew of Frankfort, The Stranger, Louis XI, The Chimney Corner, Waiting for the Verdict (repeated again the next night), The Ragpicker of Paris, Richard III, and The streets of New York, and for farces The Irish Swan (often repeated), Our Mary Anne, Irish Emigrant, Blincky Brown, Youth who never saw a woman, Deeds of dreadful Note, and Founded on Facts. All these pieces were played in a little over a month. Sometimes they played nearly every night in the week. Occasionally the program was a variant from the normal diet of drama plus after-piece or farce. On Nov. 6, 1867 for instance, first a three act comic-tragic play called . . . . or the Rich of New York was played with Mr. Martin acting as Chloe, a colored woman, then a Mr. T. Stendman sang the ballad, "Home of my Heart", Mr. Gouldock recited Trowbridges poem, "Two Vagabonds", and the evening ended with the farce

Of the various plays produced by the Langrishe Company the public was never extremely critical. They went to the theatre to be amused, they enjoyed what they saw, and higher dreams of perfect drama did not disturb them. The play Richard the Third was greeted with enthusiasm. Couldock played the Duke of Gloster, Mortimer, King Henry. Both men acted successfully for their audience. The Herald reporter ranked them high in what he called "the secret of any tragedian's success", this in his own words, "close observation, un­ remitting application, and a thorough knowledge of human character".

Of the theatrical equipment, scenery, etc., with which the company worked, little is said. The play, Streets of New York was advertised as having "new and beautiful scenic views".

Most popular of all the plays was Waiting for the Verdict. The newspaper summary of the evening is typical of many such reports and worth quoting in full.

Theatrical.-- Unquestionable the best performance of the season was that of last evening. The announcement that Waiting for the Verdict, was to be performed drew a full house, and, from the applause that frequently greeted the performers, we conclude that the audience was not disappointed. Mr. Couldock as "Jonathan Ron-e-blade" could not

151. Ibid., Nov. 14, 1867.
be excelled, and Miss Couldock as "Martha Roseblade" was charming as usual. Mr. Langrishe made of "Blinky Brown" one of the most comical of characters, and Miss Langrishe as "Sergeant Grafton" did well. Mr. Mortimer is deserving of especial notice on account of his fine acting. The performance last evening was, indeed, a great success, and we are glad to be able to announce that it will be repeated this evening. 152

A summary of the productions of Mr. Jack Langrishe and his company at the Helena Theatre from Early October to November reads like this:

**Week of October 3, 1867 (1st Performance)**
- **Post Boy**
- **Home for the Holidays** (farce)
- **Richelieu** (lead played by Mr. Couldock)
- **Weight of Gold** (Dick Stubbs-Mr. Couldock)
- **Jew of Frankfort**
- **Irish Swan** (farce)
- **Stranger** (Mr. and Miss Couldock)
- **Our Mary Ann** (farce, Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe)

**Week of October 7, 1867**
- **Louis XI** (Mr. and Miss Couldock, Mr. Mortimer)
- **Chimney Corner**
- **Irish Emigrant** (farce)
- **Waiting for the Verdict**
- **Blinky Brown** (farce, Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe)
- **Willow Copse**
- **Irish Swan** (farce)
- **Lost in London**

### Week of October 27, 1867
- **Ragpicker of Paris**
  (Mr. and Miss Couldock)
- **Youth Who Never Saw a Woman**
  (farce)

### Week of November 3, 1867
- **Richard III**
  (Mr. Couldock, Mr. Mortimer)
- **Deeds of Dreadful Note**
  (farce)

### Week of November 6, 1867
- **Self, or the Rich of New York**
- **The Irish Dragoon**
  (farce)
- **Old Phil's Birthday**
- **Founded on Facts**
- **Streets of New York**

Margaret Ronan in writing her thesis for the degree of Master of Arts based on the *Memoirs of a Frontier Woman* (University of Montana, 1932) quotes Mary C. Ronan's memories of the Helena Theatre in 1867:

I had seen the 'jolly Langrishises' tear as passion to tatters in the **Lady of Lyons**, the versatile mister as the noble **Claude Melnotte** and his 'accomplished lady' as the proud and contemptuous **Pauline**. . . .

C. W. Couldock and his daughter Eliza opened an engagement at the People's Theatre on Wood Street in the autumn of 1867. By them I was deeply and seriously impressed. I did not go often to the theatre. It was a great treat and long-to-be-remembered occasion when I did go. For me 'the play was the thing'; the escorts who took me have remained but dimly in my memory. I should like to say of my parents that they thought it part of my education to attend the theatre, but I do not know that this was true. Perhaps I went because to attend the productions of 'classic drama' was 'the thing to do.'

I saw the Couldocks and their troupe, under the
management of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Langrishe, in Richard III and in Richelieu. I thought Couldock tremendous as Richelieu. I can still hear his intonation of the old familiar lines, 'the pen is mightier than the sword' (Act II, Scene 2); and I can still hear the little page in the same play so impressively saying, 'Work, brain, beat, heart, but never say fail.'

Among what I suppose were the current dramas of the period, included in the repertoire of the Couldocks, I recall most distinctly One Touch of Nature. The plot had to do with the separation of a father and daughter, their trials, tribulations, and final restoration to each other. Having a real father and daughter play these parts added 'one touch of nature' so thrilling, to me at least, that I was set day-dreaming. I could see in the Couldocks, in their long journeys together, in their companionship in interests, an analogy to my father and me. I fancied the Sheehans, father and daughter, as actors; better still, for when my father was at home for any length of time we would sing all our old songs together, as grand opera stars! Needless to say, I had never seen, had only heard of grand opera.

My choice of parts and ideas about interpretations I got from attending the theatre. Macbeth I had seen --travestied by the actors, though not intentionally. It reeked of blood, I almost felt that I had dipped my hands in blood. Lady Macbeth was most amusingly and ludicrously terrible. Even I, in my simplicity and inexperience, realized that. The actress who took the part of Juliet in Romeo and Juliet had a strong German accent. For the entertainment of my friends I used to burlesque her interpretation of the balcony scene, imitating as exactly as I could her heavy voice and characteristically German pronunciation, --"w's" for "v's", "f's" for "v's", and other peculiarities which no type represents:

"Ach! Sfare not by do moon, da inconstant moon, Dot montly change in her circled orp, Lest dot my loff proof likewise wariable." 154

154. Ibid., p. 89-90.
Mrs. Ronan also remembered that the Great Western Circus came to Helena in 1867, a date verified by the newspaper.

The company consists of twelve male and female performers, twenty horses and three trick ponies, heralded for weeks in advance. Horses were the only animals shown. Daring bareback riders, equestriennes, acrobats, tight-rope walkers and clowns performed. In chorus the company sang, 'Oh the bells go ringing for Sarah!' A big darkie with a fine mellow voice rolled out the words of a foolish song—

'T feel, I feel, I feel so queer;
I can't tell what to do!
My heart beats fast as she goes by
In dark dress trimmed in blue.'

So many interesting, worthwhile, beautiful things have slipped from mind, — why should this insipid melody and these more insipid words remain so distinct?

By 1868, in time for the publication of the Helena Directory of that year, Langrishe, "the favorite comedian and Rocky Mountain pioneer manager," was firmly established as sole manager of the Helena Theatre.

He is constantly serving up to the public a variety of plays, and adding to his troupe new faces of acknowledged merit. Prominent among his troupe are . . . Mrs. Langrish, . . . Miss Firzwilliams, Mrs. Shields, Mrs. Waldron, Messrs. Paunsefort, Mortimer, Martin, Griffith, Shields and Waldron. C. W. Gouldock, the world renowned tragedian, assisted by his talented daughter, played a long and successful engagement at this Theatre. The late Julia Dean Hayne also played a successful engagement at this Theatre. The late orchestra is the best in the Rocky Mountains. The management has secured, at great expense, the services of the distinguished Geo. Waldron and lady, who, in a short time, will make their first bow to the Helena public. It is the intention, we understand, of the management, to always have

155. Rocky Mountain Gazette, June 8, 1867.
156. Ronan, op. cit., p. 86.
an engagement with some of the first class actors in America. Not only will he constantly present new faces, but also new plays to the Helena public. This place of amusement is the only one of the kind in our city, and it should be well patronized. Manager Langrishe has spared neither labor or expense towards making it what it is--a first-class theatre; and we feel confident in saying, that the public will give him that cordial support which he so richly deserves. 157

The members of the theatrical company had become such well-known citizens of the city that they were listed alphabetically with the men of other professions in Helena:

Boulon, Paul, (Colorado) musician, Helena Theatre.
Brown, J. L. (Colorado) actor, H.T.
Bragg, Chas. (Oregon), musician, H.T.
Charpie, A. (Ind.) "" H.T.
Dillon, M. (Col.) actor, H.T.
Griffith, J. M. (Col.) actor, H.T.
Langrishe, J. S. (" ) manager, H.T.
Martin, J. M. actor, H.T.
Mortimer, B.S. (Penn.) "" H.T.
Paul Logan (Utah) "" H.T.
Shapter, E. (Col.) carpenter H.T.
Spencer, Jr. C. (Col.) treasurer H.T.
Speed, J. (Col.) musician H.T.
Thompson, C. N. (Ill.) mechanic H.T.

In this same directory the prominent International Hotel was spoken of as being "convenient to the theatre". 158

It is interesting to note that in looking around for "new faces" to present to his Helena audiences, Langrishe often turned to the active Salt Lake Theatre with its array of distinguished players for help. George Pauncefort had acted in that Mormon center, Julia Dean Hayne was "an immense favorite with Salt Lake City audiences", and C. W. Couldock had "appeared on the boards" there. 159

158. Ibid., 1868, p. 115.
One famous actress of the west, Madame Scheller, it is particularly interesting to note that because at one time the directors of the Union Pacific Railroad... adopted a resolution to name one of the towns to be located on the road Scheller City, after the Favorite actress Madame Methua Scheller, who filled a brilliant engagement with the Langrishe troupe in this city last fall... Playing in Helena in 1868 she had taken the part of Julia De Mortimer, while Mr. Waldron played the Cardinal, in Bulwer's "Immortal" drama, Richelieu, regarded as one of the masterpieces of dramatic composition. She had had the lead in the performance that was reported thus: Romeo and Juliet told the story of their thraldom to a large and appreciative audience last evening at the Helena Theatre and were received with every evidence of satisfaction by all who were so fortunate as to be present.

Movements of Artistes.-- Mr. and Mrs. Florence close their highly successful engagement at Maguire's Opera House, San Francisco, on Nov. 12, to be succeeded by Madame Scheller. The Madame is finally to visit the shores of the Pacific... after having been over two years on her westward journey. She left New York shortly after the burning of the Winter Garden, in March 1867, where she had been playing during an enter (sic.) season before the audiences composed of the most critical and intelligent citizens of the metropolis. After having fulfilled engagements in the principal cities on her route, she reached Omaha in September '67, playing these five engagements; Salt Lake City in May 1868; Helena, in August of the same year. She returned to Salt Lake in November, filling there again a long engagement even more successful than the first; went to Colorado in March 1869, remained there until June, and retired for rest to Salt Lake.

161. Montana Post, Sept. 18, 1869.
Old playbills, photographed from the file in the State Historical Library, State Capitol, Helena, Montana.
City, where she has played again lately. Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams commence an engagement at the California theatre on the 1st of December. 182

To Madame Scheller's powers as an actress no doubt was the fact that the performance of the Lady of Lyons in the middle of October was "one of the best renditions" of that play ever seen in Montana. Her Pearl of Savory was "beautifully rendered". She was one of the "splendid cast" for Colleen sawn. More exact details of her brilliant engagement at the Helena Theatre can be seen in a few representative newspaper stories of her ability and the public's orations to her. After she left Montana Mme. Scheller could be found in December of the same year "playing Juliet to McCullough's Romeo, at the Salt Lake Theatre". Mr. Waldron figuring as Mercutio. She drew "full houses" in that city, too, remaining there until Feb. 1st when she "took her farewell benefit... in Boucicault's sensational drama of the Octoroon". From Salt Lake City, she intended to go immediately to Denver to join Mr. Langrishe's company again, (he by this time had left Helena.) but a snow blockade caught her in Salt Lake until along in April. On the evening of March 24 (1869) in the Pearl of Savoy, she made her first appearance before a Denver audience, to be "greeted with rapturous applause".

186. Ibid., April 16, 1869.
he was such a "universal favorite" among the Helena citizens, that they seemed anxious that the Post follow her movements, and record her "continued success and triumphs". By July Madame Scheller, Geo. B. Waldron and lady were playing in Cheyenne. Near Denver, Madame's husband, Mr. Methna, had purchased 20 acres of land. . .and, being the owner of real estate in Colorado, designs. . .retiring. . .with his estimable and accomplished lady to spend the. . .in delightful seclusion (sic.) But the desire for seclusion did not permanently keep this artist hidden. In November, 1869 she was scheduled to succeed Mrs. Florence at the Maguire Opera House in San Francisco.

Meanwhile in Helena, Jack Langrishe's return to Denver had left the city without the form of amusement to which they had now become accustomed. Always, however, there were places like "The Mammoth Saloon", kept by Fred White under Billy Mathews Billiard Hall, drawing large crowds who seem to be immensely amused. The saloon is supplied with all the good things of life, such as lager, wines, liquors, cigars, music, and pretty waiter girls to attend upon customers. Kings excellent band enlivens the scene, and efficient bar keepers are always ready with their polite attention.

but something more was needed to give Helena variety in the amusement line. In December this story appeared in the Post:

We are going to have theatraicals this winter if Jack Langrishe did put Thespia in a magic box and depart for the end of the iron parallels. Messrs. Paunceforth, White, Norwood and Mortimer, with several new masculine artists and ladies, have formed a company and are now busily engaged in preparing for a brilliant season. We understand the new company is to have some fine talent and will demand recognition of its merits at the hands of an appreciative people. The gentlemen are working energetically and have not time to talk much about the new enterprise, but just as a hint that we will have a full-fledged theatrical company in successful operation before the holidays we venture to make this an announcement, and wish them much profit.

Nothing more was heard of this company until after the turn of the year except that on Christmas Eve, "The accomplished scholar, linguist and actor, George Pauncefort, delighted the law-makers and potentates of the capital...by giving one of his delightful readings from Dickens". Pauncefort probably often gave readings for charity programs. He "received much praise" at one point "for his efforts towards the pecuniary relief of the city churches".

A big Helena fire in April, 1869, burned the Wood Street Theatre owned by C. C. Huntley as well as many other important buildings. This accident temporarily deferred the reentry of the Langrishe company. The "popular" Jack

171. Montana Post, Dec. 11, 1868.
172. Helena Weekly Herald, Jan. 21, 1869.
173. Ibid., Dec. 31, 1868.
174. Ibid., April 29, 1869.
had been writing since early in January from Cheyenne, "I
am looking to get back to Montana, and will start as early
in the season as possible". In March the rumor got around
that Langrishe had "purchased the old Bank Exchange with the
intention of erecting on the site a splendid theatre complete
in its proportions and perfect in all respects". This
theatrical manager "of over twenty years' experience had
not been "so well satisfied with any other locality", the
Montana press proclaimed and thus he was closing his
Theatre in Denver in May to return to Helena.

During the winter the possibility of another theatre
building had been often discussed by the local citizens.

... .It would be a great advantage to Helena
if there was erected on Main Street a fine theatre,
for assurance had been given by Mr. Langrishe that
he could make it a profitable investment by
occupying it the entire season with a first class
troupes; and we know that it would be a public
benefit, not only to our business near here, but
to the entire territory. We have understood that
if sufficient encouragement is given by our citizens
there is a possibility that we may have one. . . .
The desired building on Main Street would be
a first class, fire-proof theatre. . . . that will
be an ornament to our city and the pride of our
citizens. 177"

The public encouragement was evidently adequate. Soon
the

Parkinson Brothers are busy erecting a new and
commodious theatre building on Main Street near
the corner of Bridge. It will be 100 feet deep

175. Helena Weekly Herald, Jan. 28, 1869.
176. Montana Post, March 12, 1869.
177. Ibid., May 21, 1869.
by 47 feet wide, and will be capable of seating twelve hundred persons. . . . The cost will be about $12,000 in currency.

Langrishe had promised to lease the building and the "stage artist and property man" of his troupe arrived in Helena early in July to "superintend the construction of the stage," Langrishe had again secured the services of Madame Scheller, the brilliant actress, and Geo. B. Waldron--"the eminent tragedian"--and the citizens of Helena anticipated "a place of public amusement, where the better class of our citizens may go and enjoy an evening's entertainment occasionally that will be in many respects equal to any of the theatrical performances of eastern cities." The proud city hated to feel that Helena, "the most prosperous and flourishing young city in the West" was "behind the age in point of public amusements."

Langrishe sent a telegraphic dispatch of his arrival when he left Corinne on Aug. 12. Some of his friends met him and Professor Methna "at the Prickly Pear and bought them to the city by private conveyance". The balance of the troupe, except for the new leading lady, stopped over several days on their way from Corinne to hunt and fish,

179. Ibid., July 1, 1869.
180. Ibid., Aug. 12, 1869.
181. Ibid., Aug. 19, 1869.
making the trip an 18 day one, only reaching Helena on Sept. 182.

2. In this party were J. M. Martin, L. M. Brown, Jimmy Griffith, J. Harry Richmond, Logan Paul, W. J. Gross, Ned Shopter, and two French Musicians. The new leading lady was a Miss Fanny D. Price, a versatile and talented young New York actress. . . . She plays Leah like Bateman, Lady Isabel like Lucille Western, and will . . . a harp of a thousand 183 enchanting strings in the ears of Helena bloods.

The outstanding successes of Langrishe's 1869 season was.

The Long Strike -- The first performance of this great and thrilling drama . . . (was) received with unmistakable signs of favor and thunders of applause. . . . The new scenery, particularly the factory scene, was applauded, and the excitement which the telegraph scene produced is beyond description. 184

The Soldier of Fortune, "a beautiful play, was performed two nights in succession. The 'interesting drama', Waif and Stray attracted one of the largest audiences of the season who followed the course of the play with great 185 attention. The Lancashire Lass was talked of as "decidedly one of the best plays that have been produced here this 186 season".

Miss Fanny Price was called East to fulfill other engagements. On Nov. 26th she left on the "morning's coach for Corinne," where she planned to go direct to Omaha,

182. Helena Weekly Herald, Sept. 9, 1869.
183. Ibid., Sept. 9, 1869.
184. Ibid., Sept. 30, 1869.
185. Ibid., Oct. 7, 1869.
186. Ibid., Nov. 4, 1869.
where she was to play an engagement commencing the 3rd of December, and from there to Cleveland, Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, New Orleans, and Galveston.

Miss Amy Stone, who had been playing a brief engagement at the Salt Lake Theatre, soon stepped into Fanny Price's shoes. She drew the "largest audience ever assembled in the Opera House" to a performance of the "great sensational drama of The Hidden Hand. Her characterization of Marie, the Pearl of Savoy in the play of the same name, was "charming".

The Helena Press found that another paper in the region was joking them about the enthusiasm over Miss Stone, but their answer was ready.

'The Northwest says the Helena papers speak appropriately of Amy Stone. They evidently like Amy's tone. 'Our Amy' is an excellent artiste, and in many respects is superior to 'our Fannie', one of the bright stars of the dramatic world.'

Other plays on Miss Stone's programs were The French Spy and Othello.

The financial success that "Jack" Langrishe was making can perhaps be estimated from the following clipping:

A great Dramatic Moscow.-- Detroit, a city of 100,000 inhabitants, shows the following display of theatrical receipts during a five-nights' engagement of a noted "star": First night, $69.75; second night, 56.25; third night $42.50; fourth night, $32.00; fifth night, $12.25.

188. Ibid., Nov. 26, 1869.
189. Ibid., Nov. 26, 1869.
How does this compare with Helena with $1,500 receipts the first night at the Langrishe Opera House, without a "star"? 190

A few samples of the playbills distributed through the City by Mr. Lingrishe are still to be found in the Montana Historical Library in the State Capitol, Helena, Montana:

**Bills 1869**  
LANGRISHE OPERA HOUSE  
Main Street, Helena.  
(Langrishe, Manager  
Waldron, Stage Manager)

The citizens of Helena are respectfully informed that this new and magnificent Temple of the Muses will be opened for the Season with a Powerful Company and First Class Artistes

G. B. Waldron  
J. H. Richmond  
J. N. Martin  
W. J. Cross  
F. M. Shields  
L. M. Brown  
E. Mortimer  
R. C. White  
J. Griffith  
L. Paul  
J. S. Langrishe  
E. Shapter  
Mrs. G. B. Waldron  
Mrs. Shields  
Mrs. Firzwilliams

Gorgeous new scenery, by Professor J. G. Methna  
September 4.

"Last Man"—or the "Miser of Etham Green"  
plus Comedy  
"Irish Mesmerism"  
Ad. — $2.00 currency.

Doors open at 7  
Curtain rises at 8 o'clock

Sept. 6 "First Appearance of the Youthful Tragic Actress, Miss Fanny E. Price

"FANCHON, THE CRICKET"

(Father Barbeaud—D. Hauchett) (Laudry—G. B. Waldron)

Sept. 8, 1869 "LUCRETIA BORGIA" Farce — "BENEJIA BOY"

Sept. 11 "Engagement of the celebrated Tragic Actress, Miss Fanny Price"— "STRANGER"

Mrs. Haller—F. Price
Stranger—Waldron

"To Oblige Benson"

Sept. 14 Second week of the nightly successful engagement of Miss Fanny Price in her powerful rendition of Lady Isabel Vane and Madame Vine in "EAST LYNNE" (The great success of the age.)

Synopsis of scenery and incidents:-


Act III. A supposed lapse of one year. — Remorse.
Barbara's dream. An unsolved mystery.
Miss Corney takes a cold in the head.
Moonlight invasion of East Lynne.

Act IV. A supposed lapse of two months — Exiled.

Act V. A supposed lapse of two months — Death
Conviction of Francis Levison. The Hare family. Miss Corney exchanges adieus with an old acquaintance. Startling discovery. Lady Isabel lays down her cross. FAREWELL UNTIL ETERNITY.

Sept. 17 Benefit of Fanny B. Price
(Acknowledged by the Press and Public to be the Most consummate Embodiment of the Character in the country.)
"LEAH"
"One for Sahen J???

Synopsis of incidents.

Act I. A village in Germany. Good Friday. . . .
Act II. Scene 1--Loring House. . . .
Scene 2--A moonlight view-the old cross.
Act III. Scene 1--Loring house. . . .
Scene 2--A temporary abode of the Jews.
Scene 3--A forest glade.
Act IV. Scene 1--Village in garden as Act I.
Scene 2--Father Heilvian's house
Scene 3--Churchyard.
Act V. Scene 1--The harvest home.
Sept. 24

Third week of Miss Fanny Price.
Second night of the thrilling sensation with its Thunders of Applause.

"LONG STRIKE!" ---

Scene, Manchester. Time, Present

Act IV. "Thrilling Telegraph Scene line working to all Parts of the World."

"The Theatre will be heated with stoves."

Langrishe continued throughout 1870 to keep faithfully his promises to his public in Helena. Early in the year, as "theatrical times" had been "somewhat dull" he arranged for the various members of his company to receive "benefits".

Harry Richmond's Benefit, "The Miller of Derwentwater" with Mr. Richmond impersonating the principal character—the old miller—was very well played with "Man, the good for nothing" as an afterpiece, plus a guitar(sic.) duet and some dancing which were well done and loudly applauded.191

Mrs. Langrishe took hers on Jan. 15, and "notwithstanding the severity of the weather a good audience" assembled for "Two new plays and some fine songs".191

On Jan. 20, Dick White was the recipient of this honor, the Golden Farmer being the main attraction, volunteers for the evening including "la petite Lama" as "Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines"192

... Mrs. Shields—"a favorite actress"—received her benefit on Jan. 22 when a "new to to the Helena drama", the Foundling of the Battle-field, was produced. Mrs. Shields danced, then the glorious comedy of Grimshaw, Ragshaw and Bradshaw and the roaring farce of Nature and Philosophy.

191. Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette, Jan. 15, 1870.
192. Ibid., Jan. 20, 1870.
or The Youth that Never saw Woman.

This orgy of benefit nights was evidently just a stall until the company had adequately prepared the spectacle of the streets of New York, that unequalled drama in seven acts and twenty tableaux which they had long been setting into production. Dick White had painted new scenery especially for this piece; there was new machinery by Ed. Shapter, new properties by Griffith. "No piece holding possession of the stage abounds in finer incidents or more striking effects."

The company seemed unafraid of scenes like "The Banker's Office, the Home of the Poor; the Mansion of the Rich; the Great Snow storm, with the street cars wading through the snow; the Tenement House. . .; the great fire scene:" all this they offered as a "nights entertainment seldom equalled and never surpassed in this city".

A Mrs. Pinney had occasionally sung songs from the stage of Langrishe's Opera House. By the end of January, Manager "Jack" invited her to become the feature member of his company for a while. The public had been delighted with her songs and were anxious to hear her again in a more "histrionic" capacity. "Expectation" was "on tiptoe". Jan. 29th was the night set for the debut. "Constant and careful rehearsals (had) been given to the pieces". "The Opera House was crowded. . .and the

194. Ibid., Jan. 23, 1870.
195. Ibid., Jan. 29, 1870.
audience were more than pleased and gratified". "We think that if Mrs. Pinney has decided to go upon the stage, her success is assured", said the Press.

For her second appearance Pride of the Market was selected. This play contained the character of Marton the bouquerete. ... "one of these charming French creations that are so peculiarly pleasing when well played. In Mrs. Pinney's hands. . . ample justice will be done to the fascinating market. . . ." Helena audiences continued to be so delighted with this discovery of a "fine lyric actress" that Mrs. Pinney stayed on with Langrishe for many weeks. During her engagement The Maid of Munster, and the Lady of Lyons, were produced.

Most exciting of all was that Manager Langrishe, now with the added talent of Mrs. Pinney, planned to stage the "glorious comic opera--opera bouffe--Jenny Lind, The Swedish Nightingale. This was really a theatrical event in the City.

After this spectacle, Langrishe with part of his company took a trip to other towns in the state. Some members of his original troupe had been playing in Virginia City all winter. By the 22nd of March they were back in Helena, to reopen the Opera House with "several new dramas. . . for the amusement of the Helena public".

197. Ibid., Jan. 30, 1870.
198. Ibid., Feb. 1, 1870.
199. Ibid., March 22, 1870.
The weather was bad during these early spring days, streets almost impassible, mud everywhere. Nevertheless on the re-opening night a "very good audience" assembled to witness the Island King. The company was locally "admitted to be equal in talent and ability to any stock company in the Union". When they were staging a new play almost nothing would keep the public away.

For a while Langrishe carefully kept any of the "old stand-by" plays off his program. The Ticket-of Leave Man and The Jewess or Council of Constance were two of the plays he produced for the first time in Helena during this season.

While waiting for the water to come down, the gold to come in, and the mining to being in the spring months, Helena residents were glad to watch first rate comedies like Paul Pry, or The Gambler's Fate, a highly sensational and spirited drama, or even the more serious sensational drama the Pope of Rome by Boucicault.201

About the end of April Langrishe took his troupe to Deer Lodge and the Blackfoot for a short series of performances there. He re-opened his theatre in Helena about the 16th of May, having secured a new "star", the "famous Miss Clara Jean Walters, one of the most distinguished women on the American stage". As she was an "accomplished actress, a beautiful singer and a charming woman", many of the citizens of Helena had perhaps seen her before in New York, Chicago, Leavenworth, St. Joseph and other Eastern cities.

201. Ibid., April 16, 1870.
202. Ibid., May 4, 1870.
Miss Walters' first appearance was in *Lucretia Borgia*. Her rendition was received with enthusiastic applause, and the lady was repeatedly called before the curtain. She had been proclaimed as one "equally successful in the highest walks of tragedy as she is charming in comedy—possessing besides, a beautiful voice of rare cultivation, she is undoubtedly one of the best ballad singers on the stage." To prove to Helena this versatility her second program before then consisted of the comedies *Ireland As It Was* and *Perfection* in which she sang a number of ballads, this second bill being in as great a contrast as is imaginable to the play, *Lucretia Borgia*.

George Waldron supported Miss Walters in her heavier pieces like the *Italian Wife*, *Camille*, *Nick of the Woods*, *The Child of the Regiment*, *Arrah-Na-Pogue*, *Macbeth*, and *Maid of Munster*, and *The French Spy*. Mr. Langrishe was second to the "star" in the more comical pieces, *Tearful Tragedy in the Seven Dials*, *Perfection*, *Katherine* and *Petruchio*, *Benicia Boy*.

The most spectacular play of the season was *The Angel of Midnight*. It was a grand production and the advance reports on it were as interesting as the post-review was enthusiastic.

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Miss Walters was one Montana actress who was unafraid to appear in male roles. This action had become quite an accepted habit in other sections of the country, but so far Montana had seen little of it. In an opera of Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* or the *Wizard of the North*, she appeared as Francis Asbaldistone and sang "numerous ballads with charming effect."

In *The French Spy* she played three roles, "Henri St. Aime", the young soldier, "Hamet", the wild Arab boy, and "Mathilde de Marie".

Another reputation Miss Walters was professed to deserve was that of the "best Topsy in America", therefore it is not odd to find the Langrishe troupe staging a production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on June 9th. The play was repeated the following night.

Times were still dull in Helena. It demanded great ingenuity on Langrishe's part to find bills of theatrical value, adequate to inveigle the public into filling his theatre whenever a performance was planned. With great insight he schemed the original programs that these notices advertise.

