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History of Drama in Provo, 1853-1897

Burnett B. Ferguson

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HISTORY OF
DRAMA IN PROVO
1853-1897

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH
OF
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

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BY
BURNET B. FERGUSON
1952
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January 10, 1952

Burnett B. Ferguson
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. A BRIEF ECCLESIASTICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DRAMA IN PROVO</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CONFLICT.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. PROVO'S GOLDEN ERA</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. DECLINE</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 1, LOCAL AMATEUR THEATRICALS</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 2, PROFESSIONAL TRAVELING COMPANIES</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESUME</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLUSTRATIONS</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

This study will present as complete and accurate a history of the drama of Provo, from the earliest recorded activity (1853) to the decline of community theatre (1897), as available data provide.

Importance of the Study

The Theatre Libre of Paris (founded in 1887) is credited by theatre historians with being the world's first "Little Theatre." Wisconsin with its "Wisconsin Dramatic Society" (founded in 1910) is given the honor of being the first "Little Theatre" in America.

Community drama in Provo, Utah, had its beginnings in 1853. During the period of 1877-1883 dramatic activity reached its zenith. There were two rival dramatic companies competing for the community's favor and patronage. These two companies finally merged to present even better community drama. By 1887 the "Little Theatre" movement in Provo had begun to wane. Here, then, is a community that experienced the beginning, rise, and fall of "Little Theatre" activity before "Little Theatre" was recognized elsewhere in the world. So far as is ascertainable, no complete study of the drama of Provo from 1853 to 1897 has been recorded.
This research, in attempting to present such a history, should constitute a valuable contribution to the present studies on American drama. In addition to the fact that Provo community theatre preceded "little theatre" activity in America by more than a quarter of a century, this study also has significance as a historical survey, as the purely historical investigation of any major group is of importance to American drama.

Limitation of the Study

There has been a very limited number of books and articles written on the history of drama in Provo. Newspapers, though of inestimable value, were found to be incomplete, leaving noticeable gaps. Through the use of diaries, ledgers, and personal interviews much of the missing data was obtained. Extreme caution had to be used in the choice of material from the three later sources in that they frequently disagreed upon minor items. At times it was difficult to discern between the reliable and the unreliable information. It is apparent, therefore, that the limitations of the study are the defects within the source material.

Method of Research

The following research methods were used in gathering material for this study: (1) All known authors on the subject were consulted; (2) Old newspapers and chronicals were carefully examined; (3) Available diaries, personal histories and ledgers were perused for related data; (4) Some highly regarded
records were viewed through the medium of micro-film photography; (5) Photographs, programs, and ledgers were collected; (6) Members of the early companies and their immediate families were interviewed.
CHAPTER I

A BRIEF ECCLESIASTICAL AND
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the founding of their Church, the Latter-Day Saints have been a different and peculiar people in many ways. One of these "ways," abhorrent to the churches around them, was the Mormon's love of the dance and the theatre. In a day when participation in either the dance or the theatre was considered to be a sin, the Mormons brought both in from an unreligious world and gave them back to their original setting—the church.

But of all the churches that have welcomed back their prodigal son, the drama, none has given him so royal a welcome as the Latter-Day Saints of Utah. Since the beginning the Mormons have loved and nourished the theatre and today there is hardly a ward of the Church that does not support its dramatic group, provide a hall where plays may be given and take the keenest interest in the annual play tournaments.¹

Theatre, with the Mormons, began the same year their Church was organized, 1830. According to George D. Pyper, in The Romance of an Old Play House, the men and women who moved to Kirtland from New York state possessed "strong dramatic instincts, probably in excess of any contemporary people, due

no doubt, to the strenuous life and stirring scenes of those early days."

From New York to Ohio, from Ohio to Missouri, through all their persecutions, the Mormons carried their dreams of the theatre. These dreams materialized, at long last, in the city they retrieved from swampland. In this city, Nauvoo, they built their own "Fun Halls" where they produced their plays and struck up the fiddle for their dances.

How amazed must have been those early converts to the new Church to find their Prophet leading all these activities. Joseph Smith, a frequent participant in wrestling, horseback riding, and foot-racing, fostered the first dramatic company. He admonished the actors, upon the organization of this company, to play the great classics; and he advised them to keep their conduct above reproach. To Joseph Smith the theatre was more than entertainment, it was also a medium of instruction. Because of these standards set by the Prophet the plays produced by the Latter-Day Saints were exemplary.

In the dramatic company were some of the actors who were to perform the leading roles in the Mormons' greatest drama, the trek westward - Brigham Young, Erastus Snow and George A. Smith. The only professional actor in this first company, Thomas A. Lyne, a new convert to the Church, did not make the trek; but the foundation he laid for good drama and

2Ibid., p. 24-25.
excellent workmanship in the actors' portrayals did carry over and affect the plays of the Mormons for many years after they settled in the Salt Lake valley.

In 1841 Mr. Lyne came to the Mormons from the New York stage where he was a prominent tragedian. He had appeared with Edwin Forrest, Junius Brutus Booth and Charlotte Cushman, and had starred in "Richelieu." He was a popular actor and was taken to the hearts of the drama-hungry Mormons. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young put him to work and almost at once the plays of the Mormons assumed more than an amateur status. The productions of this first Nauvoo dramatic company included William Tell, Virginius, The Iron Chest, Damon and Pythias, and Pizarro.

The lead and the "lay" members of the Church participated in the drama. Brigham Young played the part of the Peruvian High Priest in Pizarro and took great interest in his character.

In relating this particular Nauvoo incident to John Lindsay Tom Lyne broke into a humorous vein and remarked: 'I've always regretted having cast Brigham Young for that part of the high priest. . .he's been playing the character with great success ever since.'

The dramatic urge was curbed, somewhat, during the Mormon's trek across the plains. Their entertainments narrowed down to simple get-togethers around the campfire for singing, story-telling and recitations. However, dreams and plans were made during these travel days that were to materialize in the

Salt Lake Valley.

Brigham Young, with far-seeing eye, made out his program for the social life, employment, and entertainment of his people before he knew where their future home was to be. The schools, music, the press, and the drama were alike provided for, and the pioneers were no sooner located than those four great civilizing agencies, whose roots had been carefully taken up from the soil of Nauvoo and tenderly nurtured in the great migration across the plains, were transplanted amid the more congenial soils of "The Valley" where they blossomed and shed their fragrance on "wide neighborhoods of men."

Within three years after the arrival of the first company of pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley, as soon as they had established their homes, the Mormons again polished up their dialects and "trod the boards." The first theatrical, Robert McCaire, was performed in the Bowery, and their theatricals were continuously in production from that time on. Their plays were held in various halls and meeting houses until President Brigham Young directed the building of the Salt Lake Theatre.

After the completion of this imposing edifice, the largest theatre west of the Mississippi River at that time, President Young said:

I built that theatre to attract the young of our community and to provide amusement for the boys and girls. . . Is there evil in the theatre; in the ballroom; in the place of worship; in the dwelling; in the world? Yes, when men are inclined to do evil in any of these places. . . the stage can be made to aid the pulpit in impressing upon the minds of a community an enlightened sense of a virtuous life, also a proper horror of the enormity of sin and a just dread of its consequences. . . . Upon the stage of a theatre can be represented in character evil and its consequences, good and its happy results and rewards; the weakness and follies of man, the magnanimity of virtue and the greatness of truth. . . .The path of sin with its thorns

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and pitfalls, its sin and snares can be revealed, and how to shun it.¹

Brigham Young followed up his ambitions for the Salt Lake Theatre. In the early days of the Salt Lake Theatre even rehearsals of the plays were invariably opened with prayer. Smoking and drinking were strictly forbidden. Brigham Young insisted that the playhouse ought to be as sacred as the Temple or the Tabernacle.

W. Tullidge in Tullidge's Quarterly commends the Salt Lake Theatre company for its success in meeting the requirements set down by Brigham Young.

The Salt Lake Theatre, in fact, at the outset, was elevated to the cast of a dramatic temple, and made a high school for the public for the study of human nature, which was the object of all the plays of our Solomon of the Anglo-Saxon stage. Not in the whole history of the stage, ancient or modern, was it ever before thus endowed as a sacred dramatic temple for the people. True, Shakespeare, and the rest of the great dramatic composers, with Garrick, the Kembles, the Keans, Macready, Booth, Forrest, and others of their illustrious class, in their imperial dignity of character and in matchless splendor of their genius, before whose right constellation the galaxy of stars of the pulpit have bowed in humility... have affirmed that the theatre of their designing is a temple for the people. Hereafter it may be regarded as one of the strange things of dramatic history that Brigham Young, a man of no art culture beyond that which was self-evolved, but the High Priest of a despised church, should have so lifted the theatre, to the conception of the great high priests of the stage.²

The Salt Lake Theatre was a place for social gathering and all the important people had their boxes and regular seats

¹Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, (Salt Lake, Deseret News Press, 1925),
and frequented the "Green Room" to meet the players and their personal friends.¹

The Salt Lake Theatre performed a distinct service to the "Saints." It helped to broaden their culture; it welded together a heterogenous body of foreigners, from many lands, into one common culture; and, it made easier their pioneering with the relaxation it offered them in viewing, or in performing, the role of adventurer, king, prince, saint or vagabond.

¹Interview with Dr. T. Earl Pardoe, November 12, 1951.
CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

OF DRAMA IN PROVO

Throughout all the pioneer movements, the Mormon people have realized the necessity for recreation to lessen the toil of the day. The beginnings of Provo were no less trying than the memorable trip across the plains. Each day was fraught with Indian trouble, hunger and cold; and the city was early shared by soldiers and non-Mormons who lacked the ideals and refinement of the Latter-Day Saints.

In 1847, soon after the pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, President Brigham Young sent Parley P. Pratt and a scouting party south in search of suitable lands for further colonization. The party reported the existence of a fertile valley with a fresh water lake and river. In 1849 President Young sent thirty families, numbering one-hundred and fifty people, to the location recommended by Parley P. Pratt to build a city. This city, by common consent, was named after Etienne Provot (pronounced Provo), the first white man who reported penetrating the region.

Three days' journey from Salt Lake, three miles from their objective, the Saints were stopped by hostile Indians, who threatened to take their lives. However, they were allowed to continue their journey after they had sworn, with their hands
upraised to heaven, that they would not jeopardize the rights of the Indians. This was an indication of the problems the settlers were to meet, for the Indians were many years in making friends and the Saints were to spend many sleepless nights on guard against the redmen and lose much of their needed food and valuable stock to the raids of their red brothers.

Soon after they arrived on the shores of Utah Lake (March, 1849) the settlers began building a fort. They laid out two-hundred and twenty-five acres of land and divided it among the thirty families who first came to the site and the ten families who followed them within a month. Then they hastened to plant food for their supplies were low. Their first crops were well up when a heavy snowstorm late in May destroyed their grain. It was the middle of July before many of these settlers had bread in their homes due to this storm.

Their very troubles magnified their desire for recreation and they began to assemble in their little dwellings inside the fort for entertainment. They sang together, told stories to each other, danced and dramatized incidents of their own backgrounds to entertain each other.

For a time, after the Mormons settled in Provo, the Indians remained curiously friendly, except for an occasional theft of cattle or foodstuff. Early in September of 1849 a party of immigrants, on their way to the gold fields, stopped close to the fort to replenish their provisions. Finding the Indians handy and well equipped with horses and food, they traded guns for the items the Indians could provide. This
barter marked the end of peace for the settlers in Provo. Before this time the Indians had felt their disadvantage in fighting guns with bows and arrows. Their trade had provided them with a leveling agent. With guns in their possession they suddenly felt their power and a series of unfortunate incidents occurred. The hostilities between the white man and the red man increased with each day. The policy of Brigham Young, "It is better to fight Indians with biscuits than bullets," was forgotten in the struggle for survival.

The winter of 1849-50 was a bitter one for the settlers in the little fort on the shores of Utah Lake, but Spring brought relief. They moved the fort farther East and a school-house-amusement hall was built within its walls. Life began to take on a few of the graces they so longed for; the tension over the Indian trouble relaxed as the hard winter ended, and there was hope for the summer's warmth and replenishment of the food supply.

As usual, when the Saints could find the opportunity, they sought means of relaxation and entertainment. They held informal theatricals and songfests.

No available record is had which indicated when the first 'party' or entertainments were held, but the first Sunday was a day of worship and song. Dancing was an eventide relaxation sometime in mid-April. (1849) Indian trouble kept the colonists closely huddled at night, and Fort Utah held its amusement at a very modest tempo. Oliver B. Huntington tells us: 'I went to dances in private houses where there was no floor but the ground...we could pay our admission to a party in wheat, flour, oats, corn, potatoes, squashes, molasses, beets, or anything the people wanted to eat or wear.'

1T. Earl Pardoe,"Provo's Pleasure and Drama" (Unpublished paper, 1949)
The home socials held by the pioneers generally convened in the home of some young couple where the settlers played games, told riddles and sang songs. "In the halls there were spelling schools, dances, and theatricals. When James E. Daniels arrived in the Fall of 1854, he instituted singing classes, which were considered enjoyable social events."¹

Every group of Mormons had talented members. When an invitation was issued to a party both young and old came. At these parties those talented in the dramatic and musical fields entertained. Mr. Joseph B. Walton says: "... to remain away without any justifiable cause, weakened the efforts of the others."² Mr. Walton records the price of admission to these entertainments as six ears of corn, a pint of molasses, a tallow candle, or an arm-full of wood. Whatever the admission price these people had the capacity for group entertainment and their lives as pioneers were much easier for it.

Other immigrants arrived in the settlement, among them were families destined to contribute to the entertainment of their community and the success of Provo's Little Theatre movement. These settlers were the Bullocks (whose children became actors in the Provo theatre groups), Harlow Redfield (whose home-hotel was to be used as a theatre), and the Cluffs

¹J. M. Jensen, History of Provo, Utah,(Provo: Published by the author, 1924), p. 166.

²Joseph B. Walton,"Pioneer Trails and Landmarks," (Unpublished manuscript, in possession of Mr. Bern Walton, Flintridge Heights, Provo, Utah.)
(who built a theatre over their workshop, manufactured scenery, directed plays, acted in plays and managed the local dramatic companies).

As the spring advanced, the settlers ventured a little farther from the Fort. The Indians lost interest in harrassing every person who left the protection of the Fort walls. Swift to take advantage of this, the settlers surveyed Provo and laid out their city in blocks. Some courageous families moved into log homes outside the Fort. Provo was becoming a city.

In 1852 Provo was divided into five ecclesiastical wards or divisions. Within each of these wards two schools were organized. A city library was begun. Provo City incorporated on July 17, 1852, in a special conference held in the log school house in Fort Utah. The city census showed the population to be 1,359.

An interesting item appeared in the ordinance to incorporate Provo as a city. Section 21 reads: "... to license, tax and regulate theatricals, and other exhibitions, shows and amusements."¹ The officials of Provo were recognizing the needs and desires of their people in anticipating the "theatricals and other exhibitions, shows and amusements" that were to come in the very near future.

The first theatre in Provo was a log house. The first theatrical was in the winter of 1853-4. The name of the first play was not recorded but the first cast consisted of: S. W.

¹Ibid., p. 32.

Provo's second theatre was the home of Harlow Redfield. The lower floor of the Redfield house was used as a hotel, courthouse, dancing hall, and saloon. The saloon was equipped for use as a theatre. Here the above listed company played "The Mormon Convert," with W. W. Cluff in the leading and title role.

A dramatic association was organized under the management of a man named Allen. I think it was William W., although there seems to be some question as to whether it was he or Joseph. Philip Westwood wrote a play called 'The Mormon Convert,' ... ²

The report goes on to say that William W. Cluff played the role of the Mormon Elder so convincingly that George A. Smith afterwards remarked that he would make an excellent missionary. The humor of the situation lies in the fact that he was immediately called on a mission to the Sandwich Islands.

This group of players, performing in the year 1853, can claim precedence over The Theatre Libre of Paris (founded in 1887) and The Wisconsin Dramatic Society (founded in 1910), for it preceded the French theatre group by thirty-four years and the American group by fifty-seven years.

¹Kate B. Carter, Heart Throbs of the West, (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1944) IV, 105-6.

Provo's third theatre came about quite by accident. Philander Bell built the largest house in town and its very size made it impractical to use it as a home. The building was fitted up as a theatre and dance hall; the local citizens dubbed it "Bell's Folly" and by that name it was known. Mr. P. M. Westwood took over the management of the building and his first production was "Sweethearts and Wives." However, theatre in this building was never very successful. Perhaps its failure was due to the fact that the house had primarily been intended for a home and was not suitable for use as a theatre.

The cast of "Sweethearts and Wives" included: P. M. Westwood, C. Simpkins, Mrs. Ballard, Mrs. Hardy, J. E. Daniels, Miss Kitty Ann Cownover, W. E. Nuttall, Mrs. John McEwan, Mrs. Smith, W. B. Pace, Miss E. Clarkson, Miss Jeanette Cownover.¹

By way of commentary on this performance George A. Smith made the following criticism: "Messrs. P. M. Westwood, the two Nuttals, and William Allen, are hard to beat on a stage. . . . Miss Clarkson, and the other ladies did extremely well."²

In 1854 Union Hall was built on Main Street (the

¹Tullidge, op. cit., III, 265.
²Letter from George A. Smith to Deseret News, March 31, 1885.
present Fifth West Street) by Messrs. William B. Pace, William Goddard, and James Smith. "She Stoops to Conquer" was the first play presented in this hall. Union Hall served Provo as a dance hall as well as a theatre. Later the building was purchased for commercial uses and passed out of the dramatic picture.

The stage in Union Hall (referred to as Mason's Hall by Mrs. Mary Haws York in her sketch of pioneer conditions written for the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers) was well supplied with scenery and had a commodious stage. Mrs. York stated: "The character of plays presented was probably above the average of those presented on the American stage today."  

The following year (1855) brought famine to Provo. The grasshoppers ravaged the crops through two plantings, and a large black bug infested the potato crop. Provo had grown to a city of 2,000 inhabitants and "was a partially walled city... proud in the possession of a town hall, a church and bowery, a tithing office, five schools, two hotels, a number of mills, a public library, a musical society and a dramatic association."  

By 1860 the population of Provo had moved considerably

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1 Jensen, op. cit., p. 13.
2 George A. Smith, Millenial Star, XVIII, (1856), 62.
East from the lakeshore and various businessmen were building shops and factories in the new district. Among these buildings was the furniture factory of the Cluff Brothers, David, Harvey, and Benjamin. The Cluff Brothers were very interested in the theatre. On the second floor of their factory they built a large hall which was used frequently as a meeting house and dance hall. It was not long until theatricals were introduced. The Cluff Brothers turned their carpentry talents toward making scenery and remodeling their hall into a theatre.

In 1861 a meeting was held in Cluff's Hall that was to add impetus to the theatre life of Provo. The Amateur Dramatic Company was organized at this meeting. William E. Miller was elected president; David Cluff Jr., Secretary; Harvey H. Cluff, treasurer; Benjamin Cluff, stage manager; N. T. Moore, assistant stage manager; H. E. Hudson, critic and teacher; Peter M. Wentz, prompter and William Riley, doorkeeper. The other members of the new organization were Moses Cluff, Joseph Cluff, Edward M. Peck, Martin W. Mills, Mrs. Holden, Mrs. Sarah Ann Cluff, Mrs. Electa Bullock and Miss Frances Worsley.¹

The Cluff Brothers were fresh from dramatic activities in Parowan, Utah, and they had set up a theatre in Parowan's Council House. When they returned to Provo they were "old hands" and their experience was valuable in the administration of the new organization.

¹Jensen, op. cit., p. 400
of the new theatre group.\footnote{Albert O. Mitchell, "Drama in Southern Utah," (Unpublished M.A. dissertation, Department of Speech, University of Utah, 1949) p.13.}

This company, operating in Cluff's Hall, was the first stock company, so to speak, in Utah. The company set down a constitution and bylaws to govern its operation. The preamble to the constitution listed its purpose as "The mutual advancement of the members in the science and art of dramatic representation."\footnote{Jensen, op. cit., p. 401}

Each male member, except the president, purchased one share in the company, as required by their constitution. These shares were sold for ten dollars each. Each female member of the troupe who participated in a play in a prominent part was entitled to the proceeds of one share. Their constitution allowed free admission to any member of any other dramatic troupe in the Territory. Transportation being what it was, it does not seem likely that their finances suffered from this generous allowance.

In June of 1861 Camp Floyd on the outskirts of the town was abandoned and the camp utilities were put up for sale. Among the items listed for sale was the equipment of the camp theatre. The Amateur Dramatic Company held an emergency meeting and June D. Cluff, and Peter M. Wentz were appointed to go to the Camp and investigate the items offered for sale. They found the scenery quite complete. The camp officials offered to sell all of the equipment for two hundred-and seventy-five
dollars or a span of ponies and a wagon. This was a tremendous "find" for a pioneer theatre group and they quickly authorized the price and drove to the camp to secure the scenery before any mishap could change the mind of the Camp officials.

One set of scenery was painted with vegetable and grass dyes and was most colorful. This scenery was hung up in slots at an angle of some $45^\circ$ away from the audience. An actor could walk through these angled wings and knew them as first, second or third entrance, left or right. On one side of the wings would be a painted kitchen; by turning these wings around the audience would see a palace room or parlor. Wood wings revealed summer or winter. Closed or tie wings didn't come to this stage until the early 1900's. The Cluffs were expert craftsmen and made all necessary props. A beautiful meal could be served of painted wood turkey, meats, vegetables, fruits, pastries, all were painted to order. Fish, daggers, carved pictures, all made and painted to perfection. Dolls took the place of live babies.\(^1\)

With these new sets they scheduled "Still Waters Run Deep" and the farce, "Lend Me Five Shillings." It is interesting to observe that the intense drama of the time never seemed enough. The plays were always accompanied by a farce as was the current vogue in theatres across the continent and in Europe. These pioneers were even more in need of the lighter side of the theatre. They were isolated in their little community, far away from the eastern cities and several days travel from Salt Lake. They felt a need for laughter and gayety. The farce played an important part in their theatres.

The new scenery added fervor to the Amateur Dramatic Company's presentation schedule. Closely following "Still

\(^1\)Pardoe, op. cit., p. 3-4.

New members were added to the company. Among these were Isaac Bullock, Sidney Worsley, W. B. Pace, L. John Nuttall, James E. Daniels, George Wardell, William Ferguson, Jane Cluff, and Mary Worsley. Isaac Bullock succeeded William E. Miller as president.

The theatre group grew more active and began to take plays to the communities surrounding Provo. In 1863 there is a record of the group taking some plays to Payson.

... the Provo Dramatic Association gave interesting entertainments in the hall at Payson, which were well attended, the performers doing greater justice to their characters than we had reason to hope.\(^1\)

This must have been a great undertaking. Twenty-five miles in those days, by team, was a great problem for as many performers as a play usually requires, plus their scenery.

Plays were held every weekend and the theatre became more and more an important part of Provo's culture. By 1866 Cluff's Hall had outlived its usefulness for it no longer housed the large audiences patronizing the plays.\(^2\) To fill the need Lewis Hall was built. For a number of years Lewis Hall proved a popular place for Provoans. The Hall would have been used many more years if President Brigham Young had not seen

\(^1\) Deseret Evening News, March 18, 1863, XII, 362.
\(^2\) Tullidge, op. cit., p.265.
its possibilities for conversion into the Brigham Young Academy. Upon the purchase of this building by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for its Academy, drama in Provo suffered a set-back. The Hall was in constant use by the Academy and the local troupe could not present their plays frequently enough to keep their audiences.

Provo was without drama, except for an occasional presentation, for several years after Lewis Hall was converted into the Academy.
CHAPTER III

CONFLICT

The Provo Dramatic Union, within the ecclesiastical division of Provo City known as the Fourth Ward, was organized on January 18, 1876.\(^1\) John E. Booth was elected president and Joseph B. Walton was elected secretary and treasurer. Henry Maiben was chosen to manage the group.

Henry Maiben came to Provo from the stage of the Deseret Dramatic Association in Salt Lake City. His reputation as a fine actor preceded him into the community. Other members of the Provo Dramatic Association were: Hyrum Cluff, Dominicus Snow, John H. McEwan, Myron C. Newell, Isaac Bullock, Caroline (Caddie) Daniels, Julia Ekins, and Lillie Spafford. Membership in the organization was opened to the general public and the organization rapidly increased in numbers.

One of the early productions of this group, on December 5, 1877, was "All That Glitters Is Not Gold," accompanied by the farce, "Brother Bill And Me." For this production the company secured the services of the Deseret Dramatic Association's most popular comedian, John C. Graham.\(^2\) This play was

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\(^1\)Walton, op. cit., p. 162.

\(^2\)John C. Graham filled a mission in Great Britain before he purchased the "Territorial Enquirer" in Provo. On his way to the mission field he stopped in New York City to visit his warm friend, John McCullough, a prominent actor in New York City. McCullough had played in Salt Lake City with the Deseret
produced on the stage of Timpanogos Hall, formerly Lewis Hall.

We have had quite a run lately of balls, concerts and variety entertainments in Provo, and a change to the drama will no doubt be very acceptable to the public, seeing that 'variety is the spice of life.' To meet this desirable change the Provo Dramatic Association has secured the services of the well-known comedian of Salt Lake. Mr. Graham will appear this evening for the first time on the Provo stage, in his laughable characters of Toby Twinkle and Ben Wiggles. The pieces: 'All That Glitters Is Not Gold,' and 'Brother Bill and Me' are full of humor and sentiment, and will be well cast. Miss Electa Bullock, Miss Hannah Bullock, Miss C. Daniels, and Messrs. H. Maiben, Hyrum Cluff, J. H. McEwan, D. Snow, and A. Newell have all capital characters.

This company was first called The Provo Dramatic Union in "The History of Provo" by J. Marinus Jensen and in the "Enquirer"; later the word "Amateur" was inserted in the press releases. I have not been able to find any announcement of a change in name; however, the names were used interchangeably in all the histories and press releases. The Provo Amateur Dramatic Union was usually referred to as the "P. A. D. U." by the press and the citizenry.

Other plays produced by the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union were: "Warlock of the Glen;" "Wenlock of Wenlock;" "Miralda or The Justice of Tacon;" "The Wept of the Wish;" "Townwish;" "Gilderoy;" "Ten Nights In a Bar Room;" "The Orphan of Geneva;" "Nan, The Good-For-Nothing;" "Rough Diamond;" "Gold Dragons;" "The Dumb Belle;" "My Young Wife;" "Spectre Bride-

Dramatic Association and had, at that time, formed a warm friendship with Graham. McCullough offered to sponsor Graham's career in New York's Dramatic circles and promised him greatness. (Incidents in the Lives of John C. Graham and Eliza Morris Graham, 1936) p. 4.

1Semi-Weekly Enquirer, December 20, 1877.

In the months preceding the organization of the Home Dramatic Company, the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union or the Fourth Ward Dramatic Association, as it was sometimes called, had been negligent in presenting plays and had lapsed into complete inactivity. However, shortly after the organization of Graham's group, the "P. A. D. U." reorganized under the leadership of Henry Maiben and joined in the revival of dramatic interest in Provo. John C. Graham drew his members from the city at large while Henry Maiben's group was comprised of the members of the Fourth Ward.

The reorganization of the "P. A. D. U." touched off a spark that became a flame, fanned by public reaction to each troupe as it presented its plays. The keenness of the competition between the two groups affords interesting reading in the files of The Territorial Enquirer. This competition spurred
each company in its turn on to excellence and brought a high standard in dramatic productions to the little pioneer town.

Both companies relied on the same audiences. Both companies used Cluff's Hall for their performances as Timpanogos Hall was in constant use by the Brigham Young Academy. There was one major difference, however; the dramatic critic of the only publication in the city was the dramatic director of the "Home Association."

The Provo Amateur Dramatic Union, or the Fourth Ward Dramatic Association, was reorganized on April 21, 1879. The Semi-Weekly Enquirer (name changed from The Territorial Enquirer when John C. Graham became editor) carried this announcement: "The Fourth Ward Amateur Dramatic Company has been organized and is expected to give its initial performance a month hence, when the alterations now taking place in Cluff's Hall are hoped to be completed." On July 2, 1879, the Semi-Weekly Enquirer announced the name of the production scheduled by "The Amateur Dramatic Union." The play was "The Robber's Wife" and it was produced in Cluff's Hall. Interesting in the announcement was the following:

A grand mid-day performance will be given in Cluff's Hall on July 24, especially for ladies and children. Two children under twelve will be admitted for twenty-four cents, adults for twenty-five cents.

1Semi-Weekly Enquirer, April 23, 1879.
2Ibid., July 2, 1879.
At this performance the usual farces were presented between acts. This time the farces were "Handy Andy" and "The Dead Shot." The casts included: Zina Williams, Hannah Bullock, Caddie Daniels, Emma Daniels, Annie Jones, Polly Jones, J. C. Graham, John Peters, J. H. McEwan, W. H. Brown, Reed Smoot, J. C. Stevenson, D. F. Cluff, Dan Jones, W. D. Roberts, John Worsley and Master Oscar Wilkins." 

It is interesting to note that John C. Graham was a member of the cast. The rivalry between the two companies, The Provo Amateur Dramatic Union and the Home Dramatic Company, had not yet come to the attention of the public. However, the rivalry flamed into the view of the townspeople when Mr. Graham reviewed the play. He said they needed more clarity in their playing and less time between scenes. He also said they did "average acting for amateurs." This is the first critical review of a play to appear in the Semi-Weekly Enquirer and it began what seems to have been a deliberate campaign, on the part of the Home Dramatic Company, to eliminate their competition.

The next theatrical entry in the Semi-Weekly Enquirer was the announcement of the play to be presented by Graham's group, The Home Dramatic Company. The difference in the text

1The Provo Theatre group has contributed several famous Utahns to the historical scene. Reed Smoot became one of the Council of Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He also represented Utah in the Senate in Washington, D. C.

2Semi-Weekly Enquirer, July 23, 1879.

3Ibid., July 27, 1879.
of the announcement for this play and that for the rival company was marked. The Home Dramatic Company announced their production as "Time and the Hour" accompanied by the farce "Orange Blossoms." Two days later the paper announced that "the screaming farce "Box and Cox" was to be added to the performance of "Time and the Hour." Among the cast members were Lillie Spafford and Mr. James E. Talmage.¹

Lost among the lines of the announcement concerning "Time and the Hour" was one line to the effect that the Amateur Dramatic Union would reappear the next week in "Gale Breezely" and "The Dumb Belle."

The "Enquirer's review of the Home Dramatic Company in "Time and the Hour" is quoted in part:

The Home Dramatic Company gave four performances in Cluff's Hall last week, all of which were largely patronized. Every night the building was crowded and even on the last night scores of persons left, who were unable to obtain even standing room. The performances, particularly after the first night, were rendered as well as could possibly be expected.²

Perhaps the spirit of competition was partially responsible for the large houses; in any case, by now the community had become theatre minded. Frequently Cluff's Hall was not large enough to provide even standing room for all those desiring to see the productions.

Many times people from the outlying towns and settle-

¹James E. Talmage became one of the Council of Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and a prominent educator in the Church and State.

²Semi-Weekly Enquirer, July 30, 1879.
ments came to Provo to see the plays and more often than not the tickets were all sold. In response to this need an announcement appeared in the Semi-Weekly Enquirer to the effect that citizens of Springville could obtain tickets through Mr. Don C. Johnson, their local telegraph operator. Arrangements were made to forward a limited number of tickets ahead to the citizens of Springville. It is not known how many of the other outlying towns received the same service.

It would have been interesting to have recorded the battle that must have gone on outside the press, since the Semi-Weekly Enquirer carries only John C. Graham's side of the story. In a city the size of Provo the conflict would have been known to all the citizens and would likely have incited great interest. In 1951 such a conflict would, in all likelihood, have been a deliberate box-office trick.

On August 9, 1879, Mr. Graham reviewed the play produced by the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union. This review is quoted in full: "The nautical drama of "Gale Breezely" and the laughable farce, "The Dumbe Belle" will be repeated tonight by the Provo amateurs. Surprisingly smooth." The comparison between the reviews is interesting in that the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union was referred to as the "Provo amateurs," and the critique took only two words. In the next edition of the paper there was a comment on the inappropriate between-act

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1Ibid., August 27, 1879.

2Ibid., August 9, 1879.
entertainment provided by the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union.

"We are of the opinion that portions of the song given between the pieces on Saturday night might be suppressed."\(^1\)

About this time the problems that inevitably occur when two companies play in the same hall, draw on the same audiences, and overlap in their use of actors came to a climax. There were instances where nearly the whole cast of one production for the Home Dramatic Company were also in rehearsal for some production for the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union. For example: The cast lists published July 23, 1879 in the Semi-Weekly Enquirer of the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union's "The Robber's Wife" and the accompanying farces, "Handy Andy," "The Rent Day," and "The Dead Shot," included Zina Williams, Hannah Bullock, Caddie Daniels, Emma Daniels, Annie Jones, Polly Jones, J. C. Graham, John Peters, J. H. McEwan, W. H. Brown, Reed Smoot, J. C. Stevenson, D. F. Cluff, Dan Jones, W. D. Roberts, John Worsley and Master Oscar Wilkins.\(^2\)

And, the review of the play "Time and the Hour" published on August 13, 1879 said:

The acting of Mrs. Z. Williams, Miss Hannah Bullock, Miss Emma Daniels and Mr. W. H. Brown were notably good. The parts sustained by those amateur artists and artistes have rarely if ever before been better played in the Territory. Messrs. Reed Smoot, D. F. Cluff, Dan Jones, J. C. Stevenson, John Worsley, W. D. Roberts, James F. Dunn, Willie Dunn, and Master Oscar Wilkins, and Miss Caddie Daniels although having less important parts to sustain, played with good taste and judgement.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Ibid., August 13, 1879.
\(^2\)Ibid., July 23, 1879.
\(^3\)Ibid., August 13, 1879.
According to these reports there were only three players (J. C. Graham, James F. Dunn and Willie Dunn) who were in the Home Dramatic Company's "Time and the Hour" who were not also in the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union's play in rehearsal at the same time.

Mr. Graham expressed his concern over the division and the rivalry thus:

... As long as we have been depending on the occasional visits of traveling combinations of actors from other places, we had neither the chance nor the power to have pieces according to our taste produced here, but have to take what came along.

With satisfaction, on this account, did many of us notice the endeavors of a few of our citizens to start a theatrical company of our own, and seeing that not only talent and time, but also considerable means were expended by the members of the company, to make their enterprise as much of a success as circumstances would permit, the people took kindly to them and encouraged their first performances with a liberal patronage. This step as a first experiment was well enough in its way and might have been suggestive of improvement by gradually incorporating those dramatic, literary, and musical talents which are happily to be found quite numerous in our city. For some reason from behind the scenes, and not to be discovered in front of the curtain, another company, independent of the first, started into existence, and have given performances which reflect very creditably upon their talent. 1

From all available data it becomes apparent that the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union was the first dramatic company established in Provo; however, from this editorial one would hardly believe that Graham would have been referring to himself and his company as the group which came in "behind the

1Ibid., August 23, 1879.
scenes." It is evident that Graham regarded the disorganiza-
tion of the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union at the time he organized
his Home Dramatic Company as something permanent. There must
have been some clash of personalities between Maiben and
Graham. They both came to Provo's dramatic circles via the
Deseret Theater Association in Salt Lake City and they had
both been considered prominent actors in that association.

Graham continued his editorial of August 23, 1879,
thus:

Now here is the point where my spleen comes in: I
don't like this kind of thing. I, therefore, take to
reasoning. First, Provo is just large enough to support
one company, efficient in talent, numbers and equipments.
The two companies will divide the sympathy, financial
support and actual talent. Third: It is desirable that
one man experienced in such things, alone should have the
control of our theatricals, to correct abuses, to control
affairs, and to develop the stage to that high moral
standard which its greatest poets and actors never lost
sight of. Fourth: When the winter season comes, the true
time for the theatre, then some of the actors in both
companies, being otherwise engaged, will have to discontinue
their connection with them, and we will have two crippled
companies; while, if the remaining actors of each would
come together and amalgamate the companies, their efforts
will meet greater appreciation, their financial affairs
will still be more satisfactory, the true aim of the stage
will sooner be realized and the public will be more satis-
ified. These are my suggestions.

If I did not know that actors are incapable of
jealousy and if it were not a fact that each one of them
rejoices over the success of another, I might add a fifth
argument, saying, that all occasions for animosities,
contentions, competitions, and tricks would thus be re-
moved; but as I have already remarked, actors are above
these weaknesses, here my fifth argument will not be
mentioned, it being superfluous. ¹

There is no record of the "animosities, contentions,
competitions and tricks" to which he alluded. However, anyone

¹Ibid.
within the theatre is cognizant of the existent jealousies, subterfuge and petty behaviors which center themselves around such an activity.

The statement Graham made to the effect that "It is desirable that one man experienced in such things, alone should have the control of our theatricals, to correct abuses, to control affairs and to develop the stage to that high moral standard..." laid the groundwork for the merging of the two companies under his directorship, one year later in September of 1880. This appears to have been a judicious political move on the part of J. C. Graham. However, whatever Graham's reasons may have been, the writer cannot fail to recognize the wisdom and foresight behind such a move. There was no other person in the area so well qualified in theatre technique or in as strategic a position to aid the advancement of the Provo theatre. Under his direction, as one might anticipate, Provo dramatics took on new life.

It must be remembered that the merger did not come about merely at the suggestion of Mr. Graham. It took a year of "needling" through the press and probably by personal contact before the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union consented to lose their identity to the Home Company.