*The Heaviest Thing Out*. Manager Langrishe always shows commendable enterprise in getting up the very latest plays, and having the best of actors to play them. The last great sensation, *The Girls of the Period or Life in New York*, a drama preeminently of the present age and time—a picture of the times as they are, will be presented to-night. In it occurs the already

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famous female minstrel will be presented to-night. In it occurs also, Dick Brown, the banjoist, who has kindly volunteered to aid in the representation of this most striking novelty. Miss Clara Walters will appear in four characters, male and female, and the rest of the company will have similarly arduous parts. The play abounds in songs, dances, pure startling situations and every spice of the exciting, sensation drama of the day. Owing to the length of the piece, the songs, the minstrel scene, and other accessories, there will be no other play.208

On July 2, 1870, Miss Clara Walters made her farewell appearance in Helena, the night before having been the occasion of a grand complimentary benefit in her honor. Mr. Langrishe, also, was granted a benefit before his departure with his troupe for Diamond City.

He was in Diamond City only about two weeks, returning to Helena for a brief day or so, and then off again to Deer Lodge, where about July 24th he could be found playing Richelieu. It looked for a while as if it would be a number of weeks before the Helena Theatre opened again.

But as Manager Langrishe and company arrived in Deer Lodge, a Madame Gorella and her Burlesque Troupe which had been playing in that city, moved onwards to Helena, to take possession of the Langrishe Opera House. They had been performing in many towns on "the other side of the mountains in Deer Lodge County, and had received very complimentary notices from the

208. Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette, June 27, 1870.
209. Ibid., July 22, 1870.
210. Ibid., July 22, 1870.
press of that vicinity". The performances were supposedly very amusing, including a number of musical pieces. Some of the "comical celebrities" in the vicinity of Helena volunteered to assist in the program, and handbills were soon cut, definitely announcing what the acts of the evening were to be.

The summer was a quiet one with no theatrical activity. Early in September a press notice appeared, announcing that "The Great Actor", Couldock and his daughter were on their way from St. Joseph, Missouri, "to play an engagement at Langrishe's Opera House. Manager Langrishe returned from the West Side" to meet them, and open the Fall theatrical season.

It was a gay theatrical season. Old favorite plays, The Chimney Corner, The Willow Copse, The Jew of Frankfort, Richelieu, The Stranger, and Dot or The Cricket on the Hearth, were "on the bills", as well as a new drama of Uncle Dick's Darling. Couldock and his daughter, Eliza were greatly appreciated.

The theatre belonging to Captain Parkinson which Langrishe had "dedicated" in 1869, was "destroyed in the fire of Jan. 9th, 1874." From 1871 until 1879 was a period of quiet in Helena theatricals. The depression of 1873 swept the country, and Montana particularly suffered. Other old favorite actors

211. Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette, July 30, 1870.
and actresses who had played in Helena before this time evidently felt they had either worn out their welcome in the state or received all the financial gain there they could.

Little Charlie Wilson, formerly of Langrishe's troupe, and a great favorite, too, is now playing at Wood's Museum, Chicago, Harry Richmond is playing at Cincinnati.

Miss Fannie B. Price.— We notice by the New Orleans papers that on the 7th of March, Helena's favorite, Miss Fannie B. Price, took a benefit at the St. Charles Theatre, which is now under the management of Ben. DeBar. The play produced was an original drama, written expressly for Miss Price by John De Bonay of New York, founded upon incidents connected with the French Revolution and entitled "La Marjolane". We noticed also that Miss Price commenced an engagement at Vicksburg, Mississippi, the birthplace of the brilliant young actress, on the 14th of March. We wish her, in common with our citizens, every success in her profession, and hope soon again to greet her upon the boards of the Langrishe Opera House in our city.

Geo. Waldron went to Denver in 1870 to open Mr. Langrishe's old theatre there, with Miss Fanny Price as his "star" for a while. George Pauncefort, "the 'bucolic correspondent', and dramatic reader", could be found in Honolulu in 1872.

Miss Fanny Price "disposed of her real estate in Helena" in March, 1872.

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214. Ibid., March 26, 1870.
Miss Eliza Couldock died at Salt Lake City on April 20th, 1874. "Dick" White, of the old Langrishe troupe, by 1874, had been appointed stage director of the Amateur Dramatic Association of Portland, Oregon. Mr. C. W. Couldock was supporting "??" in Cincinnati in 1875. Mr. A. B. Charpie, the leader of the theatre orchestra in early days, became the leader of the Helena Corner Band, which toured the western part of the state with a "musical entertainment."

Undoubtedly there were local dramatic events during these years. One mysterious reference to the word "Podunkish" states that the word applies to a number of the grand extravaganza and Burlesque, given up in Helena for the Benefit of the poor...."

We are in receipt of the Helena Minstrel programme, with "One Hour in the Deer Lodge Convention", as a feature in which "W. F. Slyboy" and "W. H. Climax" figure. The Minstrels are well commended and design making a tour of Montana. Come over the range, boys.

In 1875, a man named John Maguire was "meeting with excellent success" as a monologue artist and imitable comedian in "the Northern camps", Deer Lodge and Diamond City. He finally reached Helena, after several postponements of his trip. He had been much pleased with his reception in Montana and planned to "go over the field again".

218. New Northwest, May 16, 1874.
219. Ibid., Dec. 10, 1875.
221. New Northwest, May 5, 1876.
222. Ibid., Nov. 5, 1875.
Old playbills, photographed from the file in the State Historical Library, State Capitol, Helena, Montana.
from time to time there were rumors that Langrishe would return
to Montana. Manager "Jack" did get to Denver in the spring
of 1875, to re-open his old theatre with many of the "latest
eastern novelties, such as Two Orphans, Our Boys, Divorce.
He even paid Cheyenne a visit the next year but there is no
record of his having come to Montana. By 1879, however, the
report of seeing him seemed more definite.

It is said that Jack Langrishe, whom all "old-
timers" remember with pleasing thoughts, is
intending to visit Montana this season with a
dramatic company. Jack will be warmly welcomed
by a host of old friends of the early days; and,
if he brings a good company, will make money out
of his trip.

Since the fire of 1874 there had been no theatre building
until Harmonica Hall was built on Broadway in September, 1878.
This soon became known as Sawtelle’s Theatre because J. Al.
Sawtelle was its first manager and director. He was producing
there as early as November, 1878, popular dramas like Rip
Van Winkle, Ten Nights in a Bar Room, and the customary
roaring farces. The prices of admission had been cut
to "fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children".

223. New Northwest, Feb. 11, 1875.
224. Ibid., Feb. 25, 1876.
225. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Aug. 21, 1879.
227. Montana Independent, Nov. 28, 1878.
228. Ibid., Nov. 28, 1878.
Old playbills, photographed from the file in the State Historical Library, State Capitol, Helena, Montana.
Sawtelle and his company were welcomed in the community as other theatrical people had been.

The Theatre: There was a large gathering at the theatre on Monday evening, and the additions and improvements which Mr. Sawtelle has made since the hall was last opened to the public elicited great admiration. All the scenes were handsomely set, and the gypsies' glen was really a notable piece of scenic art. The tableau at the end of the act brought out an enthusiastic encore. The new members of the company, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Granville, Mr. Wood, Miss Martin, and the others proved to be valuable accessories, and Mr. Sawtelle can now congratulate himself upon a troupe with which any play he may select for presentation can be creditably rendered in all its parts. The brilliant and impressive drama of *Enoch Arden* will be given this evening, and an entertainment of a high character may be expected.  

It is interesting to note that the "new members of the company" were actors and actresses who had been seen "on the boards" in Montana in the years gone by.

The *Helena Daily Herald* carried advertisements nearly every day for Sawtelle's Theatre. This is the first time paid advertising is obvious. Previous to this time, the notices of dramatic performances were mere statements in the columns of local news-bits like "get your seats early for the theatre tonite" or "Don't miss the *French Spy* at the Opera House". Now an evening for the Benefit of the Helena Fire Department consisting of Boncicault's great work *The Streets of New York*, the general admission—$1.00 and "orchestra seats (cushioned)—$1.25 was run frankly as an advertisement in with the "ads"  

of the Helena business houses.

The company played the new eastern drama, Our Boys or sure-fire favorites like Richelieu. For this latter performance, "an entire set of new costumes have (sic.) been manufactured (sic.)

This play was a huge success wherever it was played, and Sawtelle was often taking his company to Butte or on "summer tours".

J. Al. Sawtelle became such a respected member of Montana society that he was asked to write an article for the Helena Herald on "The Drama". For the light it throws on general attitudes towards plays and the stage in 1879 it is decidedly worth quoting in full.

(Written for the Herald) "The Drama"

by J. Al. Sawtelle.

Feeling that the legitimate drama belongs to a literature of the highest order, an effort should be made by its friends throughout the country to restore it to its proper place. It has so long been prostituted to the behests of base and vulgar minds that it has well nigh lost its prestige and its place in the hearts of the cultured and refined. However, it begins to shine out in its bright face, and the bastard and illegitimate . . . is being crowded down and out of sight.

Charles Sprague, when he penned the following lines, possessed an appreciative indignation against the abuse and degeneration of the drama to the level of a monkey show: 'Lo, where the stage, the poor degraded stage, Holds its warped mirror to a gasping age; Where one loose scene shall turn more souls to shame Than ten of Channing's lectures on reclaim; Where shoals, on shoals, the modest millions reach One sex to laugh, and one to try to

231. Ibid., Feb. 22, 1879.
232. Ibid., May 14, 1879.
blur, God. who can grace yon desecrated dome
When he may turn his Shakespeare o'er at home,
Who there can group the pure ones of his race
To see and hear what bids him veil his face?
Pray Heaven, if yet indeed the stage must stand,
With guiltless mirth it may delight the land;
For better else each scenic triumph fall
And one appeasing silence curtain all.'

The Theatre in its proper management is not a place
for mere frolic and fun—a laughter—provoking
institution. Nor is the drama a grist to be
ground through such a mill to feed and satiate
the maws of boors and grovelling minds. A Theatre,
when it is as it ought to be, is an institution
for the rendition of the drama, of the legitimate
school, a literary production, a reflex of historical
events, or ennobling social peculiarities—the
actors, the delineators or the embodiment of the
author's thoughts. Through them is the mirror
held up to nature; through them we see vice and
virtue contrasted—one rewarded, the other
punished—and the mind turned in the right direction.
What better lesson can there be for the public
at large than to witness a performance of the
"Ticket-of-Leave Man", "Ten Nights in a Bar
Room", and such like plays, that show the terrible
effects of drunkenness and crime?

But while the theatre is being reclaimed and
renovated, we must demand that actors shall, as
individuals, stand well in the community. They
should be such as would find no bar to entrance
in the circle of refined and social life. The
actor or actress who would indulge in vulgar
words, double entendres and indecent gestures,
which are often seen on the stage, should be
hooted therefrom. If the insult be so great
in private and social life, how much more so when
offered in the presence of a large audience.

The press and pulpit exert a beneficent influence
in their respective spheres. The one educates
the mind for the duties of earth, the other
trains and exalts for the beatitude of heaven.
The stage in our country addressing large audiences,
and appealing to thousands who only bestow a
passing glance on the columns of the press,
wields a resistless power in the cause of morality
and freedom. The noblest precepts that fall from the lips of our learned divines, the lessons of liberty taught in the columns of our oldest journals, are personified in many of the dramas which are acted in the theatres. When thus seen, virtues are no longer cold abstractions. They "live, move and have a being". Their eloquent accents ring in the chamber of our hearts, and their earnest appeals enlist the sympathies of our natures.

Our only object then must be to preserve and never cease in the ambition to excel, and if possible attain the perfection of that consummate art whose glory it is

'To show virtue her own features,
Score her own image and the very age
The body of the time, his form, and presence'.

1880 was the grandest theatrical year Helena, Montana, ever witnessed. The chief excitement was the erection and opening of the Ming Opera House, the glorious days of which every old-timer in Montana remembers.

Mr. Sawtelle continued courageously, however, at his theatre in spite of the competition. In April, Miss Henrietta Irving was a guest star with his company, playing Charity, The Octoroon, and Lost in London to houses that were not over-full due to "the unpleasant condition of the weather." The troupe played in Helena for a month and then toured for a month. Frequently all the members of a company would not leave Helena when their manager died. Those remaining in the city would band together and attempt in some manner or other, depending on their talents, to entertain

234. Morning Capital, April 1 and 3, 1880.
235. Ibid., May 14, 1880.
the Helena public. Probably it was in such a way that the Henrietta Irvine Dramatic Combination grew. Their talent seemed "deserving", so they met with some success when they produced programs like Naval Engagements, followed by an olio, in which the best male vocalists in the city participated, the whole evening concluding with Mr. and Mrs. Peter White.

Montana's enterprising dramatic manager, J. A. Sawtelle, has recently added materially to the dramatic talent of his company. The new company is now drawing crowded houses at the Metropolis. Miss Henrietta Irvine is a fine artiste and is supplied with a magnificent wardrobe in which to sustain her parts. Miss Ella Viola is also a promising young artiste. Her beauty and girlish coquetry has won the hearts of Helena bachelors. These brilliant attractions are sustained by a full company which do credit to the Helena boards. The company will make a tour of the principal towns in the territory as soon as the season at the Capital closes. Theatre-goers, give them cordial welcome.

As will be seen by the advertisement, lovers of Shakespeare will have an opportunity tomorrow morning for enjoying some of the finest passages from Shakespeare, rendered by the late Sawtelle Company. The dagger and sleep-walking scene from Macbeth, the great trial scene from the Merchant of Venice, and the Balcony and Friar's scenes from Romeo and Juliet will be presented.

Everyone in Helena was watching with interest the development of the Ming Opera House. About the middle of April the papers were saying:-

The excavating for the Ming Opera House goes bravely on. The gods and sledges have been thrown aside as the weather grows warm.

236. Morning Capitol, May 19, 1880.
237. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Feb. 12, 1880.
238. Morning Capitol, May 23, 1880.
239. Ibid., April 13, 1880.
The Ming stables, a large building, covering a great deal of ground, was moved yesterday to make room for the new opera house. . . .

On April 27, when the workmen "began laying the rock foundations," the public was excited by the news that Mr. Ming intended to make his new building three stories high. By May 31, the building was "assuming shape." The excitement by June was more intense still.

The supports for the gallery in the Ming Opera House are all in place and ready for the flooring. The walls will be up and work on the roof begun in a week's time.

The walls of the Ming Opera House are now up even with the balcony circle, and the inside framework is far enough along so that one can already begin to see the outlines (or inlines) of a substantial and neatly arranged theatre.

During June the workmen wheeling rocks for use on the building went on strike, demanding more wages. This seemed an unnecessary hitch in the rapid progress so much desired. The strike was quickly settled by discharging the protesting men and hiring others.

While anticipating the future splendor of the Ming Opera House, the citizens of Helena were offered current amusements. The hall known as "Under the Gaslight", on upper Main Street housed a "new variety troupe in a series of minstrel and variety entertainments" as a fund of amusement for "the boys.

240. Morning Capitol, April 15, 1880.
242. Morning Capitol, June 11, 1880.
243. Ibid., June 17, 1880.
about town o' nights." Don Sebastian of this troupe stretched a tight-rope "from Leigler's stable to Headquarters Saloon," and though he was a "little out of practice and did not step as confidently as he would have under other circumstances, . . . did extremely well." The next Saturday night he undoubtedly planned to repeat the performance, running a wheelbarrow across ahead of him, -- "which is not a very easy thing to accomplish".

Odd Fellow's Halls was used for a while by "The Two-Headed Lady Company". The paper claims that the "Two-Headed lady is a veritable fact" and that "she or they sang sweetly." She only remained a few days, her business being seriously diminished because Mr. Sawtelle was back in town and offering new pieces at his theatre.

Manager Sawtelle was constantly reorganizing his company and appearing in Helena for a few days at a time, for during 1880, he seems to have concentrated most of his activity on the smaller cities of the territory - Butte, Missoula, Miles City and others. Occasionally outside actors rented his theatre from him. Charles Adams, the mimic actor and son and dance artist was one of these. For a few days Mr. Adams caught the attention of the Helena public. He and his "combination" company were announced by bills and dodgers.

244. Morning Capitol, June 11, 1880.
245. Ibid., May 19, 1880.
246. Ibid., Aug. 6, 1880.
His character delineations are perfect, and as a mimic he is hard to beat. The audience was kept in a perfect roar of laughter all through the performance. . . . There will be more buttons to sew on this morning than at any other time for many a day. 247

But in general this well-deserving gentleman was having a "run of bad luck" in the Montana Territory, and soon after the 20th of June left Helena for Deer Lodge to see if Lady Luck would be kinder to him there.

Meanwhile work of the Ming Opera House was advancing daily. The iron roofing for it was sent in from outside the state. The "patent seats and scenery were shipped from the East." The arrival of this theatre equipment created a particular stir. "Drop curtains, side-shifts and various stage paraphernalia" appeared early in August. The workmen had finished lathing the inside; the gas pipes had been placed in position. The Theatre was to be well lighted, one hundred and twenty burners were put in, all controlled from behind the scenes, so that the room could be darkened or lighted at will.

"The artistic painting on the curtains" was said to be extremely skilful. In fact the city felt it had plenty of evidence with which to boast that "this magnificent building will be, when completed, the finest theatre for a city the size of

247. Morning Capitol, June 17-18, 1880.
248. Ibid., June 26, 1880.
249. Ibid., Aug. 6, 1880.
250. Ibid., Aug. 5, 1880.
Helena, in the United States."

The Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company, eventually fated to open the Opera House, still unaware of this future honor, arrived in Montana from Minnesota in the middle of July in 1830. Under the management of Messrs. Blum and Harvey, Fort Benton was their first playing engagement in the territory. By the end of July, Mr. Lawrence, the advance agent for the troupe was in Butte, having already arranged for the company to appear at Sawtelle's Theatre in Helena.

Miss Katie Putnam was the leading lady and main drawing card for the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company. From the time the troupe first performed at Fort Benton, the theatre-going people of Montana were at this new actress's feet. Her first appearance in Helena was warmly praised and her popularity was well featured.

Some tasty lithographs of Kate Putnam appear in several show windows on Main Street. The Company of which she is the star, will be in the Territory in three or four weeks, and will, we understand, give the first performance in the Ming Opera House after it is completed.  

The Opera House was not scheduled to open until the gala Fair Week early in September. In the meantime Miss Putnam and her company played late in July at Sawtelle's Theatre where the ventilation had been much improved in order to make hot weather

251. Morning Capitol, Aug. 6, 1880.

252. Ibid., July 4, 16, 24, 1880.

253. Ibid., June 30, 1880.
Theatricals more endurable. Here Matie Putnam played Little
Barefoot, the beautiful home drama, Little Treasure, the
favorite farce, The Little Rebel, Meg's Diversion, The Child
of the Regiment and Fanchon, the Cricket together with the
company before they left for Butte and other Montana towns. All of
these plays except Little Treasure were so well received that
she repeated them in September at the Ming Opera House.

Helena wished Messrs. Blum and Harvey, "a pleasant and
profitable tour through the Territory" and assured them a
"heartly welcome" upon their return. As she left Helena, Miss
Putnam was presented with a basket of flowers, and in Butte,
the citizens made her a gift of a silver buck, composed of
five thousand assay "buttons" taken from the ore of every mine
in Butte. Inscribed on it were the words, "To a true artist,
Miss Katie Putnam; a testimonial of Western appreciation."

Preparing for the crowds and excitement of the Annual
Fair in Helena, a troupe of "bell ringers and Merry Makers"
had established themselves in the city. "Peak Family Swiss
Bell Ringers and Blaisdell Merry Makers." First they showed
what they could do in the principle streets of the town. The
brass band, a feature of the troupe, entertained the populace.
Evidently the tunes were worth listening to; "There is music
in those people without mistake," said a reporter. Taking
possession of the Sawtelle Theatre for a few days, they made what

254. Morning Capitol, Aug. 10, 1880.
would today be called a "hit".

The Bell Ringers and Merry Makers Combination is by far the best thing we have had in Helena this year. There's life about this entertainment—spice, effervescence, fizz and all that sort of thing. Helena people have got tired of high tragedy and this change is good and well appreciated, as the house last night testified. Miss Julia Peak Blaisdell's harp solo was excellent and the conclusion when two airs were played at once brought down the house. The bell-ringing was splendid. The two youngest members of the company, Miss Tucker and Willie Blaisdell, seemed to be the favorites, and received encore after encore.

Helena hated to see these musicians move on to Butte, Deer Lodge and Glendale. Sincerely the capital city hoped they would return for another engagement, as the company wisely did during the September Fair Week.

Another company, probably one organized in Helena, by the people of the locality and possibly some remaining members of Sawtelle's troupe, rehearsed under the direction of L. R. Nettie, H. M. S. Pinafore, which they also planned to produce during Fair Week. In spite of the unquenchable excitement over the opening of the Living Opera House, their performance of this Gilbert and Sullivan masterpiece for the benefit of the Helena Fire Department was well attended on August 30th.

The official days of the Fair were September 8, 9, and 10. Helena was probably never again to be so over-stimulated by excitements and amusements as during these early September days. The streets were full of visitors for the fair. It

255. Morning Capitol, July 16, 1880.
was a "lively time for the hotels, theatres, livery stables and
drivers." There were horse races every afternoon of the
week. Even with the Opera House opening, Sawtelle's Theatre
had every reason to expect that it would have plenty of
patrons too. So the Bell-ringers and Merry Makers returned
and alternated evenings with the H. M. S. Pinafore performance.
Indeed, one evening Professor Metz of the Blaisdell Company
even played a violin solo as an added feature of Pinafore.
The Footlight, a special news sheet, published during the Fair,
carried the advertisements of all three of these theatrical
groups, as the following show:

THE FOOTLIGHT, Sept. 6, 1880

1st page ads
Ming's Opera House
Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company
supporting Miss Katie Putname

"3 PAIR SHOES"

Second page ads.

Helena on Monday, Sept. 6, for 6 days
Races every day 2, 3, 4.
Purses $100. to $400.

Third page ads.

Miss Katie Putnam and the Press.
"Old Curiosity Shop"

Hartford Evening Press
at Niblo's
Boston Daily Times.

Hartford:...but the interest centers in the fortunes

256. Morning Capitol, September 7, 1880.
257. Ibid., Sept. 8, 1880.
of Little Nell and the Marchioness, a dual role essayed by Miss Katie Putnam. These parts are widely dissimilar. Little Nell is a patient, loving, saddened child, the Marchioness a hoydenish servant, ignorant and impulsive, whose principal thought is to get enough to eat. The very rapidity of Miss Putnam's changes of dress was remarkable, but more so were the complete changes in manner, the best proof of the versatile powers of this charming little actress. In the first character, her touches of the pathetic brought tears to many an eye, to be a moment later forgotten in the merriment exited by the queer pranks of the Marchioness. . . .

Boston Daily Times. . . . She has, during her stay in our city, won for herself unfaded laurels as an artist, and gained a hold upon the good will, as well as excited the admiration of our people.

Miss Putnam's acting is something rare. It is grand in many of its features. It is earnest, enthusiastic, genius like, and carries with it a power to control an audience. It is unnecessary to judge her by others. She is true to her own genius and powers, and her impersonations not only bear the stamp of a lofty superiority, but they have successfully met the polished criticism of the ablest pens.

Ad. for Sawtelle's Theatre in Helena Independent, Sept. 5, 1880. (In envelope file)

SAWTELLE'S THEATRE

Something New!

Blaisdell's Merry Makers and Peak Family Swiss Bell Ringers, "Jubilee Singers".

Under the direction of the old favorite, Frank Bosworth
The First Time in Montana of the Legitimate Plantation Jubilee Singers.

The Wonderful Bell Ringers will appear at Each Entertainment.

A full Brass Band and Orchestra, Duets, Sketches, Songs and Farces.

Monday, Tuesday and Saturday evenings, and Wednesday and Saturday Afternoon Matinees of Fair Week

Price of Admission as before.

Doors open at 7:30 o'clock

D. L. W.

Ad. for Ming's Opera House

Daily Independent, Helena, Sunday, Sept. 12, 1880

(Ming's Opera House)

Continued Success of Miss Katie Putnam and the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company.

Monday Evening, Sept. 13th will be presented the beautiful romantic drama entitled

JANE EYRE

Jane Eyre... Miss Katie Putnam supported by the full strength of the company.
A full and Efficient Orchestra
Under the direction of
Prof. M. O'REARDON,
Formerly leader Oates Opera Company.

Change of Programme Every Night!
Admission ... $1.00 Reserved Seats ... $1.25
Seats may be secured at the Box Office from
10 A.M. to 8 P.M.

GRAND FAMILY MATINEE
Saturday 2 P.M.

C. A. Hazenwinkle,
Manager

The "grand opening" of the Ming Opera House took place
on the night of September 2, with Miss Putnam as both Nell and
the Marchioness in The Old Curiosity Shop. The newspaper the
day before said,

The opening night at Ming's Opera House promises
to be a very splendid affair. The play is a new
one to Montana audiences, the company is one of
the best that ever visited the Territory, and
the Opera House is the finest one in the Rocky
Mountains. 258

The Hazenwinkle Troupe played in Butte the night of August
31st, and were so delayed on the road to Helena that they
did not arrive until late in the evening of September 1st.

The coach in which they came was detained two
or three hours, some miles out while an impediment
in the shape of a wreck of freight wagon was
being removed from the stage road at a place where
it led along a mountain side. A careless driver
had upset his wagon in such a manner that it
was impossible for other vehicles to pass until the
wreck was cleared away. 259

257. Morning Capitol, September 1, 1880.
258. Ibid., September 2, 1880.
259. Ibid., Sept. 2, 1880.
The story of the festive opening of the Opera House is best told by a woman who remembers that more than fifty years ago she was in the first audience.


50th anniversary of opening of Ming Opera House. Sept. 2, 1880.

.. . .gay laughter, the silent tears and the lilting songs which filled its walls in the years following... 1880... Lamp-lighted night... solid old brick walls... roccoco design of the old theatre; but deep are the memories of those who attended the first performance lies a warm recollection of that stirring night, momentous in the cultural history of the city of Helena.

Accompanied by guests from throughout the territory, elite Helena thronged to see Katie Putnam in Dicken's "Old Curiosity Shop", the opening performance. Every seat in the gallery and in the boxes—the first to be seen in a Montana Theatre—was taken. With these seats and those in the orchestra selling at a dollar and a dollar and a quarter, the curtain rose on Montana's first "Thousand dollar house". Chronicling the event the next day, the Helena Herald forerunner of the Montana Record Herald, said, "The elegant attire of the ladies was in keeping with the hall in which the audience was assembled and the general effect when the lights were turned on was brilliant in the extreme.

Typical of the lavishness of that opening night were the programs 'printed on varied colors of satin and scented with the sweet odors of the most delicate perfumes.'

Henry Sheehan, who as a young employee of Sands Bros. Dry Goods Company, arranged the elaborate draperies in the theatre.

As the curtain with its painted Italian scene was slowly rolled up, thunderous applause greeted the appearance of John H. Ming, who had built the theatre for Helena from his fortune founded in the first general store in Denver and increased by
MING'S OPERA HOUSE

Thursday, Friday & Saturday Evenings
APRIL 17th, 18th and 19th, 1884.

THE COMIC ESTHETIC OPERA,

PATIENCE,

OR

BUNTHORNE'S BRIDE.

Frieda, Hedwig, Thurs., Fr., Sat. Evenings

DAMON AND
PYTHIAS

Thursday Evening, June 23d, 1887.

DAMON AND PYTHIAS

DAMON

Mr. GEO. C. MILN

PYTHIAS

Mr. A. H. MILLER

Phrenics

Mr. W. W. WARD

Emotions

Mr. W. W. WARD

Probes

Mr. A. H. MILLER

Facilities

Mr. A. H. MILLER

Hermon

Mr. P. W. SMITH

CALANTHE

Mr. W. W. WARD

Old playbills photographed from the file in the State Historical Library, State Capitol, Helena, Montana.
Montana investments.

The acclamation was renewed when Major Martin, territorial delegate to Congress and one of the outstanding orators of the Northwest, stepped to the footlights. His speech quoted in part, "Adds to Gaiety" Miss Putnam, abandoning her professional air for the moment, added to the gaiety of the evening by reciting a poem filled with local names and telling of the deplorable theater situation in Helena before Mr. Ming had come to the rescue.

All thoughts of the local phase of the program were soon forgotten as Miss Putnam, resuming her professional demeanor, stirred her audience with her dual role as the Marchioness and as Little Nell. 260

The second play produced in the new edifice was the Pearl of Savoy, and the third was The Little Detective, after the performance of which Miss Putnam was serenaded at her hotel. In fact the lady's popularity grew until by the night of September 12, the evening's door receipts exceeded one thousand dollars!