From all available data which was apparently being ignored by Graham, the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union had some prior claim since it had been organized in 1876. It would be interesting for the student to discover some of the conflicts and problems surrounding this controversy; however, due to a
dearth of material covering this period and because there is no reliable verbal information by those closely related to these companies, such data must be left to supposition.

Mr. Graham ended his editorial of August 23, 1879, with the following plea:

Let us have one company that can sustain itself, comprising the best talent of both companies, and of others that may yet be found, and this company under a stage manager of experience, judgement and talent; and the Provo stage, not being under so heavy financial consideration as in other places can cultivate such a taste for chaste, pure, and refining representations, as will be an honor as well as a benefit to our city.¹

Mr. Graham had a wise point in suggesting that the financial support and actual talent should be united in the best interest of the Provo theatre program. As will later be revealed, through the union proposed by Mr. Graham, Provo drama flourished and reached financial and artistic heights that would have otherwise been impossible.

No more was said in the press of consolidating the two groups. However, the campaign continued. On August 23, 1879, the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union produced the "Emigrant's Daughter," and "The Spectre Bridegroom." They played to a packed house and the play went off smoothly. Said the "Enquirer" (August 27, 1879) "the farce caused no little mirth." This production, however, incited the following anonymous letter to the editor.

It would afford me much pleasure could it applaud, through the columns of your journal, the choice of plays made by the Provo Amateur Union. I cannot consistently do

¹Ibid.
so. After all the kindly and well intended suggestions on this very point that have been given to that company, both from your pen, Mr. Editor, and mine, their selection gets 'no better very fast.' The company has sufficient ability to justify it in attempting something greater than it has done. Now what is their instructive or elevating in such productions as the "Emigrant's Daughter," or even 'The Robber's Wife?' If our local companies expect to retain the encouragement and support of the people of Provo, they must offer for public amusement and instruction much better plays than those named.

What parent would take or send his children to witness such trashy and worthless productions? They might please the juvenile eye, or the uncultivated taste of even some persons of riper years, but the intelligent mind is by no means justified thereby. Depend upon it, the company that will present the best plays will get the most liberal patronage. I would therefore urge the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union in the most friendly spirit, to change its base and give the people something that will prove a lasting benefit to them.

The playing on Saturday night was not equal to that of the first presentation of the 'Emigrant's Daughter.' With the exception of Mr. J. B. Walton and Mr. R. Maeser, everybody played too tamely. The piece is a bad one to do to begin with, and the acting by no means redeemed it. The gentlemen of the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union should give some attention to swordsmanship. The exhibitions in that respect on Saturday night would have been better if left out.

Those persons who paid their money to see the 'Grand Illuminated Tableau' must have gone home awfully disappointed. With the window blinds raised the 'pale silvery moon' would have served the purpose equally as well, and no powder would have been wasted. If anything of that kind is worth doing at all, it is certainly worth doing well.

Farces ought to be played as lively as possible. 'The Spectre Bridegroom,' however, seemed to cast a chill over everybody - the audience in the bargain. It is to be hoped that 'The Spectre Bridegroom' got a decent burial on Saturday night, for he certainly merited it. For the first time I then learned that old Aldwinkle was of Irish extraction.

One bouquet was thrown on the stage on Saturday night and that was just one too many. It is to be hoped that the audience nuisance will not be repeated.¹

It seems that dramatic critics were just as biting in the early days of drama as now.

¹Ibid., September 17, 1879.
In sharp contrast to the reception of "The Spectre Bridegroom" came the press reaction to "Two Orphans." This play was allegedly the greatest success of any play presented to Provo audiences up to that time. Through the three days of the first run it played to standing room only audiences every night. In the cast were the following thespians: Mrs. Electa Bullock, Mrs. Williams, Miss Lillie Spafford, Miss Emma Daniels, Miss Hannah Bullock, Miss Caddie Daniels, Miss Annie Jones, Miss Polly Jones, Mr. W. Smoot, Mr. John McEwan, Mr. Owen Smoot, Mr. W. H. Brown, Mr. Dan Jones, Mr. James F. Dunn, Mr. D. F. Cluff, J. Worsley and Mr. J. E. Talmage.

The reviews in the Semi Weekly Enquirer were generous.

My conviction is that the 'Two Orphans' is, as the bills announce, 'one of the greatest dramatic successes of the age.' Every act is a drama within itself, contains a powerful lesson and ends with a vivid and striking tableau that fairly mesmerizes the audience. The interest felt in the action of the play becomes distressingly painful at times.

The Home Company in this its third effort has earned fresh laurels. Provo has every reason to be proud of its talented and efficient dramatic corps. Its equal is not to be found in Utah Territory. True, when the 'Two Orphans' was first produced in Salt Lake, the company that then played it may have rated in ability somewhat higher than does our local company, but since its dissolution, no other local company, as this writer knows from personal observation, has appeared on the boards that can rank with the Home Company of Provo.¹

John C. Graham influenced the theatre life of Provo more than any other single man. He was an enthusiastic lover of good theatre. He spent long hours after he closed his desk at the newspaper with the young dramatic aspirants of Provo.

¹Ibid., September 6, 1879.
He coached them and guided them as he acted with them in the plays he produced. Frequently his newspaper reflected his love of the drama by the use of quotations from the plays of Shakespeare. He dedicated a great deal of space in his paper to the drama. He reprinted articles concerning actors or the drama from the eastern papers and he wrote his own editorials on the drama.

The following editorial was taken from the August 13, 1879 edition of the Semi Weekly Enquirer.

It is gratifying to observe the revival of the drama in Provo and to know that it is receiving the liberal support of the public. This is as it should be. 'Holding the mirror up to nature' is a source of valuable instruction and will afford many a useful lesson to both old and young. Recognition and encouragement of the moral and legitimate drama in our midst cannot fail to produce good and permanent results, and those who are so engaged in instructing the youthful minds and directing in fact the morals of the community should, besides being actors and actresses, be credible and responsible individuals in whom parents and guardians, and all others interested, have implicit confidence and trust.

The performances given during the last month or two by our local companies may be regarded, on the average, as meritorious successes. All our actors have their peculiar faults, however; and although an indulgent audience may choose, for the time being at least, to overlook them, they ought not to be lost sight of by the parties possessing them. The actor may be letter perfect in his lines, yet gesticulate ungracefully or dress inappropriately and out of character. His walk, carriage and general demeanor on the stage may be faulty, but if he knows his lines and speaks them correctly, the audience is very apt to overlook his defects, trusting to time, training and practice to work the charm. Love of dress, or the inclination of the performer to 'look nice' should be no inducement to adorn the character with a dress entirely out of keeping with the national custom, condition, position, and circumstances of the assumed character.

The older and more experienced of our local amateurs have acquired more ease and freedom and have evidently cultivated their memories. This may be partly due to the training they have received from the one or two professionals associated with them, but it is my opinion that these essential
qualities are more the natural results of practice than intuition. What our home actors now need most is to know how to act. Having overcome the stage fright common to beginners and rendered themselves capable of speaking their lines unfalteringly, this knowledge may now be more easily acquired. I don't know any better advice to offer my young friends than that of Hamlet to the players:

'\text{Do not saw the air too much with your hands, thus; but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest and (as I may say) whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. . . . Be not too tame either, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action with this special observance, that you o'ерstep not the modesty of nature; . . . to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image. Now, this overdone, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve.}'

Two or three of our local amateurs are painfully disposed to 'saw the air too much,' as Hamlet says. Some again are 'too tame,' and it to all such that these lines have special application. In order to act any part on the stage, except a burlesque one, it is not necessary to be unnatural. To 'hold the mirror up to nature' one must be natural.\footnote{Ibid., August 13, 1879.}

On August 16, 1879, the Home Dramatic Company presented "Time and the Hour" again. Graham said in his review: "Provo playgoers cannot avoid noticing the rapid advancement made by the members of the Home Dramatic Company in their acting."\footnote{Ibid., August 20, 1879.}

With this performance of "Time and the Hour" the farce, "Rent Day" was presented. Cast in "Rent Day" were Emma Daniels, Wm. Smoot, Miss Lillie Spafford, D. F. Cluff.

In reviewing this performance Graham said:

The farce of "Rent Day" was one of the richest treats Provo theatre goers have had for a long time. The class of plays put on the stage by the Home Company is of a kind that cannot fail to give general satisfaction when properly presented. The people of Provo must be gratified to witness the improvement made in this respect. We have had too many
dime novel productions in the past, too many of the Indian warwhoop and blood and thunder kind, and the Home Company deserves commendation for inaugurating a new era in this respect.  

When the Brigham Young Academy organized its physical education department in 1879, the Home Company offered its services in the campaign to raise funds to equip the gymnasium. For this purpose they revived "Rent Day" and "Box and Cox." The September 10, 1879, edition of the Semi Weekly Enquirer says, "It is to be hoped that the public will give material support to this movement, fill the house tonight, and so help forward the cause of education."

The following Saturday night the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union gave a repetition of "The Emigrant's Daughter" which was received with great favor on its former presentation.  

The September 17, 1879 Semi Weekly Enquirer announced that the popular "Time and the Hour" would be presented for the last time on the Saturday following the announcement. "The elegant and roaring comedietta" of "Orange Blossoms" was presented with "Time and the Hour." The cast of the combined performance included J. C. Graham, W. C. Smoot, W. H. Brown, and Miss Hannah Bullock, Miss Lillie Spafford and Miss Emma Daniels. The review of this last presentation of "Time and the Hour" was not favorable. The play had been in rehearsal since early in July, had been presented continually during August and September in the various communities around Provo and in Provo itself. Graham delivered a pen lashing through the public

1Ibid., August 20, 1879.
2Ibid., September 10, 1879.
The first act of "Time and the Hour" ought to have been better rendered on Tuesday night. I understand perfectly well that our home artists are engaged in other pursuits besides that of playing on the stage, and that, in consequence, they have not much time to spare for study. This would be considered a reasonable apology on a first representation but on a third playing of the same parts inside of a couple weeks, that excuse cannot reasonably be urged.

The members of the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union have an advantage in this respect over the Home Company; they are usually better up in their parts. It may be because they take more time for study and spend a longer time in preparing their pieces, but no matter what the cause is, they certainly do not call into requisition the prompter's service as much as do some of the members of the Home Company.

In justice to the latter company I will say, however, that the playing in the second and third acts was highly creditable. Miss Emma Daniels, and Mr. D. F. Cluff never played as well. Mr. Charles Stevenson may make a fair actor in time, but he must cure himself of a very grave fault, a bad memory. It was agonizing to watch his frequent appeals to the prompter while attempting to get through the part of 'Cannon' in 'The Dead Shot.'

All was not criticism, however, for the reviews of "Orange Blossoms" were very favorable. The performance was called "a capital one. . . with screams of laughter."^2

From time to time various members of the Deseret Theatre Association broke away and joined traveling companies or organized their own companies. Two of these members, a Mrs. Belle Douglas and a Mr. M. Forster, scheduled one of the first out-of-town stock company performances in Provo. Their appearance was announced in the "Enquirer" on September 20, 1879, and their first performance was on September 22, 1879. The citizens were disappointed with the play. The "Enquirer" review said the "grievance felt by those who attended. . . was chiefly caused by the failure of the company to do what they advertised they

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1Ibid., September 20, 1879.
2Ibid.
were prepared to do and going to do."\(^1\) Mr. Graham announced his disappointment in the paper along with his regrets saying that he could well remember when the two, Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Forster, had been members of the Salt Lake stock company "and were considered very useful and efficient members. It is evident that the public is better pleased with our local talent."\(^2\)

The citizens of Provo had acquired a highly selective taste for the drama. Imitations and second-rate performances were not appreciated.

At this point in Provo's dramatic history the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union, searching for a drama that would please the public and perhaps redeem themselves for "The Spectre Bridegroom," revived "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," the great temperance play. In announcing the play the "Enquirer" said, "The dramatic Union plays this drama very creditably and we trust it will draw two more such houses as it met with on the former presentation of the play."\(^3\) In a measure the company must have felt compensated for their revival when they read the reviews:

Last Saturday night, 'Ten Nights in a Bar Room' was played to a full house. The representation was very creditable indeed. The impersonation of Joe Morgan by Mr. Walton was 'par excellence,' that gentleman excelling any other of his impersonations of character. . . . \(^4\)

Through the next months the two companies presented their plays on alternate weekends. When the press reviewed one cast's play it also announced the other cast's production. For instance:

\(^1\)Ibid., September 27, 1879.  
\(^2\)Ibid.  
\(^3\)Ibid., September 30, 1879.  
\(^4\)Ibid., October 29, 1879.
The new and latest production of the Home Dramatic Company has proven another signal success. 'The Dead Witness' or 'Sin and Its Shadow' is all that it was claimed to be - an exciting and thrilling drama. All the ladies and gentlemen engaged in the presentation of the piece acquitted themselves in a most satisfactory manner. Special praise is, however, due to Miss Hannah Bullock, Miss Emma Daniels, and Mr. John H. McEwan. Prof. Jepsen and his little orchestra performed their part in an equally satisfactory manner. The tableaux were made a very attractive feature in the performance and were very effectively rendered, reflecting great credit on those who had the practical arrangement of them. This splendid little drama will bear another repetition.

On Saturday evening next a capital comedy bill is offered by the Provo Amateur Union consisting of an ever popular 'Toodles' in two acts and 'Poor Pillicoddly.' Messrs. Maiben, Cluff, Maeser, and Walton and Miss Polly Hodgert are in the casts.¹

The Home Company ran into a little difficulty early in November of 1879. Contrary to previous company customs they did not present their play "Blow for Blow" on the announced schedule. Perhaps the delay had its cause in a situation similar to the final presentation of "Time and the Hour" when the players were not well enough up in their lines to appear to good advantage. On November 12, 1879, the "Enquirer" carried a public apology. "The management have concluded before presenting the great sensational play of 'Blow for Blow' to give it thorough rehearsal and preparation, so that its production will ensure at least an artistic success."²

November 12, 1879, saw the Provo public treated to a dramatic display typical of the type being presented all over the United States during the period. Professor Charles Andress, illusionist and ventriloquist, appeared in Cluff Hall. "The

¹Ibid., November 5, 1879.
²Ibid., November 12, 1879.
entertainment proved to be one of the very highest quality, first class in every respect, and the best of the kind ever given in this city.\(^1\)

The advance advertising for this act was spectacular in comparison with the usual advertising given local plays. The "box" in the newspaper showed a magician beheading his assistant. The magician held the hair of the assistant in his hands. Scattered around on the floor were the arms and legs of the victim assistant.

On January 23, 1880, the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union received the final blow of their undoing. J. C. Graham leased Cluff's theatre for a limited period. His intentions were to present his Home Company and augment the theatre schedule with "respectable and first class artist combinations of Salt Lake City and other places."\(^2\) This announcement marked the end of productions by the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union. The Home Company had won the "fight."

The two companies finally merged in September of 1880. They became one company, the Home Dramatic Association, with one director, J. C. Graham. Their first play with combined forces was "Waiting for the Verdict."

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\(^1\)Ibid., November 15, 1879.
\(^2\)Ibid., January 28, 1880.
CHAPTER IV
PROVO'S GOLDEN ERA
1880 to 1889

John C. Graham accepted the responsibilities he courted in the editorial he published on August 23, 1879. The plans he set forth in that editorial reached fruition in the years he guided and controlled the theatrical diet of Provo. The Ogden Herald recognized his efforts in an editorial which was reprinted in the "Enquirer."

... We doff our chapeau. ... (to) ... that excellent editor and admirable actor, John C. Graham, whose genius has done so much for the development of the histrionic art in Provo.1

Although self elected, Graham was the person most suited for the management of Provo dramatic events. His past experience included managing the Millenial Star, managing the Salt Lake Theatre Association, and publishing Footlights, dramatic bulletin of the Salt Lake Theatre.

He was recognized by all persons connected with the Salt Lake Theatre as their foremost male comedian. He published the only newspaper in the Provo area and had the complete cooperation of the authorities in the city. With the backing of the press and the prominence he had gained among Church and civic authorities in Salt Lake and Provo he was easily one of

1Ibid., February 26, 1887.
the most powerful men in Provo. Not least among his qualifications was the esteem awarded him by the theatre going public.

Mr. Graham, as everybody in the Territory knows, who is familiar with the drama, is a host in himself. Give him ever so small a part to play and he will invest it with all the importance and prominence possible. He has a pleasing faculty of making a great deal out of nothing. Salt Lake lost its theatrical backbone when the gentleman came to Provo. Under his management the company cannot fail to develop into a corps of first class performers.¹

This article, written when the Home Company had not yet had time to prove itself, was substantiated by the many years of amusement and enjoyment the Home Dramatic Association and John C. Graham gave to the Provo public.

Provo's golden age of drama could have been said to have begun in 1879 when the two companies, the Home Dramatic Company and the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union, were organized. However, the real progress was made when John C. Graham assumed the leadership of the campaign to bring the best drama to Provo citizens. Until the time when he leased Cluff's Hall in the interest of promoting excellent drama no organized and methodical attempts had been made to build drama beyond the amateur status.

The first production in Cluff's Hall after John C. Graham assumed the managership was on January 28, 1880. The Home Dramatic Company presented two pieces, the four act tragic drama of "Ernest Maltravers" and the farce, "Jacob Earwig." These plays were not new to the Territory. They had been presented

¹Ibid., August 20, 1879.
shortly before by the Salt Lake dramatic association and were presented in Provo because of the tremendous success the Salt Lake company had enjoyed in its presentation. "Ernest Maltraver" drew crowded houses on two consecutive weekends in February of 1880.

The problem of overcrowding was always a major consideration while the theatre was in Cluff's Hall. The standing room audiences were the usual occurrence but at times there was not even standing room. The system of selling tickets added to the problem. Tickets to any of the Home Company's plays could be purchased at either the office of the Semi Weekly Enquirer or the Provo Woolen factory; however, the tickets issued at the factory were red slips which had to be exchanged for regular seat reservations on the nights of performance. With this system it was impossible to predict the size of the audience for any performance. An attempt was made to solve this problem with the following notice:

Those persons holding tickets that have been purchased at the factory for the Home Company's performances, are required to get them exchanged at the Enquirer office for regular admission tickets. Our patrons will see the necessity of this when we state that it is to avoid overcrowding the theatre, and that in order to secure admission it will hereafter be necessary for them to get the red tickets exchanged before the night of performance.¹

On March 13, 1880, Phil Margetts, Mr. Graham's close friend from the Salt Lake City stage, came to Provo to guest-star in "Lancashire Lass" and "Chimney Corner."

¹Ibid., February 7, 1880.
There was a crowded house to greet Mr. Margetts last night. In consequence of the immense success which has attended this engagement Mr. Margetts has been induced to remain one night longer, and will appear in two more of his popular characters. He will make his third and positively last performance on Monday evening, when he will be presented in this city in the great and sterling drama entitled "Chimney Corner." Mr. Margetts will sustain his favorite character of Peter Probity.

The Home Company members who supported Mr. Margetts in these dramas were: John C. Graham, McEwan, Jones, Cluff, and Misses Hannah Bullock and Annie Jones. The performances were concluded with Margett's newest and favorite farce entitled, "We All Have Our Little Faults." In this piece he was assisted by Mr. Graham as "Goosey," Mr. I. Bullock as "Gingernut," Miss Emma Daniels as "Mrs. Rollick" and Miss Polly Jones as "Louisa."

The citizens of Provo were delighted with the Deseret Dramatic Association's favorite comedian. The houses each night of his performance were packed. Margetts was delighted with his Provo audiences. He sent the following thank-you note to the "Enquirer" office for publication.

What Phil Margetts Says:
Previous to my departure from your beautiful city, my time was so taken up as to afford me no opportunity of expressing my thanks to a generous public and the dramatic company that received me so kindly and supported me so artistically in performances given during my engagement at Cluff's Theatre. Consequently, I avail myself of this opportunity of returning my thanks to the theatrical patrons of Provo and my grateful acknowledgements to Manager Graham and his excellent company for the many favors shown me while laboring with them to entertain and amuse the good people of Provo.

In justice to Manager Graham I will take the liberty of saying that through his energy and perseverance he has now a dramatic company that he may justly feel proud of. The

1Ibid., March 13, 1880.
names of Mr. A. O. Smoot, Mr. W. C. A. Smoot, Mr. W. H. Brown, Mr. J. H. McEwan, Mr. I. Bullock, Miss Hannah Bullock, Miss Emma Daniels, Miss Annie Jones and Miss Polly Jones deserve special mention; and with the other members, a stock company is competent, under the direction of its efficient manager, to produce first class plays and dramas in a style that cannot be excelled anywhere else in Utah.

Wishing that management and the ladies and gentlemen of the Home Dramatic Company all the success their talents and efforts deserve, I subscribe myself their sincere friends. Signed by Phil Margetts. Salt Lake City, March 20, 1880."

An interesting incident in the friendship of these two men was published in the Salt Lake Herald, on April 7, 1895. It gave account of one of Phil Margetts' visits to Provo. He arrived just at presstime and gave an announcement of his next play to John C. Graham with the request that he use it in that edition. According to Margetts' request Mr. Graham gave him a few lines. A few days later an enraged Phil Margetts presented himself at the "Enquirer" office.

'John,' said he, 'what do you mean by it? What have I ever done to you that you should put a thing like that in your paper about me?' 'Why, what's the matter, Phil?' says John. 'I wrote a good notice for you, didn't it suit you?'

'Suit me,' roared Phil as he drew from his pocket the offensive newspaper and slapped it with his fist. 'Do you suppose I'm suited with a notice like that?' 'Phil Margetts the doughy comedian, is playing a brief engagement throughout the county.' 'Who says I'm doughy? Do I look doughy? Do I act doughy, John? What do you mean by it, sir?'

'Why, Phil,' says John, 'it doesn't say doughy. It says doughty. Don't you see, Phil, doughty.' 'Well, doughty then,' cries Phil, as mad as ever. 'Same thing, doughy or doughty, same thing, John. It's too bad, too bad, an old friend like me, John.'

'No, no,' says John. 'It isn't the same thing. I wouldn't say doughy about you, Phil. I said, doughty. You know what that means. Strong, lusty, vigorous, don't you know. It's a word that Shakespeare used to use - been in use hundreds of years. Why, it's a fine word, Phil. You ought to be proud of it.'

Ibid., March 24, 1880.
Margetts was evidently mollified, although still quite mystified. Finally, he held out his hand to Graham and said, 'Well, John, I'll forgive you this time. It wasn't quite as bad as I thought it was; but John, was it necessary to go back three hundred years to find a word to use on an old friend like me?'

The crowded houses, the danger of fire, the inadequacy of staging and other conditions of Cluff's Hall continually worried J. C. Graham. Two years previous to this time he had initiated a series of meetings with the purpose of stimulating interest in the building of a new theatre. The committee chosen at that time had been unable to agree on a site for the proposed theatre, and they had no faith in their ability to raise the funds needed to build such a structure. Graham could not forget the problem. Every performance in the inadequate hall reminded him of the needs of the growing city of Provo. Every performance seemed to whet his determination to see Provo possess a fine theatre. With these dreams in mind he again, in February of 1880, called the various committees together and they set up subcommittees and gathered stock subscribers' names and began to hold regular meetings in the interest of a commodious theatre for Provo.

At their second meeting, early in February they settled on a definite site for the theatre. "The building is to stand on ground purchased from Mr. C. W. Smith, which is situated on the lot just west of Worsley's blacksmith shop. The building will front north." 

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1*Salt Lake Herald*, April 7, 1895.

2*Semi Weekly Enquirer*, February 7, 1880.
At a later meeting Mr. C. W. Smith, the businessman from whom they planned to purchase their building lot, appeared and offered them a much better lot with seventy feet frontage. This lot was on the same block as the previously chosen site but was closer to Center Street and much more desirable. The committee voted unanimously to build upon the last offered lot.\(^1\)

The problems involved in choosing a building lot were centered around finding a spot close to the homes of the majority of theatregoers, finding ground not in swampland as was so much of Provo, and in locating far enough from the business district to allow for sufficient quiet. At the time of their choice the majority of the businesses in Provo were on Fifth West Street, four blocks away. However, a few of the factories and business houses were beginning to move north to follow the citizenry who had moved to escape the mosquitoes and other swamp conditions.

Plans for the new theatre building moved forward rapidly.

The gentlemen who have taken hold of this enterprise mean business, and are pushing matters relative to it rapidly. Judging from the present energy in that direction it will not be long before the citizens of Provo will have a commodious lecture, opera, dancing and theatre hall.

The subscription list is not yet quite complete and those who wish to invest where there is a chance to get a reasonable interest on amounts invested now have the opportunity.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)The old Provo Opera House stands at 46 North First West Street in Provo, Utah.

\(^2\)Semi Weekly Enquirer, February 7, 1880
At a third meeting of the committees for the new theatre, J. C. Graham, who had been delegated to the chairmanship of the building committee, reported the results of that committee's investigation.

... recommended that the building should be forty-five feet wide in the front, extending back fifty-four feet, then fifty-three feet wide and thirty-one and a half feet long, making the entire length eighty-five and a half feet; height twenty-five feet from the grade to the square and the walls to four adobes thickness. The cost of the building exclusive of scenery and other stage requisites was estimated at $5,000. This amount was represented as sufficient to complete the building and render it available for concerts, lectures and dances.¹

The recommendations of this committee were accepted and adopted into the minutes of the meeting. They set the price of shares in the theatre stock at fifty dollars each.

Perhaps part of the reason the theatre dreams materialized so easily in this year, 1880, where they had failed two years before, was the fact that the city fathers were interested in a theatre. The Mayor, himself, Mr. W. C. A. Smoot,² was very active in the Home Dramatic Company.

At the third meeting of the committees Mayor Smoot addressed the gathering. He expressed his endorsement of the movement to build a theatre. He promised them his complete support and encouragement in their enterprise.³

In the early fall of 1880 the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union, forced into retirement through lack of a hall in which to produce their plays, asked for the privilege of joining the Home Dramatic Company. They were welcomed, for that had been

¹Ibid., February 14, 1880.
²Ibid., November 8, 1888.
³Ibid., February 14, 1880.
the calculated design of the Home Company. The two companies merged in September and presented "Waiting for the Verdict." John C. Graham directed the two companies in their first efforts together. At long last the dramatic energies in Provo were all working together for a common cause. With this merger the period of conflict was drawn to a close.

In February of 1881 a few members of the Home Company traveled to Payson to produce "The Dead Witness." They were assisted by the following Payson thespians: Julia Hancock, Mrs. Lottie Hancock, Mrs. Anna Huish, Mr. John Quigley, Mr. Joseph Huish, Mr. Sol Hancock and Mrs. Asiel Hancock. The hall they performed in was appropriately named "Hancock Hall."

Between 1871 and 1873, while Mr. Graham was managing the Deseret Dramatic Association, he edited a daily theatre publication called Footlights.¹ This little paper was made up of advertisements with a limited number of news articles and humorous incidents of the Salt Lake Theatre. There was no need for such a publication in Provo for the Semi Weekly Enquirer served the theatre faithfully, even down to rehearsal notices. The following rehearsal notice was inserted in the February 26, 1881 edition of the "Enquirer."

Rehearsal Notice:
The ladies and gentlemen of the Home Dramatic Company in the casts of 'Deception' and 'Turn Him Cut' are requested to be in attendance at the usual place for rehearsal on Monday evening, next, 28th inst. at six thirty sharp.

John C. Graham²

¹The bound volume of Footlights is on file in the Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah.
²Semi Weekly Enquirer, February 26, 1881.
This was the usual method for calling rehearsals.

When "Deception" and "Turn Him Out" reached the public on March 7, 1881, the performances drew what today are called "rave notices."

The performance given in Cluff's Theatre on Monday night is pronounced by the lovers of comedy to have been one of the best yet given by our talented Home Dramatic Company. Judging by constant laughter from beginning to end.

'Turn Him Out' is a screamer, and sent everybody home perfectly well satisfied that it was the funniest farce they had yet seen.

The bill will be repeated on Saturday evening next, with the addition of an interlude consisting of comic songs, by Messrs. F. F. Bee and Wm. Lewis.

In another edition of the "Enquirer" "Deception" was said to be a play that would "tax the highest efforts of our local artists, being one of those superior and sparkling comedies that few dramatic companies ever attempt." The cast of "Deception" included: Messrs. Graham, Maeser, Brown, Dunn, Rawlings and Misses Bullock, Annie Jones, and V. Hodgert. The "Turn Him Out" cast included J. C. Graham, Miss Polly Hodgert, Miss Annie Jones, and Messrs. Brown and Rawlings.

The next theatrical to be enjoyed by Provo audiences was a return engagement of Phil Margetts. Margetts was on a tour of the cities in the vicinity of Utah Lake. He was accompanied by his troupe, chosen from Salt Lake and northern Utah communities, called "The Phil Margetts' Star Combination." Margetts was always a favorite of the Provo theatre goers. He

1 Ibid., March 9, 1881.
2 Ibid., March 5, 1881.
was induced to remain over as he had a year before, and present again "Chimney Corner." The notices of this play were just as enthusiastic as the reviews of the year before.

... It will be remembered that about a year ago, Mr. Margetts presented this excellent domestic drama to the Provo public on the last night of his engagement, and that it was considered one of the greatest treats ever given here. In response, therefore, to a number of citizens who were then present, and many who were not, Mr. Margetts, has concluded to give a performance of the "Chimney Corner," tonight, with one of his most laughable farces. Between the pieces Mr. Pierce will amuse the audience with some of his Dutch specialities.1

On this trip Margetts and his troupe performed in Lehi, Pleasant Grove, Spanish Fork, Payson and Provo. Each performance was a one-night stand except the Provo performance, which lasted Thursday through Saturday. Provo felt warmly enough about the company to prompt the following recommendation:

Mr. P. Margetts concluded his Provo engagement on Saturday night last, having drawn during his stay three very good houses, which is an evidence of the popularity of the gentleman and that the performances had given satisfaction to our theatre goers.

Mr. Margetts has wisely selected a good troupe for his tour in the southern settlements, and now that the ladies and gentlemen - coming as they have done from different portions of northern Utah and were comparatively unacquainted with each other and the public until thus brought together - are familiar with the pieces comprising their repertoire and with each other, our friends farther south may confidently expect a rich dramatic treat in the visit of this dramatic company. The company consists of several good amateur actors and actresses, besides Mr. Margetts, and Mr. Harry Taylor of the Salt Lake Theatre, and altogether they form one of the best combinations that have ever traveled from one end of the Territory to the other. We therefore take pleasure in recommending the Margetts Star Combination to the people of Southern Utah.2

The above mentioned performance brought to the Provo audience mixed emotions of pleasure and chagrin - pleasure in

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1Ibid., May 4, 1881.
2Ibid., April 30, 1881.
the fine work of the Margetts Company and chagrin with the "ungentlemanly and unladylylike conduct" of their youth.

It is a lamentable fact that a great many of our young people and I am inclined to believe not a few of the older ones, are guilty of ungentleman and unlady-like conduct while witnessing dramatic performances at Cluff's theatre. Whether this is intentional or not, I am not prepared to say, but it appears to me very much like consummate ignorance, and is a terrible index to their early culture. The violation of good breeding, and a proper respect for the rights and privileges of others, seems particularly noticeable during Mr. Margetts' engagement in Provo.

On Friday night Mr. Margetts assumed the difficult role of the old Postillion, and deserves special praise for the able manner in which he impersonated the character; he was however, greatly annoyed and dismayed, and a great many of the audience humiliated at the loud shouting and semi-demonic grunts of a number of would be somebodies, who usually are to be found perched upon the backs of benches in the rear of the hall, and make themselves odious to those who would like to enjoy the evening's performance.

While the old Postillion was in deepest anguish over the safety and protection of his grand-daughter, fine dramatic talent and power were given to this scene, and brought the tears to the cheeks of all, save those whose sense of comprehension is so dull that they could not understand or appreciate the situation. Nothing can be more discouraging to an actor or actress, and fill them with so much contempt, than to hear a crowd of uncouth urchins laughing and shouting during the recital of a pathetic sentence; and no lady or gentleman would be guilty of thus destroying the etiquette of public places, anymore than a sane person would whistle in a church while the benediction was being pronounced.

This particular clique of rowdies must be taught that others have rights besides themselves, and they must respect those rights even though the officers of the law are required to take an active part in silencing this unnecessary disturbance.

A greater number of respectable ladies and gentleman would frequent our theatre, if this rowdyism were only stopped, and complaints have been made from several, denouncing this unwarrantable conduct on the part of some of our boys.

Let us have an improvement in this direction, as well as in Center Street.\(^1\)

Mr. Graham felt very keenly about this problem and kept up a barrage of articles in the "Enquirer" about conduct in the

\(^1\text{Ibid.},\text{ May 7, 1881.}\)
theatre. Almost any month an article similar to the sarcastic "Rules for Theatre Goers" could be found in the "Enquirer."

Rules for Theatre Goers:
1. Take along a sack of peanuts to crunch during the fine musical part of the performance; or, if it is only for appearances, a hunk of gum will answer.
2. If you enter the gallery, let it be at a time when confusion will be the most confusing, and then storm the castle. Go out in the same manner.
3. If applause is needed, a shrill whistle, or a rude yell or a thundering stampede, is nice, and helps to kick up a dust and set the wild echoes flying.¹

Such articles and public reprimands for misconduct among theatre goers did much toward alleviating this problem in Provo. Such misconduct was prevalent during this time throughout the whole of the United States and was an unending source of chagrin and humiliation to the traveling companies. Because of this campaign for order in the theatre in Provo and because of the fine audiences which resulted Provo was one of the favorite "stands" of traveling companies, and was referred to affectionately as the "Jewel Box" by the circuit players.²

Shortly after the incident concerning the youth's reception of the Margett Star Combination another group of "youth" was the subject of a request through the Enquirer:

The management of the Home Company respectfully requests that children in arms be left at home, the public having been so often disturbed by them, and the demand to make this request so general, they do so not with the intention of injuring, but of benefiting the theatre goers of this city.³

¹Utah Enquirer, January 12, 1888.
³Semi Weekly Enquirer, May 18, 1881.
On May 18, 1881, the Home Company presented the "Lonely Man of the Ocean" with a cast including Mr. W. C. A. Smoot, Mr. J. H. McEwan, Mr. J. C. Graham, Mr. Brown, Mr. Collier, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Dunn, Mr. H. E. Rawlings, Miss Bullock, Miss Polly Jones and Miss V. Hodgert.¹

In October of 1881, John C. Graham left Provo for several weeks to rehearse in Salt Lake City with the Salt Lake Home Dramatic Company for a special group of theatricals to be given during General Conference week. The plays produced were "Sea of Ice," "The Willow Copse," "The Queen's Evidence," and "The Banker's Daughter." This custom of presenting special groups of plays during the week of General Conference was later to be introduced in Provo during their week-end stake conferences.


In May, 1883, the Provo Theatre Company was incorporated. The Provo Theatre was now built but not completed, and plans were to have it ready for the fall theatre season. The officers of the Company when it incorporated were: President, Harvy H. Cluff; Vice-President, J. P. R. Johnson; Directors, John C. Graham, George M. Brown, Peter Stubbs, Jacob F. Gates, and Samuel Liddiard; Secretary and Treasurer, Wilson H. Dusenberry.

¹Ibid., May 18, 1881.
According to Tullidge in his *History of Provo*, the building was not ready for the winter theatricals as planned. "About a year ago the excavation for the new theatre was made, and the foundation and basement story put in. During the summer the walls were laid, but in consequence of early and almost incessant storms last winter, the roof was not completed till the Spring of 1884."¹

The building, according to Tullidge, was one-hundred and ten feet long by fifty feet wide in the auditorium section of the building. The stage was sixty feet wide and forty-six feet deep.

The building is constructed entirely of burnt brick, the walls being thirty-five feet high. When completed there will be a parquette, and two galleries, with a seating capacity of eight hundred.

This theatre, when finished, will be the finest structure of its kind outside of Salt Lake City, and will compare favorably with the Walker Opera House in that city.²

The Provo Opera House was dedicated on the evening of July 22, 1885.

The dedicatory exercises of the theatre on Wednesday night were appropriate and interesting. President A. O. Smoot delivered the dedicatory prayer. A postle John H. Smith, made a brief congratulatory address, and the President of the Company, H. H. Cluff, gave a concise account of the enterprise from the date of the incorporation, February 5, 1883, up to the present. The Provo Choir under Professor Daniels' leadership sang several of their best pieces; Mr. J. R. Twelves sang the beautiful ballad, 'Evangeline,' and Mr. J. C. Graham recited 'Marc Antony's Oration.' Toward the end of the exercises, the architect of the Theatre, Mr. W. H. Folsom³ made a few remarks. Bishop J. P. R. Johnson, offered the benediction.⁴

²Ibid.
³W. H. Folsom was the architect for the Salt Lake Theatre and the Salt Lake Tabernacle.
Two days later on July 24, 25, 1885, the first play was presented. This opening production was "The Streets of New York." The following is a reproduction of the Theatre Bill.