Miss Katie Putnam and the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company played at the Ming Opera House until September 18th. On the morning of the 19th they departed for Bozeman and Virginia City, "after which they will proceed to the Terminus preparatory to leaving the Territory." Their full repetoire during the gay weeks in Helena was,

261. Ibid., September 4 and 5, 1880.
262. Ibid., Sept. 18, 1860.
Sept. 2  OPENING Old Curiosity Shop
Sept. 3  The Pearl of Savoy
Sept. 4  The Little Detective
Sept. 5  Three Pairs of Shoes
Sept. 7  Meg's Diversions
         Youth Who Never Saw a Woman (farce)
Sept. 8  The Little Detective
Sept. 9  Old Curiosity Shop
Sept. 10 Lena, the Madcap ("written especially for Miss Putnam, and her best character")
Sept. 11  Fanonchon, the Cricket
Sept. 13  Jane Eyre
Sept. 14  The Pearl of Savoy
Sept. 15  Little Barefoot
Sept. 16  The New Magdalen
         Nan, the Good-for-Nothing (farce)
Sept. 17  The Child of the Regiment
Sept. 18  Two Babes in the Woods (...the first performance of a play written especially for Miss Putnam by Joaquin Miller, but never reviewed by the Montana papers)
CHAPTER IV

OTHER CITIES AND LATER DAYS
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OTHER CITIES AND LATER DAYS

Although Virginia City and Helena were the two centers of theatrical activity in Montana in the early days of the Territory, the smaller settlements nearly all have records of local and amateur dramatic entertainments, traveling minstrel shows, and even occasional visits from a professional stage company. Unfortunately these less popular towns were slower in the publication of a local newspaper and therefore accounts of exactly what they saw in the amusement field are harder to find.

A good many interesting notes are available, however, on the old theatre at Fort Shaw, Montana. This Fort, "one of our country's more important frontier posts in the West," was established in June 1867, "on the historic Helena-Benton stage route to protect settlers from the Indians" and later was used to protect "from lawless white men the big shipments of gold and the hundreds of thousands of valuable furs that were hauled to Fort Benton to be sent down the Missouri River to St. Louis."

probably at an early date the soldiers here, as at many other posts, built for the amusement of themselves and their friends, a small theatre where they could stage "minstrel-shows, variety performances, farces, and an occasional drama." The Fort Shaw construction was a barn-like structure, a hundred and twenty-five feet long, with a stage measuring twenty-four by thirty-five feet. It was unfinished, unpainted, and unfloored, but had this advantage over the early theatres of Shakespeare -- nowhere was it "open to the weather". All the front seats and two additional rows to the right were reserved for officers and their guests. The rest of the house was for the soldiers and the general public.

Before every performance fresh sawdust was sprinkled in front of these seats and in the main aisle from the door to the stage. Kerosene lamps, large and small with reflectors, furnished the light. The footlights consisted of flat lamps set in a row where they lighted the orchestra as well as the proscenium. When melodramatic dimness was needed, a signal was given the leader and the entire orchestra rose like one man and turned the wicks down to the blue. In the same way light was restored.

Plain wooden benches were the seats. There were dressing rooms and a property room in a hallway not far from the stage. The scenery and scenic effects probably were all handmade or improvised things.

The society at the Fort had a tendency to be very gay when the men were not away in "pursuit of northern Indians."

Along the board walks in front of the officers' quarters, pass groups of fashionably gowned women, and men in uniform and much gold lace, on their way to dinner party or dance. Out in the square a tall pole bears a flag of which the wind makes sport. Appropriate ceremonies mark its raising and lowering. There is a band playing, guard mounting, the clanking of chains the prisoners wear when sent to work. Over in the barracks the soldiers, when possible, idly lounge, and comment to one another about what is going on at the other side of the square. The ears of many a fine lady and haughty officer would burn could they hear them.265

The officers and their ladies were required to pay one dollar for reserved seats at the Fort Shaw Theatre. The enlisted men probably bought seats at "four and six bits", paying for them by a credit system,

The first sergeant of every company kept a list of those in his company who attended the performances, and, when the paymaster came, deducted the amount due the theatre from each man's roll and gave it to the manager.266

Whenever a prominent visitor was at the Fort, a theatrical performance was given in his honor. Ranchers from the country around often drove a long distance to attend the plays. The day of the first professional performance at the Fort,

...early in the day the heterogeneous collection of rigs from plain and mountain began to encircle the theater premises like flies around spilled molasses.267

265. Mrs. M. E. Plassmann, "When Fort Shaw's Elite Reveled in Dramatics; Theatre There in 1875".

266. Chowden, op. cit., p. 304.

267. Ibid., p. 305.
Another newspaper clipping for which the original place and date of publication is unknown, is an article by Miss Devine entitled "When Katie Putnam Played in Pioneer Montana", which tells of the earliest dramatic production at Fort Shaw.

At first the soldiers were their own actors. Considerable histrionic talent was found among their number, and many a wild drama was presented in excellent shape. There was a performance every Friday night. Occasionally drama would give way to negro minstrelsy, which latter, of course, afforded the participants many opportunities to make sly digs at the officers --- opportunities rarely overlooked. Devine was one of the stars of the cast. As he said quaintly the other day in recalling the incidents, 'I was leading lady, female impersonator and danseuse.' He really was called upon to fill the chief feminine roles. As a youth Devine had been in the ballet, and under the personal training of the once famous Lydia Thompson, had acquired much knowledge of stage dancing.

The first so-called "professional" group appeared at Fort Shaw in 1874, when the post was at "the height of its well-being." The company consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Boll and their family of "six children, the oldest girl in her 'teens and a clever actress" came to live at the Fort and played there for two years until the trouble with Chief Sitting Bull and his Sioux Indians warned them that they had better leave for the East while they still could. This talented actor and his wife had been discovered by Mrs. Gibbon, the wife of the Commandant of Fort Shaw, in a rather unusual way. Returning one day from a visit to Helena, this lady had been obliged

269. Ibid., p. 307.
The lady of the house opened the door, and Mrs. Gibbon, with her first glance at the woman her long-haired, smooth-faced doctor-husband, who was painting local scenes in water-colors, realized that these people were entirely out of their natural sphere. The conversation soon revealed that they were actors of European birth who had been persuaded by a relative to come to Montana during the gold rush. . . before her call was half over Mrs. Gibbon had decided to bring the Boll family to the Fort for at least one season of professional theatricals, realizing the advantage of having real women in the plays instead of pretty-faced soldiers who spoke in falsetto when wearing the petticoats. . . . The visitor was hardly out of sight continuing her journey before Mr. Boll was unpacking a trunk into which he had thrown a few plays and costumes while packing to leave Chicago for the West. 270

And as his family had never acted in English, Mr. Boll was faced with the immediate necessity of translating "some of his best German plays." 271

The Fort prepared a home for the Bolls, "built against one side of the theater" and consisting of "two spacious rooms, like the theater built of slabs and rough lumber." Their arrival was "heralded by word of mouth and handbills all over the territory."

Everything possible had been done to make the first performance and outstanding affair. 272 Ingomar, the Barbarian was selected for the opening piece. The ambulances from the Fort went and got the new company and their belongings, and the Fort Shaw Dramtic


271. Ibid., p. 304.
Association received Herr Boll with open bottles.

A Mrs. Schultz and Madame Eckert came from Helena to assist the company at the opening performance. Other roles were adequately handled by the soldiers. Mr. Boll as ...

...Ingomar was in his element; and Mrs. Boll looked very pretty as Parthenia, wearing a Grecian garment of flowing folds, a bunch of scarlet flowers on one shoulder, and a broad bandeau holding her dark ringlets in place. The slight foreign accent added interest to the text.

The people at Fort Benton occasionally came the sixty miles necessary to attend a performance at Fort Shaw. Thus reports about Herr Boll and his company sometimes reached the columns of the Benton Record.

CORRESPONDENCE. To the Editor of the Record:
At the theatre the other evening the performance of two lively and interesting pieces kept the audience in a continuous uproar. The first piece—a comic drama, in two acts, entitled a "Bachelor of Arts"—was very creditably presented. The character of Harry Jasper, by Herr Theo. Boll, was splendidly performed, while the Andrew Wylie of Mason is hard to beat; in fact, each actor seemed to do his level best. Mappin's song was well rendered and loudly applauded, as was also the comic Dutch duet by Harrington and Engel. Harrington as a Dutch comic song man is, I think, unrivalled in the West, and no lover of comicalities should miss hearing him. His English is becoming no better fast. The performance concluded with a roaring one-act farce entitled, "The Corner's Inquisition", which was also well put on. The Association is beginning to understand that the residents of Fort Shaw want fun, and seem to have discarded sentimental dramas, which were becoming a bore.


273. Ibid., p. 305.

274. Benton Record, Feb. 15, 1875.
One more performance given by the Boll family deserves a full report.

In spite of all rules and prohibitions, the soldiers could always get whiskey at one or the other of two places in opposite directions and about five miles from the Fort. . . . So when Mr. Boll decided to put on 'Ten Nights in a Barroom,' there was some hesitation among those who knew that though the Seventh Infantry had won the titles of 'crack' regiment, 'gallant' 'warring', it was also noted for its fighting members, and 'Ten Nights' was a strictly temperance play. However, it was considered high-class melodrama by rural audiences in the East, and Mr. Boll put it on for its possible moral effect.

His daughter, Minnie, the most talented of the Boll children, played the part of Mary Morgan. Besides her talented acting she had a sweet singing voice, and her hair curled naturally.

The house was filled to capacity, and Mr. Boll experienced the surprise of his career when he saw this gathering of fighting men, coming red-handed from an Indian battle, sitting soundlessly absorbed in every word spoken in the play. There was little applause, so intense was the attention, and the silence gave Mr. Boll and Minnie better opportunity to bring out the strong points of the play.

She sang 'Father, dear father, come home with me now'—one verse just before he entrances in the first three acts. When, at the end of the third verse, she staggered onto the scene with blood covering her face after having supposedly been struck by the bottle hurled at her miserable father, a concerted move of ominous sound sent a tremor of apprehension through the actors and spectators, and Mr. Boll with a simple but imperative gesture quelled it and proceeded with the play. A decided snicker was audible in response to the swift ducking behind the bar of Slade.

But when the next scene revealed the interior of Mary's home with her lying on a white little bed and having a white bandage around her forehead, the silence was absolute. . . and it remained so until
she whispered, 'Come nearer, father, I don't want mother to hear—it would make her feel so bad. I am not going to get well, I'm going to die'.

The next day the sutler did a tremendous business in dressgoods and trinkets and from every building, be it barracks, stable, bakery, tailor shop or officers' quarters, came the subdued verses of 'Father, dear father, come home with me now'. Soon the whole Boll family, except Mr. Boll and the oldest boy... blossomed out in new calico dresses all alike, for the soldiers, unknown to one another, had bought dresses for Minnie from the same bolt of material, because it was the brightest in the store.275

All through its existence, perhaps even before the theatre building was up, Fort Shaw entertained and was entertained by the traveling monologuists and one-man acts. As early as 1868, Mr. George Pauncefort had been "invited by the Commandant and officers of Fort Shaw to visit" and give his interpretations of Dickens' characters, "Nicholas Nickleby at Dotheboy's Hall, with the history of poor Smike... Boots at the Holly Tree Inn, and illustration of the loves and hopes and fears of Mr. and Mrs. Walmers, Junior...."

J. Mulcahy had amused the soldiers in this same place with his well known comic acts, "Brougham's Metamora, the Mulligan Guards, two songs, and a dance". By 1876 Mr. John Maquire, "one of the best comedians and most popular actors in the "West", was "tickling the risibilities of his large and appreciative audience" to such an extent that they complained of weakness in the sides for many days thereafter. He was

supervising a company at the time, and they presented *O'Callahan on his Last Legs.*

Charles Rivers being played by Mr. Higney, Dr. Banks by Mr. Cosgrove, Julia by our lovely and accomplished female impersonator, Mr. Kretchman, and Mrs. Montague, a gushing widow, in love with Felix O'Callahan by Mr. King. 'Old Man Smith' was also very funny in a female plantation dance -- he performed the part of the female, not the plantation. The creme de la creme of Sun River Valley. . .were present en masse; and from the liberal applause they bestowed upon Dr. O'C's eccentricities. . .they enjoyed themselves hugely. 278

Though the Fort Shaw Theatre was destroyed by fire late in 1880, the early part of that year had been exceptionally gay. The Sawtelle troupe visited the Fort several times, the Henrietta Irving Combination played "very pleasant entertainments which were well attended and appreciated by both officers and men," and while waiting for the Ming Opera House in Helena to open, Katie Putnam performed for large audiences of soldiers at Fort Shaw.

Not only because it throws light on how the officers of Fort Shaw knew a theatrical company was in the Montana Territory but also because it described a possibly typical tour through the towns of the region by an acting group, it is well to insert here Mr. Vivian's report of a trip into Montana from Corrinne.


... They prevailed upon us to take the seven
days' stage trip to Helena in the dead of winter,
assuring us that we would be amply requited for
the hardship endured by reaping a golden harvest
of dollars. Acting upon their advice, who knew full
well the necessities of the undertaking, Mr.
Vivian ordered some coats made especially for the
trip from Buffalo skins reaching to our feet, and
with fur caps, leggings and mittens, also two
fine robes belonging to Mr. McCormack, that he
insisted we should need, we felt quite ably
prepared to defend ourselves against the
keen and biting sallies of old Jack Frost when
seen at his best, doing his heaviest strokes in
a Montana midwinter.

So we mounted the old-fashioned stage coach at a
small town some distance from Corinne armed
cap-a-pie to do battle with the elements upon
one of the coldest days that it has ever been
my fortune to experience. The coach, I remember,
was rather shy of room, and by the time we were
fairly situated with our numerous wraps, to our
embarrassment several other passengers gather about
with anxious, puzzled faces that seemed to say,
'Where do I get in?'... About eight o'clock in
the evening in an uneventful day, we arrived at
the station for supper and lodging. It was not
dignified by the name of hotel and the service
and cuisine were not of the kind to tempt the
appetite of an epicure. We partook but daintily
of the menu at the first several stations, merely
sufficient to fortify ourselves... until about
the fourth day, when at one halting and relay place
we sat down to a really well-cooked and palatable
dinner, not withstanding the fact that it was
served sans ceremonie. One dish that I particularly
remember, being a novelty, was what the waiter
who gave us the verbal bill of fare designated
as sage-hen... At all of those stations where
we spent the nights en route to Montana we were
called for breakfast at three in the morning and
were well upon the road at four, in order to
cover as much ground as possible by daylight... Thus passed each day until we reached Virginia City,
Montana, our first stopping place which was rather
a lively mining town, in which we played two evenings
to large audiences. Then we left for Helena, where
we were splendidly received, playing a week to
standing room only. If I remember correctly, there was then no admission to the theatre under $1.50, while $2.00 or $2.50 was the price for reserved seats... Many officers from Fort Shaw came over to attend our entertainments, being very enthusiastic and urging us to visit the Fort... We started for the Post, a long stage ride from Helena.

After three weeks at Fort Shaw, Mr. Vivian played a one-night stand at Fort Benton, possibly returned to Helena before he continued his tour to Butte, Bozeman, Missoula, Deer Lodge, Fort Ellis, Fort Buford, and from there he left the Territory, sailing down the Missouri, perhaps to stop at Bismarck, Fargo, and Manitsha.

Fort Benton, though more conveniently located for the visits of traveling actors and actresses, situated as it was at the Montana junction with the Missouri River passageway to St. Louis, never had a theatre of its own. As late as 1880, when Kate Putnam was waiting to fill her engagement at the Ming Opera House, the only place she could perform in Fort Benton was in an old warehouse.

Fort Benton's Overland Hotel was the place where in June 1875 Mr. Wm. Hyde gave his "Grand Sterioptic Exhibition," with "apparatus of the most improved kind... illuminated by an oxy-calcium light capable of throwing a clear disc thirty feet in diameter." His projections included everything from views of Yellowstone Park to Statuary.

The Fort Shaw Dramatic Association made occasional trips to

281. Benton Record, June 19, 1875.
Benton to perform for the populace there. Other than these productions, all that is known of the early theatrical activities in Fort Benton is found in the following chronological assortment of press clippings.

Sept. 4, 1875 Why can't we have minstrel performances at Benton during the coming long winter nights. (sic.) There is musical and other talent in town sufficient to organize an excellent amateur troupe, which we are sure would meet with hearty support. 282

Sept. 18, 1875 Mr. John Maguire, a comedian of unusual ability, will entertain the residents of Benton, this evening, with an 'olio of oddities, comprising grand dress recitals, character sketches, and Irish specialties. As an elocutionist, Mr. Maguire is said to be second to none in the country, while his humor is of a superior order to that of the famous Alf Burnett. The Independent and Herald speak highly of Mr. Maguire's performances at Helena, and we have no doubt he will be equally appreciated at Benton. 283

Dec. 5, 1875 A minstrel troupe has been organized, with Mr. John Murphy as manager. The members expect to give their first performance on or about the 15th inst. . . . We understand that the program for the first performance . . . will consist of three negro farces, a stump speech, and a comic quartette (sic.), besides songs, dances, &c. 284

Dec. 18, 1875 The first performance of the Fort Benton Minstrel Troupe came off on Monday evening, and all circumstances considered the entertainment was very creditable to the Troupe. 285

Jan. 1, 1876 The Minstrel Troupe gave their second entertainment, on Monday evening, to a crowded house.

283. Benton Record, Sept. 4, 1875.
284. Ibid., Sept. 18, 1875.
285. Ibid., Dec. 18, 1875
286. Ibid., Jan. 1, 1876.
Jan. 15, 1876  The Fort Benton Minstrels will perform to-night, without fail, the manager having recovered from a serious disinclination to straighten his neck. 287 The Troupe will also perform again on the 25th instant.

Feb. 5, 1876  The Benton Minstrels have closed for the season. . . . A series of dramatic entertainments, for the purpose of obtaining funds to build a church and establish a library at Benton, are spoken of. 288

The soldiers at other military posts in the Montana territory organized local minstrel shows and dramatic entertainments from time to time. There was an early theatre at Fort Ellis. At a loss of three thousand five hundred dollars it burned to the ground in 1872. The Farrell troupe which had been playing at this Fort Ellis Theatre went into Bozeman after the accident "to raise money for the creation of a theatre building to take the place of the one recently destroyed by fire. The Fort Logan soldiers formed a Fort Logan Dramatic Company, "completed their new hall," and gave entertainments.

Will Cave remembered and recorded some theatrical activity on the part of those stationed at Fort Missoula.

Late in the fall of 1877, just before they were relieved by the 3rd infantry, the soldiers of the 'Fighting 7th,' stationed at Fort Missoula gave a minstrel performance at the courthouse, which, while not strictly professional, bordered that. . . nearly in its excellence. . . . One of their songs (was) 'Gideon's Band.' 292

287. Benton Record, Jan. 15, 1876.
288. Ibid., Feb. 5, 1876.
290. Ibid., Feb. 24, 1872.
291. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, April 1, 1880.
Like the Forts, each small town in the Montana Territory, "had its day" as a place that adequately rewarded the visits of courageous acting troupes. Diamond City, for example, was looking back "to the remembrance of her days of former greatness" by 1879.

Deer Lodge county prospered from 1865 to 1870, the placer mines there producing "more than $20,000,000 in gold dust."

The valleys were well settled with prosperous ranchers. The town of Deer Lodge was the center of education and refinement for the territory, many families moved to town and built beautiful homes because of the superior educational advantages. Every branch of business was represented by large and substantial establishments.

This was the sort of community that drew Boulon's Minstrel troupe from Helena in 1869. Fred White's group of dancing girls appeared there the same month. Of not quite such high class as the other theatrical companies was,

Dick White the irrespressible (who) turned up in Deer Lodge with another entertainment for the boys this week, consisting of vocal and instrumental music, dancing and gymnastics. The music was of the Italian persuasion, and although a suggestion of garlic pervaded each warbled note, and the violins were played upside down, and the harps looked as though they had been 'hung on the willows' too long, it was probably very good. ...

293. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Sept. 11, 1879.
295. Ibid., p. 34.
296. Montana Post, May 14, 1869.
Mlle. Forestell, the contortionist, included Deer Lodge as she collected "astonished audiences" throughout the territory in 1871. John Maguire faithfully visited "all the principal camps" in Deer Lodge County in 1875. 1880 brought Katie Putnam on the tour that has so frequently been mentioned before and Charley Adams, the actor who had been having a run of bad luck.

The citizens of Deer Lodge gave a benefit that...must have been welcome to that gentleman. Every seat in O'Neil's Hall was sold. Mr. Adams was in Helena that day, and the Deer Lodge people hearing he would not get there soon enough for the performance, sent out a carriage which met him some ten miles. (from) Deer Lodge and took him into town.

Miss Henrietta Irving also gave two or three performances in Deer Lodge in 1880.

The troupes of Mr. Jack Langrishe and Mr. J. A. Sawtelle were the two expected local visitors in most of the smaller Montana towns in the 1870's. As early as 1870 Jack Langrishe was putting himself on record as a dancer for his "Beartown friends," as he wandered "across the range" from Helena, "in the vicinity of Beartown, Missoula, and Cedar Creek." By 1879 Mr. Sawtelle sent out to all towns in the region "his new daily advertising sheet for his dramatic company." He was willing

300. New Northwest, Nov. 5, 1875.
301. Morning Capitol, June 20, 1880.
302. Ibid., May 22, 1880.
304. Ibid., Aug. 11, 1870.
to tour to any place where they might be well received, even so small a town as Silver City.

John Maguire always claimed that he was the real pioneer actor in Montana. He traveled afoot, by stage, and on horseback to nearly everything in camp in the area. Coming from the "grand" days of the theatre in San Francisco, he nevertheless found Cottonwood Hall in Deer Lodge or the old Beartown hotel adequate enough places in which to render his monologues. A born Irishman, speaking through life with a strong Irish brogue, Mr. Maguire undoubtedly could do such pieces as Shamus O'Brien to perfection. His tongue must, however, have been something of a handicap when he attempted readings from Shakespeare. If the days after 1880 were followed by this paper, John Maguire would eventually be credited with nearly a monopoly on the theatre business of the State of Montana. But by 1896 he was controlling theatres in Butte, Anaconda, and Great Falls, and with the first railroads bringing some of the biggest theatrical names of the day into the State to perform.

In 1872 John Maguire, who afterwards for many years was manager of the Maguire opera house in Butte, and of the Maguire 'circuit', appeared at Beaupre Brothers' store in Forest City in a number of Irish character sketches. Yet I remember that his rendition of Shamus O'Brien appealed considerably to my sense of admiration of heroics. Maguire inclined pretty considerably to the tragic, and while his elocution was little at fault, his selection generally was along a vein too serious to bring him extraordinary popularity as a one-man entertainer.

Fanny Morgan Phelps was another pioneer who had the courage

to adventure off the beaten track. In 1866 and again in 1868, this talented actress played not only in Virginia City but also in Leavenworth where audiences were delighted with her "personations, and that, too, not without good reason."

Two final examples of cheerful touring companies were Backenstos' Museum which in 1875,

...having returned from a highly successful trip to Fort Shaw, Sun River, Benton and other camps... will exhibit in Missoula next Tuesday, Renchton Wednesday, Stevensville Friday and Corvallis on Saturday evening. Returning thence, the exhibition will be given at Gwendale, Silver Bow, Butte, and camps in that direction.309

Mr. Backenstos' exhibit included Traul's Legerdemain Entertainmen

The other even earlier troupers were the Metropolitan Concert and Dramatic Troupe, composed of Ned Ward, Miss Daisy Dean, Mr. Foss and others. After playing to crowded houses in Helena in 1867, they stepped out of that center to perform for the citizens of Blackfoot City and Diamond City.

Diamond City itself formed the Sensation Minstrel Company in 1879. After playing to fifty dollar houses "(which is remarkably good for Diamond)", they traveled to Radersburg, 311 Centerville, and Canyon Ferry.

A summary of the theatrical activities in early Missoula, Montana, has been written by Will Cave, who remembers many of the performances of which he speaks.

308. Montana Post, Sept. 25, 1868.
309. New North West, Aug. 6, 1875.
310. Helena Herald, May 24, 1867.
311. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, March 6, 1879.
Sometime early in 1874 a jolly, devil-may-care darky called Charley Summers, who had served a term in the territorial prison for having been so careless with other men's horses; with seven or eight stranded white companions organized a minstrel show in Deer Lodge and came to Missoula and played in the old Kennedy house barroom. . . . Their curtain raiser was 'Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the day etc.' We youngsters of the town, never having known anything of the kind, thought the show great, but I guess it was strictly 'rotten' all right, even for that day. . . . the minstrels went on the rocks here and disbanded.

Not long after a 'slight-of-hand' performer, with his assistant, and with an 'educated pig' as an added attraction came to town and his opera house was also the Kennedy hotel barroom. He had quite a number of rather clever tricks up his sleeve which he brought forth upon the occasion, but, my recollection of the patronage is such that I can scarcely comprehend how he and assistant managed to get out of the country whole unless they may have translated the pig's education into pork chops.

In the winter of 1875-76, probably playing here for a week, and keeping an audience of 30 or 40 attending every night, came to Missoula Charley Vivian, accompanied by his wife. . . . At that time the Masonic Hall was the second story of the otherwise vacant building which had been Worden & Company's first store in the town. . . . In this hall Vivian gave his show. While Mrs. Vivian assisted him with rather indifferent rendition of one or two recitations each evening, such as 'Curfew' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. It was Vivian himself who was in reality the 'whole show'. He was very attractive, and had a wonderful repertoire of catchy songs and dances, never seeming to repeat himself. (Dialect and character songs and monologue.) He had a rather good voice; but it was his jolly stage personality which brought the town to his feet the first night. . . . He brought a collection of then up-to-date songs, some of which I recall distinctly: 'Jersey Sam the Farmer's Man', 'You'll Never Miss the Water Till the Well Runs Dry', 'Castles in the Air', and 'Silver Threads Among the Gold'; but his great hit was the song and dance skit: 'Ten Thousand
Miles Away'. In this he appeared in the guise of a London 'pickpocket', his monologue was descriptive of the tribulations of the sneak thief while the song announced his preparation to 'go to his true love' who had been transported to a 'penal colony' 10,000 miles away. The dance was a set of peculiar shuffling steps, which, he explained, because of overfrequent sentences to the 'treadmill' had become habitual. This he continued without cessation, during the 'turn'.

...His convivial nature...responded...

often to the call of the 'cup that cheers'.

The next attraction was 'Taylor, the Wizard'.

...Either in 1876 or 1877 at fair time, Taylor entertained the people here with a series of exhibitions in the old courtroom; and...as a first class interpreter of the illusions of legerdemain, he would be hard to beat even today. His 'Pandora's Box' or as he called it 'The Turkish Box Mystery', could not be excelled. By the time Dwight Harding and Pete Hauton finished with throwing a diamond hitch and tying packer's knots on each the box and Taylor himself, he had sure enough to exercise more than ordinary magic in order to exgricate (sic.) himself from the rope, slip out of a sewed up sack and into that box in less than two minutes time.

Late in 1878; a Taylor family came to town and furnished entertainment for several nights. The nine-year-old daughter of the family was the chief attraction. As a juvenile performer she evidenced considerable precocious ability and gained a townful of admirers. She returned some five or six years later but at that time seemed not to have made any great hit...

Missoula's first genuine dramatic treat was occasioned by 'Nellie Boyd' and her company, who came in August 1879. Her leading man was 'Hasenwinkle'. Her support generally was very satisfactory. The company, organized in San Francisco, toured the territory by private conveyance. The initial performance in the courthouse was 'Fanchon, the Cricket'. The town attended, and it returned as eachnight in succession followed, 'East Lynne', 'The Hidden Hand' and 'The Celebrated Case'. The company went to Stevensville, where it played two nights and, returning, another night here. Considering how
meagerly the efforts of the members were supplemented by the scant stage accessories which they were compelled to carry with them, their plays were remarkably well presented, evincing not only a reasonably high order of histrionic ability, but also the spirit of true pioneers as they braved the hardships and inconveniences of travel incident to conditions then existing.

A couple of months later, J. Al. Sawtelle, who was conducting a theatre in Helena, brought his company to Missoula, playing four or five nights. 'Ten Nights in a Barroom' was the company's 'hit', though the other plays given were almost equally meritorious in attractiveness. Sawtelle himself was the drawing card. His support averaged up about equally with the Nellie Boyd people but there was no leading lady to compare with Nellie Boyd.

... .Katie Putnam. . .came with her company in mid-summer of 1880. Her opening number was also a 'Fanchon, the Cricket', and immediately in the hearts of those who were privileged to witness her portrayal of the 'Cricket', she was acclaimed to the title which she held undisputed for a score of years: 'Montana's favorite'. Petite, sprightly, vivacious, depicting juvenile characters with charming naivette (sic), even until the days long after the silver touched her hair, no other actress small or great has ever gripped the hearts of Montana theater-going people as did Katie Putnam.

The theatrical history of Missoula in the days after 1880 centers in Daniel E. Bandmann, a Shakespearian actor of international reputation, who bought a ranch in Hell-gate Canyon, a mile outside Missoula, and settled there for the rest of his life. The records of the County Clerk's office in Missoula show that it was 1889 before Bandmann secured his first grant of land in Montana from the Government. But

312. Will Cave, article in the Missoulian, March 28, 1922.
even if he had been living in the region for from two to
give years in order to be able to claim such land, a date
past 1880 makes the cycle of his life on and off stage in
Missoula, Montana, material outside the bounds of this paper.

Butte, too, had "aspirations to be the pride of Montana,
leaving Helena a wallflower who had had her day."

In the early sixties a few prospectors, looking for
gold, pitched their tents on the site of what is
now Butte. And a little later, and some farther up
the side of the hill, a few log cabins were built
and the camp staked out and named Butte City, for
it was near a barren hill called Big Butte, and so
the spectacular city of Butte was born to become
the most noted camp in the world, and about fifty-
two nationalities are represented today, and their influence adds to the picturesqueness of the camp.

But it was not until 1885 that Butte really became a "hustling,
bustling mining town", so most of its theatrical stories
come too late for this paper to cover. Without stating what
years the buildings mentioned were in use, an article in the
Montana Standard in December 1930, gives the following facts
on the early theatres of Butte.