PROVO THEATRE

Grand Opening Home Dramatic Company Friday Evening July 24, 1885

Great Sensational Play - In Seven Tableaux

"STREETS OF NEW YORK"

Cast of Characters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Dodger</td>
<td>Mr. J. C. Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Fairweather</td>
<td>Mr. W. C. A. Smoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Fairweather</td>
<td>Mr. J. H. McEwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gideon Bloodgood</td>
<td>Mr. W. H. Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Livingston</td>
<td>Mr. R. Maesar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puffy</td>
<td>Mr. J. Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Puffy</td>
<td>Mr. George Smoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>Mr. H. E. Rawlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>Mr. J. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duc de Calcavella</td>
<td>Mr. A. C. Glazier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Mr. Hiram Duke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alida Bloodgood</td>
<td>Miss Annie Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Fairweather</td>
<td>Miss V. Hodgert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Fairweather</td>
<td>Miss Hannah Stubbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Puffy</td>
<td>Mrs. Mable McAllister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first Act occurs during the Commercial Panic of 1837.

The Remainder of the drama takes place during the Panic of 1857.¹

This opening night must have been one to remember.

What a gala night it was! John C. Graham as manager and leading man flitted happily between two responsibilities. The house seated eight hundred people and was packed to capacity. People drove from all over the valley. Special guests came in fancy clothes for the event. The architect of Utah's great Tabernacle, William

¹Ibid., p. 2.
H. Folsom, had planned and directed its erection. Great flamboyant lights lighted the street and a home-talent cast thrilled its audience.

The hand-rolled curtain creaked its merry way to dozens of calls and hugging and kissing was enjoyed by all the actors and sundry help. It was an event and gave Provo a place for drama, opera, and musicals of all kinds.1

In March of 1949, one hundred years after the settlement of Provo, The Player's Guild of Provo presented a revival of "The Streets of New York" as a part of the centennial celebration. The Provo Opera House had long since ceased to be used as a theatre but for this celebration it underwent a change from its everyday use. All traces of its use as an armory were taken out and for two nights, with an improvised stage, the building became again the Provo Opera House. The only living cast member of the original production, Mrs. Hannah Stubbs Jones, attended each performance.

The cast for this hundred year revival included, Maj Sylvester as "Alida Bloodgood" (formerly played by Annie Jones), Harold Brereton as "Mark Livingstone" (formerly played by R. Maeser), Lee Buttle as "Tom Badger" (formerly played by J. C. Graham), and parts played by Bevan Haycock, Verl Dixon and Tell Muhlestein.

The following list of plays was presented in the Provo Theatre between July 24, 1885, and April 7, 1887. The cast lists have been obtained through the collection of The Curtain made by J. C. Graham and owned by his daughter, Mrs. Sadie Graham Haws of Provo, Utah.

1Pardoe, op. cit., p. 5.
"The Corner Grocery" August 8, 1885

The Natural Irish Comedian, Dan'l Sully

In His Domestic Comedy, "The Corner Grocery"

Cast of Characters:

Daddy Nolan. ... an upright man ... Mr. Dan'l Sully
Henry Budweiser ... part owner of grocery ... Mr. Burt Clark
Tom Nolan ... clerk in corner grocery ... Mr. Charles Edwards
Lawyer Rapp ... somewhat of a detective ... Mr. John Robinson
Patrick Conway ... one of the finest ... Mr. P. Paul
Jimmy Nolan ... the bad, forgetful boy ... Master Malvey
Messenger A. D. T. ... an original ... A. Kydd.
Deputy Sheriff ... Jack McCoy
Budweiser's Dog ... A. K. Nine
Mrs. Michael Nolan ... Annie Sanford
Jennie Burke ... Mamie Johnson

"New Kathleen" August 14, 1885

Cast of Characters:

Kathleen Mavoreen ... Mrs. Fanny Osborne
Terence O'More ... Mr. Henry Osborne
Bernard Cavanaugh ... Mr. H. E. Stoepel
Black Roddy ... Mr. Robert David
Lady Dorothy ... Miss B. Vaughn
Kitty ... Mrs. May Stoepel

"The New Camille" August 27, 1885

Cast of Characters:

Armand Duval ... Mr. William F. Clifton
Count de Varville ... Mr. Walter Adrian
Gaston ... Mr. Logan Paul
Mons Duval ... Mr. Jas. R. Garey
Gustave ... Mr. Harry E. Whiting
Doctor ... Mr. Robert Mason
This production was a grand complimentary benefit to Mr. John C. Graham by the Home Dramatic Company, Provo Theatre Company and the orchestra and attaches. This was one of the few instances when Mr. Graham received compensation for his work in the theatre.

**Cast of Characters:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Tit</td>
<td>Mr. J. C. Graham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Gilbert Heron</td>
<td>Mr. A. O. Smoot, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper Blythe</td>
<td>Mr. W. H. Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natkins</td>
<td>Mr. J. B. Walton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flitter</td>
<td>Mr. John Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulb</td>
<td>Mr. H. E. Rawlings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick</td>
<td>Mr. George Smoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lurcher</td>
<td>Mr. A. C. Glazier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Heron</td>
<td>Mrs. Electa Bullock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lady Florence</td>
<td>Mrs. A. O. Smoot, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lottie Warrener</td>
<td>Mrs. Teenie Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Miss May Perry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Comrades"
October 2, 1885

Cast of Characters:

Roy Manning .......................... J. C. Graham
Matt Winsor .......................... A. O. Smoot, Jr.
Simon Stone .......................... John Peters
Marcus Graves ........................ J. B. Walton
May Manning .......................... Mrs. Teenie Taylor
Nancy Nipper ........................ Miss Vic. Hodgert
Bessie Bradley ........................ Miss H. Stubbs.

"In His Power"
October 7, 1885

Louis Aldrich, supported by his own company.

"Queen's Evidence"
October 7, 1885

The first appearance of the Home Dramatic Club of Salt Lake City, Utah, in the new Opera House.

Cast of Characters:

Moses Abrams ........................ Mr. H. M. Wells
Mark Langley ........................ Mr. J. D. Spencer
Robert Sanford ........................ Mr. L. Cummings
Sir Richard Warburton ................ Mr. B. S. Young
William Hartstone .................... Mr. J. T. White
Lockkeeper .......................... Mr. J. Bennett
Watkins .............................. Mr. T. Manning
Rose Sanford ........................ Miss Edith Clawson
Ella Warburton ...................... Miss Florence Whitney
Laura ................................. Miss Ivy Clawson
Little Alfred ........................ Petite Ruby Clawson
"Three of a Kind"  
October 26, 1885

Salsbury's Troubadours, traveling Company, including Nellie McHenry and Nate Salsbury.

"The Moral Brand"  
November 21, 1885

Cast of Characters:

Job Merriton .......... Mr. W. H. Brown
Chrystal Baxter ........ Mr. J. H. McEwan
Caleb Kit .............. Mr. J. B. Walton
Jeremy Jenkinson .......... Mr. W. C. A. Smoot
Harry Hammelton ........ Mr. H. E. Rawlings
Wilford Hearton .......... Mr. A. C. Glazier
David Demure .......... Mr. T. Osborne
Mr. Billett .............. Mr. H. Duke
M. Clump ............. Mr. J. Duke
Farmer Groves .......... Mr. C. Duke
Cadger Collins .......... Mr. J. C. Graham
Alice Gray ........ Miss Marion Grier
Miss S. S. Simpkins .... Miss Vic. Hodgert
Miss Ellen Mordaunt .... Miss May Perry

"Alice Darvil"  
December 19, 1885

Cast of Characters:

Richard Darvil .......... Mr. J. H. McEwan
Ernest Maltravers ........ Mr. W. C. A. Smoot
Lumley Ferrers ........ Mr. J. B. Walton
Sir William Maltravers .... Mr. T. Osborne
Lord Saxingham .......... Mr. H. E. Rawlings
Colonel Montaigne .......... Mr. Lars Eggertson
Armstrong ........ Mr. George Smoot
John Walters ........ Mr. R. Duke
Castruccio ........ Mr. H. Duke
Alice Darvil ........ Miss Marion Grier
Lady Florence ........ Miss A. Cownover.
"Under the Gaslight" December 25, 26, 1885

Cast of Characters:

Ray Trafford .................. W. C. A. Smoot
Snorkey .................... J. H. McEwan
Byke ......................... W. H. Brown
Bermudas .................... J. C. Graham
Peanuts ...................... Sadie Graham
Justice Bowling, and
Signal man ................... J. B. Walton
Demilt, and
Lawyer Splinter ............... H. E. Rawlings
Windil ....................... Al Holdaway
Rafferdi, and
Martin ....................... Joab Collier
Sam .......................... Frank Newell
Peter Rich .................... Martie Graham
Officer 999 ................... H. Duke
Laura Cortland ................ Miss Marian Grier
Pearl Cortland ................ Miss Lizzie Holdaway
Mrs. Van Dam ................ Miss May Perry
Peachblossom .................. Miss A. Cownover
Old Judas ........................ T. Osborne
Lizzie Liston ................... Miss Cluff

"The Beggar's Petition" January 1, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Squire Grandley, and
Alderman Fairfield ............ Mr. L. L. Nelson
Robert Brightwell, .......... Mr. L. E. Eggertsen
Edgar ........................ Mr. A. I. Holdaway
Humphrey Brown, and
Dan Halyard .................... Mr. Brigham Smoot
Dick Darkley .................. Mr. F. Newell
Jimmy Links ................... Mr. J. C. Graham
Lawyer Pettifold ............... Mr. W. Fleming
Charley Brace .................. Mr. T. Taylor
Fat Servant, and
Officer ........................ Mr. A. Olsen
Phil Bolter ..................... Mr. R. Olsen
Farmer Cornell, and
Bill Swiggins .................. Mr. O. Wilkins
Arthur Grandly ................. Mr. Bert Smoot
"The Octoroon"  
January 2, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Salem Scudder . . . . . . . . . . J. C. Graham  
Jacob McCloskey . . . . . . . . . J. H. McEwan  
Old Pete . . . . . . . . . . . . . W. C. A. Smoot  
Wahnotee . . . . . . . . . . . . . W. H. Brown  
George Peyton . . . . . . . . . . J. B. Walton  
Colonel Pointdexter . . . . . . . A. O. Smoot, Jr.  
Judge Sunnyside . . . . . . . . . H. E. Rawlings  
PauL . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Sadie Graham  
Capt. Ratts . . . . . . . . . . . . C. A. Glazier  
Jules Thibbeadeaux . . . . . . . J. Collier  
Lafouche . . . . . . . . . . . . . J. Duke  
Caillon . . . . . . . . . . . . . R. Mitchell  
Jackson . . . . . . . . . . . . . J. White  
Solon . . . . . . . . . . . . . . H. Duke  
Zoe, The Octoroon . . . . . . . Mrs. Teenie Taylor  
Mrs. Peyton . . . . . . . . . . . Miss V. Hodgert  
Dora Sunnyside . . . . . . . . . Miss L. Holdaway  
Dido . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Fleming  
Grace . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Lillie Milner  
Minnie . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Lizzie Ivie

The Company took "The Octoroon" to the Payson Theatre for three performances in the week of February 25, 1887. The play was received with enthusiasm by that city.

"Two Orphans"  
January 14, 1886

Springville Dramatic Troupe

Cast of Characters:

Count de Liniere . . . . . . . . . . Mr. H. Whiting  
Armond . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. M. Westwood  
Jacques . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. A. Johnson  
Piere . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. M. Johnson  
Marquis de Presles . . . . . . . . Mr. B. Dallin  
Doctor . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. Leroy Van Leuven  
Picard . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. C. Graham  
Countess de Liniere . . . . . . . Miss Ida Matson
Louise .................. Miss Vila Cook
Henriette ................ Miss Lula Boyer
La Frochard .............. Mrs. Lydia Johnson
Marian .................... Miss Julia Whitmore
Genevieve ................ Miss Eustis Vane
Julie ..................... Miss Sadie Franks
Florette .................. Miss T. Van Leuven

"Hazel Kirke" January 25, 1886

The Lewis Morrison Company presented Lewis Morrison and Rose Wood. This was advertised as the six thousandth performance of the play.

"May Blossom" January 26, 1886

Mr. Morrison and Miss Wood presented this play, as advertised, exactly as they had presented it for eight months at the Madison Square Theatre, New York.

"The Willow Copse" February 27, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Luke Fielding .............. Mr. P. Margetts
Augustus .................. Mr. J. C. Graham
Sir Richard Vaughan ....... Mr. W. C. A. Smoot
Dick Hulks ................. Mr. J. H. McEwan
Bill Staggers .............. Mr. J. B. Walton
Colonel Vanguard .......... Mr. John Peters
Arthur ..................... Mr. T. Osborne
Lynx and Joseph .......... Mr. H. E. Rawlings
Bubblemere ................ Mr. Brig. Smoot
Fungus .................... Mr. H. Duke
Officer .................... Mr. J. M. White
Thomas ..................... Mr. J. Duke
Rose Fielding ............. Miss Marian Grier
Lucy Vanguard ........................ Miss A. Cownover
Meg ....................................................... Miss V. Hodgert
Lady Apsley ........................................ Miss May Perry
Miss Apsley ........................................ Miss Milner
Georgina ............................................... Miss Fleming
Fan ......................................................... Miss Lillie Milner

The first performance of the "Willow Copse" given in the Provo Theatre on Saturday night proved an unqualified success. Nowhere in Utah has the piece ever been better presented." In spite of stormy weather the theatre was crowded.

"Colleen Bawn" ........................ March 19, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Hardress Cregan ............................. Mr. J. C. Graham
Kyrle Daly ........................................ Mr. W. C. A. Smoot
Danny Mann ...................................... Mr. J. H. McEwan
Myles Na Coppaleen .......................... Mr. W. K. Reid
Father Tom ........................................ Mr. J. B. Walton
Mr. Corrigan ...................................... Mr. T. Osborne
Bertie O'More ..................................... Mr. H. E. Rawlings
Hyland Creagh ................................. Mr. H. Duke
Ducie ................................................. Mr. O. Wilkins, Jr.
Servant .............................................. Mr. J. Duke
Corporal ........................................... Mr. J. Outhouse
Eily O'Connor ..................................... Miss Marian Grier
Anne Chute ......................................... Miss A. Cownover
Mrs. Creagh ........................................ Miss Vic Hodgert
Shelah ............................................... Miss Lillie Milner
Kathleen Creagh ............................... Miss Nellie Fleming

"Orange Blossoms" ......................... March 27, 1886

Mr. Septimus Symmetry ........................... J. C. Graham
Colonel Clarence ............................... L. E. Eggertson

1Territorial Enquirer, March 2, 1886.
From a handbill, loose in the files of the Territorial Enquirer, it was learned that the current prices at the time of "Orange Blossoms" were: Dress Circle, fifty cents; First Circle and Parquette, thirty-five cents; Second Circle, twenty-five cents.

"The Lonely Man of the Ocean"        April 3, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Cyrus Bloom ............... J. C. Graham
Wyndham Bowyer ......... J. H. McEwan
Lieutenant Adams, and Bashford ... W. C. A. Smoot
Jack Jolly .............. J. B. Walton
Squire Hillington ......... H. E. Rawlings
Mark Bell .............. J. Outhouse
Red Marley .............. T. Osborne
Heathcote .............. J. Collier
Grapnell .............. J. Outhouse
Helena ............... Miss Marian Grier
Eve Hillington ........ Miss Nellie Fleming
Becky Bowles ........ Miss Lillie Milner
Peg Pollock ........ Miss Emily Brown

This play was presented during the conference weekend as a special conference attraction.

The theatrical entertainments given in the Provo Theatre during Conference evidently afforded intense satisfaction to our visitors. The really excellent acting of the Home Dramatic Company called forth universal expressions of approbation. Salt Lake visitors were especially gratified. We do not remember, ourselves, when the Company did better than they did in the three pieces presented at Conference time. 1

1Ibid., April 9, 1886.
In justice to Mr. J. B. Walton, we must say that his impersonation of Jack Jolly in 'The Lonely Man of the Ocean' could scarcely be excelled. Miss Vic Hodgert also gained additional favor with the public. Her rendition of the part of 'Mrs. Cregan' was a pleasant feature in the performance of 'The Colleen Bawn.' Miss Grier was never before seen to such excellent advantage as during these performances.

It was gratifying to notice that our local company had lost none of its prestige but had rather improved it.
An interesting sidelight on this play, aside from the generous notices, was gained from an interview with Sadie Graham Haws, daughter of John C. Graham. She said that during one performance of "The Lost Ship" when Mr. Graham was tied to the mast of a sinking vessel, the acting was so realistic that a young niece of John C. Graham ran down the isle crying, "Oh, save my Uncle John, Oh, save my Uncle John."

"Rough Diamond" May 29, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Sir William Evergreen .... J. B. Walton
Lord Plato. . . . . . . . . . . L. E. Eggertson
Captain Blenheim . . . . . . Domenicus Snow
Cousin Joe . . . . . . . . . . J. C. Graham
Tom . . . . . . . . . . . . . . T. Martin
Margery . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Lillie Milner
Lady Plato. . . . . . . . . . Miss Nellie Fleming
Lucy . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Bell Milner

"Foiled" or "Blow for Blow" July 5, 1886

Cast of Characters: (Epilogue)

Charley Spraggs .... J. C. Graham
John Drummund. . . . . A. Eggertson
Lieutenant Linden . . . J. B. Walton
Josiah Craddock . . . L. E. Eggertson
Mr. Bolder . . . . . . . . Brig Smoot
Mr. Kenward . . . . . . H. E. Rawlings
Brent . . . . . . . . . . . . H. Duke
Mildred Craddock. . . Miss Grier

1Interview with Sadie Graham Haws on December 1, 1951.
Kitty Wobbler; Miss Milner

In Drama:
Charley Spraggs. J. C. Graham
Sir Harry Linden. J. B. Walton
John Drummond A. Eggertson
Dr. Grace John Peters
Josiah Craddock L. E. Eggertson
John H. Duke
Alice Petherick Miss Marian Grier
Lady Linden Miss Nellie Fleming
Kitty Wobbler Miss Lillie Milner
Mrs. Mousley Miss Grace Smith.

This play was given as a benefit for the building of the Sixth Ward Meeting House. One hundred and thirty dollars was realized from the performance.

"Green Lanes of England" July 24, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Martin Wheatstone L. A. Cummings
Clement Brand J. D. Spencer
Frank Selby J. C. Graham
Nicholas Quadling L. E. Eggertsen
Gustavus Jones J. B. Walton
Sheriff Hyrum Duke
First miller Jos. Duke
Second miller Heber Duke
Margaret Whitstone Miss M. Grier
Mrs. Selby Miss V. Hodgert
Clara Miss L. Milner
Martha Brand Miss Fleming
Nellie Milly Peck

"The Green Lanes of England" was presented in honor of the first anniversary of the Provo Theatre. The management went to considerable expense to design and paint new sets of scenery, and also purchased new mechanical effects to augment their effectiveness. They invited John D. Spencer and L. A.
Cummings from the Salt Lake Home Dramatic Club to star in their production.

There were indications of an immense audience at the Theatre this afternoon. As we were going to press the Sunday School children were streaming into the building in large numbers. The reserved ticket sale for tonight was also good. Notwithstanding the presence of the circus in town the "Green Lanes of England" appears to be the chief attraction with the public. Certainly, no theatrical representation that has ever been offered by the management has created in advance as much interest as this piece has.

"Sin and Its Shadow" or "The Dead Witness" October 2, 1886

Cast of Characters:

Toby Welsh .... J. C. Graham
Henry Vernon .... J. B. Walton
Alfred Davager .... L. E. Eggertsen
Marks .... A. Eggertsen
Blinker .... Brig Smoot
Mary Vernon .... Miss Grier
Ellen Brandon .... Miss Fleming
Sarah .... Miss A. Conover

"A Kiss in the Dark" October 2, 1886

(Farce accompanying "Sin and Its Shadow")

Cast of Characters:

Salem Pettibone .... J. C. Graham
Frank Fathom .... A. Eggertsen
Mrs. Pettibone .... Miss Grier

"A Mountain Pink" October 13, 1886

Miss Bella More and her own company. One performance.

1Territorial Enquirer, July 23, 1886.
"Mama's Black Baby Boy"  
October 16, 1886  

"Lancashire Lass"  
November 5, 6, 1886  
Cast of Characters:

A party by the name of Johnson  . . . . Mr. P. Margetts  
Robert Redburn  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . A. O. Smoot, Jr.  
Ned Clayton  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. W. C. A. Smoot  
Spotty  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. E. Walton  
Kirby and Danville  . . . . . . . . . W. H. Brown  
Jellick  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. Peters  
Milder and St. Donovan  . . . . . . . . Mr. L. E. Eggertsen  
Kitley and Phil Andrews  . . . . . . . . Mr. H. E. Rawlings  
Postman  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. John Morgan  
Ruth Kirby  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Nellie Colebrook  
Kate Garston  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Nellie Fleming  
Fanny Danville  . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Lillie Milner  

Return engagement of Mr. Phil Margetts from the Salt Lake Home Dramatic Company.

"Bitter Cold" or "A Tale of Two Christmas Eves"  
December 25, 1886  
Cast of Characters:

Toby Topples, the village Tinker  . . . . Mr. J. C. Graham  
Harry Manvers  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. B. Walton  
Ben Dicks  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. L. E. Eggertsen  
Gaffer Fallow  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. Joseph Duke  
George Shickle  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. H. Duke  
Mary Manvers  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss M. Grier  
Sukey  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss E. Brown
"Charcoal Burner" or "The Dropping Well of Knaresborough"  
January 1, 1887

Cast of Characters:

Valentine Verdict ........ Mr. J. C. Graham
Poynet Arden ............. L. E. Eggertsen
Edmund Esdale ........... J. B. Walton
Matthew Esdale .......... A. Eggertson
Abel Cole ................ John Peters
Caleb Brown .............. Brig Smoot
Godfrey Harrington ....... H. E. Rawlings
Jacob Jones .............. T. Allman
Ralph ..................... John Martin
Edith Harrington ........ Miss M. Grier
Barbara Jones ............ Miss Lillie Milner
Mother Grumble .......... Miss Belle Milner

"Dead Shot"  
January 1, 1887

(Accompanying farce)

Cast of Characters:

Louisa ..................... Miss Grier
Chatter .................... Miss E. Brown
Hector Timid .............. J. C. Graham
Captain Cannon ........... J. B. Walton
Fred Thornton ............. A. Eggertsen
Mr. Wiseman .............. Mr. George Q. Corey

"Faust and Marguerite"  
January 10, 1887

Lewis Morrison Company with Miss Celia Alsberg.

"On the Rio Grande"  
January 12, 1887

The Lamb-Jordan-Price Company.
"Monte Cristo"  January 18, 1887

The Joseph R. Grismer Company featuring Mr. Joseph R. Grismer and Miss Phoebe Davis.

"Called Back"  January 19, 1887

The Joseph R. Grismer Company featuring Mr. Joseph R. Grismer and Miss Phoebe Davis.

"Claude, The Denouncer"  February 23, 1887

Cast of Characters:

Claude Darnand . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. H. McEwan
Adolphe . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. B. Walton
Simon Siggel. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. J. C. Graham
Gustave . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. H. E. Rawlings
Larosse . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. H. Duke
Hans Hoegfidi . . . . . . . . . . . . . L. E. Eggertsen
John Brown . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. Brig Smoot
Signor Matteo . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. John Pyne
Pierre. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mr. Joseph Duke
Victorini. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Mrs. Nellie McEwan

Evidently the Home Company met with difficulties in their presentation of "Claude, The Denouncer." The play had been announced for February 23, 1887; however, the following announcement postponed it until February 27, 1887.

It was stated in our Tuesday's issue that this performance would be given as early as Saturday night, next, but, the Home Dramatic Company have since found it to be utterly impossible to get the drama ready for presentation for that night and have concluded to postpone the performance until Wednesday. 1

"Boots At The Swan"  February 23, 1887

Accompanying farce.

1Ibid., February 18, 1887
Cast of Characters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Earwig</td>
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<td>Frank Friskly</td>
<td>W. H. Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Higgins</td>
<td>J. H. McEwan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Pippin</td>
<td>L. E. Eggertsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Moonshine</td>
<td>Miss L. Milner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>Miss Grace Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Miss E. Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy</td>
<td>Miss B. Milner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Zitka"  
March 1, 1887

H. C. Miner's Company. One night stand.

"Under the Gaslight"  
March 5, 1887

Given as a benefit for the stake choir. Cast of characters was the same as on the earlier presentation.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin"  
March 16, 1887

"McFadden's Original Boston Double Uncle Tom's Cabin."

"Lost in London"  
April 5, 1887

Cast of Characters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Armroyd</td>
<td>Mr. L. Cummings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Featherstone</td>
<td>Mr. J. McEwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Blinkers</td>
<td>Mr. J. C. Graham</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On February 11, 1887, the Home Dramatic Company went to American Fork. They appeared on February 11, with "Sin And Its Shadow" and "A Kiss in the Dark," and on February 12, they presented "The Chimney Corner" and "Hector Timid."

On January 28, 1887, the Home Dramatic Company staged a reunion for all former members of the company and stockholders of the theatre company. The "Enquirer" published a request for

This play was planned and performed for the Provo Stake Conference entertainment. It had been announced in the Territorial Enquirer, on March 29, 1887, that Mr. Laron A. Cummings, Miss Ivy Clawson and Miss Ardella Cummings, all of Salt Lake City, would appear in the play. However, Mr. Laron Cummings was the only Salt Lake actor who appeared when the play was presented. Home Company members substituted in the other two parts.

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"Rosedale"  
April 6, 1887

Same cast as previous performance.

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the addresses and names of any people formerly associated with the Provo Theatre. Committee members planning the event were: J. H. McEwan, A. Eggertsen, Joseph Nuttall, H. E. Rawlings, L. E. Eggertsen, Mrs. J. H. McEwan, Miss Vic Hodgert, Miss Marian Grier, Miss Lillie Milner and John C. Graham.¹ The reunion was in the form of a grand ball.

The last play of the season was a road show attraction "Humbug," on May 10, 1887, by the Roland Reed and Fred Marsden Company.²


On December 26, 1887, the Home Dramatic Company took "Won at Last" and the farce "Mr. and Mrs. Pettibone" on tour of the southern cities in Utah County. They played at Springville, on December 26, Payson on December 27, and Spanish Fork on January 2.


In February of 1888 a group of young aspiring thespians organized and made a bid for public favor. They began their

¹Ibid., January 21, 1887.
²Ibid., May 7, 1887.
public appearances with "The Romance of a Poor Young Man" and the farce, "Nobody's Child." These dramas were the same ones chosen by the Salt Lake Home Dramatic Club some years earlier for the first performance of that Club. The "Enquirer" reviewed the play: "Mary Wilkins, eight years old, brought great applause, Honors go to Brig Smoot and Ida Smoot, J. M. Jensen, Ella Wilkins, Mamie Bullock, George Dusenberry, Oscar Wilkins, Jr., Ed Young and John H. McAdam."¹ The play was repeated on the next two weekends. This group of thespians was encouraged by the Home Dramatic Company. Mr. Graham spent hours rehearsing with the group which later joined with the Home Dramatic Company.

In 1887 and 1888 a new aspect entered into the lives of some of the actors on the Provo boards. Among those whose careers were interrupted were John C. Graham and Samuel S. Cluff. For the next several years drama took a backseat to the drama in the courtrooms. The Edmonds-Tucker Act was being prosecuted and enforced. The trouble over Polygamy continued until after the Manifesto in 1890. John C. Graham was effected by the Edmonds-Tucker Act for he had three wives and twenty children. During this period many Mormon men took to the underground or left Utah for a temporary exile in Arizona or Mexico. Some other Mormon men served prison terms for violation of the Act.²

An interesting account appeared in the Territorial Enquirer on October 7, 1887, stating:

¹Ibid., February 21, 1887
²John C. Graham served one year in the State Prison,
Yesterday morning Mr. John C. Graham went to the courtroom as usual to record the transactions of the District Court. While there Deputy-Marshall Arthur Pratt walked up to him, and whispering in his ear said that if he would step outside he would read a warrant to him. Mr. Graham willingly complied. The warrant was read charging him with unlawful cohabitation. Simultaneously with his arrest. . . .

John C. Graham appeared before United States Marshals on this charge at least twice. While his case was being tried before a Commissioner Hills, it was also being tried before a Grand Jury. Graham published a full account of what went on in these two trials and made a special point of the illegal aspect: A man can not be tried for the same crime twice not to mention simultaneously in two different courts. Graham kept all the circulation of the Territorial Enquirer aware of this slip.

With Manager Graham spending much of his time in court and the rest of his time trying to keep the "Enquirer" in running order, the theatre life of Provo was neglected. Most of the theatricals presented to the Provo audiences were from traveling companies, or companies from neighboring communities.

The Lindsay Company from Salt Lake City presented "A Celebrated Case" on March 2, 1888. On March 29, 1888, the Abbey Company presented "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and the reputation of this celebrated company was so good that two or three hundred people were turned away at the door because all the standing room had been sold.

1Ibid., October 7, 1887.
2Ibid.;
3Ibid.; March 30, 1888.
On March 29, 1888, the Enquirer announced the appearance of the Barrows and Staley Company. This company featured Miss Emma Heath in their April 5, 1888, performance of "She."


On July 23, 1888, the Wilber Combination Company presented two plays, "Escape From Law" and "Three Wives to One Husband." The titles and combination of these two pieces are particularly interesting in light of the time of presentation and the community in which the play was performed.

"Enoch Arden" was presented on September 18, 1888, by the Springville Dramatic Company. This troupe toured southern Utah with "Enoch Arden." When they finally reached Provo they had had several months of public performances in this play. They were well received in Provo.

It is hardly necessary to comment on the well harnessed talent of "Mose' Johnson or the excellent articulation of Miss Lula Boyer, for locally, they have proven themselves to be in every respect worth the popularity they have gained. C. W. Houtz as Peter Lane, seemed indeed at home, while being so artifically henpecked by Peter's wife. Harry Rodgers made a fine old doctor. N. T. Matsen made a patient lover and little Nell Boyer a noble lass.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Ibid., September 18, 1888.
CHAPTER FIVE

DECLINE

During the year 1888 amateur theatricals were influenced greatly by political affairs in the community. The trials and prosecutions of those who violated the Edmunds-Tucker Act kept many of the active members of the local theatre group far too busy to participate in the theatricals. Because Graham was unable to direct and participate in the plays he began to investigate the possibilities for finding substitutes for the Home Dramatic Company's service to the community. After much correspondence and personal effort Graham succeeded in making arrangements with the manager of the Tabor Grand Opera House in Denver and the Grand Opera House in Salt Lake City to have Provo Theatre included in the "Silver Circuit." This circuit included Denver, Salida, Colorado Springs, Leadville, Grand Junction, Aspen, Cheyenne, Laramie, Salt Lake City, Ogden, and other "leading cities" in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. This agreement put Provo on the list of "leading cities" and brought to Provo many more first-class theatricals.

According to Sadie Graham Haws, daughter of J. C. Graham, her father fully understood that when he brought the traveling companies here he was minimizing the Home Dramatic Company's opportunities to perform.1 However, he also

1Interview with Mrs. Sadie Graham Haws on November 26, 1951.
realized that the community needed recreation and the cultural advantages of the theatre. Since the Home Dramatic Company could not be active in providing these advantages he felt that in justice to his audiences he should provide their theatre.

The arrangements to include Provo in the "Silver Circuit" coupled with the set-back the Home Company received through the temporary disbandment brought about by the Edmunds-Tucker trials proved to be more than the Home Company could endure. Beginning with this period there was a sharp decline in Little Theatre activities. The professional troupes replaced the local organizations. The spasmodic efforts of the young "Thespian" group was not "finished" enough to compete with the organized efforts of the professional troupes, and as a result the demand for amateur drama decreased while the circuit provided more and more plays to meet the increased demand for professional theatre.

In November of 1888 the first and only recorded refusal of a traveling company's services was acknowledged in the "Enquirer." A certain Professor Kent, described as a pigmy built man, and his band of Pigmy players, stopped in Provo with no previous billing. The Provo Theatre refused him, saying; "It will be solely on the experienced judgement of the management that 'snaps' and 'snides' will be prevented from stopping here, and if one thing is outstanding in the Provo Theatre it is the absence of traveling aggregations of mediocrity and fraud."¹

¹Ibid., November 9, 1888
Several humorous incidents crept into the news in 1888 in spite of the court trials and the grimness of the "underground." W. C. A. Smoot, the Mayor of Provo, who was also a prominent member of the Home Dramatic Company, was running for reelection to the mayorship. He entered into a wager with the opposing candidate. Whichever one lost the election would "wheelbarrow" the winner from "the bank corner to West Corner and back." When the day of the election arrived all the town turned out to participate. The local band played and the citizens cheered as Mr. Brown grasped Mr. Smoot's feet and propelled his human wheelbarrow the prescribed block and back. This was the closest they came to local dramatics in the year 1888.

Mr. Joseph B. Walton, in his unpublished history of Provo, attributes the decline in amateur dramatic productions to Provo's being included in the circuit and to the inability of the amateur companies to provide the elaborate and artistic costumes and scenery which the traveling professional troupes brought with them. He says:

Dramatic efforts on the part of locals was chiefly confined to all the various wards. The centralized efforts on the part of the home companies soon came to a stand still. The reason for this was due to organization of the centralized chain of companies completing the circuit, of which Provo was a member. Another cause was artistic effect in properties. The artistic effect was lacking. We could not compete in properties. We could not afford to make the scenery nor the costumes that the plays called for. We could not compete in the gorgeous and dazzling effects. This was too much, so the locals were obliged to take a back seat. The schools have, however, made some effort to restore the drama to the little theatre for educational value.2

1Ibid., November 9, 1888.
The dramatic efforts of the local thespians did suffer greatly by comparison. The local actors were drawn from the community's business and farm groups. Their daily occupations kept them busy and crowded their participation in theatricals into two or three hours in the evenings. Few of these citizens had the inclination or the time to work on a production until it assumed the perfection of a professional company.

The finances and resources of the Home Company were unable to provide the selection of costume, lighting effects and staging accessories to compete with those of the period. Theatre of the period in United States was beginning to be a lavish spectacle. From reading the reviews the writer feels that at times the actor was used merely as an excuse for the breathtaking effects. Some of these effects are described in the following paragraphs.

In "The Ivy Leaf" presented by Power's Irish Company, on May 20, 1889, the staging included an eagle's crag and an ivy tower. The most spectacular scene advertised was a daring leap across a huge chasm.¹

On Thursday, November 27, 1890, "Stowaway" was presented. The advance newspaper notices had a picture of a safe-blower at work. The press promised an exhibition, on stage, of a genuine safe-blower "blowing" a safe. This same production had a "big white yacht, with real masts and sails, fully rigged

¹Utah Enquirer, November 27, 1890. The Territorial Enquirer became Utah Enquirer in November of 1890.
in every particular."¹

A realistic picture of lights and shadows in the great metropolis was provided when a traveling company presented "Waifs of New York" in 1890. Their special scenery included the great Harlem River Bridge set, the Old Trinity Church set, the Tombs, and "The great fire scene at five points."²

On March 12, 1891, with the production of "The World," a traveling company brought a raft scene complete with moving raft and other effects.³ In the same year another company brought a threshing machine which threshed grain on stage throughout the entire third act.⁴ In view of the development of the machinery of the time one wonders what happened to the lines of the actors amidst the noise of a fully equipped and fully operating thresher.

Actual production costs of "Twelve Temptations," produced on June 13, 1891, were $35,000.00. How could the Home Company in Provo, or any other small pioneer town dramatic club, hope to compete with that financial venture?

In November of 1891, Yon Yonson's Company presented "A Lumber Camp In Winter." On stage they showed "the soul thrilling sensation, the breaking of a log jam."⁵

¹Ibid., November 27, 1890.
²Ibid., May 31, 1890.
³Ibid., March 12, 1891.
⁴Ibid., July 3, 1891.
⁵Ibid., November 28, 1891.
In "Faust" in 1895 the traveling company brought calcium lights and a "complete electrical plant" to be assembled in full view of the audience.¹ During the performance of "The Pay Train" a train crossed the stage "at full speed in sight of the audience." The advance advertising said, "This train has carried more applause than any train made up yet."² Being upstaged by a train must have been a unique experience!

In "The Fool's Revenge" the citizens of Provo witnessed "A marvel of stage art, with its vital flashes of lightning and showers of real fire. The dance of the dames and the electrical duet . . . a most weird spectacle."³

In the reviews of the "Tornado" the "Enquirer" said: "The play seems to have been written to suit Mr. Carter's stage inventions, and really he has some good scenic effects. The tornado was wild and realistic and the sinking ship was not bad."⁴

"Uncle Josh Spruceby" played in the Provo Theatre on January 16, 1896. This play showed a "wonderfully realistic saw mill scene." On stage was a full working sawmill with thirty-six inch steel saws. The reviews called it the "grandest and most novel scene ever attempted on any stage."⁵

The main attraction of "The Defaulter" was the "double leap for life." The advertisements showed two horsemen jumping their horses over a wide chasm. The reviews called it a perfect

¹Ibid., May 30, 1895.
²Ibid., October 21, 1895.
³Ibid., May 14, 1896.
⁴Ibid., November 19, 1896.
⁵Ibid., January 16, 1896.
wonder in stagecraft."¹

No small local amateur group could compete with these groups when the public clamored for more and more sensational effects. Scenic effects had not been the specialty of the Provo Home Company; and the "Thespian's" technique in scenic effects had been severely criticized at times. For instance: "Had the scenic effects been attended to with a little more care, the play would have gone better. It does not seem consistent to see flashes of lightning... while all the lights are in full blaze..."² Because they could not supply such special effects as sinking ships, electric duets, tornadoes, log jams and runaway trains, the young "Thespians" began to lose heart and the Home Company made few efforts to compete with the professional theatre troupes.