The first show house in Butte was the old Renshaw
hall, located on the upper story of what is now
(1930) the Terminal drug store on West Park Street
. . . .Professor George LaFord and Professor
Coutare held forth there as . . . dancing masters. . . . all
big dances were held there, and when a good show
came to town, that is where it held forth. . . .

A little later the theatrical center of the town
shifted to the Alaska building at the corner of
Granite and Alaska streets. Good shows continued
to come here and that is where the people saw them
for a number of years. 315

313. Carrie Adell Strahon, 15,000 Miles by Stage, (G. P.

314. George Wesley Davis, Sketches of Butte, (The Cornhill
Company, Boston, Mass., 1921) p. 149.

One night a friend came to me and said: 'How would you like to go to the theater, and after that just wander around a little and take in some of the sights?' I was a stranger in town at the time and was glad of the opportunity.

We started out and turned into Main Street and on down the hill. In front of a building with a sign over the door, 'The Comique,' a crowd was standing on the sidewalk. He turned to me and said: 'We'll go around in the alley and enter that way; that's where the respectable people go in.

We went to the next street below and walked on until we came to an alley. Not far up the passageway a light hung over a door. He opened the door and we passed up a narrow flight of stairs leading to the gallery—as it was called. In reality, it was a circle of stall-like boxes, each place a compartment with a bolt on the inside of the door and a small slide where drinks were passed in.

The front of the box—as it was called—that looked down upon the stage and floor below was enclosed by a wire netting. A scene was painted on this screen, the effect being that the occupants of the compartment could see all that was going on and not be seen from floor or stage.

On the floor below sawdust was sprinkled. Tables for four were here and there about the auditorium. Girls in gaudy evening dress were waitresses and entertainers. At intervals one would mount a table and do a terpsichorean stunt, much to the amusement of the loungers.

The performance on the stage was on the order of our present-day vaudeville, with a few extras to suit the occasion. An encore was the signal for boisterous applause and the throwing of coins at the artist. Many a coin went which might otherwise have gone to buy a loaf of bread for a hungry child, or helped to pay for a gown for a deserving wife.

We had been there but a short time when my friend said: 'Please excuse me for a moment; I hear a familiar voice in the next box.'
In a few moments he returned. 'We're invited in next door,' he said, with an amused smile.

We went in. There were two occupants of the box: my landlord and a painted beauty seated on his lap. Soon a tray with drinks on was passed through the slide. A small red ticket was on the tray, and the painted beauty quickly reached out her hand and took the bit of cardboard and put it in her stocking. It represented her commission.

We stayed but a short time in this place and then went out into the fresh air. 316

By May of 1879, the Sawtelle troupe from Helena was visiting Butte fairly frequently. Richelieu by this company had its first production in Butte, and

was such an artistic success that the citizens of that place requested a repetition of the same, which request was complied with to a crowded house. . .of delighted auditors, and all present pronounced it the finest performance ever given in Montana. 317

By the first of May the following year this same company was back in Butte again to play for two weeks.

It was not until 1880, that Butte could boast of an amateur dramatic association. One of the plays performed by this organization was *the society drama, Bread upon the Waters.*

The great theatrical days for Butte came much later when John Maguire opened the first "real" theatre, located where the Leggat Hotel was standing in 1930. It is a matter of record that in his attempt to give the people of Butte a high-class theatre, he sent all the way to New York for a company of

layers to make a special trip to produce Adrienne LeCouise on the opening night. The gayety of his premiere performance rivaled that of the King Opera House with which he had been so closely associated until a quarrell with Mr. King caused his departure for Butte. The programs for the Maguire Opera House opening were printed on white satin with the names of the players in gold.

All the elite of Butte, including the many mining figures of that day, occupied the box seats. Women were dressed in the most fashionable gowns that Fifth Avenue shops in New York could supply and the array in the dress circle was one that would have graced the best theatre in any land in the world. The play was a great success and Maguire felt that he had started on the road to real success.

It was not long, however, before misfortune overtook him and his fine playhouse burned to the ground.

The citizens of Butte helped him rebuild and to this new theatre with the coming of the railroads came all the great players of the late '80's and early 1900's—Fanny Davenport, Mrs. Fiske, Madame Modjeska, Maude Adams, William Faversham, Blanche Bates, DeWolfe Hopper, Eddie Fay, Maxine James Ahern, Gillette Burgess, Theodore Lorch, Wilton Lackaye, Melbourne McDowell, Robert Mantel, Billie Burke, Margaret Anglin, Mlle. Rhea, Richard Mansfield, Elliott. The later days in this Opera House in Butte, as in the Helena and Later Butte theatre history is full of gay and frequently scandalous material about players like Nat Goodwin, Daniel Bandmann, Charlie Chaplin's first movie offer coming while he was in Butte, Sarah Bernhardt

being refused a theatre by the Erlanger trust, trade union trouble, and quarrels between the various Montana theatre magnates. Uncle Dick Sutton, "the dean of the theatrical business in Montana," packed enough weird experiences into his life to fill a book.

Four other Montana cities came into the theatrical spotlight later than 1880: Billings and Bozeman where Thos. Flanigan started opera houses in 1883; Great Falls which saw its first theatrical performance in 1886, in an old store on Central Avenue, and Anaconda where the Evans Opera House was constructed in 1885.

Scattered bits of program material, advertisements, and bill poster evidence in the Appendix to this Chapter show how elaborate and full the theatrical days of Montana grew after 1880.

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CHAPTER I
APPENDIX A

Amateur Entertainments
Amateur Entertainment.—On Friday evening of last week the best Amateur Entertainment we remember to have seen anywhere was given at Wilcox Hall to a crowded house, and by general desire repeated on Tuesday evening of this week to an excellent audience. The following, with little variation, was the programme for both evenings:

Lochiel's Warning, John Forbin and Chas. Miller

Charade—A Thorn Among the Roses
Mrs. Candor—Principal of Rosebud Institute—Lucy Hammond
Patience Plunkett—Oldest of Her Pupils—Emma Butcher
Lucy, Bessie, Jane, Jane Augusta, Marie—Pupils—Nettie Rogers, Minnie Miller, Lizzie Self, Nellie Goff, Nannie Kelley
Bridget Maloney—Cook—Mina Bailey
Tom Candor—Mrs. Candor's Nephew—T. P. Aspling
Job Seeding—Lad-of-all-work—Charles Miller

Ballad—"Silver Threads Among the Gold"—Miss Ella M. Wright

Acting Charade—Library
Mr. Fitz Hugh Brown—Ignorant Fop—Rhett Wiles
Mr. Walter Hanson—Educated Gentleman—T. P. Aspling
Dick Grey—Impudent Brother of Young Ladies—Johnnie Miller
Mrs. Grey—Sensible Sister of Evelyn—Lizzie Self
Mary Grey—Very Dressy, Affected and Silly—Nannie Kelley
Mr. Billington—Lecturer for the Benefit of the Presbyterian Church—J. F. Forbis

Down by the Sea—A Drama in 2 Acts

Abner Raymond—A City Merchant—T. P. Aspling
Capt. Dandelion—Really a City Favorite—Rhett Wiles
John Gale—A Fisherman—Charles Aspling
September Gale and March Gale—Proteges of John Gale—J. F. Forbis—Charles Miller
Jean Crapeau—Old French Peddler—Henry Leach
Kate Raymond—A City Belle—Nannie Kelley
Mrs. Gale—John Gales Wife—Lucy Hammond
Kitty Gale—John Gale's Daughter—Lizzie Self
ELOCUTIONARY ENTERTAINMENT.--It is but once in long periods that we Montanians are now gratified by genuine worthy entertainments: still more seldom by Dramatic Readings of merit. We have an opportunity now. Mr. Carl B. Plummer is announced to give an entertainment at the Court House, on Thursday and Saturday evenings of this week, which we are sure will give amplest satisfaction. The comments of the press, plain, pointed, and unmistakably commendatory, and the testimony of many witnesses, is assurance beyond all question that especially in his character and humorous delineations he is most excellent. We are disposed, therefore, to recommend all who enjoy a fine recitation to go both times—the first time anyhow. The selection for Thursday evening includes the following:

Paul Revere's Ride.......................... Longfellow
The Grave of Adam.......................... Mark Twain
The Skinned Man............................ Mark Twain
No Sect in Heaven.......................... Mackay
Schneider's Ride on der Mool.............. K B
The Blue and the Gray...................... Finch
The Little Hero............................ Mathison
Widow Bedott (in costume).................. Mrs. Witcher
Molly Muldoon................................ Anonymous
Courtin' Patty Bigelow...................... Anonymous
Harp uv a Tha-o-u-san Ster-ings ahi....... Anonymous
The -------'s Sister Nancy............... Sanders

The second entertainment on Saturday evening will be of other selections and such repetitions as may be requested. Mr. Plummer will give an entertainment at Blackfoot on Monday evening, and on Wednesday go to Pioneer, New Chicago, Philipsburg, Missoula and perhaps other northern towns. We bespeak for him good audiences.

*****

The New North-West
August 20, 1875

Carl B. Plummer's Entertainments. During the past week Mr. Plummer has given two entertainments here to large and
Rightful audiences. His readings, especially those of eccentric character and humor, are excellent. His Widow Bedott, imitations of Mark Twain, delineations of Yankee, German and Irish characters and hard shell sermons are all fine and hard to be surpassed. The Professor has a full repertoire of selections and, with an apparently inexhaustible fund of anecdote, can entertain an audience night after night with unabated interest. In conception of character and in thorough impersonation of that assumed, he is a true actor. In reading he evidenced good elocutionary ability and in versatile facial expression he is a master artiste. The entertainments he gives are the best of the kind we have had in Montana, and those who delight in a good hearty laugh should not lose the opportunity of hearing him. The Professor goes hence to the Northern camps and we recommend our readers to give him good houses assured they will be gratified.

The New North-West

October 8, 1875

Maguire's Entertainment.—Mr. John Maguire, of Virginia, Nevada, a cousin of Thomas Maguire, the noted Pacific Coast Manager, is billed for an entertainment this (Thursday) evening. Mr. Maguire has been for several years in the leading stock companies of San Francisco and Virginia as delineator of eccentric characters, taking a summer tour as far east as the Mississippi each season. This year he has followed up the river to give a few entertainments in Montana on his route home. Mr. Maguire has a pleasing address, an actor's face, and comes announced by the press of down-river neighbors and that of Helena as a most excellent reader. His readings embrace selections from Shakespeare, Sheridan, Bulwer, Dickens, Hood, Thackery, Bret Harte, Trowbridge, Poe, etc., and the character pieces are all given in character dress. His "Shamus O'Brien," "Fontenoy," and Poe's "Bells" are especially mentioned as masterly readings, and the entertainment includes selections from the loftiest sentiment to the most touching pathos and finest humor. His reputation is such that we confidently recommend our people to attend, assured that the entertainment will be one of the very best it has been their pleasure to hear. Let us give good entertainments good patronage, that under the tongue of good report Montana may become an attractive field to good artists, and the poorer "shows" become a superfluity.

*****
CHAPTER I

APPENDIX B

Minstrels Shows
Great Western Minstrels.—The people of Virginia City, Nevada have been signal­ly favored this week in the way of amusement. The Great Western Minstrels, possessing super­ior talent in the profession, opened in Templar's Hall on Monday evening to a good house, although contending against unfavorable weather on short notice. Tuesday evening the speech interfered with the attendance, but a fair house greeted them. Both of the performances rendered the most satisfaction, and if laughing has the virtue of increasing one’s corporeal dimensions, we may soon expect to see several embryo aldermen in our community. Messrs. Holman and Sparrow, the leading spirits of the company, have but few superiors in any country as first class minstrels. Their dancing, singing and general performance is difficult to excel in any place. The singing of Miss Holman is remark­ably good, displaying the harmony, sweetness and confidence of an accomplished vocalist. Prof. Wilkenson is excellent and at home in almost any role, and peculiarly so as the delineator of negro eccentricities. Harry Holmes makes a splendid Teuton, and personified "Cider Nick" to perfection. The other members of the troupe, among whom we mention Professor Damme, leader of the orchestra and a finished musician, act their parts well. The company is well worthy of a liberal patronage. The performance is conducted within the limits of strict propriety. They open to-night in the People's Theatre, and present an entirely new and attractive programme.

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The Montanian

May 30, 1872

North Pacific Concert Saturday Night

The young gentlemen composing the Amateur Minstrel Com-
The Northern Pacific Minstrels.—This organization of amateurs gave their concert as per announcement, on Saturday evening at Driggs' Hall. To say that the entertainment proved a success would be drawing it very mild. Half an hour after the doors were opened the Hall was crowded to its utmost capacity, and we believe we make no misstatement when we say it was undoubtedly the finest and largest audience that has ever assembled in Montana to witness a Minstrel performance. The burnt cork professionals who have visited our city have not been of a class to inspire much confidence, and have consequently have only drawn an auditory of masculine lines. This was a different affair altogether. The performance was gotten up as a contribution to the amusement of our citizens—both ladies and gentlemen, and attracted to the footlights all who very well leave their homes and business. The assemblage was largely composed of ladies, and we were pleased to notice, the "little ones" were not left at home, but brought along to enjoy the (to them) glorious evening. The programme lasted nearly two hours, consisted of a variety of good things well performed, and, if we judge from the enthusiastic manner in which the various pieces were applauded and the many favorable comments on the street next day, it gave satisfaction throughout. We know the gentlemen compos-
ing the organization do not covet fame in the profession they
had but adopted for the evening, and are quite satisfied to
realize that their efforts and motives were so well appreciated
by the good people of Virginia; we therefore mention no
names, but congratulate them as a company upon the achieve-
ments of the evening. To the Business Manager of the enter-
tainment, who in himself is a whole "committee of arrange-
ments," is due much credit for the efficient and generous
labor bestowed toward the success of the performance. The
receipts of the evening were $179.00, which will pay all ex-
penses and leave a handsome gift to charities.


CHAPTER II

APPENDIX A

1. Reviews of the Opening of the Montana Theatre, Virginia City, Montana, December 1864.

2. Reviews of the Keystone Gymnastic Club, Montana Theatre, Virginia City, Montana, June and July 1865.

Montana Post

December 10, 1864

Local and other items.

THE NEW THEATRE.---The New Montana will open this evening, and will be the neatest, most comfortable and pleasant place of the kind in the territory. No expense has been spared to render the house warm and comfortable. The seats are so arranged, that all can have an unobstructed view of the stage. The scenery which is all new and beautiful, was painted by De Witt Waugh, and reflects credit on his heretofore well earned reputation as an artist. The traps, machinery, etc., were made by Wm. J. Norwood, who has also the working of the stage; his experience amply qualifies him for the position. The musical department will be a feature in the performance and includes the best musica (sic) talent in the country. The company includes Jas. M. Martin, John Jack, James Miller, William Norwood, De Witt Waugh, Davy Smith, John Heidlinger, Jack Speed, J. Babcock, Geo. Barclay, Alex. Olhausen, Miss Mary Kendall, Miss Emma Perkins, and Mrs. Flora Caven. The opening bill will be the beautiful comedy of "Faint Heart never won Fair Lady", comic and sentimental songs, and a grand overture by the orchestra, which of itself was well worth the price of admission. The performance to conclude with the roaring farce of the "Spectre Bridegroom." An efficient police will be on hand to enforce order. The curtain will rise at 8 o'clock, but be there fifteen minutes before to hear the overture.

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Montana Post

December 17, 1864

The Montana Theatre.---On Saturday last, the opening of the Montana theatre was witnessed by a numerous audience. The night was intensely cold, but this did not prevent many of the fair sex from taking their places, long before the hour announced for commencing the performance. The entire arrange-
were very creditable to De Witt Waugh the manager, who appears to be a sort of Genius of the Lamp on a small scale; providing, as Robson would say, "chiefly music, scenery, and all other needful substances." Considering the small means at his hand the scenery is a very praiseworthy effort of art. The building is comfortably seated, on the inclined plane principle, so that all can have a good view of the stage. "Painty Heart never won Fair Lady", and the "Spectre Bridegroom" were the bill of fare, and under all the circumstances, we think highly of the performance. Mr. J. M. Martin played "Rue Gomez" with great spirit. Miss Kendall's conception of the boy king was remarkably effective. Miss Perkins did justice to the somewhat difficult part of the Countess. The costumes of the ladies and of Mr. Martin were well chosen. The Marquis of Santa Cruz was personated by Mr. J. H. Jack. Don Pedro fell to the lot of Mr. W. J. Norwood and Gomez was supported by Mr. A. Olhausen. Though these parts were not in the first role, yet they were fairly represented and the curtain fell amidst loud applause. The superior music of the band tended much to enhance the enjoyment of the spectators. Miss Flora Caven sang "Annie Laurie" and Mr. James G. Miller gave "Villikens and his Dinah" by way of interlude. Both were loudly and deservedly encored. Mr. Miller, as "Diggory", in the farce was far ahead of most amateurs and will make a good low comedian in due time. As it is, a slight decrease of effort and a clearer articulation would render his comic singing excellent. The farce went off with eclat. On Tuesday, "Love in Humble Life", followed by "Keep your Temper" drew a good house and the acting was, on the whole, an improvement over that of Monday. As the company gets accustomed to each other, and opportunities of close study are afforded, there will be little room for criticism on the score of exactness and perfect knowledge of the parts....so important in all historic delineations; especially in those not otherwise prominent. Being free from those immoral surroundings so objectionable in many theatres, we trust folks at the Montana will succeed in their enterprise as caterers for the public amusement. The farce, "To Oblige Benson!", played on Tuesday night, was far ahead of all preceding performances, and would have done credit to any theatre.

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The Montana Post
April 15, 1865
Local

Montana Theatre.---This attractive place of public
Amusement opened on Monday, under the management of Collins & Co., with the celebrated drama, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The company exerted themselves to the utmost in the delineation of the characters assigned to them, and succeeded admirably. A most pleasing feature in the representation was the appearance of Miss Isora Matthews as "Eva." The audience testified by repeated and well-earned applause that, by so young and totally inexperienced a player, there has seldom been witnessed in any theatre, a more touching or truthful representation of the part assigned to her. The conversation with Uncle Tom and St. Clair, and the death scene, brought tears to many a hardy mountaineer. The impersonation of "Topsy" by T. O. Duncan, was of the first order of art, and took immensely. This opinion would be indorsed in New York and London. J. H. Jack fully maintained his reputation in the part of "Uncle Tom," and Collins as "George Harris," and more especially as "Gumption Cute," highly delighted the spectators. W. J. Norwoods' "Marks" was given with great humor and effect. We were much pleased with Mr. Martin's rendering of "St. Clair," which improved every night. In "Deacon Ferry" he was also highly successful. Lon McCarthy gave "Legree" on Wednesday evening, in a manner superior to anything he has yet attempted except "Blueskin." Mr. Ohlhausen made a step in advance by acting as "Phineas Fletcher," and the auctioneer. Master Hosmer played "George Shelby" with truth and correct taste. The remaining male characters, "Shelby" and "Tom Loker," by Messrs. Ward and Fletcher—two amateurs—and "Haley," by Bartley, were very fairly presented. Miss Woods played "Eliza" and "Cass" very finely. Her getting up in "Casey" was perfect. She locked the character, and gave the speech, "Simon Legree, you are afraid of me," etc., with great vim and effect. Miss Perkins was cast for "Miss Orphelia," and Caven was very prettily dressed as "Mrs. St. Clair," which part and that of "Emeline," are better suited to her than any others in the piece. We missed John Heidlinger's clarionet in the orchestra, but the music was very good notwithstanding, and De Witt Waugh's E-flat told very sweetly in the songs by "Uncle Tom" and the final chorus. At the close of the performance on Wednesday, the third night of the piece, Miss Matthews was called before the curtain, and that most deservedly. The call for "Topsy" being unanswered, her representative and some others were minus the honors they would have received. We shall be obliged to postpone our notice of the "Octoroon" until next week, and hope the citizens will patronize the Theatre as it deserves. The "Octoroon" is dramatized from the beautiful tale by Judge Howmer.

Montana Post

June 10, 1865
Montana Theatre.—The Keystone Club will give a grand
exhibition at this well known theatre, tomorrow June 11th.
Billy Sheppard's "Essence" and "Little Tommy's Contortion"
are alone worth the price of admission. 

Montana Post
June 17, 1865

The Keystone Troupe.—The troupe of athletes, Dancers
and Negro Melodists, who are now exhibiting in our city,
gave an entertainment on Wednesday night in the Montana
Theatre. There was not a single performance which could be
called mediocre. W. H. Remington, (the "Mose" of other
days), is a man of vast muscular energy and scientific Acro­
bat. The Indian-Rubber feats of Master Tommy, the pet of
Camp Douglas, were quite above par, and the ludicrous imi­
tations of the clown, I. C. Hoover, were mirth-provoking.
His bodily strength is very great, and displayed to advance
in the feats on the bars. The Violin Medley of O. H. Perry
was very fine and very much enjoyed— it was really good
music. Billy Sheppard's song and Banjo solo were very well
received, and his Essence of Old Virginy is a first class
performance, which would be entertaining six times a week for
the season. The public will patronize this troupe as soon
as they have an opportunity of judging of their merits,
which will be afforded them shortly at Nelson's Leviathan
Hall. This building will from its size and height, accomo­
date both the audience and the gymnasts. The feats on the
trapeze and Corde Volante are always popular, and with such
artists must be both exciting and entertaining. We hope to
see a full house. Tonight's performance will be given at the
Montana Theatre—the weather preventing the completion of
arrangements at Leviathan Hall.

Montana Post
June 24, 1865

The Keystone Troupe having fitted up J. A. Nelson's Le­
viathan Hall, will perform to-morrow evening and Monday. The
space being ample, a large part of the performance hitherto
unavoidably omitted, will now be added to the list of the
attractions. The feats on the Corde Volante and Trapeze are
by far the finest of gymnastic exercises, and decidedly the
most popular. There is a side entrance for ladies. Gentle­
men will pass through the Bar on Wallace Street.
The Chapman Troupe arrived in town this week, and opened the Montana theatre on Wednesday--Mrs. George Chapman appearing as Pauline in the "Lady of the Lyons." The acting of this lady was very good and very well received. The rejection of Beauseant's proffered love, was a severe effort. The fifth set especially was impressively rendered by all the company. Harry Taylor played Claude and Edwin Clark represented Beauseant, both the roles being well sustained. Mr. Geo. Chapman, a veteran of the drama, gave the Colonel very happily, being as touchy, excitable and good hearted as could be wished. We were glad to see our old friend, J. M. Martin, in the parts of Gaspard and Mons. Deschapples. Gaspard was well got and well played. Mr. S. H. Chapman's conception of Glavis was very humorous. Mr. Bartley was also on the stage as the lanlord. Mrs. Caven and Miss Perkins, who were warmly welcomed, played the Widow Melnotte and Madame Deschapples, with good taste and effect. Mrs. Caven, who never looked better on the stage, sang "We Met by Chance" and was loudly applauded and encored. Her "Trust to Luck" was well rendered, and is always a favorite. Mr. George Chapman's "Laughing and Sneezing" and "The Steam Arm" provoked much mirth and applause. In the farce "The Actress of all Work" Mrs. George Chapman exhibited great versatility and judgment. The part of the Actress was excellent.

On Thursday night the "Stranger" was presented, followed by "Diamond Cut Diamond" and excellent farce. Mrs. Geo. Chapman's impersonation of Mrs. Haller, in the closing scene, was that our space does not permit an extension of our remarks this week. We are bound, however, to say that the effort made to present this piece to the public was creditable to the troupe. We were happy to notice in the orchestra, De Witt Waugh, Jack Speed, David Smith and Buz Caven, with whose music we have been so often charmed. We commend the present company to the public patronage and support, and hope to see full houses during the winter.

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The Montana Post

September 23, 1865

Montana Theatre.—The performances at the Montana have
continued every evening, during the past week, and a great variety of pieces have been performed. George Chapman's most artistic impersonation was unquestionably Wormwood in the "Lottery Ticket," and he was very successful as Christy Trap in "The Cobbler and the Lord." His comic singing is well received. Harry Taylor made his mark as Mose, the fireman; he looked like one of the Big Sixsz transplanted. As Julius Dormilly he did well and as Captain Buridan, in the prison scene and death, played with much force. Martin's benefit, on Thursday evening, was a "feature" in the week's performance of considerable interest. "La Tour De Nesle" (Marhuerite of Burgundy) and the "Model Farmer" were presented, the beneficiare playing the brothers D'Auiney very fairly, in the first piece, and Trotter Southdown in the farce, as well as we are likely to see it for many a day. His Robert Macaire was also very good. Mrs. Woods as Marhuerite of Burgundy, never looked as well on the stage, and gave the confession of her crimes with much feeling. Mrs. Southdown was very naturally played and she was well supported by Miss Perkins as Mrs. Benson. W. J. Norwood's Landri would be considered a most creditable impersonation in any theatre. Mrs. Gro. Chapman, a most useful actress, appeared to advantage as Mariette in the "Orphan of Geneva" and Marie in the "Two Murderers of France;" by the role of Nancy in the "Cobbler and the Lord," suited her exactly, and was well rendered. Mrs. Caven's dancing and singing, always popular, are extremely so at present; she was encored twice for her ballads in one evening. The most artistic performances of the week were De Witt Waugh's solos on the guitar, during Martin's benefit; the tone was pure and clear and the execution faultless. Mr. Kline, the violinist is a great addition in the orchestral department. Edwin Clarke's Adam Winterton in the "Victim of Honor" was his best performance, and very well dressed and conceived. Sam Chapman's Capias was our choice among the parts rendered by him, and was a very faithful delineation. Mr. Bartley's Orsini was probably as good as any of his characters.

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The Montana Post
September 30, 1865

Montana Theatre.--The Company at the Montana Theatre deserves to be well patronized for the zeal and assiduity with which they labor for the performance and entertainment of the public. "Black-Eyed Susan" and "Jack Shappard" were successful novelties, among the heavier pieces, and the Comedy Night on which were presented, "A Bull in a China Shop," "The Secret," and "The Dutchman's Ghost," was a merry evening. Mr. George Chapman is a very good comedian. His
acting in the characters of Momos, Delph and Carlitz, in "Love in Humble Life," on last Wednesday evening was much appreciated and applauded. His Colonel Damas is very fine. Harry Taylor acquitted himself well as William, in "Black-Eyed Susan" and played Jonathan Wild and Claude Melnotte with much judgment and taste. His impromptu performance on the violin, on Wednesday, was well received and executed. Edwin Clark's Sir Roland Trenchard and Beauseant were very creditably rendered, especially the former. W. J. Norwood's Mendez revived the old feeling in favor of his conception of this part. S. H. Chapman's Thames Darrell was given with considerable skill, and his Clavis in "The Lady of Lyons" was, in the last scene, very truthfully conceived. Mrs. Chapman's Jack Sheppard did her great credit. It was one of her very best and most successful efforts. As Susan and as Pauline, this lady exhibited great knowledge of her profession. In the latter character, her performance was superior to her first representation of the part. In the last scene, her acting was just and pathetic in a high degree. Miss Emma Perkins played fairly as Mrs. Wood, in "Jack Sheppard," but we liked her Widow Melnotte much better, and as Christine, in "Love in Humble Life," there was a great advance in her usual style of acting. Mrs. Caven's dancing and singing are nightly applauded and encored. "The Low-Backed Car," on Thursday night was much admired. Her Widow Melnotte was her best character. Taken altogether, our theatre is a very pleasant place to while away an evening, and we are sure of good music, in addition to the pleasure derived from the dramatic performance.

The Montana Post

October 7, 1865

The Montana Theatre has been running every night during the past week, and with success. The prominent representations have been "The Rag Picker of Paris", the "Jibbenaino-say" and the "French Spy." "Jack Sheppard" has also been repeated most successfully. We like to see Mrs. Chapman as Jack. She looks the part, which is saying a good deal; and she plays the reckless, dare-devil character with good effect. However, we are of the opinion that her Henri St. Alme and Achmet in the "French Spy" are fully equal in merit to her Jack Sheppard. Her pantomime was excellent. The sword combat with George Chapman, who played the Arab Mohamed, and played it well, was a very creditable performance, (considering sex.) Geo. Chapman's line is low comedy. The sorrows of poor Spike, in the "Loan of a Lover", were more humorously
portrayed. Harry Taylor's "Rag Picker," (Father Jean) was original and well rendered, and his Jibbenainoy was both natural and forcible. A strict attention to his profession, is all that is necessary to make this gentleman a preformer of high merit. Of his talent and versatility, there can be no question. He is an excellent artistic pianist and a good violinist. Dick Johnson deserves much credit for his representation of Jonathon Wild, given only after a few hour's study, and his Sergeant Duborg was a good performance. Joe Rielly, for whose benefit "Jack Sheppard" was played on Wednesday, did well as a young amateur in Owmm Wood and much better in Marshal Beaumont. Edwin Clark's Sir Roland Trenchard, was greatly improved, and his Colonel De Courcy was likewise an advance on his usual style. S. H. Chapman certainly played Tony Beauvais better than any character we have seen him perform. He was often applauded. R. P. Bartley did better as Major Didier, than ever before in this theatre. Mrs. Caven's dance, the Triumph of Cupid, was pretty; but the Highland Fling is her best performance and most heartily enjoyed. Her singing is highly appreciated. In one department this lady excels. Her costume and getting up are always tasteful. Gertrude, in "The Lane of a Lover," was a part in which she succeeded. Miss E. Perkins' best character for some time past was Madam Potard in the "Rag Picker." There was more force in it than in any other character she has played this season. The company take great pains to amuse the public, and we hope they will continue to be supported. Mrs. Chapman's benefit is fixed for Monday night, and we hope she will have a full house.

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The Montana Post
October 14, 1865

Montana Theatre.--The heavy rain in the beginning of the week, and the miry state of our thoroughfares, prevented any preformance at the Theatre, for some days. The pieces we feel bound to notice especially are "The Drunkard" and "Ireland as it is." The two characters are Edward Middleton, by Edwin Clarke, and Bill Dowton, by Dick Johnson, were about equally well played, and both elicited round after round of applause. Each preformer has found his best part in this play. The Drunkard in "Delirium Tremens," was a finished piece of acting and not exaggerated. "Bill Dowton's" dance with "Miss Spindle," (Miss Perkins) procured for both performances a perfect ovation. George Chapman's best sentimental character hitherto, was Dan O'Darolan. The parting scene
with the children, washingly natural and pathetic. Joe Rielly
did surprisingly well in Neil O'Carolan, and S. H. Chapman,
who improves nightly, made a decided hit in "Ragged Pat."
Mrs. Chapman gave a very artistic impersonation of Mary Wil-
son, but her triumph was in Judy O'Trot, on Thursday, her ben-
efit night, in which she so pleased the audience, that she
was called before the curtain amid a tumult of applause. Miss
Perkins was very happy in her conception of Miss Spindle. It
did her great credit. The "bonnet" might have been worshipped
without any breach of the 2nd commandment, seeing that it was
unique, being the likeness of nothing terrestrial or celestial.
Mrs. Caven's Agnes was prettily dressed and nicely given. Her
dance as the Alma in the "French Spy," was light and aerial to
a degree, beyond her usual role. The acting of La Petite
Belle Chapman, as Julia the "Drunkard's" child, was amazingly
natural and easy. Her song, My Mother Dear, was given with a
power of voice, very unusual in so young a preformer. We
shall soon lose our troupe, for a time, at least, and we com-
mem them to the people of Helena, as worthy of their patron-
age and support. Mrs. Kidder, the Agent, will start for Last
Chance, early in the week, to make the necessary arrangements
and the company will follow, probably on Saturday. We wish
them a profitable time there, and a speedy return. In the
long Winter evenings their performance will be specially ac-
ceptable.

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The Montana Post

October 21, 1865

Montana Theatre.—Mrs. Caven's and Edwin Clarke's bene-
fits, on Tuesday and Thursday evening, respectively, have
been the leading features of the week's performances. The
former was a comedy night, and passed off with eclat. "Bet-
sy Baker," "Jenny Lind" and "Poor Phillicoddy" were the
pieces selected, Mrs. Caven playing Betsy Baker, Jenny
Leatherlungs and Sarah Blunt, (her best role). In all of
these characters she appeared to good advantage. Her arith-
metic in the latter personation, was of the most amusing
character, and her dancing of the Cracovienne was very neat
and pretty. Mrs. Chapman's Mrs. O'Scuttle is remarkably hu-
morous, and her Portia, in the "Merchant of Venice," was
given with much judgment and effect. Miss Perkins played
Mrs. Phillicoddy with an animation and force very creditable
to her. Edwin Clark was cast for Shylock, on Thursday, and
in that most difficult character, acquitted himself well.
Geo. Chapman's Phillicoddy excited much laughter. S. H.
Chapman's telescopic practice as O'Scuttle amused the audi-
ence amazingly. Joe Reilly improves in his acting, and for
inexperienced a performer, he manages his costume and "get up" very well. His impersonation of the Bermondsey Tanner was improved, both in the action and in the style of delivery. Dick Johnson's Gramby Gag, in "Jenny Lind" was highly comic, and his "Cousin Joe" which he played in company with Mrs. Caven as Margery, was an excellent performance. Mrs. Caven's part was also very nicely rendered. W. J. Norwood's song, "The Low-Backed Car"—his first effort of the kind in the city—was, by unanimous consent, pronounced the best given in that line in the Montana Theatre. He should not hide his candle under a bushel.

The Montana Post
October 28, 1865

The Montana Theatre.—This week the Fenians had their complimentary benefit, and despite the snow-storm and the cold, turned out well, and they were rewarded for their exertions by a good time. The evening's performance included the representation of "The Stranger," "The Dagger Scene," "The Wife," a song from Little Belle, and the farce of "The Two Gregorys." George Chapman played the Stranger with sedateness and melancholy as in his former representation of the character. He created much mirth in the character of Gregory, (the servant.) Mrs. Chapman's representation of Mrs. Haller was, at times, highly pathetic and generally effective. Dick Johnson made an excellent Solomon, and a highly comic Gregory (Master) in the farce and W. J. Norwood's Peter was amazingly droll. Miss Perkins looked remarkably well, on the stage, as the Countess, and plays with more force and energy every time. Little Belle sang her song, The Captain with His Whiskers, in a very naive and amusing manner, and was highly applauded. In "The Dagger Scene" Peter Ronan, one of the Brotherhood, whom we claim as belonging to the confraternity of types, really deserved much credit for his acting as Julian St. Pierre. It was not exaggerated, but was played artistically, and with a most correct appreciation of the plot. Edwin Clarke, whose peculiarity is that he invariably plays the hardest parts best, gave Ferrando very well; he looked frightened, which is not either easy to do, or common to see. Much disappointment was caused by the absence of Buz and Mrs. Caven, (on account of the weather, said the manager.) De Witt Waugh—who plays "Still Waters Run Deep" in every day life—after taking the violin part for some time, with good tone and execution, seized his favorite silvery horn, and, turning the musicians into a brass band, gave a creditable performance, on short notice. We understand that the groupe
started for Helena in the beginning of the week. For the present, they are starring it as Nevada.

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CHAPTER II.
APPENDIX B.

Peoples Theatre, Virginia City, Montana, 1866.
1. Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Irwin and Company—reviews.
2. Miss Belle Douglas—reviews.
3. Julia Dean Haynes—reviews.
People’s Theatre.—The People’s Theatre opened on Saturday night and it is with great pleasure that we announce both this fact, and the highly entertaining character of the performance. The manager, Dick Johnson, has fitted up the hall over the Montana Billiard Saloon with great taste, and De Witt Waugh’s new scenery—which is remarkably well painted and designed—is a great addition to the appearance of the stage. In the orchestra, Paul Bolon is leader, and by his superior intonation and execution on the violin, greatly enhances the pleasure of listening to his music. As a solo performer, he is far above mediocrity. Dick Johnston is a rapidly improving actor, and is now an established public favorite, as a comedian. His Mouser, in Betsy Baker, was excellent, and Granby Gag in Jenny Lind, was another success. W. J. Norwood played Carlitz, in Love in Humble Life, with great humor. He is most reliable and useful as a member of the troupe. Edwin Clarke performs much better than formerly. There is a spirit and vivacity about him which were only seldom noticeable during his engagement at the “Montana.” His Ronslaus and Sergeant Austerlitz were especially well rendered. Billy Sheppard is a valuable man in a comedy troupe. When he personates a darky, the negro is there, and his comic singing is really good. The “Recollections of Salt Lake City,” took amazingly. His “Essence of Old Virginny” is not to be beaten in this latitude, and we much doubt if we might not say in any other. Miss Perkins and Mrs. Caven both play in an improved style. The former’s Christine in Love and Humble Life, was far ahead, in simplicity and correct feeling, of her previous impersonations. Mrs. Caven always appears to advantage as Betsy Baker; and generally, by an increased accuracy and greater spirit testifies to the value of practice and study. Her dancing is always popular and will continue to be so. An encore is a regulation in her case. The burlesque of the fight at Helena was very amusing. The ladies seemed much exercised in spirit at the technical method of carrying a boxer to his corner. Billy Sheppard and Dick Johnston appeared as Con and Patsey and brought down the house. On Saturday evening the management was vociferously called to the front and duly welcomed. Upon the whole, we
think the company deserves great credit for their exertions and a dollar and a half might be spent in a much less profitable manner, than in buying a ticket. There will be no Sunday performances, which is an excellent regulation. This evening will be presented, at the People's Theatre, the cuedetta of Who Speaks First; and Overture (Spirit of the Night) by the Orchestra; a Song, by Dick Johnston; a Recitation, by Miss Emma Perkins; a Ballad, by Mrs. Caven; a song and Dance, by Billy Sheppard, and Ventriloquism, by Mr. L. C. Lee. As an old acquaintance in a new guise, everybody should go to see this gentleman. The bill is very attractive throughout.

The Montana Post

January 27, 1866

People's Theatre.—The performances at the People's Theatre have been highly successful throughout the week, and have attracted good houses. On Saturday last there was presented the best night's entertainment that we ever witnessed in the city. All went smoothly and well. "Who Speaks First," was very humorously rendered, the whole company playing their parts with correctness and good taste. W. J. Norwood's "porter" was highly laughable. The overture by the orchestra, "Spirit of the Night," was remarkably well played, and was loudly applauded. Dick Johnston's two songs, the female smuggler and "Joe Bowers" provoked much mirth. Miss Perkins' recitation, "the country girl's lament," was the best specimen of elocution, by far, that this young lady has ever given in Virginia. The imitation of ventriloquism by L. C. Lee was remarkably good especially when it is remembered that he has not practiced for twenty years. The imitations of the Shanghai, the young pig, the saw, the plane and the parrot, were excellent; the ventriloquism was accurate, and the sound proportioned to the distance imagined, with great accuracy. Mrs. Caven never was in better voice, and her ballad, "Will you love me then as now," was well received. Billy Sheppard was "immense." His "Mormon Song," and "Phoebe Brown" were applauded. His dancing is hard to beat in any place. The "Secret" wound up the bill of fare, and though all the parts were remarkably well rendered, Billy Sheppard's nigger, Thomas, was decidedly the leading feature. The genuine fun and ridiculous horror of the darky were both admirable given, and brought down the house again and again. There will be no performance to-night, in compliment to Governor Meagher, who delivers his lecture, at the usual hour of performance. Miss Millie Woods, our old favorite, will appear on Monday evening.

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People's Theatre.—On Monday night last, Miss Mellie Woods made her first appearance this season, as Rosie Redland in the "Robber's Wife." At the conclusion of the piece she was loudly called for, (sic) and was led before the curtain by the manager, who also announced that he had entered into an engagement with Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Irwin, and Master Harry Rainforth, who would appear on Wednesday, in the "Honeymoon." The announcement we received with the heartiest applause. The entertainment fully equaled the highest anticipations of the public. Mr. and Mrs. Irwin played with a truth of conception, and a fidelity of delineation, perfect, even in the most minute details of the difficult parts of Juliana and Duke Aranza, to the intense delight of the audience, who called them before the curtain and received them with most ecstatic delight. Mr. Charles Graham as the Count and Master Harry Rainforth as Lopez were warmly received and deservedly applauded. In the farce, "The Fool of the Family," Mr. Irwin played Zeb Brighton, Mrs. Irwin, Betty Sanders, Mr. Graham, Mr. Sanders, and Master Rainforth, Gumption. The parts were admirably sustained throughout. We regret that the space at our disposal forbids a lengthened notice of the performance of these distinguished artists and of the regular company who exerted themselves most successfully. The bill for tonight includes the "Lady of the Lyons" and the "Swiss Swains." As the house is perfectly secure and strong, none need stay away unless indeed it be the young men whose vulgar behavior and loud calls were evidences of a want of good sense, which rendered their room more valuable than their company.

People's Theatre.—The play-going public enjoyed a rich treat on Saturday night. "Black-Eyed Susan" was performed, with a truth and spirit that held the audience spell-bound. Not only the ladies, but many of the sterner sex, shed tears at the final scene. Mr. Irwin's William was as fine a piece of acting as we have seen for many years. The rollicking man-of-war's man—the genuine "Salt" was admirably given; as was also, in even a bigger degree, the pathetic and soul-
stirring—parting from Susan. Mrs. Irwin played beautifully. Susan is not as sensationally cast as William; but the tearless agony and the calm despair of the farewell scene was an exhibition of the highest and most difficult attainment in the histrionic art. The part of the Admiral, played by Edwin Clarke, was also a noticeable feature of the play, being well rendered. Master Rainforth as Jacob Twig, was excessively comic. The remaining members of the troupe did their duty; but the parts did not admit of their distinguishing themselves highly. In "Sketches in India" Mr. and Mrs. Irwin acquitted themselves as comedians of high excellence. The imitations of actors by the stage-struck tailor, Tom Tape, were very good, and Sally Scraggs, was as happy, quick-witted, and full of careless abandon as could be wished. Lady Scraggs and Poplin fell to the share of Miss Woods and Miss Perkins and were very correctly rendered. Granam was a very fierce Sir Matthew. "The Stranger" was played on Monday. The touching and beautiful part of Mrs. Haller was finely conceived by Mrs. Irwin, while the morbid misanthropy of the Stranger was personated to the life by Mr. Irwin. Our choice among the rest of the characters would be Billy Norwood's Peter and Dick Johnston's Solomon. Baron Steinfort was also artistically presented by Mr. Clarke. The rest of the characters were presented with fidelity and exactness by the company. The "Swiss Cottage" was received with much applause, and was well acted throughout. The negro eccentricities of Sheppard, on both nights, were most amusing. The new Theatre will be opened on Wednesday next, with "The Hunchback." The enterprise, industry and business tact of Dick Johnston, the proprietor and manager, deserve a rich reward. The building will be a credit to our city, as well as affording the means of displaying talent, hitherto cribbed and confined most unnaturally, by the limited size of the stage.

The Montana Post

February 10, 1855

People's Theatre.—A crowded house, every night, attests the interest taken by the public in this institution, and their appreciation of the histrionic ability of the performance is vouched for by constant applause. The most attractive performance for the past week, in our opinion, were the Lady of Lyons and the Hunchback. Mrs. Irwin as Pauline gave evidence of her great talent as an actress, by the perfection of delineation and quick transition from the proud merchant's daughter, to the affectionate and faithful wife. But Julia is her triumph. Her refusal to sign the deed was magnificent, and the long lingering look at the torn
letter, was the perfection of art. Mr. Irwin, as Claude
Helnotte, and as Sir Thomas ChiffoId, played with a truth
and earnest pathos that delighted the audience. Mr. Irwin's
voice, appearance and figure are excellent. The Col. Da,as
of Charles Graham was well dressed, well voiced, and well
acted throughout; some passages in Walter Walter, in the
Hunchback, were finely remembered. Master Rainforth bids
fair to attain high eminence in his profession. He evident­
ly has a learning towards the part that Charles Matthews
excelled in. His Slavis is of this class. His stump speech
was piquant and racy. Miss Perkins' best part was ...adame
Deshapelelles, which was well played. Miss Woods, in company
with Edwin Clark, gave the love-making scene of the cousins,
Modus and Helen, in the Hunchback, with amusing effect. Dick
Johnston's "I Fly," in Fathom, was first rate. W. J. Nor­
wood made the most of Master Wilford, or the earl; but last
week in his favorite character of the Mock Duke, in the
Honeymoon, he earned most deserved applause. Billy Sheppard
is invaluable in his line. Banjo, tambourine, singing,
dancing or discoursing, a more artistic stage Darkey is not
to be found. Of the comic powers of the troupe, we shall
have to speak again. To go through the varied roles of an
artiste like Mrs. Irwin, within the limits of a short notice,
is impossible. The music at this theatre is, frequently,
really charming, and it is always good. When the new theatre,
with box, pit and gallery, is finished, we shall have reason
to be well satisfied. Dick Johnston has brought the build­
ing on Jackson Street, and is putting things through. "Black
eyed Susan" and "Sketches in India" are on the programme for
tonight. It should be stated as an extraordinary fact that
the "Lady of Lyons" was played without book, from memory,
only. It's rare to find a company that can do this.

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The Montana Post
February 24, 1866

People's Theatre.—In spite of the furious snow storm and
biting cold, a large number of people attended the opening of
this new and elegant place of amusement. The exertions of the
manager and proprietor, Dick Johnston, deserve liberal patron­
age, for the house would be a credit to any western city. The
drop curtain is a very beautiful Italian scene, by De Witt C.
Waugh, and is much admired. New scenery and decorations will
be added, as fast as they can be made. The building will
easily accommodate 500 people. The Hunchback was repeated,
with a marked improvement in the acting throughout. Mrs. Irwin
added much to her previous portraiture of Julia. The interview with the Secretary, and with her father, (the Hunchback,) were magnificent and every point was applauded. The true womanhood bursting through the trammels of pride and anger, was very touching exemplified. Mr. Irwin's scene as the Secretary, (Sir Thomas Clifford) was the finest piece of acting he has yet given. Mr. Graham's Master Walter was greatly improved and toned down to nature. Edwin Clarke's Modus, and Miss Wood's Helen, were spiritedly rendered, and Miss Perkins as Lord Tinsel was as heartlessly foppish as the character required; Master Wilford, by W. J. Norwood, Fathom, by Dick Johnston, and Gaylove, by Harry Rainforth, were presented effectively. Indeed, the whole cast was successful. Mr. and Mrs. Irwin were called before the curtain and that most deservedly. "Crossing the Line," by the regular company and Harry Rainforth, was amusing in the extreme. At the close of the performance, Dick Johnston was loudly called for, and bowed and gave his thanks, wisely declining an exhibition of oratory at midnight.

The Montana Post
March 3, 1863

The New Theatre.— The proprietor is daily fixing up this very commodious building, and adding new scenery, etc. The moonlight scene with twinkling stars, is certainly pretty. De Witt C. Laugh is an artist by nature. The colored lamps on each side of the stage are very handsome. The foot-lights are much more effective than formerly, and the hanging lamps, at the side, give a sufficient light all over the parquette. The enclosure of the orchestra by a railing is a very excellent improvement. They now have height enough to the ceiling, and depth sufficient to work traps to advantage. The difference, in this respect, is instantly appreciated in such a scene as the drowning of "Eilly O'Connor," in the Colleen Bawn. The gallery, which will hold nearly two hundred persons, on a pinch, is quite an addition to the appearance of the building, as well as affording room for a large number of spectators. The seats in front of it are the best in the house, both for hearing and seeing. The cotton lining of the whole building is well strained, and gives a neat appearance. As far as wooden seats can be made comfortable, all has been done by the contractor that could be, for the convenience of the spectators. We are bound to say that Dick Johnston deserves much credit for his exertions. We now have a building full equally (sic) to our requirements, and an ornament to our city.
People's Theatre.--The house was filled with an appreciative audience on Wednesday evening, to witness the performance of 'Jessie Brown', and the feeling of satisfaction at the spectacle, and approbation of the efforts of the manager and troupe was universal. The exertions of the scenic and property departments were very great, and, considering our distance from America, extremely successful. Mr. Irwin as Randal Macgregor looked well, and played his part in a highly artistic style. The refusal to kill Mrs. Campbell was the best of a series of fine histrionic effects. Mrs. Irwin showed to great advantage in Jessie Brown, the alternate exhibition of quaint humor and melting pathos being exactly her forte. The announcement of the coming of the Highlanders was electrifying in effect. The interview with Geordie was also admirably rendered. Harry Rainforth's Ahmet was very correctly given. Charles Graham's impersonation of the Rev. David Blount was most natural and artistic; it was greeted with repeated applause. Edwin Clarke as Geordie Macgregor did his best, and better than ever before. "Then Sweenie has escaped, and Geordie is not a coward," was first rate. Billy Norwood kept the house laughing as Cassidy, and Billy Sheppard played Sweenie very nicely. Miss Woods and Miss Perkins (Mrs. Campbell and Alice) did their share toward the success of the piece. The music, led by Paul Boul on, considering the small number of performers, is very excellent. Our theatre is really a place of amusement now. The rest of the performances were all worthy of note did our space merit.

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The Montana Post
March 17, 1866

People's Theatre.--The performances at this popular place of amusement attract large houses, and deservedly so; for every exertion is made by the proprietor, Dick Johnston, to render the bill of fare acceptable to the public, and the acting of Mr. and Mrs. Irwin, always good and truthful, assisted by Harry Rainforth, Charles Graham and the regular troupe, affords a most desirable means of amusement to our citizens, and empty houses, formerly crowded with dancers, prove that genuine dramatic representation under proper man-
agement contributes to public morality. We have had "Rack of the Woods", "Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady" and "Marble Heart." Mr. Irwin appeared to great advantage as the Jibbenosay; it is one of his best characters and was well sustained throughout. His Ruy Gomez is a part just suited to his temperament and physique, and he did the gallant cavalier ample justice. The part of Raphael calls forth all his energies and he made a decided success; the rejection and the dying scene were very fine. Mrs. Irwin sustained her reputation as Tellie Doe; but her strength lies in such parts as Julia in the Hunchback, the Duchess of Torrenueva, Marco, Pauline, etc. In these she is always at home and brilliant. Marco's declamation on the evils of poverty and the misery of a dependant position is the best single "speech" we have yet heard from that lady. In her comic role there is no better Betty Sanders on the stage and in all such parts she can play a piece, with one assistant, that would afford a whole night's entertainment. Mr. Graham gave Ralph Stackpole most humorously, his line is usually old men, and in them he excels, but this is an exception, old age just suits Harry Rainforth; he played it admirably. Drying Marie's shawl was perfect. Edwin Clarke saved his distance in Roland Forster; no man ever did more, in that part. Billy Norwood's Wenonga was very well got up, and the pantomine was effective. Miss Wood's Marie was well dressed and, especially in the concluding part, well played. Miss Perkins did her duty in Clementine and Edith Forster. The manager plays many parts that are not seen but are most useful. On the stage he appeared well as Colonel Bruce and the Marquis (a butterfly). We hope he will live through the summer; he is most useful as the butterfly in Virginia. Billy Sheppard, Sultan of all the darkies, played well, and drew down the house every time. We are pleased to see the large number that attend constantly.

The Montana Post

March 24, 1866

Presentation to Mrs. S. M. Irwin.--On Monday night, at the conclusion of "Grist to the Mill", Mrs. Irwin was loudly called for. On her appearance, General Meagner stepped on the stage, and, presenting her with a handsome ring, a pair of ear-rings, and a brooch of Montana gold, spoke as follows: "Several of my fellow-citizens--most of them, Mrs. Irwin, countrymen of yours by birth--have done me the honor to request, that I should present to you a token of the esteem in which they hold you, personally, as an amiable and an accomp-
The Montana Post
March 31, 1866

The People's Theatre.—Since our last issue, we have had some splendid performances. The "Female Gambler" was most successful. Mrs. Irwin as Madame de Fontanges, played magnificently. The scene in which she faints, after accepting the alternative of Fouche, was splendid. A fine woman struggling against one overpowering vice, is hard to play; but this lady always succeeds in it. Her Pocahontas was highly amus-
ing, and the apparitions of Agnes in the "Mistletoe Bough," were beautifully managed. Betsy Baker was a gem of truth-
fulness. What the cockneys call the "Hexasperated Maitch-
es," were most natural. The impersonation of Gertrude was
also much enjoyed by the audience. Mr. Irwin's Henri de
Neuville was finely rendered in bravura style, and his Sir
Reginald de Courcy was very scientific, especially in the
finale, where the acting was consummate. Captain Murphy
Maguire was as natural an Irishman in love as we are like-
ly to see for some time. Charles Graham has made his mark
for life in two characters, Desmaret and Aminadab Sleek.
The first crafty, obsequious and deadly, would make a name
by itself; and the last would bring down any house with an
audience in it. The sanctimonious old sinner was a perfect
portrait. Harry Rainforth's best characters were the tremb-
lin Marquis de Cevennes, in the "Female Gambler," and Roliff,
in "Pocahontas" the last being a very humorous piece of play.
Ed Clark's Pouche and Baron de Clifford were very creditably
managed; the latter showed much less of the stiff and un-
gainly air of a young man playing an old one, that is usual
with actors. Dick Johnston's benefit night was stormy and
unkind, but the house was very well filled, nevertheless--
much better than we expected, under the circumstances. The
labor of Kobo, the goblin page, is physically enormous; it
was well sustained. The "Mistletoe Bough" and "Betsy Baker"
are two good pieces. In the latter, Houser was "firm as a
rock." Kross-as Kan-be, in "Pocahontas," and Slow, in the
"Mistletoe Bough," with good taste and effect. Billy Shep-
pard is as black as ever, and a double encore man. John
Messenger has taken some parts this week, of which Frank Vin-
cent, in the "Serious Family," was the best. Miss Woods
was very beautifully and correctly dressed as Poo-te-pet.
The most thoroughly natural piece of acting this lady has
ever given, was in Mrs. Torren's confession to her husband of
her being to blame for his hypocritical conduct. Miss Per-
kins as Ernestine, in the "Loan of a Lover," as Mrs. Louser,
and as Cecille, in the "Female Gambler," played very well.
The marked and constant improvements in this lady's style
of acting are frequent subjects of remark. The deep mud is
a great draw-back to play-goers of both sexes, and especially
to ladies.

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The Montana Post

April 7, 1866

The People's Theatre.—The principal pieces performed at
this deservedly popular place of amusement during the past
week, were the "People's Lawyer," and "The Spy of the Potomac," the "Honeymoon" and "Ooahontas." Of the last we have already spoken, and have only to say that its last we have very successful. Mrs. Irwin's Biddy O'Flaherty was much ap­ plauded; her conception of the part is naive and natural enough for an importation direct from Skibbereen; it was accompanied by repeated and well-earned applause. Juliana, in the "Honeymoon," was beautifully rendered; the petted, passion­ ate and self-willed bride's metamorphosis into the loving and dutiful wife were admirably portrayed. The versatility of this lady's genius is a difficult and highly finished repre­ sentation of the gentle Yankee, which does him infinite credit. His Colonel Merriville in the "Spy at Potomac" is not more than an average character, but was well played. As Duke Aranza, in the Honeymoon, he proved his power nobly, and brought down the house. The mutual support afforded by this gentleman and his lady, greatly enhances the character of the plays in which they are cast together. Charles Graham is an actor of great talent, and a gentleman of most desirably social qualities; it is a pity that he does not take more care of his health, as sudden indispositions on the part of such a fine performer greatly disappoint the public and mar the efforts of his associates. Robert Howard is a gentleman's part, a few actors can do more than Graham can to make a character of this out of a part. Harry Rainforth as the Lock Duke, was especially successful; his audience and his last scene were very clever and humorous. His Jeff was also highly natural and much applauded. Dick Johnston's Sergeant Hick­ ory and John Ellesly, were both good. Edwin Clarke's best character was Rolande, which was really well conceived and presented, causing much admiration and amusement. John Mess­ enger played Jaques nicely. Billy Sheppard came out all square in his own line, and did the Judge fairly in the "Hone­ eymoon." Miss Wood's Zamora, especially in the veiled scene and in the feigned story of the two lovers, did her great credit, and was a marked improvement on her former performance of that character. In Caroline (the Spy) this lady was also successful. Miss Perkins' Drummer Boy was very natural, the death scene being most faithfully represented; as Mrs. Otis, also, she acted with much credit to herself. The music at the theatre is always good. Paul Boulon is a fine violinist, and is well supported. The "Octoroon" is to be played to-night, and we prophesy a great treat to the public. All should go that like theatricals.

The Montana Post

April 14, 1868
People's Theatre.—We were greatly gratified at the performance of "Black-Eyed Susan," on the 6th inst. Mr. Irwin's impersonation of William was a masterly effort of art and genius, and few in the theatre could restrain their tears at the parting scene, and the preparations for the execution. Mrs. Irwin's Susan was much more effective than before. The meeting with William was excellent, and the tearless agony preceding the swooning, at the moment of separation, was magnificent. Harry Rainforth's Jacob Twig was just and correct in pantomime, and was most humorously given vocally. Dick Johnston's Gnatbrain is well conceived; the shake hands (sic) with William was especially good. Edwin Clarke seemed to enjoy Doggrass very much, and he played the Admiral with dignity. Charles Graham was generally useful in half a dozen minor characters. John Messenger's Captain Crosstree was also fairly presented. Miss Emma Perkins pouted most naturally, as Dolly Mayflower. The dance was very much enjoyed. The "Octoroon" on Monday was a great success. Mr. Irwin's Salem Souder was more natural, and less exaggerated than we ever remember to have seen it. The man who plays a Yankee as a vulgar fool is representing his own character and not the Yankee's. Zoe was beautifully acted by Mrs. Irwin. The sorrow of the broken-hearted Octoroon proclaiming her race, was most touching. We cannot avoid saying that Charles Graham's McClosky was worthy of any stage, and would be creditable to any man. It was good all through. The starting from sleep when pursued by Wah-no-tee, (Dick Johnston, who pantomined and dressed the character well), was, perhaps the best. Harry Rainforth's Old Pete was a gem, in its way. Captain Ratts and Dido were well given, by Billy Sheppard. Gro. Peyton fell to Edwin Clarke, and was nicely played. Dora Sunnyside was tastily dressed by Miss Woods, as well as justly represented. The bid for Zoe was No. 1, Mrs. Peyton was given to Miss Perkins, and was well got up and truthfully presented. We are sorry we cannot extend our remarks on this play, for the performance merited it.