However, the activities of the Home Company, the Provo Amateur Dramatic Union and the "Thespians" had whetted the Provo public's appetite for theatricals. The conflicts between the early dramatic companies had provided the public with fine dramas and had kept the actors aware of their obligations to the public and the companies toward better drama. Therefore, when the commercial companies came to this "cow town" with their "super colossal productions," they were surprised to find in this out-of-the-way hamlet an audience that not only expected perfection but were quick to recognize and voice, through their press, the inadequacies of any company.

¹Ibid., January 19, 1896.
²Ibid., March 5, 1889.
For instance: The Charlotte Thompson Company, after a highly successful tour of the Pacific Coast must have been "taken aback" to read the following critique of their Provo engagement.

Charlotte Thompson, in her character of Lady Isabel, and William Yearance were very good. The balance of the company were not as well adapted to their respective parts. The introduction of modernisms and New York slang into such an old standard piece as 'East Lynne' is not at all commendable; the characters don't seem to be fitted for telephones and other modern inventions.

Provo had been subjected to many years of preparation for the coming of the professional theatre. The Provo public was ready for the best the professional theatre had to offer. With Provo's invitation the professional theatre descended like an invading horde of crickets to devour the efforts of local amateurs.

To show the comparison in the status and decline of the amateur theatre and the rise of the professional traveling attractions the chapter has been divided in two sections. Section I will show the decline of local amateur productions. Section 2 will discuss the traveling professional theatre groups.
Section 1, Local Amateur Theatricals

In January of 1889 the Home Company had been in retirement for several years. However, they met and performed "Loan of a Lover," as a part of the celebration of the forty-fourth anniversary of the Fifteenth Quorum of Seventy in Provo Stake.¹

In mid-January the Taylor Company, from Salt Lake City, played in the Provo Theatre. This company came to Provo with a rather poor advance recommendation. According to press notices they played in Lehi shortly before their Provo appearance and left a very disappointed audience. Some of the members of their troupe had not been well up in their lines and the play had suffered from their slow deliveries. However, they gave an admission free performance in recompense and vindicated themselves before their Provo appearance. Provo rewarded them with a full house.

The small city of Springville, Utah, contributed two companies to central Utah's theatre. The Springville Dramatic Association, in addition to the Snow-Houtz Company, presented plays in Provo. On February 16, 1889, the Springville Dramatic Company presented "Above the Clouds" with J. M. Westwood, J. B. Whithead, Lillie Boyer and Belle Holley in the leading roles.²

The Springville Dramatic Association highly gratified the visitors to our theatre, on last Saturday evening, February 16, by their good representation of the highly interesting and deeply affecting modern American drama

¹Ibid., January 15, 1889.
²Ibid., February 22, 1889.
entitled, "Above the Clouds." All the parts were well taken. . . .

The Provo "Thespians" who had appeared in 1888 in "The Romance of a Poor Young Man" appeared on the boards again in March of 1889 in "Nobody's Child." The group had been coached for the piece by J. C. Graham. Graham seemed especially fond of the young group and spent many hours with them prior to the opening of "Nobody's Child." He also gave them one of the best advance press campaigns for their play that the "Enquirer" ever gave a play.

The reviews following the play were generous in their praise. The group was commended for its improvement over its last play. The only complaint was at some inconsistency in scenic effects. After the reviews in the press and the praise of their friends the "Thespians" were too sure of themselves and on a repeat performance of "Nobody's Child" they "blew-up" in their lines. Mr. Graham expressed his regrets in that the audience was so select for that performance. President Wilford Woodruff and Elder George Q. Cannon of the Council of Twelve were both present.

The cast of "Nobody's Child included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe, Nobody's Child</td>
<td>Brig Smoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Lazonby</td>
<td>George A. Dusenberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brice</td>
<td>J. M. Jensen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Adams</td>
<td>Will Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Robert Tregarvon</td>
<td>C. W. Dusenberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Penryn</td>
<td>C. A. Glazier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Hurfey</td>
<td>Robt. McCauslin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty Lavrock</td>
<td>Ida Smoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludy Tregarvon</td>
<td>Mame Bullock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Ibid., February 22, 1889.
2Ibid., March 5, 1889.
3Ibid., February 26, 1889.
The Snow-Houtz Company from Springville played in the Opera House in mid-January 1889. The "Enquirer" said they "entertained the people with good performances, fully sustaining the reputation gained in the northern settlements of Ogden and Logan. And, had they slower delivery they would hardly be classed among amateurs." Will Houtz and Bernard Snow were the Springville thespians who organized this traveling company. Most of their members were also from Springville; however, a few of their members were gathered from various other places in the Territory. Among their group was Marinus Jensen of Provo who wrote one of the early histories of Provo. The title of the production, on this occasion, was "The Rival Merchants." The costumes in this production were an amazement to the Provo audiences. The "Enquirer" said they "surpassed anything seen previously in the Opera House, though many first class eastern troupes had played there." 

Marinus Jensen did not appear in many of the plays his home town company produced. So his performance in "The Rival Merchants" was a surprise to the townspeople. The reviews said; "We must not forget Marinus Jensen, of Provo, who impersonated the Monk ... as few unprofessionals could do, and makes a hit of it wherever he plays." Perhaps the reason that

1Ibid., January 13, 1889.
2Ibid., January 8, 1889.
3Ibid., January 13, 1889.
Jensen had not appeared with the Home Dramatic Company was that he was a member of the teen-age "Thespian" group and his talent had not been discovered by the older actors in the Home Dramatic Company.

The companion piece to "The Rival Merchants" was "Ernest Maltravers." The cast was as follows:

Ernest Maltravers. . . . . . . . Mortimer Snow
Lumley Ferrers . . . . . . . . . M. L. Snow
Dick Darvil . . . . . . . . . . . Will Houtz
Alice . . . . . . . . . . . . . Miss Virginia Snow

On March 5, 1889 the Snow-Houtz Company returned to Provo for a two night stand. They repeated their "The Rival Merchants" and "Ernest Maltravers." This time the former complaint that their delivery was too rapid was revoked. They had corrected their pace and their performances were called "professional." 1

Another Provo ward dramatic group was organized on August 20, 1889. The Second Ward Dramatic Association organized and chose "Amid the Breakers" for their first performance. 2

The inactivity of the Home Dramatic Company frequently left the Opera House empty. Because of this the Theatre Company Inc. was forced to rely on other means of revenue to make their building pay. They gave public entertainments and balls. 3 They rented the building for private entertainments. The most popular

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1 Ibid., March 8, 1889.
2 Ibid., August 20, 1889.
3 Ibid., October 9, 1889.
form of amusement, outside of theatricals, was the Theatre Balls. 1

Four minstrel shows played in the Theatre in October and November of 1889. Three of the shows were performed by the M. M. Minstrels, a local company. They appeared on October 23, November 3, and November 31. The cast included Bo Cunningham, Fred Graham and John Fish. This company toured the State and performed in all of the larger towns. As though the home town minstrels were not enough, the Goodyear, Elitch and Schilling Company was booked on October 25, 1889.

In May of 1889 the Home Dramatic Company met and decided to revive "The Octoroon" for a Fourth of July performance. A sad note in their announcement was the line: "all the old favorites will appear." The Home Company could not command the backing to survive more than an infrequent performance. Such famous favorites as John C. Graham, Will Smoot, J. H. McEwan, J. B. Walton, W. H. Brown and others as announced for the cast of "The Octoroon" were just "old favorites." 2

In December of 1889 the management of the Theatre was reorganized. J. C. Graham had served since the dedication of the building but was obliged to retire for reasons of business and health.

As will be seen in our local columns certain changes have been made in the directory of the Provo Theatre Company, the most important one, in fact the only change of any importance, being the resignation by Mr. J. D. Graham, of the management. We opine that the public will be loath to part with Mr. Graham, for it must certainly be conceded that he has accomplished more for Provo, in giving her prominence in histrionic matters, than any other dozen men

1Ibid., November 8, 1889.
2Ibid., May 13, 1889.
we know of. Eight years ago, when he undertook the erection of the theatre there were plenty who decried its size, predicting that it might be filled in twenty years from that date. Time and time again there has not been room to accommodate the throngs who have gone there to witness some great attraction that, through the exertions of Mr. Graham has consented to play in "the jewel box" at Provo, as our theatre was proverbially called "on the circuit." It took a great deal of money to erect the building, and but few men to bear the burden. Mr. Graham has been one of the few to bear the load.

We know that it has not been a paying investment to the stockholders, for we realize that had it been, improvements would have been made which, for want of capital, the public are deprived of. The Dispatch only hopes that new management will make as good a record as the retiring manager has made. They have not so much in their favor, for Mr. Graham is well known to the dramatic world, and by the profession, is ranked a creditable artist. This goes a long way in managing a theatre.

An article appeared on page twenty-five of Mr. Graham's scrapbook announcing the change in management of the Provo Opera House.

The board of directors of the Provo Opera House held a meeting Saturday, the twenty-sixth, when the following business was transacted:

J. T. Gates resigned his position as director, he being unable to give the necessary attention to the business, owing to the press of private business interests.

S. S. Jones was elected a director to fill the vacancy.

J. C. Graham tendered his resignation as manager which was accepted by the board.

Mr. Graham has held the position of manager from the opening of the house and to his indefatigable efforts are largely due the favorable reputation Provo enjoys among theatrical people. When the house opened nearly seven years ago, it was with difficulty that Eastern companies of reputation could be induced to play in Provo; but after several visits East, by Mr. Graham, and an endless amount of correspondence, the attention of managers were attracted

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1John C. Graham, Personal scrapbook, owned by Sadie Graham Haws, Provo, Utah. p. 24. The dates and sources of the newspaper article were clipped off, however, it is thought that the Dispatch spoken of was the small Gentile paper which ran competition to the "Enquirer" for a short period of time.
and today first class companies are anxious to appear in our Opera House.

The many years of experience Mr. Graham had in connection with the Salt Lake Theatre and his wide acquaintance with the theatrical business without which it is doubtful if the house would have been able to achieve its present position. This will be easily comprehended when it is remembered that when the house was completed there was an indebtedness upon the building of $15,000 of which interest has been paid at the rate of ten percent.

The business of the Opera House now requires more attention than Mr. Graham could give from his numerous other business engagements, and this caused him to resign.

The resignation of H. H. Cluff as president, was also tendered and accepted. President Cluff's appointments compelled him to be away from Provo for some time to come, and this would prevent him giving the attention to the presidency of the board that the position requires. President Cluff has presided over the deliberation of the board of directors since the organization of the company, and he has been an incessant worker for the success of the Opera House.

S. S. Jones was elected president to succeed Mr. Cluff. Mr. Jones is a heavy stockholder and has served several terms on the board of directors. He is well acquainted with the conditions of the company and his acknowledged financial and executive ability cannot fail to be of great service to his new position.

Bishop J. P. R. Johnson who has served several terms as vice-president, and been connected with the Opera House Company since its commencement was appointed manager. He intends to devote a large portion of his time to the supervision of the business of the house, and will make a most efficient manager. We understand that it is his intention to make some needed improvements in the interior of the building at an early date.

The board and officers now consist of the following gentlemen: S. S. Jones, president; W. H. Dusenberry, vice-president; H. H. Cluff, J. C. Graham, J. E. Booth, A. Singleton and T. E. Thurman, directors; C. A. Glazier, secretary and treasurer; J. P. R. Johnson, manager. 1

The Provo Theatre was affectionately called "the jewel box" according to the above articles. This was probably due to the fact that the facilities of the theatre were modern and new as compared to the other small town theatres; and it certainly was in part due to the high caliber of the audiences the players met in Provo. The audiences, though not always

1Ibid., p. 25.
ideal, were superior to those the actor frequently confronted. There are, however, frequent references to conduct that would indicate that there was much to be desired. For instance:

Just as the climax was reached there came that vulgar, hoarse laugh from the citizens of the third circle hoodlums and other characters incapable of appreciating anything higher than minstrel performances and puppet shows.

For its time in the century Provo was cultured beyond the average city for it had had many years of theatre before theatre began coming to other cities of its size and location. The few citizens guilty of rowdyism or unruly conduct were constantly reminded in the press of their unbecoming actions and of the disapproval of other citizens. This subdued the offenders, although it did not always eliminate the problem.

J. B. Walton took over the directorship of the first play after the reorganization of the Theatre Company. The first play presented by the newly organized Provo Dramatic Company was "Green Bushes." They gave two performances on Christmas Day of 1889. This play was the instance of the rowdyism noted in the previous paragraph. The following review appeared in the December 26, 1889, "Enquirer."

One of the audience. What he heard concerning the "Green Bushes."

"Well, what is your verdict?"
"Amateur, decidedly."
"Well, I don't hardly know, in places I think it raised above that."
"I do not hesitate to pronounce it the best home production since the days of Hannah Bullock."
"In places, as you say, it was almost above criticism; but then some of the finest scenes were so tame as to fall flat on your ears."

1Utah Enquirer, December 20, 1889.
That in great part was the fault of the audience. There for instance, was Miss Findlay. Considering that it was her first appearance before an audience she did exceedingly well, up to the scene of meeting her husband in the wilds of Mississippi. To my knowledge, her fainting here drew tears from the eyes of quite a number sitting around me. But just as the climax was reached there came that vulgar, hoarse laugh from the denizens of the third circle hoodlums and other characters, capable of appreciating nothing higher than minstrel performances and puppet shows. Now an experienced player would have taken no notice of this, for all have to put up with it more or less, to the great disgust of the audience. But it killed Miss Findlay. After that, even in the sublimest passages, she could throw no more feeling into her voice but the pitiful ring of the counterfeit. Her manner was very constrained, as if at every action she feared the hoodlum would outbreak again. There is good reason to believe that a repetition of the play will put her more at ease before an audience.

Other players were Marinus Jensen as Murtoagh, Nellie Cluff as Meg, J. B. Walton as Mister Grumidge, and Wm. Hill as Jack Gong; and Lars Eggertsen. The feature of the evening was, of course, Miss Lillie Boyer.1

On January 1, 1890, the new dramatic company presented its second production, "Hearts of Oak." This play received more favorable reviews than did "Green Bushes." When the theatre crowd discovered that the new company was planning to produce "Hearts of Oak" they unanimously agreed that the inexperienced company had an "elephant" on their hands.2 There was a general surprise when the play was presented. "There was little doubt but what the play was a surprise to everybody after witnessing "Green Bushes" . . . the surprise is not that they managed the elephant to perfection, but that they managed him so well."3

The cast of "Hearts of Oak" consisted of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Silas Engleheart</th>
<th>W. H. Hyde</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruby Dayrel</td>
<td>J. M. Westwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Searly</td>
<td>L. E. Eggertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spooning widow</td>
<td>Nellie Cluff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife of old Joe</td>
<td>Emily Brown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Ibid., December 26, 1889.
2Ibid., January 2, 1890
3Ibid.
Dish breaking maid . . . . . . . Stella Jaques
And, Miss Lillie Boyer
(role not reported)

As in "Green Bushes" Miss Lillie Boyer from Springville, was said to be "The glory of the evening." There is no further record of the activities of this newly organized dramatic company.

On May 19, 1890, less than five months later, another new dramatic company was formed under the name "Home Company." It first appeared on May 24, 1890, in "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." More newspaper space was given to this production than to any other amateur production to date. Advertisements ran for eight days previous to presentation. The "Enquirer's" interest was no doubt partially due to the fact that the leading lady was Miss Sadie Graham.

For all the advance build-up given the play this production did not escape the critic's blows. On May 26, 1890, among other comments concerning the play the following statement was made: "Some of the acting appeared a little bit crude."
The cast included Tom Osborne, Hyrum Cluff, H. Duke, Mr. Nance, Miss A. Glazier, Miss Sadie Graham, Miss Nellie Allred.

On January 29, 1891, the following notice appeared in the "Enquirer."

Messrs. Tom Osborne and John Nicholson are organizing a dramatic company for occasional visits to the towns of Utah County. The pieces in rehearsal are "Comrades," and 'Saved', or 'A Wife's Peril.'

1Ibid., January 29, 1891.
"Comrades" played in Provo February 4, 1891; in Spanish Fork, February 7, 1891; and in Payson on February 14, 1891. This company was made up from the cast of "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." Company members were C. F. Olson, L. L. Hudson, H. Duke, T. Osborne, Sadie Graham, L. Johnston, and Estella Jaques.

Nine months went by before the local thespians again donned greasepaint and took curtain calls at the Opera House. November 3, 1891, there was a brief announcement in the column "City and County Jottings" stating that "A Son of Thespis" is at the Opera House tonight." No more publicity was given to the efforts of the new dramatic company. The next mention of this newly named "Local Dramatic Organization" was a notice of their presentation of "Black Flag" on December 22, 1892. The cast included: Annie Jones Atkin, Estella Jacques, Flora Maiben, Rose Young, Thomas Osborne, Archie Graham, J. M. Jensen, Charles Olsen, Fred Graham and M. H. Graham.

For the next three years there was no dramatic activity in the community. On January 28, 1895, an article appeared in the "Enquirer" to the effect that there was talk of "The Octoroon" being put on the boards again by the old Provo Dramatic Company. "There is no doubt that a Home Company would be appreciated and many citizens have expressed the hope that as many as possible of the old company would appear.¹

¹Ibid., January 28, 1895.
The old company did present "The Octoroon" on March 1, 1895. They played to a packed house. There were nearly 2,000 people in attendance at this performance given in conjunction with the annual old folk's entertainment. This celebration was reported to be the "most successful ever given in the city" and must have been a source of encouragement to the old Home Company, for on February 25, 1895, the following notice appeared in the "Enquirer."

The people of Provo will no doubt be gratified to learn that the popular and talented Home Dramatic Company which in years past afforded so much genuine amusement to theatre goers has been reorganized with J. C. Graham as before, director. In rehearsal is "Lancashire Lass.'

Two days later the paper announced that the admission prices at the Theatre had been reduced to the old figures, and, "all kinds of pay, to use a primitive expression, will be taken." This "all kinds of pay" seems to have been the last straw that the drowning organization grasped. This sort of admission fee would bring the audiences who could not otherwise afford the prices of the traveling companies.

"Lancashire Lass" received favorable reviews.

... First act was rather stiff... The other four acts went off charmingly and a traveling theatrical man, who was present declared most of the acting was quite the equal of many traveling companies. 'The party by the name of Johnson' (which was John C. Graham) he said, 'has been on the stage before. I could see he was one of the old school, as soon as he stepped upon the stage.' It was

\[1\text{Ibid.}, \text{February 25, 1895.}\]
easily discernible, and the audience who nearly all knew Mr. Graham from former days, greeted his appearance in the second act with generous applause. Tom Osborne, C. D. Olsen, M. H. Graham, J. M. Jensen, Sadie Graham, Estella Jacques, Catherine Barnes, were the cast.