The Montana Post

April 14, 1866

Presentation to Mr. S. M. Irwin

At the conclusion of "Camille," yesterday evening, a storm of applause from all parts of the house called Mr. and Mrs. Irwin before the curtain to receive the justly earned tribute of admiration, at the touching pathos with which their
performance of Armand and Camille had been graced. Mr. Sam
word stepped on the stage and handed to Mr. Irwin a brick of
pure Montana gold, worth $711, spoke as follows with great
feeling and much propriety of gesture:

"Mr. and Mrs. Irwin: Many of your numerous friends and
admirers, citizens of Virginia, have requested me to be in-
strumental in conveying to you a testimonial of their regard
and esteem; of their appreciation of you both as accomplis-
hed and talented artists—of you, Mr. Irwin, as a gentleman, a
genial companion and friend—and of you, Mrs. Irwin, as an
accomplished lady, the object of their unfeigned admiration
and an artist of brilliant and versatile talents. This insuf-
ficient and inadequate testimonial I have the honor and plea-
sure of presenting to you, is of Montana gold; and while it
may not be without intrinsic value, we cherish the hope that
in after years, it may serve to recall to your minds pleas-
ing reminiscences of your friends in Montana."

Mr. Irwin who seemed much gratified at the receipt of the
present, answered as follows: "Mr. Word—Ladies and Gentle-
men: I am delighted to see so large and fashionable audience
present on this occasion. I scarcely know how to thank you
for the compliment you have paid myself and wife. It proves
to me that our noble profession is appreciated in Virginia
City, if we may judge by the brilliant success of our engage-
ment here. Much is due to the influence of an intelligent
press, which guides the taste of the public and fosters edu-
cation. It has been said that where ever the drama flourish-
es, there is found civilization; for good taste and refine-
ment go hand in hand with the drama; and, while we endeavor
to teach you a moral lesson, we need not fear that our favor-
ite art in Montana will keep pace with the age. Ladies and
Gentlemen, I never was very brilliant at making speeches; I
seldom speak more than is set down for me, and my wife says
that half the time I do not speak that. I would ask my
friends that they have a finger in this pie, I mean this brick,
if it is emblematical of themselves, I am convinced that they
are all first class bricks of Virginia, Montana. It is a
beautiful bar, and I hope I shall never do ought to be debarr-
ed of their friendship. I thank them all a thousand times for
this beautiful present, so characteristic of their flourishing
territory, and I hope that none of them will ever be without
a brick, if it is only a brick in their hats. Once more, lad-
ies and gentlemen, allow me to thank you, and to take this
opportunity to say that a few more nights will terminate our
present engagement, as we propose to visit Helena; but I hope
to return and pass many pleasant evenings with you, and aid
with our amusements to cheer this uphill life with specks of
sunshine."
People's Theatre:—On Saturday last the "Life of an Actress" was performed, in which, Grimaldi, was admirably rendered by Charles Graham, both the dialect and the pantomine were well received. Lord Arthur Shafton was made all that the part admits of Mr. Irwin, and Maltravers was very effectively rendered by Edwin Clarke. Dick Johnston appeared to advantage as Selway Dawdle, and Wopshop was very creditably filled by Harry Rainforth. Mrs. Irwin gave a very pathetic rendition of Violet. Miss Woods played Julia, the rival actress, with much vim and point, and Miss Perkins did the Countess with a stiff-starched precision very creditable to her. "Our American Cousin" was given on the night of Harry Rainforth's benefit, and was well received. There was a crowded house, and the young gentleman, who played Lord Dundreary was loudly applauded, when called before the curtain. His usual role of acting is far beyond his years, inexperience. Asa Trenchard is a part that suits Mr. Irwin well, and he gave it in his best style. Mrs. Irwin's Mary Meredith was just and graceful in execution, far more than the author contemplated; but the triumph of this talented lady was "In and Out of Place" where her versatile genius revels uncontrolled, and "Independence Day" her masterpiece of song, was beautifully executed.

Miss Wood's benefit was on Wednesday, when she appeared as Lucretia Borgia, and we may justly say of her performance, that though there are many leading actresses who could excel her representation of the character, yet we do not believe there is a lady on the stage who could, with as little dramatic experience, play it nearly as well. The appeals to the cavaliers not to divulge her name: "Who Triumphs Now?" the killing Gubetta, and the death scene, were fine pieces of acting. The lady was most warmly received at the close of the piece. Gennaro fell to Mr. Irwin, who in the last scene did himself complete justice. Gubetta was faithfully represented by Edwin Clarke, and Charles Graham made a fine scene of the tete a tete with the Duchess. The Cavaliers were impersonated by Dick Johnston, Harry Rainforth, Billy Norwood, Miss Emma Perkins and C. Force. The latter young gentleman will make an actor of merit, if he studies and avoids the Scylla of Western actors—the "big head." Billy Sheppard's dancing and singing were good as usual. De Witt Waugh's guitar solo produced a double encore. It was unquestionably beautiful, and hard to equal by any performer. The music of the brass band was admired by everybody. So rapid an improvement in horn playing as that of A. Charpie, we never heard.

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People's Theatre.—On Monday night, Billy Sheppard received a well-merited benefit, offered by the dramatic and minstrel troupes, of which he has been a very useful member. Billy's performances were very good, and whether singing, banjoing or dancing, the audience recognized him as public property, and called for him again and again. Our old friend Mrs. Flora Caven, the popular danseuse and vocalist, appeared once more on the stage, and received a double encore for her really fine dancing of the Highland Fling. Dick Johnston presented a gilt house brick to Billy Sheppard with a very humorous speech—a burlesque on the oratory of Mr. Sam Word, when delivering the gold brick to Mr. Irwin, a short time since. Billy's reply was about as good a thing of its kind as we have ever heard, and repeatedly brought down the house. The part of Quake, by Charles Graham, in "Love in all Corners," was very amusingly rendered. Bolding and Charles were given by J. Messenger and J. C. Crawford, with considerable tact, and Miss Millie Woods acted Rose with much skill and point. Charles Force took Lucretia, (assigned to Miss Perkins,) in the absence of that lady, and deserves favorable notice for the evident care and study of his role; for so young a tyro, he does amazingly well. Con's war club exercises were greatly enjoyed, and were very finely executed. Themusic was very good. Paul Boulon is a fine performer on the violin, and gives to the music a spirit and finish very rare to be encountered in theatres of the mountains. Since Charpie's horn playing is so much improved, De Witt Waugh's second violin and Jack Speed's effective base, complete a smallbut efficient orchestra.

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People's Theatre.—On Saturday evening last, Mr. J. S. Townsend the tragedian, from Salt Lake City, made his first appearance in the character of Iago, which he rendered with entire fidelity and praiseworthy conception of the part. He also appeared as Snoozle, in the farce "Unwarantable Intrusion," and as Leatherlungs in "Jenny Lind," both of which parts he played very well. Charles Graham gave Othello in the act (the third) produced, with much force and spirit, and marred the happiness of Snoozle by his appearance as the In-
truder; he also played Swigitoff with very considerable unoco-
truction. Dick Johnston appeared in his old character of Granby
Gag, which involves such a large addition to his "visible
ponderosity," as in itself is most comical. In this part,
in conjunction with Mrs. Caven, who played Jenny Leatherlungs
with commendable fidelity, he executed a dance of large di-
ensions and infinite mirthfulness. Mrs. Caven's fancy dance
was very neatly and gracefully given, and, as requested by
the citizens, the lady had to stand an encore, which, in her
case, seems a vested right or a bore—which the lady considers
it we cannot say; the audience regard it as a cherished priv-
ilege. Billy Sheppard did very well in singing, and danced
his jig better than we ever saw him. He bid the audience a
rather asthmatic farewell, owing to his being totally out of
wind, from exertion and repeated encores. He leaves for Hel-
ena, in a few days, we learn, and carries with him an enviable
reputation as a dancer, vocalist and general nigger, of the
most slip-shod-all-over-looseness and quaint humor, of any
that have tried that role in Montana, or the next place. Buz
was on hand as leader of the orchestra, and played some waltz-
es with fine tone and beautiful precision of time.

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The Montana Post

June 2, 1866

People's Theatre.—On Monday evening last, Miss Belle
Douglas appeared for the first time in this city as Lucretia
Borgia. This lady's style of acting improves greatly in the
estimation of spectators, night after night. In the celebrat-
ed piece we have named, Miss Douglas displayed great histrion-
ic power. The address to the cavaliers at the supper, was re-
markably well delivered. In Margery, the "Rough Diamond," all
that could be said of it was that it was too faithful for the
mountains, where the type of character is never seen off the
stage, but in England it would be a great success. Miss Doug-
las was loudly called for and applauded for at the close of
the play. Dick Johnston as Cousin Joe, played his best, and
his efforts were much appreciated. Our space does not afford
room for a detailed account of all the performances but we may
say that J. S. Townsend's Duke Alfonso was splendidly given.
J. S. Potter personated Gubetta very correctly; but in Gover-
nor Hearthall and Harry Hammer, in the "Soldier's Daughter"
and the "Golden Farmer" he was at home, and played finely.
Chas. Graham distinguished himself as Tom Tape in "Englishmen
in India" and both looked and played Old Mobbs, the burglar,
to perfection. On Thursday night, Miss Douglas, as Sally
Scraggs, gave her best performance; it was original, effective, humorous and truthful. Miss Perkins' Lady Scraggs was very nicely played, and was greeted with considerable laughter and applause. Mrs. Caven's dance on Wednesday night was the most artistic and graceful performance of the kind we have witnessed by that lady; and of her songs, the "Cottage by the Sea" and "Trust to Luck" were remarkably well sung; in poplin, also, this lady acted very spiritedly. Billy Norwood, who occasionally steps onto the boards, made a great hit in Timothy quaint, and was much applauded. Buz Caven's violin gives out music as well as notes, and George Brandt's guitar told with effect. We must not omit to mention Tony Ward's singing, which is good; his "Quartz on the Brain" is worth hearing twice a week, till the hot weather. To-night the "Wind and the Whirlwind" and "Peter White," will be performed, with Miss Douglas as Clarissa and Mrs. Peter White.

The Montana Post
June 9, 1886

People's Theatre.--The representation of "William Tell" and "Damon and Pythias" were the leading features of the week's performances, and "Peter White" was also a much appreciated novelty. Mr. Lyne played the part of William Tell in a manner highly creditable to him, and in the character of Damon gave unquestionable evidence of high talent as a tragedian. Townsend, as Pythias, played in a style never before attempted by him here, and was much appreciated and applauded. Manager Potter, who had just returned from Helena, appeared as Dionysius, on Tuesday evening, and sustained the character in an able manner; Charles Graham dressed and represented Helchtal with great taste and correctness, and as Lucullus, the Freedman, acted very finely. Dick Johnston, as Peter White, was very amusing; the character is a good one. Miss Belle Douglas's best impersonation was the character of Mrs. Peter White, which was performed in a style that brought down the house. Her Hermione was also artistically rendered. Miss E. Perkins was nicely dressed as the widow White, and played it with a spirit. Mrs. Caven's songs and dances were good. In the latter department this lady has never appeared to such advantage. Kitty Clover suited her exactly. Mr. Potter intends that his troupe shall play alternately here and at Helena, in the new Theatre. Mrs. Julia Dean Hayne is expected in July. The Bray troupe commence playing, we understand, on Monday, and after their engagement here they will go to Helena.
Walter Bray's Dramatic and Concert Troupe.—If there is anything in the shape of amusement we especially delight, it is a well conducted exposition of character by a talented artiste; and a combination of wit, song, music and dance, has for us more charm, when free from vulgarity or tameness, than any ordinary representation of the melo-dramatic or tragic cast. We have had a week of choice entertainment. The Bray Troupe is the first association of performers we have ever seen without one or more poor tools in it, marring and neutralizing the efforts of the more talented by their ignorance and want of ability, or by the exhibition of that 'actor-killing disease, they"big-head." No such drawbacks injure the reputation or distract the members of this admirable comedy company from the business on hand. Walter Bray, in our opinion, is the most finished low comedian that we have seen for the last fifteen years, and though we have not witnessed the exercise of his great histrionic talent in other departments, yet we are certain that such a player is a first-class man in any one of the numerous branches of his profession. He has the art of representing dialect parts with perfect fidelity, and of rendering low life with minute accuracy, but without vulgarity. His representations of Peter Spyke and Hans Barth, scarcely admit of being excelled. His knowledge of his art is perhaps better shown by the result of his labor as a teacher, than even as a performer. Flora Bray's dramatic education is triumph enough for one man, and Master Joey is assuredly a "chip off the old block." His young Scamp was perfect. We dismiss Master Walter with the remark that some men are a "whole team," but he is a "whole team and a driver." Of Flora Bray—the modest, well taught, talented young artiste—it is hard to say too much. Her playing in Gertrude, Arabella Blowhard and Catherine Burble, especially the first and last characters, was as truthful as a photograph; down to the smallest motion of the hands, it was all well considered. The simple, but extremely tasteful costume of this young lady, (still, in years, a novice,) must be credited to Mrs. Bray, and it is a great credit. Flora Bray's voice is now of unusual depth and richness; its lower tones will be magnificent in times to come. "Why do Summer Roses Fade?" was charming. "The Lone Rock by the Sea," sung with Joe Mabbott, was sweetly pathetic, and the duett from "Il Eravatore" was worthy of a triple encore. Mrs. Bray is a great addition to the company, playing such parts as the Landlady in the "Persecuted Dutchman," with entire success and perfect fidelity. Carrie Chapman is an accomplished danseuse and brought down the house time and
again. Her costume of blue and lace edging is much the more becoming of her toilettes. We should like to hear a song from her, for her voice sounds truly and sweetly in the chorus. As an actress, she is very clever; playing such parts as Captain Amesford, Agustus Clearstarch, etc., with great effect. Her best effort was Mrs. Burble. It is an ungrateful part, but was made pleasing by the merit of the actress. Joe Nabbott is one wheel of the wagon and the tongue. His voice is good; he sings like a gentleman, and as if he loved music, while as the "boss" of the Minstrel Troupe he is quite natural and unaffected. His horn adds much to the accompaniments. Ed. Ward wants a paragraph by himself; he is a Prometheus gentleman in his line. Walter Bray can excel him in such efforts as the "Essence of yellow covered literature," or "A Visit to the President;" but in dry jokes, impromptus, nigger eccentricities, dancing and acrobatic performances, taken altogether, Ned is Ned, and nobody else is in this part of the world. Charles Johnson, who plays at the same time, a bass instrument and a guitar, is certainly a wonderful and dextrous and correct performer, and S. Samelson is a most accomplished violinist, not dealing in marvelous solos, but showing the skill of a thorough musician, throughout the performance, by aiding, filling up, intonating and sustaining vocal efforts with his violin which he handles like a master. We must have one solo from him yet. We be-speak a full house to-night for there will be a first class performance, and an entirely new programme, to conclude with "Andy Blake, or the Irish Diamond." We have seen this beautifully rendered by Mrs. Irwin, and we are anxious to witness its interpretation by Flora Bray. There should be a crowded house.

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The Montana Post

June 23, 1866

The Bray Troupe.—The performances of this talented company ended with Miss Flora Bray’s benefit on Thursday night. There was a large house on the occasion, and every item of the performance was presented in first-rate style. At the close of the entertainment, Miss Bray was most warmly received. "Why do Summer Roses Fade?" sung by this young lade was rapturously applauded, and she received a double encore. Her performance of Gertrude was even more lively than before. Mrs. Bray’s Ernestine was decidedly well rendered, and Carrie Chapman’s dancing was deservedly and loudly encored; she excells in the rapid execution of "steps", and sparkling tours de force. Her Captain Amesford is most natural. Walter Bray is a most versa-
tile and talented artist. His splendid readings from Ham­
et and Damon and Pythias, given under the heavy disadvan-
tage of a darky's "make-up," proved him a first class read-
er, and a tragedian of high merit. Fred Ward, as Lu­cullus, was sublimely ridiculous, and when he leaped over the orches-
tra and ran up the aisle of the parquette, escaping from
Damon, the people roared with laughter. Joe Habbot's "Rock
Me to Sleep Mother," was charming, and he made a good lyn-
heer Swyzell. Samelson's violin solos were much enjoyed.
There were some very fine bass notes in the runs, and some
beautiful thrills in the upper register. The simultaneous
execution of first and second, was also very fine. The per-
formance was loudly encored. Mr. Bray, after leading Miss
Flora before the curtain, expressed a hope to meet us short-
ly again. In this we fully join; for a better comedy troupe
will not play in Virginia City for many a long day. To wish
them success may be polite, but it is necessary, for they
can command it.

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The Montana Post

July 7, 1866

The People's Theatre, which has been closed for some days
past, was reopened on the evening of the 4th inst., under the
management of Mr. J. S. Potter, with the comedietta of the
"Wheelwright, or not me—Somebody Else." Mrs. G. Chapman sus-
tained the character of Minnie very creditably, and Mrs.
Waught's Louise was excellent. Messrs. J. B. Townsend, Tay-
lor and Chapman did their respective characters in elegant
style. On Thursday evening, programmes were out, announcing
the first appearance of Mr. E. R. Collins, "for one night on-
ly;" but owing to some intervening circumstance, the curtain
did not go up. On Friday, Mrs. G. Chapman took a farewell
benefit. On this occasion, Mr. E. R. Collins appeared in the
character of Captain Buridan, and Mrs. Chapman as Marguerite
of Burgundy, in the play of "La Tour de Nesle," on the whole,
the performance was excellent. We learn that Miss Bell Doug-
lass and B. S. Mortimer have effected an engagement with the
lessee of this Theatre, to commence on Monday night next.
Miss Bell is a fine actress, and Mr. Mortimer is a star in the
profession in any country. We understand, too, that Mrs. Jul-
ia Dean Hayne is expected shortly to take an engagement at
this Theatre.

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The Montana Post
August 11, 1866

Theatricals.—Mr. and Mrs. Selden Irwin gave one of their select and humorous entertainments on Tuesday last, consisting of three laughable pieces. The programme commenced with "The Widow's Victim," in which Sel. personated the character of Jerry Clip, with imitations of the celebrated actors of the day. Harry Rainforth in this play did his part in fine style, and Billy Norwood as Mr. Twitter, made the character, even more than Twitter, or anybody else. Mr. Irwin as Mrs. Rattleton, left no room for comment. Mrs. Flora Caven and Miss Perkins did their respective characters with great credit to themselves. The interlude consisted of petite comedy of "Anthony and Cleopatra," in which Sel. did the character of Anthony and Mrs. Irwin that of Cleopatra. The performance concluded with the entertaining and laughable farce of the "Fool of the Family," which made perfect one of the best entertainments ever given in this place.

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The Montana Post
September 1, 1866

The People's Theatre is now under the management of Belle Douglass, who, as the bills represent takes pleasure in announcing that she has effected an engagement, for a limited number of nights with those talented artists the Irwins.

Last night—An Hour at Seville, operatic comedietta, by Mrs. Barney Williams and Mrs. Irwin. Comic drama—Crowded houses.

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The Montana Democrat
V. C.
September 6, 1866

Mrs. Caven's Benefit.—On Monday evening at the People's Theatre, Mrs. Flora Caven takes a benefit. We hope that our citizens will turn out that evening and give this lady a substantial benefit. She is a worthy and estimable lady and deserves a full house. Our people filled the People's Theatre
for Mrs. Hayne and others, and it is nothing more than appro-
prate to fill the house for Mrs. Caven, who is one of our
own gifted citizens.  

The Montana Post
September 9, 1866

The dance-house closed on Wednesday night for the pur-
pose of giving the girls and their "wagon-masters" a chance
to go to the Theatre. We are glad to see even the spirit
of generosity made manifest by the actions of the dance-house
proprietors. It is time, however, that they were exhibiting
some commendable traits of character.

The Montana Post
September 9, 1866

Wednesday evening last, People's Theatre, Irwin's last
appearance, "Irish Assurance and Yankee Modesty" and "A Day
in Paris."

The Montana Post
October 30, 1866

The Benefit of the Boys was a huge success in every re-
spect. The large audience that filled the theatre will testi-
fy that it was one of the best entertainments of the season,
and a visit to the treasury department satisfied us in regard
to the financial results. The first play, "The Honeymoon"
was never put upon the stage in better shape. Mr. Waldom was
true to his high reputation. Mrs. Langrishe displayed those
charming phas of acting, of which she is mistress.
....Others in the cast were Mr. Martin, Mr. Collins, Mr.
Mortimer, Mr. Norwood, Mr. Griffith, Mrs. Fitzwilliams, Mrs.
Bennett, Mrs. Shields, Mr. Steudman and Mr. Spencer....

Bray's Band which during the last year added so greatly
to the enjoyment of the theatrical season, and contributed so
much to the pleasures of past days, executed a grand overture,
and on being encored, gave, in their own inimitable and beau-
tiful style, "Come where my Love Lies Dreaming." We are con-
fidant that there is not in the West a band that can excel
this one for rare musical ability and skillful execution of music. By request, Mr. Paul Boulon gave "Sounds from Home," on the violin, and for his encore, a beautiful varied melody. This young and talented musician, celebrated throughout the West for his rare skill on the violin, has a brilliant future before him. His exquisite performances on the occasion of the late concert, were the wonder and admiration of that cultivated and appreciative gathering. The concluding performance was "Rough Diamond" in which the central character was Mrs. Geo. B. Waldron, whose appearance was greeted with hearty and tumultous applause which evidenced to that lady that she is enshrined in the hearts of our citizens as a favorite. Juno like, graceful and superbly beautiful, vivacious, exceedingly spirited in the character, she was the admiration of the audience and the life of the play. Too much credit cannot be given or praise conceded to Mr. Griffith, the energetic Manager, and the members of the company, for the successful realization of their efforts, and we close with our best wishes for their prosperity, and the hope that each one will be the proprietor of a "Niblo's". *****
CHAPTER II
APPENDIX C

Home Theatricals
Home Theatricals.—We believe Virginia is the only city of our Territory that has distinguished herself by amateur theatrical representations. We formerly knew that there were at least a score of ladies and gentlemen of that city who not only appear upon the stage with much credit but are capable of displaying great talent. During the past winter a society has been rehearsing a representation under charge of Mr. Pauncefort, and on Wednesday evening they gave a performance in the People's Theatre, which was crowded with the elite of the capital. Having a knowledge of the play that was cast for the evening, and enjoying an acquaintance with the particular merits and abilities of the various performers, we might with some degree of safety, attempt a critique, but other duties more important, though less pleasing, call our attention. We agree with our Virginia contemporary that it is an evidence the ability, intelligence and cultivated taste of the citizens of Virginia, and but another illustration of that genial, social spirit, that characterizes the Social City of the West and will perfume the memory of her existence long after she is numbered among the cities by the sounding sea.

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CHAPTER III
APPENDIX A

1. Helena Theatre (Wood State Theatre), 1869 and 1870 - reviews.

2. Langrishe Opera House, 1869 and 1870 - reviews.
March 10, 1876

Langrishe in Colorado

First performance ever given in the Pike's Peak Gold Region—Appearance and Progress of Jack Langrishe and Company.

From the Colorado Register, February 16th

Every old resident of Colorado knows something at least of Mr. Langrishe the pioneer actor, and his estimable lady, and a majority have known him intimately. They were welcome guests in every household, and on the stage they were always received with applause. The uniform amiability, scrupulous integrity, and dignified gentlemanly bearing of the man on all occasions, his kindness, charity, and unstained morality in all walks of life endeared him to every class of people, and in the early times when the rough element predominated in all public assemblies, Langrishe was always sure of their respect. It is well known that while he prospered for a time and accumulated considerable property, in those dark days when misfortune visited the country, it fell upon him with the rest and left him impoverished. Then, with a small band of devoted followers, he left the Territory and during the past five years has played in nearly every section of the Union. His great talents as an actor, combined with his no less distinguished social qualities, have won, let us hope, substantial rewards.

The first dramatic performance opened to the people of Denver occurred at Apollo Hall a small frame building, the upper story of which was fitted up for the purpose with a temporary stage and a hastily executed scenery, early in November 1859. The company, under the management of Chas. B. Thorne, now or recently in charge of Niblo's Garden, New York, consisted of William and Thomas Thorne, Sam D. Hunter, John Jack, and Misses Hardee, Louis Wakely and Flora Wakely. The drama of "Theresa's Vow," or "The Cross of Gold," was produced, with manager Thorne in the leading role.
The first minstrel show was opened in that historic old shell, (long since removed) known as "Cibola Hall," on Ferry street, Jim Reed, an old Missouri river pilot, proprietor. Tom. Duncan, Jim. McGangle, Charlie Marion, A. O. McGrew, (now city editor of the New York News,) J. B. Caven, John C. Spencer, and "Mountain Charley," (afterward if not then, a highly notorious character in the Gregory mines,) composed the troupe of burnt cork artists. They began raking down gold dust in September 1859.

In those times there was but one mountain camp and that was located at Gregory Point. In May 1860, Madam Wakely brought her troupe above mentioned, from Apollo Hall, Denver, and set up her budget of histrionics in a two story log building, owned by Major Hadley of Mountain City. The first floor was occupied as a bakery, grocery, barber shop, meat market and for other purposes. Herbert Pardee (since dead) represented the leading characterd, and Dick Wilmot, also gone to that bourne, from which few actors return when they "shuffle off", in Cheyene assumed the role of low comedian, or funny man. H. B. Norman, who the year previous, held a place in the stock of Ben. DuBar's theatre in St. Louis, A. L. Gooding, and W. H. Paitello had been added to the original company, which now represented a very creditable showing as to numbers. M'ille Haidee, the prettiest woman on the frontier, was the chief attraction, and next to draw poker, drew out the greatest piles of gold and black sand at $2.50 per head. "Buz," Caven led the orchestra Haidee finally married a gambler and ran away with him. This broke up Mrs. Wakely's combination. In October of '80 out of the fragments a new troupe was formed, and opened in the upper story of the Veranda Hotel, Lawrence street Central, then just completed by Col. Albertson. In a short time they were reinforced by the arrival of C. K. Irving, J. C. Whitall, James Waters, John Jack, M. J. Doughterty, and several others whose names we cannot now recall, and played a very successful season of about nine weeks, when, in consequence of the desertion and subsequent elopement of one of the female members, its career was brought to an untimely close.

In the spring of 1861 this theatre known as the "Varieties," was reopened by Messrs. Langrishe and Doughterty, with Harry Richmond, Messrs. McAutho, McKinnen, (then about eighty or ninety years old) and Carter, Mrs. Lamgrishe, Miss Mary Sullivan, and Miss Kendall. On the second appearance of this company a scene not known in the bill, was interpolated which set the vast audience in a roar. The play was Bulwer's "Alice, or the Mysteries". Maltravers (Mr. Richmond) was doing his prettiest bit of pathetic acting, and with streaming eyes upturned toward the rafters, exclaimed to the heroine in tones of agonized supplication, "Alice, why don't you speak to me?" Before Alice had a chance to reply the answer came short, quick, and emphatic from an inexperienced stage carpenter
The orchestra consisted of a small drum and a brass horn.

After playing to crowded houses for some time at $1.50 gold as the price of admission, Mr. Langrishe moved into the People's Theatre, built by "Uncle" Henry Wait, on Main Street just above the Central City Bakery. After playing in his new quarters for some time, and reaping a considerable harvest from the prosperous times, Mr. Langrishe folded his tents and war robes, and made a tour of all the principal camps of the Territory, where he succeeded beyond his expectations.

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The Helena Weekly Herald

October 3, 1867

Theatrical.-- Another full house greeted Mr. Langrishe's company last evening. We were unfortunately debarred the pleasure of hearing the first play—that of the "Post Boy,"—but we heard it uniformly well spoken of, especially those portions of it which were rendered by Mr. and Mrs. Coreldock. The farce, "Home for the Holidays," kept the house in a roar of laughter and was remarkably well brought out. It is not for the sake of shielding a criticism that we say, all did well,—for one of the great characteristics of the present company, at the Helena Theatre, is the almost perfect rendering of the secondary parts. This evening Mr. Coreldock, as Richelieu, in the play of that name, will be sure of drawing a crowded house.

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The Montana Post

September 25, 1868

The performance of Saturday night was witnessed by a large and interesting audience, who most certainly enjoyed one of the best entertainments, taken as a whole, that has yet been presented to our citizens. The play was "The Phantom," a highly sensational drama—the story of one of those wild, weird legends of Germany, that clothe in mournful interest and thrilling romance every rock, glade and mountain torrent of the dear old fatherland, the plot being founded on the traditions of the Vampire, that terror of maidens "pure and spotless", was clear, the personal (sic) being bold and distinct, the one idea and story is woven through
and into language as simple as the pretty peasant maids who lived in constant dread of the coming of the horror. The only feature of the first act was the "Flower Song," from Faust, by Madame Scheller, which she sang with exquisite feeling, and her pure, clear tones were never heard to better advantage. The second act gave more scope for fine feeling and acting. The Madame exhibited some rare shades of acting, and represented the trance scene with a truthfulness positively startling, and absorbed all admiration for the acting by sympathy for her condition. Mr. Waldron as the soulless, feelingless being was grand—sometimes awful; we have never seen a character so vividly personified—that realized so correctly the appalling and awful "mystery." Mr. Langrishe as "Davy" was immense....

Also included in the cast were Dr. Reese, Mrs. Fitzwilliams, Mrs. Shields, Mortimer, Griffith and Brown.

Tonight will be presented a rare old comedy, "Giralda, or the Miller's Wife," a French opera dramatized. It is one of the most comical comedies in the English language. After attending rehearsal we can confidently say that it is sparkling all over and full of repartee and songs. In it Madame Scheller will introduce "You Naughty, Taught Man," from the 'Black Crook." Mr. Langrishe appears as "Gil," Madame Scheller as "Geralda." The other cast is very strong. This will be one of the most delightful entertainments of the season.

The Montana Post
October 9, 1868

Last Saturday night the Theatre was almost overflowing with intelligent citizens and beautiful citizenesses to witness one of the finest entertainments of the theatrical season, in the play of the "Octoroon." This drama is one of those highly sensational combinations of nonsense, morbid sentiment, and harmless passion that appeals directly to the yearning sympathies of poor philanthropists. The idea is pure fancy, the plot a fiction, and the whole play a deception. Notwithstanding the character of the play it has this merit, that instead of detaining all the work upon one or two characters, it calls into prominence all those taking part in the dialogue. This feature, together with the vigorous manner in which the play was brought out, rendered it highly amusing and interesting. Madame Sheller, as "Zoe," the poor Octoroon, was charming, and rendered the lovescene very touchingly. One of the objects of the play is that she
is compelled to take poison. Mr. Waldron, as "McClosky," was splendid. The reckless abandoned coarseness and viciousness of the slave dealer was capitably delineated......

Other members of the cast included Marin, Jimmy Collins, Mr. Shields, Mrs. Langrishe, Messrs. Griffith, Brown, Mortimer and Norwood.

Tonight will be presented that beautiful and charming operatic comedy, "The Child of the Regiment," with all the original music of the piece. It would be an insult to the intelligence of our readers to recommend to them the superb beauties and delightful features of this drama. All who love the beautiful, the melodious and the fascinating will be in attendance.

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The Montana Post
October 23, 1868

Benefit of Madame Scheller:—Last evening an audience which, for beauty, intelligence and brilliancy has never in this city been surpassed, assembled at the Helena Theatre to greet Madame Scheller in one right testimonial before her departure from our Territory. The house was overflowing, the assembly in excellent humor, even before the curtain rose. The play, "The Life of an Actress," was one of the most beautiful ever put upon our stage. The acting all through was superb. Madame Scheller surpassed herself in each phase of her part and rendered the touching songs which glittered along in her part like gems in a costly diadem, with a pathos and feeling expressive of a heart overflowing with appreciation of a demonstration, magnificent, complimentary, and well deserved. She was greeted with constant applause through the piece, and her appearance before the curtain in response to the calls of the audience, was the occasion of a splendid and enthusiastic applause. Mr. Waldron was splendid in the character of "Grimaldi," and displayed that power of introducing into a character and individuality and intensity of expression that vivifies and makes it a thing of life instead of a reflection.

....Mr. Martin, Mr. Shields, Mr. Brown, Mr. Mortimer, Mr. Norwood, Mrs. Fitzwilliams, Mrs. Shields and Mr. Griffith were also in the cast.....

For the last time, perhaps, in Montana, Madame Scheller has been the recipient of an ovation, an honor to any artiste, however high in the temple of dramatic fame they may be niched. For the last time our citizens whose hearts ever beat in responsive cadences to the claims of beauty, talent and genius, have assembled to greet with demonstrat-
ions of affection, regard and appreciation, one whose name is a household word even among these mountain vales; whose genius has created and illuminated recollections that will beautify daily actions long after the favored beneficiary has said Good bye. While Madame Scheller's departure is regarded with feelings of sorrow and regret by us, we are assured that she is deeply sensible of the cordial greeting, the many kindnesses and demonstrations of mind and heart on the part of our citizens which has caused her to feel that she was no stranger, but among warm and devoted friends, and she feels a deep sense of gratitude to the citizens of Helena for their generous welcome and warm friendships. We trust ere long to have the pleasure of welcoming her return to this land, and listening to her classic rendition and wealth of melody. Till then we believe that when the plaudit of other scenes of dramatic triumphs shall have died away, in the storehouse of memory, she will have no brighter picture or more cherished recollections than those created by her Montana life.

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The Helena Weekly Herald

August 5, 1869

Wood Street Varieties.—Passing up Wood Street Saturday evening, we dropped into the new theatre. The Managers deserve great credit for the taste and skill they have exhibited in the arrangement and construction of their house. It is certainly the neatest thing of the kind we have ever had in the Territory, and it is just the place to pass a pleasant hour or two in an evening. We have neither time or space to give a criticism of the performance, but we are compelled to say that the managers have made a decided improvement in the additions to their company. The new performers are all very clever, and we may reasonably expect to see something new almost nightly.

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The Helena Weekly Herald

September 9, 1869

A Debut of Miss Price at the Langrishe Opera House:

A densely crowded house witnessed the first appearance of this brilliant young artiste yesterday evening. When we
say artiste we wish to convey to our readers the full meaning of the word. It has become a commonplace title, not always deserved, but in this instance we can apply it with truth, indeed. Miss Price's rendition of the "Little Merry Cricket" was in every respect artistic. In many points she surpasses our original Fanchon--Maggie Mitchell. The character is drawn by Miss Price with a great delicacy, and defined with a nicety of shades and a careful adherence to truth and nature. There was no exaggeration in her delineation whatever, and this cannot be said of Maggie Mitchell. In her pathetic scenes she was particularly happy, and her simple, artless manners touched every heart present. Miss Price received ovation after ovation, was called before the curtain repeatedly, to receive the acclamations of an enthusiastic multitude. She has won the hearts of the people of our community with one single sweep. We congratulate Mr. Langrishe upon the acquisition. He could not have made a better selection. Miss Price possesses a pleasing face, a good stage presence, and a clear sympathetic voice. Mr. Hauchett played "Father Barbeaud" in a most excellent manner and received also many enthusiastic plaudits from the audience. Next to Miss Price in prominence stood Mrs. Fitzwilliams, who enacted "old Fadet" with great power and striking effect. Mr. Waldron did full justice to the character of "Landry"......

Didies---------------Mr. Martin
Madelon-------------Mrs. Waldron
Mother Barbeaud-----Mrs. Shields
Father Cailan--------Mr. Gross
Messrs. Shields, Mortimer, Griffith

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The Helena Weekly Herald

September 16, 1869

East Lynne at the Opera House.—The production of this thrilling drama was witnessed yesterday evening by a crowded house. The performance gave genial satisfaction. Miss Fanny Price, in the dual character of Lady Isabel and Madame Vine, displayed her talents as a tragic actress in a brilliant manner, and carried the sympathies of the audience with her to the end of the play. Her impersonation was made all the more charming by investing the character with an air of refinement, which other actresses have more or less discarded, making the character of East Lynne rather repulsive to the cultivated taste of the intelligent class of theatre-goers. Miss Price
manifested a tenderness in the pathetic passages almost childlike, which was calculated to touch every heart in the audience. Waldron, as Archibald Carlyle, stood out prominently and enacted the part with his usual great ability. Mr. Richmond gave a good portrayal of the character of Lewison. Gross, as Lord Severa, made quite a hit with the audience. His quiet and unassuming manner and strict attention to the business of the scene always creates a favorable impression. Mrs. Fitzwilliams, as Mrs. Corney, was excellent. Mrs. Waldron, Mrs. Shields, Mr. Mortimer, Mr. Shields and the rest of the company filled their parts well. This evening "East Lynne" will be repeated with the same rare ensemble, and all those who wish to see a really excellent performance must not neglect to attend the theatre tonight. It is the last performance of the great drama. Seats should be engaged before 8 o'clock in the evening.

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The Helena Weekly Herald
September 30, 1869

From then on the Langrishe Opera House drew "crowded houses."

Miss Price became an admired person in Helena society. After the complimentary benefit tendered to her on Sept. 18.

A number of her personal friends and admirers ... assembled at the Planter's House to pay their respects to the brilliant young actress. Among those present were some of our most prominent and wealthy citizens—bankers, judges, Federal officials, lawyers, and representatives of almost every other profession—most of whom were accompanied by ladies—the beauty, grace, and fashion of Helena. A sumptuous repast was spread and the joyful party gathered around the festive board, where, for an hour or two, ruby and sparkling champagne flowed as freely as water, and toasts were drank (sic) and speeches were made, and everything contributed to make the occasion a joyous one.

Miss Fanny B. Price: This brilliant tragic actress, we are pleased to say, is nightly drawing crowded houses at the Langrishe Opera House, and every succeeding performance adds fresh laurels to her matchless fame as the youngest and most successful tragedienne on the American Stage. Wherever she has been throughout the United States, Miss Price has won golden opinions from the press, and a reputation as great as it will be lasting. Socially and intellectually she has few
superiors, and possesses in an eminent degree the happy faculty of making warm and devoted friends wherever she goes. Miss Price has been amongst us but a short time, yet who does not entertain for this estimable lady a true and genuine friendship. In fact, it has been well said that "all are her friends, and all speak in her praise."

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

January 19, 1870

Dick White, our old time friend and a veteran actor, takes a benefit at the Opera House on Thursday evening next. The bill is "The Golden Farmer," that sterling old comedy, with as much fun, pathos and sentiment in it as any play ever put on the boards. Beside this there will be a variety of interludes and numerous volunteers. Mr. Harry Taylor, who in former days supported Julia Dean Hayne on the Helena stage, will reappear as "Old Mob." Harry is a good actor and his many friends will be glad to see him once more on the legitimate boards. Not the least of attractions, though perhaps in point of size the smallest, will be la petite Laura, daughter of Mr. White, in her song (a la Amy Stone) of "Captain Jenks of the Horse Marines." Dick has been the old Thespian stand-by of Helena; is a good actor, a good singer, and eminently a good fellow--besides being a scene painter who has produced some of the finest effects ever witnessed in our Helena Theatres. No man has labored more faithfully than he to amuse, entertain and edify the public, and no one is more eminently deserving of a rousing testimonial of public appreciation in return. We certainly hope that Dick may have the "bumper" benefit of the season for he will deserve it, not only from personal matters, but from the attractions which he has secured to make the evening a "gala night."

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

January 27, 1870

First appearance of Mrs. Pinney.--Mrs. Pinney, a lady of rare accomplishments and attractions, makes her re-entree on the stage next Saturday evening, Mr. Langrishe having secured her services for six nights. This lady has all the requisites to make a first class actress, and no doubt will be a brilliant addition to the many luminaries now giving lustre to the stage--possessing an elegant appearance, a rich
contralto voice of rare cultivation, and all the requisites necessary for success in that now so popular and pleasing Pastoral play in three acts entitled "Clari, the Maid of Milan," has been selected for her debut. The piece is entirely new and has never before been presented in this city. The character of "Clari" is a beautiful creation, and will no doubt receive justice at her hands. The beautiful ballad "Home Sweet Home," is appropriate to the scene and will be given in her best style. Few, perhaps, are aware that this well-known song written by John Howard Payne, belongs to this piece, and forms the plot of this beautiful drama, written by the same author. The musical burletta of the "Loan of a Lover," will also be presented, Mrs. Pinney appearing as Gertrude, and will sing the original music, including "I don't Think I'm Ugly," "Peter Never Thinks of Me," "Tomorrow Will be Market Day," etc., etc. This is a bill of rare attraction, and no doubt will fill the Opera House to repletion, as there will be no performance till Saturday night. Seats can be secured any time during this week by calling at the Sample Rooms.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

February 6, 1870

Theatrical.—Last evening Bulwer's play of the Lady of the Lyons was performed at the Opera House to one of the largest and most appreciative audiences we have seen at the theatre for a long time. The character of Pauline was rendered by Mrs. Pinney in a manner which elicited the praise of all, and far surpassed the most sanguine expectations of her friends. In the third act—the cottage scene—we think the acting of Mrs. Pinney was the most natural and pleasing we have ever witnessed in the same character, upon the Helena boards; and from the close of that scene to the end of the performance she carried the sympathies of the audience with her and was called before the curtain at the end of each act. Harry Richmond as Claude Melnotte, fully sustained his reputation as a first class artist, although in the first two acts he did not come up to our idea of the Melnotte of the author, but he more than redeemed himself in the last three acts, and gained his share of the applause of the audience. Harry Taylor personated Beaucraft in a gracefuily and mannerly manner; and was well received. Griffith as Glavis the foppish friend of Beauscaut personated the character with his usual good taste and good acting. Griffith never fails. Langrishe as the bluff old Col.
Demas looked and acted his character in an excellent manner, Mrs. Langrishe and R. C. White as Ions and Madame Deschappelles, sustained their parts in an admirable manner, and Joe Bray as Caspar, the friend of the Mellnotte, showed himself to good advantage. Mrs. Shield's Widow Mellnotte was rendered in a very matronly manner, and Billy Norwood as the landlord impersonated the gossiping host true to nature. The performance of Saturday evening was an excellent one, and although we did not remain to see the "Phenomenon in a Smock Frock," we are sure that in the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe that sterling farce was rendered in the most mirth provoking manner.

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The Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

February 10, 1870

Theatrical.—Another triumph was attained by Mrs. Pinney on Tuesday night, in her beautiful and faithful rendition of Rosina Meadows. No truer picture of everyday life has ever been presented to a Montana audience; and the frequent and hearty rounds of applause with which she was greeted were worthy and well earned, coming as they did from a critical, crowded and well pleased audience. Mr. Richmond is also deserving of the highest praise for the admirable portraiture he presented of Mr. Meadows—in the last act he was fairly grand, and carried the sympathies of the audience with him. No better representation of Harry Mendon could be found than Harry Taylor. He did ample justice to the part, and his friends (and they are legion) were pleased, in the bar room scene to hear him call for a lemonade, and expressed their feelings with loud expressions of gratifications. Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe, as a couple of down easterners, kept up the merriment of the scene in an approved manner, and caused roars of laughter. To-night, we will have for the first time in Helena, a grand opera bouffe. The very name startles us. We cannot fancy ourselves in the fastnesses of the Rocky mountains, but actually think we are going to Fiske's Grand Opera House, forming one amongst the busy throng on Broadway. Opera Bouffe! ! ! Jenny Lind, with all the original music and new introductions including choruses, grand arias, brilliant scenes, recitations and all other things pertaining to the opera; embracing selections from the world renown Grand Duchesse De Cheronstien, Lucretia Borgia, Bohemian Girl, Robert Le Diable and the more familiar African Opera "The more you put down the less you pick up" winding up the famed can-can and many other novel-
ties, too numerous to mention. In addition, the elegant comedy of "Charles the Second" will also be presented--Mrs. Pinney as Mary Copp, in which she will sing, by request, her favorite song of "Coming Home." This, in addition with her personation of Jenny Lind, will give a musical entertainment never equalled here.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

March 27, 1870

"Sorosis," the great sensation of the day will be presented at the Opera House next Tuesday evening. We were somewhat astonished at seeing a bill circulated through town the other day, headed "Attention, Sorosis--meet Tuesday evening March 29th." The mystery is not explained. Manager Langrishe, always up with the time, has procured the new play with the stunning title of "Sorosis, or Woman's Rights and Man's Wrongs," and will present it for the first time in Helena next Tuesday evening. In these days of strong minded women; when we are lectured by Anne Dickenson; interviewed by Olive Logan; persuaded by Mrs. Gordon's, and tried by juries of both sexes, of which the fore-man is a woman, the first appearance of the word Sorosis on a bill of any kind produces a profound sensation, and gets expectation on the tip-toe of excitement to see a piece that will truly depict the Rights of Women, to say nothing of the wrongs of men. Attention, Sorosis! Let it be a crowded meeting; fill the Opera House to repletion and witness the most enjoyable play of the day. The piece is in three acts; ably written; abounding in telling points, true witticisms, comic situations, and a deal more truth than poetry. The first act introduces us to various married couples, showing us how people can be ill-mated in this world, and the bad effects arising therefrom. In act second the mystery continues, and "Twenty minutes for divorces," is ably illustrated, and will save a journey to Indiana, where the cars stop at various stations that length of time for this laudable purpose. In the third act we have a regular smash-up. Men's wrongs are supposed to be debated rightly. "Sorosis," the women meet, and the d---l is to pay generally. But we will not spoil a good play by giving the entire plot. See it yourself and enjoy the rishest treat of the season.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

March 30, 1870
Theatrical.—Another great novelty and sensation is offered at the Opera House Tuesday evening—the very celebrated comedy of "Wild Oats," which has been long in preparation, will be produced for the first time in Helena. It is almost useless to enlarge on or eulogize this great play. It is familiar to all theatre goers and it is one of the great attractions at Wallack's theatre, N. Y. It is also rendered famous by the wonderful performance of Edwin Adams, as Rover—the leading character—a part always selected by him for his opening night in all his starring engagements. On this occasion George B. Waldron will assume the erratic personage, and we anticipate a rare treat in his performance of the everescent and go-ahead individual. "Wild Oats" is one of these charmingly written comedies, abounding in fun and sentiment so elegantly intermingled as to render it one of the best acting plays holding possession of the stage. Every character is distinct and thoroughly marked, and will call out the talents of the full strength of the company—each member having a part suited to his or her abilities. In addition to this rare attraction, the new and highly successful farce of "Ice or Paxle Francais" will also be presented, forming a bill of attractions never surpassed in this city. The very name of "Wild Oats" should draw one of the most fashionable and critical audiences. It is a play hardly ever attempted out of the large cities in the East, being a large and difficult one to fill. The manager therefore has much pride in presenting it to his patrons here, and feels confident it will be rendered in a manner that will bear comparison with the best theatres in the Union.

Last night a first rate house honored the advent on the Helena boards of "Sorosis, or Woman's Rights," Mesdames Waldron, Langrishe, Shields and Fitzwilliams, and Messrs. Waldron, Richmond, Martin, and Langrishe acquitted themselves with credit, and to the amusement and satisfaction of the audience.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

April 21, 1870

Benefit of George B. Waldron.—Boucicault's great sensation drama entitled the "Pope of Rome," will be presented for the first time in this city. Most of our readers know the popular story of the election of Suxtus V., representing him as assuming, during the conclave, the appearance of decrepit
age, so that he was chosen as one to be easily ruled; but immediately after that, casting aside his crutch and assuming his erect and stern bearing, to the dismay of all. He was known to all as a man of iron-will, great administrative power, insensible to fear, flattery or self-interest. This character of the ancient Roman type had raised the herdsman's son of Montalto to high positions in the Franciscan order, where his learning in philosophy, theology and canon-law, as well as his eloquence as a preacher, were duly appreciated. In 1557 at the age of thirty-six, he was made Inquisitor General at Venice, and in 1570, a Cardinal; his baptismal name was Felix Peretti, but in his order, and as cardinal, he was known by the name of his birthplace, Montalto. Elected Pope in 1585 he put down the banditti, restored the reign of impartial law, encouraged industry, supplied Rome with a noble aqueduct and enlarged the Vatican library. In the affairs of the church he introduced several reforms, fixed the number of cardinals at seventy, required each bishop to visit Rome at certain intervals, and established various congregations or committees for the more speedy transaction of all ecclesiastical business. He brought the Spanish Inquisition, which had long defied the Pope, to a position of obedience, and took steps toward a thorough correction of the editions of the Latin Bible. Though personally not loved, he was admired and respected by the people who saw in him a just ruler devoted to their real interests and good; by the various European courts as a statesman of singular ability; and by the church over which he presided as a firm opponent of all laxity and corruption. G. B. Waldron will appear as cardinal Montalto, afterwards Sextus V; Harry Richmond as Adrian Peretti; G. Martin as Hugo Mortimer, White, Griffith, Paul, and Mesdames Waldron, Langrishe, Shields will appear.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

May 12, 1870

The Coming Woman.—We copy the following notice from the Omaha "Herald" of Miss Clara Walters now on her way to Montana: Miss Walters is an actress far above the usual standard of merit, and in our honest opinion ranks among the stars of the Thespian art. She has a versatility of talent we have never before seen, and so admirably combined, and each in such high degrees of perfection, in one artiste. She is good in everything. Really great in tragedy, she has shown superior ability in comedy, and all other departments of her art. Whether as Lucretia Borgia, Lady Macbeth, Camille, Pocahontas, Judy O'Trot, Meg Merilles, the Yankee Gal, Beauty, or La Fille du
Regiment, she is really truely and uncomparably excellent. Such a varied talent has never before been seen on the stage of Omaha, and we opine is very rarely equalled anywhere.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

June 1, 1870

Opera House.--This evening will be performed the "Angel of Midnight," a Franco-Germanic play, with grand and thrilling sensations. The story relating more particularly to two physicians, one Dr. Bernarr, a scientific and honest man, and the other, Dr. Rouspache, a charlatan whose service can be obtained for any object. The scene opens in the house of Bernarr, who is poor, and of course, charitable, and is struggling to make a fortune for his family's sake. He is tempted to use his skill for base purposes, to aid expectant heirs to reach their inheritance, etc., but refuses. In the height of his despair, with true German Diablerie the Angel of Death (Miss Walters) appears, and a bargain is struck between Death and the Doctor, to the effect that whenever the latter sees the Angel at the couch of any of his patients, the Doctor is to forgo his skill for which the Angel promises him wealth, reputation and standing. On this the drama works. The Count de Stromberg (Mr. Gross) is rich, but being worried to death from the fact that when a young man, at a revel, a quarrel arose between him and the Baron de Lambeck, and he supposed that in the same he killed him. The Baron leaves a son of the same name (Mr. Waldron) who has run through his fortune, and has compelled the count to promise him the hand of his daughter Marguerite, (Mrs. Waldron) who is in love with Paul Bernarr, (Richmond) and whose suit is favored by her brother Karl (Browne). Herr Reckman (Mortimer) and Fretz (Langrishe) expect to fall heirs to the Count's money, and the charlatan, Dr. Rouspache (Martin) to kill him off, but the Count is saved by Bernarr, much to the chagrin of Reckman, who is his uncle; and in the second act the Angel of Death appears and Reckman is struck dead just as he resolves to disinherit his nephew for his skill. In addition to these characters there are Catherine (Mrs. Fitzwilliams) and Agraff (Mrs. Shields), and a number of student friends of Bernarr. The third act is a masked ball at the Count's house, with dances. The quartette, "Come Where my Love Lies Dreaming," by Mrs. Waldron, Mrs. Fitzwilliams and L. M. Browne; a fancy dance by all the characters. The Baron attends as Captain Satan, the same disguise the Count wore when the former's father died. There a quarrel ensues. The Angel appears as
Love, mingling in the dance and captivating Karl. Dr. Roubspache, as Apollo, figures in this scene. The fourth act is a thrilling picture—a duel in the snow, during which the angel of death hovers between the combatants and finally struck the guilty, who is left to perish like a dog in the snow. The fifth act contains the further temptation of the Doctor, who is about to be married to Marguerite, and he has to choose which shall be rendered a victim to death Marguerite or his mother. He is in agony and beseeches the Angel to take his own life, but spare those who are so dear to him. The Angel refuses. Paul finally prays to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death. The Angel disappears. The compact is broken.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette
June 2, 1870

The Angel of Midnight—this truly novel and great play was performed for the first time last night at the Opera House, and was received with great applause. There is a charm about this weird piece that is truly enchanting, never failing to keep an audience spell-bound from first to last. The effects are grand and startling, and were all well rendered. Miss Halters as the Angel of Midnight, gained fresh laurels by her excellent performance of that difficult character. The Baron of Waldron was a good performance. In fact, the entire play was well acted. Paul, by Richmond, Rouchaune, by Martin, Fritz, by Langrishe, and Marguerite by Mrs. Waldron, being excellent; while Browne, Griffith, Mortimer, Gross and Mrs. Fitzwilliams rendered their several characters with great spirit. The play was well placed upon the stage; the masquerade scene was given with great spirit, and the snow scene was perfect in all details. In the third act, Mrs. Waldron, Mrs. Fitzwilliams, Mr. Browne and Mr. Kelly sang the quartette of "Come where my love lies dreaming," in a superior manner. The fancy dance by Mrs. Shields was well received, while the general dances were well conceived and executed. The ascention of the Angel in the last scene was a grand effect. This great play will be repeated to-night and we advise all to see it.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette
June 8, 1870
French Spy Tonight.—Tonight the grand military drama of the 'French Spy' will be presented. This is always an attractive and popular piece, and the announcement of a new actress in the leading role is always sure to draw a crowded and expectant audience. From what we have seen of Miss Walters, in her various characters, we are inclined to think she is in every way suited to this difficult and arduous part. Possessing a perfect knowledge of stage business, with an ease and grace in her manner, she cannot fail to prove one of the most attractive representatives of the 'French Spy.' All the grand effects of the piece will be given with appropriate music, daring combats and beautiful tableaux; ending with the fall of Constantina, storming of the fort and destruction of the Arabs by the French troops. Miss Walters appears in the triple character of Henri St. Aime, the young soldier, Hamet, the wild Arab boy, and Mathilde de Marie. Remember this is the only night the 'French Spy' will be presented and we advise all to attend.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

June 18, 1870

Invisible Prince.—A grand novelty is offered tonight at the Opera House. After much preparation the grand Burlesque of the Blondes, entitled the Invisible Prince, will be presented for the first time in Helena tonight. The bare announcement of this now very popular and well known musical extravaganza should be sufficient to draw the largest house of the season. Great care has been taken in the production of the piece, including new and beautiful scenic effects, and all the glorious music that renders an entertainment of this kind so attractive. Clara Walters appears as Don Leander, a part peculiarly suited to her abilities and will sing the many songs allotted to her in a charming manner. The Prince, although invisible, must be witnessed by all. The piece abounds in rich repartee, ludicrous situation, sparkling dialogue and transformations, with songs, duetts, choruses, round catched etc., without number. The entire company are in the cast. Read the bill and see the amount of amusement in store.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

June 22, 1870
A Night with "Sam Lover."--- The White Horse of the Peppers, by the immortal Sam Lover, will be produced for the first time in Helena, to-night. The piece possesses, in an eminent degree, all the characteristics which distinguish the productions of its author—a gentleman as much admired for his powers as a musician, an artist, as poet, as a scholar. The drama is replete with such incidents and situations as are required in stage representations, while the dialogue abound with just sentiments, genuine wit, pure humor, and natural pathos. The time at which the scene is laid, is a stirring one for the adherents of King James, and many a noble supporter of that pusillanimous monarch not only shed his cause, on the "banks of the bloody Boyne," but left as the reward of his fidelity, a condemned name, and ruined fortune to his plundering successors. The part of Agatha, a true hearted, honest and faithful portrait of the hard fighting, dare-devil gentleman of the time and nation. His outbreaks of feelings, love of his country and easily excited sympathies offer an excellent contrast to the cold, phlegmatic, cautious, calculating mercenary Hans Mansfield, these two parts will be ably taken by Langrishe and Martin. The strategy by which Gesald recovers his confiscated lands, is well conceived and most humorously carried out. In short, from the opening scene, to the fall of the curtain, the interest in "White Horse of the Peppers" never flags. It is interspersed with glorious music, songs, duets, choruses, and is altogether one of the most attractive pieces ever offered in Montana. Let the house be full.

*****

Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

September 15, 1870

A wonderful entertainment.---Prof. Wilkinson, the wonderful magician, star comedian, and King of the Davenport rope tying feat, will give one of his pleasing exhibitions at the Opera House, on Saturday evening. This will consist of some of the most amusing and wonderful tricks of the age. The Davenport rope trick, which created such a sensation in spiritual and other circles throughout the world, will close the entertainment. Any two gentlemen in the audience may select, can tie him with eighty feet of rope, in as many knots as they please, and he will clear himself in half the time it takes to tie him. This will be performed openly and without going into any cabinet, or behind a screen, as the Davenport Brothers did. The performance will be chaste and pleasing, performed on an open common table, and will astonish the audience in a most unheard of manner. Our territorial contemporaries have
been loud in praise of Professor Wilkinson.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

October 7, 1870

Benefit of Mr. Coullock: We naturally feel obliged to this renowned actor for his visit to the mountains at this inclement season of the year, to entertain and amuse our theatrical folk, and we hope to see his efforts appreciated by a large audience on the occasion of his benefit tonight. For the occasion he will appear as Mons. Du Vernet, in an entirely new play, entitled "The Advocate," of which, we believe, Mr. Coullock holds the copyright, and which he only plays himself. In this he will be supported by Richmond, Gross, White, Shields and Griffith; Miss Coullock taking the part of Madame La Rose; and Miss Emma appearing also. This new drama is represented to us to be a most beautiful one, and the fact that Mr. Coullock chooses it for his benefit is evidence of his favor for the piece. To old admirers of Coullock it is only necessary to say that he will appear as "Milky White," in the afterpiece of that name, to insure their presence. Those who have seen him in this character, and who can appreciate one of the most difficult and delicate pieces of acting within the range of the drama, always make a point to see it when they can, and to cherish it afterwards as a delightful memory. Our friend Martin plays the entertaining part of Dick Duhs in this play—a rattling character; Miss Coullock appears as Annie White, and Fitzwilliams as Mrs. Sadrip. We advise those of our readers who wish to enjoy one of the best things they ever saw to turn out this evening, and, as the house will probably be filled, to secure seats early this morning.

*****

Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

October 18, 1870

Fine Bill.—The strongest, if not the best bill ever offered in this city, is presented at the Opera House this evening; Mr. and Mrs. Coullock appearing in two of their great specialities, "The Advocate, of the Last Cause," received with great favor on its first production, will be offered for the last time. The character of Mons du Vernet is one of Mr. Coul-
dock's ablest personations, and that is saying enough. The drama itself is one of intense interest, and the part of the old advocate one of the most telling we have ever witnessed on any stage. See it to-night, watch it closely, and the fine touches of nature brought to light by that master of the art, Couldock, will indeed delight and surprise you. Miss Couldock is equally at home in Madame La Rose, and leaves nothing to be desired in its performance. The evening concludes with the drama of the "Chimney Corner," too well known to all theatre goers to need any notice from us. Peter Frobigy has but one representative and that is Couldock; in this character he stands alone and unapproachable. It may be a long time before such another bill is offered, and we advise all to see the grand double attraction to-night.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

October 20, 1870

The Fat Knight Again.—By special request of a large number of our citizens, who failed to attend the first representation, and by many who wish to see it again, Sir John Falstaff will reappear tonight. Mr. Couldock's representation of Sir John is a most artistic and delightful one and no person can witness it without being pleased. Harry Richmond's Prince Hal was noted excellent, and Mortimer's Hotspur a good piece of acting. Jimmy Griffith read his lines with excellent effect, and Langrishe's nose becometh the Knight of the burning lamp. The play is excellent and we believe presented for the last time.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

October 21, 1870

Benefit of Miss Couldock.—This delightful actress and admirable lady, who has pleased our audiences so much, will take a benefit tonight. Miss Couldock has won the general approbation of the public in her parts, and the numerous admirers of her talents will turn out in strong force on this occasion of her benefit. The bill offers two new plays, never before produced here. Mr. Couldock appears in his great character of "Phil Stapleton," in the beautiful drama of "Old Phil's Birthday," and Miss Couldock takes the part of "Marion," in the same piece. The evening will conclude with the glorious comedy: "The Day After the Wedding" in
which Miss Couldock will appear as Lady Elizabeth Freelove.
The cast is an excellent one; the pieces entirely new;
Miss Couldock deserving a fine benefit, we hope to see the
house crowded from pit to dome.

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Daily Rocky Mountain Gazette

October 22, 1870

Theatrical.—Last night, the occasion of Miss Couldock's
benefit, was muddy and disagreeable; but notwithstanding
these drawbacks, the opera house was well filled, as it de­served to be, (sic). The plays were excellently produced,
and Miss Couldock rendered her character in the very best
manner. The audience was delighted at the evening's enter­tainment. A great bill is offered for tonight. The evening
will open with the beautiful drama, "One Touch of Nature"
and will close with Couldock's specialty, "Milky White" in
which he was never equalled or approached by any living actor.

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CHAPTER III.

APPENDIX B.

1. Ming Opera House, Helena, 1880 - reviews.
The Morning Capital

June 9, 1880

Dramatic

Mr. Paul C. Blum, the manager of Ming's Opera House, is sparing no effort to furnish Helenaites amusement of the best character, just as soon as the eloquent structure on Jackson street is completed. Learning that the Nellie Boyd Company was coming here, Mr. Blum wrote to Welty, the manager, with a view to engage this well known troupe for a season. The reply states that the company is playing to first class houses in the towns of California and has no intention of coming here at present.

Thinking that a musical attraction of a high order might be duly appreciated here, Mr. Blum placed himself in communication with Wilhelmj the famous violinist who is now in Ottawa, Canada, and preparing to go to Australia. Wilhelmj's agent fixed the moderate price of $500 a night and expenses for one or two nights in Helena, or $2000 for five nights with a matinee generously thrown in. These figures being slightly too steep, Mr. Blum concluded that Montana does not care for music anyway.

The Katie Putman Combination will be the opening attraction at the Opera House September 1st. The Company has twelve members, higher salaried people than those of any other troupe of the character in the country, and all of whom are away up in their profession. Katie Putman herself is an actress after Lotta's style and is by many considered superior to that winsome creature. C. A. Hazenwinkle, whom our leading citizens will remember as the leading man of the Nellie Boyd Troupe, is manager of the Katie Putman's, who will be at Fort Benton in the middle of July and will remain in Montana about eight weeks,—the period for which Mr. Blum has engaged them.

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The Morning Capital

July 20, 1880

Lena, the Madcap
Sawtelle's Theatre was last evening crowded with the wealth and beauty of Helena to witness the first appearance in Helena of the talented, piquant and versatile actress, Miss Katie Putman, supported by the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company. The play was "Lena, the Madcap," with Miss Putman in the title role. Lena is a happy, mischievous maid, who, in addition to the buoyancy of her age, is possessed maturally of a wild, frolicsome, madcap disposition. The character is a difficult one to render, and none but a thorough artist could successfully attempt it. But Miss Putman renders the part so naturally—the elastic step, the joyful laugh, the sparkling eye—that the audience for the time-being almost forgot they are sitting in a theatre, but seemed to be looking on from afar off at scenes in real life and events that are actually transpiring. Miss Putman is destined to be one of the greatest favorites that ever appeared before Montana audiences. The company, too, that supports her is an excellent one, and much better than often finds its way out into this remote section. We congratulate the Manager on his good judgment, and predict for them a successful run.

The Morning Capital
July 23, 1880

Amusements
------
The Katie Putman Entertainments
at Raymond's Hall
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(Bismarck Tribune)

The people of this city were right royally entertained this week by the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company, with Miss Kate Putman as the particular star. Miss Putman is making a tour through Montana this year, and pending the departure of a boat for Benton has given the amusing loving people of Bismarck a series of entertainments in point of excellence equal to any in the country. Miss Putman is an actress of national reputation, being of the same school as Alice Oates, while her acting shows a close study of Maggie Mitchell. During the theatrical months proper (winter season) Miss Putman plays to crowded houses in all the leading theatres of the country, and is an especial favorite on the Chicago stage. Many dramatic critics have pronounced her superior
to Maggie Mitchell in many of the characters she plays, and
with the exception of "Fauchon, the Cricket," is indeed her
peer. "Lena, the Madcap," was presented Tuesday night by
special request of many of the most prominent citizens. This
will be the farewell performance in this city, and is cer-
tainly deserving of a crowded house. The support of Miss
Putman is good, far superior to that on the road. In fact
there is not one in the company, but that is a first class
artist. Mrs. Ada Lawrence and Miss Minnie Castle, both
charming actresses, are with the company. The great O'Reard-
on, who had justly earned a world-wide reputation as a pian-
ist and musician, is leader of the orchestra, and his famous
tumbleronicon medley brought forth showers of applause. The
company leaves to-morrow night for Benton, Bozeman, Helena,
and other Montana cities, and it is to be hoped that they
will be greeted with crowded houses wherever they go, as
they go, as the entertainment justly merits. The company
carries twelve sets of scenery, and the pieces are put on with
studied care and attention. As an expression of gratitude,
the following testimonial was presented to Miss Putman, and
its request granted. To Miss Katie Putman: We desire to ex-
press our appreciation of your talents, and to thank you for
the pleasure you have afforded us during your sojourn in this
city; and in token of our esteem we tender you a complimen-
tary benefit for Friday evening, July 2nd, and ask that on
that occasion you present "Lena, the Madcap."

Notes.
Katie Putman is the most charming and accomplished act-
ress who has ever visited the northwest.
A curious co-incident. The receipts of Monday and Tues-
day night's entertainment of the Katie Putman Company were
exactly the same to a penny.

*****

The Morning Capital

July 23, 1880

Fanchon

The audience that witnessed Miss Putman in the charac-
ter of Fanchon last evening was more than pleased. All who
have seen the play will agree with us that any but a thorough
artiste attempting to render this difficult part will ignom-
iously fail. But Miss Putman is so well fitted for the
character that it seems it must have been especially created
for her, or she for it. Her perfect naturalness on the stage, above all, stamps her as the perfect actress. There is none of that stageiness that is the fault of so many of the profession, but every action is nature itself. In this we think her a great success. She has appeared here four evenings, and in more than that many characters, and in all has proven herself to be above criticism. Her support, too, has been of the best, without which the efforts of the best actress or actor would meet with poor success. This evening "Lena, the Madcap," will be repeated. Reserve seats as usual at the box office.

The Morning Capital
September 3, 1880

OPERA HOUSE OPENING

Last night was the opening night at Ming's new Opera House. Nearly all the seats were taken long before the box-office closed, and before the curtain rose there were, at an estimate, 700 persons seated in the parquetry, dress circle and balcony circle.

At the raising of the curtain Hon. Martin Maginnis and J. H. Ming were discovered seated on the stage. Major Maginnis stepped forward and delivered a short but interesting dedicatory address in well chosen terms, at the conclusion of which Miss Putman read a poem description of the struggles of the drama in Helena.

Then followed the play of the evening, "The Old Curiosity Shop." It is needless for us to enter into the plot of the play as all are familiar with Dicken's famous story of that name, on which the play is founded. Suffice it to say that the play pleased the audience so well that it will bear being repeated several times during the season. Miss Putman as Little Nell and the Marchioness, Mr. Ferris as Dick Swivel-ler, and Flint Kennicott, as Quilp were exceedingly good. We are sorry that lack of space forbids a more lengthy account of the performance, for it merited a column. To-night will
be produced "The Pearl of Savoy."

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Helena Independent
September 12, 1880

Fanchon the Cricket

There was another very large audience at the Opera House last evening. "Fanchon" was the play. It has been produced a number of times in Helena by different actresses, chief among whom in this particular play was Miss Fanny Price. Miss Putman's rendition of the title role last evening was certainly equal, and by a large number regarded as superior, to any performance of the "Cricket" here. The support was uniformly good, and the music by Prof. O'Reardon an attractive feature of the entertainment. There was also a good house at the matinee yesterday afternoon, when "Three Pairs of Shoes" was presented. Ever since the opening of the Opera House the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company have had splendid audiences and deserved them.

Tomorrow evening the beautiful romantic drama of "Jane Eyre", with Miss Putman in the title role, will be presented.

******

The Herald
September 15, 1880

Local News

A Handsome Present

On Saturday evening before the curtain rose at the Opera House, Miss Putman was the recipient of a handsome silver rimmed banjo, a gift from a boy friend in Chicago by whom it was made. It is a very beautiful present and as a token of friendship is highly prized by the actress who makes hosts of warm personal friends wherever she appears.

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The Morning Capital
September 18, 1880
Opera House

A large audience was present last evening at the complimentary benefit tendered to Miss Putman by our citizens. The performance was an excellent one and evidently gave the best of satisfaction. The character of Josephine in 'The Child of the Regiment' is one which gave Miss Putman an excellent opportunity for a display of her genius. The other members of the company sustained their characters in their usual satisfactory manner.

This evening a new play, written especially for Miss Putman by Joaquin Miller, will be given. It is entitled "Two Babes in the Wood," and has never before been produced on any stage, and consequently a Helena audience will have the honor of witnessing its presentation in advance of the rest of the world. This will be the last appearance of Miss Putman and the Hazenwinkle Dramatic Company.

A matinee will be given this afternoon, at which time Miss Putman's favorite play, "Lena, the Madcap," will be presented.

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CHAPTER IV.

APPENDIX A.

Miscellaneous Later Material
And bear in mind that Jamestown, Bismark, Dickinson, Miles City, Livingston and Bozeman are all good this season.

Manager Ming at Helena, submits the following:

Fast Mail............. $575.75
Tornado................ 559.00
War of Wealth........ 728.00

There is no necessity of Manager Maguire saying anything about Butte and Anacondas; "IT'S simply capacity, and that's all there is to it, my boy."

Missoula is always good, as you know, and Manager Hartley says it's better now than ever.

There is always open time for first class attractions."

Cal Stone
P. & T. A.
N. P. R. R.

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N. P. R. R. Co.
City Ticket Office
St. Paul, Minnesota    January 5, 1897

"Oh, I don't know,
It's not so far."

N. P. THEATRICAL BULLETIN NO. 6
Season 1896-97
The theatrical business along the N. P. Ry., reaching from St. Paul, Minnesota to Portland, Oregon, and passing through the principle cities of Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, has been surprisingly prosperous since the opening of the season...

17 companies—N. P. Circuit—15 weeks...
Gay Parisian Company (Chas. Frohman)
Bowery Girl Co.
Fast Mail Co.
Nat Goodwin Co.
Uncle Tom's Cabin Co.
Colored Minstrels (Mahara)

************

Cal Stone
Passenger and Ticket
Agent
N.P.R.R. Co.
St. Paul, Minnesota

*****

Clipping. Montana Record Herald, September 2, 1930.

An idea of the many famous players seen in Helena can be gained from the record kept by George Miner who managed the playhouse for the last ten years of its existence...

Frederick Warde
Louis James
Joseph Jefferson
Stuart Robson
Florence Roberts
Frank Daniels
Anna Held
Nancy O'Neil
Mrs. Fiske
Rose Coglan
Mrs. Patrick Campbell
Mary Manning
E. A. Soothern
William Faversham
Henry Miller
Paul Gilmore
Alice Lloyd
May Irwin
McIntire and Heath

Catherine Kidder
Kyrie Bellew
Maxine Elliott
Willie Collier
Edna Wallace Hopper
Eleanor Robson
William Fawley
Tim Murphy
Lawrence D'Aroy
Matthews and Bulger
John L. Sullivan
James J. Corbett
Blanche Walsh
Paderewski
Eddie Foy
Harry Corson Clarke
Eugenia Blair
Charles Murray
Madame Modjeski
Ming Opera House (J. M. ) Program printed at Anaconda

Milton and Dollie (comedienne) Nobles
"Love and law!" (Melodrama in 4 acts)

Synopsis of incidents and scenery

Act. I. Love--The Intimation. Scene--Boyview cottage, Staten Island, with a view of New York Bay and Harbor including a perfect view of the Bartholdi Statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World" in its correct Geographical position. (Hoyt and Bro.)

Act. II Love--The Inspiration Scene--The den of Giovanni Corti, Crosby Street, New York City. (Thos. Plaisted)

Act. III Love--The Realization Scene--The boudoir of Helen Montague, New York City. (Hoyt and Bros.)

Act. IV Law--The Consumption Scene--Law office of Sawyer and O'Paff.
Scene II--A street adjoining the residence of Helen Montague.--
Scene III--The den of Giovanni Corti

A lapse of ten hours between the first and second acts.
A lapse of 8 months between the second and third acts.
A lapse of four weeks between the third and fourth acts.

*****
Helena Dramatic News, August 24, 1855

Ming, O. H. (J. M. Manager)

Miss Lotta Wade
"Caste" (Tom Robertson)
(Miss Belle Douglas--Marguise D'Alvroy.)

Gallery-$0.50$
Porquet and dress circle-$1.00$

Ming Opera House (Remington, manager)
Monday--1st time in city
Program "A Gilded Fool!" (Henry Guy Carleton)
American Comedy.

Tuesday--"The Nomiee" (from French of Richardson) Nat.
Goodwin. All the stage business by Mr. Goodwin. Next

Ming Opera House (J. M.)
Program Minnie Hank
Concert and Opera Company-Sept. 15, 1886. (Carriages at 10:15 PM)
 Bits drom Carmen (Bizet, Act. II)
 La Favorita (Donizetti, Act. IV)
  Il Travatore (Verdi, Act. IV)

Opera Programme--Jan. 10 and 11, 1887 (one orange, one yellow, 14x10)
  Helena Encore Club
  G. & S. New Opera
  The Mikado

Ming Opera House--Dec. 26, 1882
Readings and Vocal Selections by Miss Birdie Damon of Boston, Mass. Opinions of the Press--All Boston
readings in churches. "...her winning manner, excellent elocution, and attractive selections..."

General Admission $1.00
Gallery $0.75

Libretto for Emma Abbott
Martha

Opera House (Nov. 21. ) (J. Maguire, manager)
Concerts--Rafael Joseffy
Program Ming Opera House (J. C. Remington, manager)

Miss Marie Wainwright in her magnificent production of Twelfth Night and Famous Comedy in 4 acts, by John Tobin. "The Honeymoon."
Company 12-16.

*****

From 1894 Onwards

J. L. Ming was managing his own Opera House. Announcements were sent from time to time heralding the most spectacular attractions he had to offer. The following two were found in his own scrapbook, which he evidently kept faithfully during his years of management. They were printed on the inside page of a white paper folder.

White Paper Folder Announcement:

Helena, Montana
April 13, 1895

"I desire to call your attention to see the appearance of the eminent actors, Frederick Ward and Louis James, at Ming's Opera House, commencing next Thursday, in an attractive repertoire, including Julius Caesar, Othello, Francesca da Rimini, and the latest Shakespearian success, King Henry IV.

These gentlemen are the representative tragedians of the American stage, and all their performances are lessons in history and dramatic literature. This is their last year together, and their engagements will be the leading will be the leading society dramatic event of the year.

Respectfully yours,

J. L. Ming,
Manager."

White Paper Folder

"Ming's Opera House
Helena, April 11, 1896
"I desire to call your attention to the appearance of the eminent actor, Frederick Ward, at this theatre for one night only on Tuesday, April 14.

Mr. Ward is the acknowledged leading tragedian of the American stage, and on this occasion he will present his latest and greatest success, Shakespeare's King Lear, which the critics say is his masterpiece and one of the finest productions ever put on any stage.

Mr. Ward's engagement will be the leading society dramatic event of the season.

Yours respectfully,

J. L. Ming,
Manager

P. S. - The sale of seats commences at Lockwood's Drug store on Monday Morning. The prices will be $2.00, $1.50, $1.00 and 50¢.

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The Helena Herald
March 14, 1896

Plays and Players

The packed house for "Finnigan's Ball" and the space attendance for Louis James again demonstrated most fully the education of Helena's people in the theatrical line. A legitimate play, produced by stars of world-wide reputation, goes begging, while a "knock-down and drag out" farce on the Murray and Mack order packs the house. I do not call it depraved taste. It is only a lack of education. A finer tragedian has not graced the boards of Ming's Opera House since Booth played here than Mr. Louis James. Yet his two houses were a disgrace. On Monday night a negro show plays. The house will be crowded....Remember friends, this reflects upon your city and upon yourselves as individuals.

*****

Helena, Montana

Small notice--"J. L. Ming has assumed the active management of Ming's Opera House. He will have absolute control, and this arrangement is a permanent one."
1894—beginning in the early part of July—

**PLAN**

J. M. Emmett  
Proctor's—"Too Much Johnson"  
"Charley's Aunt, and Jane"

Tornado, War of Wealth  
Thomas Keene  
Kate Putman  
James B. Mackie  
(In old Kentucky)  
Nellie McHenry  
Spider and Fly  
Louis James  
Old Homestead  
Fast Mail  
Katie Emmett  
Fanny Price  
Charles Dickson  
Joe Caw Thorn  
Marie Wainwright  
Frederick Abrde  
Roland Reed  
DeWolf Hopper

Ward and James  
(April 8, 1895. Three nights and Sat. matinee  
Othello  
Henry IV  
Francescoada Rimini  
Julius Caesar

August 3, 1895—Lark Twain "In Talks and Readings"  
Dan Sully—Nov. 6 and 7, 1895  
1896—June 20—Rhea—"Empress Josephine"  
"Nell Gwynne"

1896—Feb. 10—J. P. Sousa

MING'S OPERA HOUSE  (J. L. Ming, Manager)

Oct. 30, 1894—Alex Salvini—"Jon Caesard Bogan"  
(Tickets 75¢ to $2.00)

Auditorium—Primrose and West Minstrels—no date.

Ming Opera House, August 18, 1894—opening dramatic  
season of 1894-95. (August 21) Friends—sparking  
comedy drama (E. M. Royle)

1890—James O'Neill—"Monte Cristo"  
1896—March 12, 13—Louis James, Hamlet, Othello  
1897—Louis James, Romeo and Juliet, Sportacus, Jan. 20  
1892—Concert—Ellen Beach Yaw—June 11  
1895—Lecture by Frederick Ward for hospitals (48.85  
equal one-half proceeds.) Ming Opera House free of  
charge.
1896, Oct. 12—Mahara's Minstrels
19--Gus Heege in "A Yenuine Gentlemen"
20--Charles Macklin and Theresa Milford—"Fabio Roman's", Benedict's
24--Jules Walters—"Side Tracked"
? 25--The Hypnotist Gunning—Cause of much discussion
29--30--The Hypnotist Gunning
? 26--Katie Emmett—"The Waifs of New York"

(Marie Tavary Grand Opera Company Shipped and engagement. Did go to Butte 1894—Sued 1896)

1896, Dec. 2—"Uncle Tom's Cabin
9--Georgia U. Minstrel stars
19--John Dillon—"Wanted the Earth"
22--Joseph Murphy—"Kerry Gow"
25--Cosgrove and Grant's Comedians—"The Dazzler"

1897, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1—Corinne—"Hendrick Hudson, Jr."
Jan. 20—Louis James, Spartans, R. and J.
Jan. 29--K. Putman—"Miss Johnny"
   "Ola Linne Kiln"
   "Old Curiosity Shop"
Feb. 2--Nic. Sorley's Points—comic
3-4--Frawley Co.—"Chanty Ball", "The Ensign"
6--Magician, Albini
8-9--Grisner—Davies—"Humanity", "New South"
Mar. 2-3--Chas Yale's Co.—"Forever Devil's Auction"
Mar. 20--Prodigal Father Co.—Vaudeville
April 6--7--Fanny Price—"At the French Ball"
April 11--Joe. Herne—"Shore Acres"
22--Broadway comedians—"Town Tpoics"
May 6--Ida Fuller—illusion dancer, plus vaudeville
26--Primrose and West—Minstrels
June 2--Comedians (??? and Vokes) "A Run on the Bank"

MING'S OPERA HOUSE
Helena, Montana
(no date)

"Helene has won the capitol by 1900 majority, demonstrating that this is the best town in the State of Montana.

A Turkish Bath, Oct. 17-------------------------$479.75
Alexander Salvini, Nov. 5---------------------993.50
In Old Kentucky, Nov. 9----------------------713.00
In Old Kentucky, Nov. 9--------------.489.00

For Open Time and times wire or write

J. L. Ming, Manager.

**

Ming, Opera House

Thursday 28, 1895 (Thanksgiving)
Matinee and Night
Only appearance of

Daniel Bandmann
and
Theresa Bandman (a "San Francisco lady")
Efficient company, assisted by local talent

Three comedies

"David Garrich"
"The First Night" One Act Each
"The Happy Pair"

"....has passed the half-way milestone in ???."

"....Mr. Bandmann was the first star to appear in Pope's Theatre in St. Louis, the leading playhouse in that city at the time. That was in 1871, before the great bridge was built there across the Mississippi. He appeared in the "Merchant of Venice". He presented "Dr. Jeckel and Mr. Hyde" at Niblo's Theatre with such success that he forced Richard Mansfield to drop the play, who was also playing it at that time."

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Programs

1. J. S. Langrishe - "Man of tge World"- (benefit) (John Maguire)
   "Skeptics" - (Most laughable comedy)

2. Jan. 1st, 1872 - Entertainment for Benefit of Poor
   - "Presentations" - big letters (22)

3. Feb. 17, 1872 - Concert (Vocal and instrumental)
   Helena Charity Fund
4. Ming Opera House - Mr. E. J. Buckley - Douglass Winthrop
   (N. Y. C.) "Young Mrs. Winthrop"
   (John Maguire) (Society Play)
   Wed. and Thurs. "My Partner"

5. Ming Opera House - Milton and Dollie Nobles - "Love & Law" (melo-)

6. Ming Opera House - Herr Daniel E. Bandmann - "Narcisse, the Vagrant"
   6 nights - May 26 Miss Louise Beaudet - "Richard III"
   31 (Salt Lake on May 15) "Merchant of Venice"
   28 (Admission $1.00) "A Woman of the People"
   27 Reserved seats at Armitage's Store
   $1.25

7. Opera House (J. M.) - Barlow, Wilson and Rankin's "Mammoth Minstrels", "Buffalo Bill's Wild West"
   "Mickey-Doo" - Burlesque

8. Opera House - Matinees 2 o'clock - Rose Eytinge - "Felicia"
   ("Elephant returns from the stage")

9. Ibid. Oct. 4th - Lawrence Barrett - "Julius Caesar"
   Louis James
   (The furniture and appointments on the stage all
   from firm of A. P. Curtin.)


11. Ibid. "Miss Georgie Wood Thorpe, Fred Cooper, Lotta Wade" - (Soubrette) "Mysteries of Paris"
    (new Scenery, and mechanical effects, especially the
    great celler scene on the River
    correct costumes and all details which tend to a most successful
    performance."
    Gallery - 50¢
    Dress Circle and Parquet $1.00

12. Ibid. Phosa McAllister - "Frou-Frou"
    March 21
    Sat. 2 P. M. Matinee - "Camille"

    Oct. 30, 1888 - Scott (R. L.) & H. Mills -
    "Chip o' the old Block"
    Jessie Bonstelle
14. Ibid, March 17 - Phosa McAllister - "Romeo and Juliet" March 18
   "Camille"
15. Ibid. Grace Hawthorne & "m Clifton - "New East Lynne"
16. Katie Putman - her own company - "Clivette" full "argument on Bach." "Origial music, original cos-
tumes". Under direction of Prof. Simonson.
17. Maguire's Theatre - 'Damon and Pythias" June 23, 1887
   Geo C. Miln
   Adele Payn
18. Same play - cast given.
19. Ibid. - Hawthorne and Clifton - "Queena"
20. Ibid. - Phosa McAllister - "Leah the Forsaken" Mar. 20 ?
    "Frou-Frou"
    "Camille"
21. Ibid. - Katie Putman - "The Little Detective" - Dec. 14, 1883
    "Youth that never saw a cooneau"
    Sat. eve. - last night - "Paul of Savoy"
    Mr. Frank Bosworth volunteered
    Sat. afternoon - "Grand family matinee at 2:30
    Admission - \$1.00
    Reserved Seats - \$1.25
22. Ibid. - Putman - "Dot" or "Cricket on the Hearth" - April 9 ?
    Dramatized by Dion Bonicault
    Frank Bosworth - Stage Manager.

The Opera News "containing the official program of..."

Helena, Montana, January 13, 1887

Georgia Wood Thrope Co. (Miss - "bright and talented
soubrette", Mr. Fred Cooper - versatile comedian)

"In the Pines"

Miss Lotta Wade
"Alixe" (as played at the Fifth Avenue Theatre,
N. Y. for nearly one year.)
Page 2 - Notes "Theatrical"

Mrs. Langtry is to appear in her next play as an unscrupulous woman of fatal beauty. She is said to gravely study her part with her usual indefatigable industry. (sic)?

Ibid. Jan. 13, 1887

Tonight

Good Thrope and Cooper
Nutinee Sat. at Miss Lotta Wade and Co. "The Mysteries of Paris" (Eugene Sue's Leilo-drama acts)
"This great play will be produced with new scenery, mechanical effects, especially the Great Cellar Scene on the Seine correct costumes and all details which tend to a most successful performance."

Ibid. Jan. 24, 1887 - Katie Putman's Co. in "Fanchon"

Monday night - Pykes Opera Company

Jan. 24, 1887 - Katie Putman "The Little Detective"
"Roaring Farce-The Youth who Never Saw Woman"

Sat. Mat. - "Lena the Madcap"
Sat. Night - "Grand Testimonial Benefit and last appearance of Miss Putman. "Fanchon"

Opera News Jan 24, 1887 (Ming Opera House (J.M.))

Katie Putman Comedy Co. - one week commencing Jan. 24
"Emma the Elf"
Tomorrow night - "Old Curiosity Shop"

Tuesday Feb. 22, 1887 (Ming's Opera House(J.M.))

Grand Opera in English - Emma Abbott tonight "Lucretia Borgia" (Special engagement Grand English Opera Co. "The most successful Eng. Opera Co. in America"

Wednesday Evening - Abbott farewell performance "Il Trave
tore" (Abbot as Lenora)

The Opera House News - Helena Montana

undated (Maguire's Theatre (J. M. Prop))
1. W. J. Gilmore "Geates and Tost - Three Act Spectacle
   "The Devil's Auction or the Golden Branch"
   (Elaborate Plans, large cast)

2. Pyke Opera Co. - Ming's Opera House
   (Jeannie Ministon) "The Mikado"

3. Ditto - Sat. Feb. 5. "Boccaccio" (Suppe's Great Opera)
   "Next week's program published in Sunday's paper"

4. Ditto - "Path of Love" (Audran's Opera Comique)
   Thursday evening (by special request) "Boccaccio"
   Grand Sat. Matinee - "Prince Methusalem"

5. Ditto - Tonight - "Prince Methusalem"
   Tues. Feb. 8 - "Queen's Lace Handkerchief"
   Friday - "Chimes of Normandy"

Opera News Ming's Opera House (J. M. Manager)

Tonight
   "Trebelli & Musin Opera Co.
   "Grand Concert and Opera"
   Part II
   "Scenes in full costume from Bizet's Grand Opera
   "Carmen"

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Helena Dramatic News
Helena, Montana
August 23, 1886
("issued every day during fair week"
Distributed gratuitously as an advertising medium and theatrical pro-
gramme"

Vol. VI No. I

Ming Opera House (J. M.)

Fair Week
Miss Lotta Wade (and a carefully selected Company of
Comedians) "In a change of Programme every evening"

I. Monday, August 23, 1886
"The New Magdalen" (dramatized version of Wilkie
Collin's famous story)
Lady Janet Roy - Miss Belle Douglas

Gallery 50¢
Parguet & dress circle $1.00
"The Dramatic News makes its best bow to the public on this, its sixth annual appearance. It is recognized as one of the necessities of Fair Week, and will endeavor to maintain the previous good record.

It will publish daily programs of each day’s races and of each evening’s performance at the Opera House..."

II. Thursday, August 26, 1886

Miss Lotta "ade in "The Lights O’ London!"

Matinee Sat. at 2

(Tomorrow – "Leah, the Forsaken")
(Mrs. Jarvis – Miss Belle Douglas)

"The great spectacular success, originally produced at the Union Square Theatre, New York, with a wealth of magnificent scenery."

"The Lights O’ London is by all odds the grandest presentation ever put before the public on the local stage, and must be seen by everyone."

"...has the grandest scenic effects and is one of the strongest plays before the American public. To see the magnificent scenery is alone worth double the price of admission."

"The Opera House is well ventilated now, and the audience can enjoy a performance without being obliged to go outside the acts for a breath of fresh air."

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