The company ought not to let this first successful production be its last.¹

The members of the cast of "Lancashire Lass" took their play to Spanish Fork twelve days after their Provo performance. But, in spite of the demand for amateur theatricals, this performance was the last one for this group. On December 23, 1895, Mr. Graham again handed in his resignation. He had served the Theatre and the Provo Opera House for eleven years broken only by the year when he was "on the underground." With this play the brilliant career of amateur theatricals in Provo and the Provo Home Dramatic Company came to a close.

There is periodic indication of the desire of man to satisfy the urge to act. There are numerous indications of local theatrical groups forming to present some type of dramatic activity, each meeting with measured success as relating to local approval but with meager success as relating to monetary remuneration.

In October of 1896 a local group presented the play "Therese, the Orphan of Geneva," to a "fair sized audience at the Opera House."² This piece was evidently gotten up in a hurry, for it was marred somewhat in presentation by two or three not knowing their lines."³ Sadie Graham took the role

¹Ibid., March 4, 1895
²Ibid., October 27, 1896.
³Ibid.
of "Therese," J. H. McEwan was "Carwin." The reviews of the play said J. M. Jensen was cast out of his element in the sombre part of the count. W. A. Waler was cast as Picard and Mart Graham "made a hit in 'Lavigne' where he knew his lines.\footnote{Ibid., January 28, 1897}

Others in the cast were R. Maeser, Louie Maiben, Miss Flora Maiben, Hyrum Duke and Maude Graham.

These were hard times for the amateur actor. The circuits took his audiences and Little Theatre was in its death throes. It is merely coincidence, but interesting, that the following account coincided with the lingering death of Little Theatre in Provo.

Archie Graham, an eccentric actor, attempted suicide at Springville by the morphine route. But, the doctor prevented it. When the doctor called and asked what Archie had taken, the latter replied, 'None of your damn business, but give me a revolver and I will finish the job.'\footnote{Daily Enquirer, October 27, 1896. New Name of the Enquirer.}
Section 2, Professional Traveling Companies

The first company to produce a play in the Opera House in 1889 was the Grisner Company with John R. Grisner and Phoeve Davis starring in "Forgiven" and "The World Against Her." They played to full houses on New Year's Day. On January 29, 1889, J. S. Murphy, an Irish comedian of note, presented "Kerry Gow," "Dan O'Horn," and "Shaun Rhue."

Madame Janauschek, announced as the greatest living tragic actress, played "Meg Merileis" on the Provo boards on March 22, 1889. The Utah Enquirer was not kind in the reviews of the play.

But Janauschek of today is not the Janauschek of other years. There is not that fire, that electricity, that made the name of Janauschek world renowned and which is now the only magnet which draws her full houses whenever she is announced to play. Madame Janauschek is getting old and it is doubtful whether she will ever visit this part of the country again in her professional role.

The company, in the main, was very poor. Tyrone Power as the old tutor, was good, and won more applause from the audience for his fine acting than did the madame.2

On March 16, 1889, the Stetson Company played 'Uncle Tom's Cabin. The next four attractions at the Opera House were minstrels. The Lew Johnson Black Boy Minstrels came first on March 28, 1889, and the Baird Minstrels, one of the few all colored companies, played on April 1, 1889. The McNish, Ramza and Arno Minstrel Company played on April 2, 1889.3

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1Tyrone Power was the father of the present day actor Tyrone Power.
2Utah Enquirer, March 23, 1889.
3Ibid., April 4, 1889.
The Johnson and Stevens Company played their minstrel show on April 23, 1889. This was said to be the most refined minstrel ever presented in Provo. The main complaint against minstrel shows was that they did nothing original. "This company, at least had the merit of originality in its jokes and its attire."¹

On May 19, 1889, "The Ivy Leaf," played by Power's Irish Company was performed in the Opera House. This play was one of the early traveling spectacles. The advance publicity releases showed two horsemen leaping their mounts over a wide chasm.²

On July 30, 1889, the "Enquirer" reviewed the Lilly Clay Show. This show seems to have been a vaudeville type of show. The company surprised the Provo audience by ringing the curtain up on time. This was such an unusual occurrence that only fifty had arrived for the first part. The D. & R. G. Railroad kept a train at the station waiting for the company and they left early.³ So, the part of the audience that was late missed the first and the last parts of the show. This "cutting" of the show must have been a "blow" to the pride of the theatre people in Provo who considered their admission to the circuits an acknowledgement of the importance of their city. It would indicate to the student, however, that Provo and its importance in the eyes of the traveling troupe was very small, due to the size of Provo. This makes its tremendous

¹Ibid., March 23, 1889.
²Ibid., May 19, 1889.
³Daily Enquirer, July 30, 1889. The "Enquirer" became a daily.
capacity for the theatre and its development of the theatrical arts all the more phenomenal.

The Frank Daniels Company brought "Little Punk" to Provo in October of 1889. Frank Daniels was billed as the funniest man of the age. On October 29, 1889, the Frank Mayo Company played "Davy Crockett" in the Opera House. And, on September 19, 1889, immediately prior to four performances of a home town minstrel company, the Goodyear, Elitch and Schilling Company presented their Minstrel Show.

Nick Roberts and his Company played in Provo on December 5, 1889. This company treated Provo in much the same way as the Lilly Clay Company. They left a train waiting at the station and rushed through a portion of their play, "Humpty Dumpty," then boarded their train and left for their next appointment. The main difference between this company and the Lilly Clay Company lay in the fact that the Nick Roberts Company didn't arrive until after 9:00 o'clock. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad often influenced the Provo stage, as in the instance where the leading man of the Katie Putnam Company stepped off the train and fell through a hole in the platform boards, incapacitating himself for the performance that night.

On December 12, 1889, "Around the World in Eighty Days" played in the Opera House. This play emphasized quantity rather than quality. It was accompanied by two railroad cars

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1Ibid., October 18, 1889.
2Ibid., September 15, 1889.
3Ibid., January 16, 1890.
of special scenery and fifty people. One other traveling company played in Provo before the end of 1889. The Milton and Dollie Nobles Company presented "The Phoenix" on December 13.

The Felix and Eva Vincent Company arrived in Provo on January 6, 1890, for a full week's run. They played the following selections:

- Monday Evening: "Father and Son"
- Tuesday Evening: "Foggs' Ferry"
- Wednesday Evening: "Pygmalion and Galatea"
- Thursday Evening: "Two Orphans"
- Friday Evening: "Our Boys"
- Saturday Matinee: "Fanchon"
- Saturday Evening: "Inshavogue"

The prices of this company were low: Dress Circle, fifty cents; Parquette, twenty-five cents; Balcony, thirty-five cents; and Gallery, fifteen cents. The prices were not the only interesting drawing card. On Saturday afternoon every child who attended was given a "handsome toy" and the lady holding the lucky number was presented with a dress pattern. On Saturday night an "elegant bedroom suite" was given away to the holder of the lucky number.¹

Evidently the "bait" offered by this company was right, for the reviews said that the company on all nights played to a "jammed" house. There was an interesting sidelight to the account of the play in the January 7, 1890, "Enquirer." Mr. Vincent made a curtain speech in which he rebuked the "peanut crunchers." "This way of cracking peanuts at a play is a most

¹Ibid., January 7, 1890.
disgusting and uncivilized habit that some people have habituated themselves to. Frequently in some of the most pathetic scenes of the play the low growl of the numerous munchers of peanuts is heard, marring the effect of the rendition.1

The Katie Putnam Company came to Provo on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad on January 15, 1891. Their play as scheduled was "Honor Bound" but they were not able to perform because Ed Warren, "one of the leading members of their company had met with an accident in consequence of one of those numerous holes in the railroad platform. . . . Mr. Warren's leg was very badly sprained."2 Evidently here was a company that did not believe that the "show must go on." It seems ironic that an actor should injure himself on a railroad platform after having been oriented to the hazardous stages and backstage areas of the time.

On Monday, January 21, 1890, Miss Helen Blythe and Company appeared in "Mother's Love." On January 28, 1890, Louis James performed "Virginius" to a small house. His performance was so fine and the reviews so favorable that when he returned, less than one year later, in "Cardinal Richelieu" he played to "standing room only."3

Joseph Grismer and Phoebe Davis produced "The Tigress" and "The Burglar" in late January 1890. On February 17, 1890,

1Ibid.
2Ibid., January 16, 1890.
3Ibid., December 28, 1891.
the Hill Union Square Company brought "A Possible Case" to the Opera House. The reviews in the "Enquirer" of the performance of this play stated simply: "The case is possible but scarcely probable."\(^1\)

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" played in the Opera House on February 24 and 25, 1890.\(^2\) The Postage Stamp Company performed on March 15, 1890. This company brought a band which gave community concerts in connection with their performances. They used a sort of "Pied Piper of Hamblin" arrangement. The band played and then marched to the theatre followed by the townspeople.

"The Merchant of Venice" and "Hamlet" were played in the Opera House on March 21, and 22, 1890, by "The Bandman" and his New York Company.\(^3\) On March 24, "The Bandman" presented "Romeo and Juliet" with an interesting innovation in the casting of the play. Shakespeare used a young man for Juliet; "Bandman" used a young woman for Romeo. This was a popular trend of that period. Many ladies of the theatre, in keeping with the activities of the "suffragettes," tried their skill at "taking over" for the men in their field.

On April 2, 1890, the Rial and Morris Company presented "The Great Metropolis." The Opera House was host to the New Irish Comedy Company in "Kitty From Cork" on April 11, 1890.

\(^{1}\)Ibid., February 17, 1890.  
\(^{2}\)Ibid., February 21, 1890.  
\(^{3}\)Ibid., February 17, 1890.
On April 14, 1890, the Zigzag Company was enroute to the Bush Street Theatre in Los Angeles and stopped for one night. Their entertainment had no plot or name and was conducted for laughing purposes only.¹

Mr. Augustin Daly's New York Company presented "A Night Off" in the Opera House on April 15, 1890.² "A Soap Bubble" on its sixth annual tour was presented by Charles Jerome on April 25, 1890.³ On April 29, 1890, the three St. Felix sisters played in the Opera House in "A Royal Hand."⁴

On May 12, 1890 the Blackney's Comedy Company presented "The Virginia Mummy." Miss Kate Emmett returned to Provo on May 26, 1890, to play "The Waifs of New York."⁵

On June 5, 1890, the Tellid McHenry Company brought "Lady Peggy" to the boards of the Opera House. On June 6, 1890, the original New York cast of "A Long Lane; or, Pine Meadow" played in Provo. This company brought the same scenery used on the New York stage with them, including the original live sheep.⁶

On Thursday June 12, 1890, Joseph Hayworth, hailed by the Daily Enquirer as the "great actor of this generation," presented Steele MacKaye's "Paul Kauvar."⁷ Still another New York theatre company presented "The Great Cromwell" on June 14,

¹Ibid., April 14, 1890.
²Ibid., April 15, 1890.
³Ibid., April 21, 1890.
⁴Ibid., April 29, 1890.
⁵Ibid., May 26, 1890.
⁶Ibid., June 6, 1890.
⁷Ibid., June 7, 1890.
1890. This production was traveling after a six-year run of the play in New York City.¹

July, 1890, brought another group of traveling companies to Provo. Lottie Wade and Henessy LeRoyle presented "What Is It?" on July 4, 1890. On July 1, 1890, a different type of entertainment came to the Opera House. It was titled "A Night With James Whitcomb Riley." "The portrayals, character sketches, dialectic delineations and impersonations."² were presented by Virgil A. Pinkley, director of the Department of Elocution and Oratory in the College of Music, of Cincinnati, and author of "The Essentials of Elocution and Oratory. The prices of this entertainment were slightly higher than the usual play. The Dress Circle was one dollar with the prices going down to twenty-five cents for the Second Circle. On August 7, 1890, "The Shatchen," was presented by the M. B. Curtis and Frank Mordaunt combination with their supporting company.

On Thursday, November 27, 1890, the play "Stowaway" was presented. This play has been mentioned in this thesis before in connection with the safe-blower promised as part of the act, and the big white ship with real masts, sails, etc.

On December 8, 1890, the Goodyear, Elitch and Schilling Minstrel show played in Provo again. On December 20, 1890, the W. S. Cleveland Company Minstrels performed in the Opera House.

¹Ibid., June 30, 1890.
²Ibid.
Louis James and Company returned to Provo on December 26, 1890. When Mr. James played "Virginius" in Provo, a year earlier he had played to a very small house. When he returned for this engagement the *Daily Enquirer* informed the community that "Mr. James is the greatest Richelieu now on the American stage." Due to such unsolicited advertising the house was packed for the performance of "Richelieu."

Clara Morris presented "Renee De Moray" on December 29, 1890. Miss Morris was an established player with the Baldwin Theatre in San Francisco. James A. Garfield, President of the United States, said of Miss Clara Morris, "She is the most gifted woman I ever knew." The prices for this production soared to $1.50 for the Dress Circle seats.

The Aaron Johnson Company presented "Out of His Sphere" on Christmas day, 1890. This company was a traveling company organized in Springville, Utah. For these "home town" players the prices dropped back down to seventy-five cents.

"The Bohemian Girl" was scheduled for the Opera House on January 5, 1891. The Emma Abbott Company, accompanied by the Grand English Opera Company, arrived for their performance but the performance was never given because Miss Abbott died early in the afternoon of January 5, 1891. The company disbanded after cancelling all their engagements.

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"Miss Multon" was presented on January 12, 1891, by the Felix and Eva Vincent Company. "Arroh-Na-Pogue" was presented by the same company on January 13, 1891.\(^1\) On January 14, the Vincent Company presented "Pygmalion and Galatea."

A Chicago Company, John Dillon and Company, brought "Wanted the Earth" on April 23, 1891.\(^2\) On May 7, 1891, the Milton and Dollie Nobles Company presented "Love and Law."

On May 20, 1891, the Great John L. Sullivan with his own company presented "Honest Hearts and Willing Hands." The following announcement was of interest:

Professor John Lawrence Sullivan, from that literary center of the country, Boston, holds forth in Provo tomorrow night. Many newspapermen along the route of his travels have thought best to retract whatever nasty things they may have said about the Professor's ability as an actor, because he has the reputation of also being a hard hitter. Now the Enquirer wants it understood that it has nothing to retract. It has never said anything bad about the Professor's ability and has always held that he was quite a man in his way. We hold the same today.\(^3\)

"Wild West Melisse" played in Provo from May 18 to May 25, 1891. The company presenting the play was the American Novelty Company. They held their shows in a tent to cut expenses.\(^4\)

"Black Mantles" was presented in the Opera House by the Logan Opera Company on May 27, 1891. This company was gathered from northern Utah and attracted a great deal of

\[^1\]Ibid., January 13, 1891.
\[^2\]Ibid., April 23, 1891.
\[^3\]Ibid., May 19, 1891.
\[^4\]Ibid., May 18, 1891.
attention.¹

Lillian Lewis and Company presented "Credit Lorraine" in the Opera House on May 26, 1891.² The George Staley Company returned with "A Royal Pass" on June 1, 1891. "Twelve Temptations" by the William J. Gilmore Company was presented on June 13, 1891. The production cost of this play with its accompanying ballet and scenic display was $35,000.00.³

The Salt Lake company organized by John S. Lindsay played "Lady of Lyons" in the Opera House on August 20, 1891. The cast included Edith Lindsay, Lovella Lindsay, H. E. Rogers, and Mamie Lindsay. They followed their "Lady of Lyons" with "The Noble Outcast" on August 28, 1891, and "Ingomar" on August 29, 1891.⁴

On September 12, 1891, the Charles Dickson Company played "Ingog." On September 26, 1891, the Thomas W. Keene company played "Richard the Third." "The Hustler" played in Provo on October 26, with John Kernell in the title role. He was supported by the M'lle. Staccione and Gus Mills Company. "Yon Yonson" with its log jam and other scenes of a lumber camp in the wintertime played on the Opera House stage on November 28, 1891.⁵

Miss Lillian Lewis supported by the Lewis Company returned to Provo on November 11, 1891, to present "As in a Looking Glass." The costumes Miss Lewis wore were especially

¹Ibid., May 27, 1891.
²Ibid., May 26, 1891.
³Ibid., June 10, 1891.
⁴Ibid., August 20, 1891.
⁵Ibid., November 28, 1891.
beautiful and influenced the "styles" of the Provo women for many months after her performance. The Daily Enquirer promised Miss Lewis and her company that they could be guaranteed full houses when they played in Provo as a reward for the performances in "As In a Looking Glass."  

On December 5, 1891, the Newton Beers Company presented "Lost in London." On December 9, "Dr. Bill" was presented in the Opera House. The company which presented this play was not mentioned in the advertisements or reviews. 

The Wilber Company presented, "The Planter's Wife" on December 11, "Streets of New York" on December 12, "Two Orphans" on December 13, and "The Clemency Case" on December 14, 1891. The "Devil's Auction" was playing in Provo during the "stand" of this company. The William Gilroy Company could not appear in the Opera House simultaneously with the Wilber Company so they presented their play in a tent.  

Fowler and Warmington and Company presented "Skipped by the Light of the Moon" on December 25, 1891. On January 8, 1892, "Sport McCallister" by the Bobby Gaylor Company played in the same week with "Mr. Potter of Texas" by F. W. Sanger's Company. 

On February 3, 1892, the W. T. Carletan's Opera Company presented "Indigo, Indigo" in the Opera House. The company

1 Ibid., November 12, 1891. 
2 Ibid., December 12, 1891. 
3 Ibid., December 25, 1891. 
4 Ibid., January 8, 1892.
brought fifty people. On February 10, 1892, the Daily Enquirer announced Fredrick Ward in "The Lion's Mouth" for February 17, 1892. Katie Putnam returned in "Love Finds a Way" on March 3, 1892. The Charles Frohman's Comedian Company presented "Mr. Wilkinson's Widows" on March 21, 1892. \(^1\) The cast stars were Joseph Holland, George Drew Barrymore and Mattie Ferguson.

On March 4, 1892, the theatre bill consisted of monologues by Phil Ray.

On March 9, 1892, the Daily Enquirer announced the engagement of the Corinne and Kimball Opera Comique and Burlesque Company in "Carmen Up to Date," with sixty singers and performers. The "Enquirer's" encouragement with articles like the following made the performances a sellout.

The sale of seats has been the largest for months and should be for this is the best company that ever visited this city. Provo is the smallest city in United States that this company plays in. The Company plays the balance of the week in Salt Lake then Denver for a week and Chicago for fifty days. \(^2\)

The Reno and Ford Comedians presented "Joshua Simkins" on April 19, 1892. This company also used their band of twenty players to advertise. They staged a parade through the streets at noon. Effie Elsler and the Frank Weston Company presented "Hazel Kirke" on April 25, 1892. \(^3\) This company presented a "handsome souvenir which was to be treasured as a memento of

\(^1\)Ibid., February 26, 1892.
\(^2\)Ibid., March 2, 1892.
\(^3\)Ibid., April 19, 1892.
of the occasion," to every lady who attended. The Beebe-Barbour Company began a five night stand on April 27, 1892. During their stay they presented "Chips From an Old Block," "A Legal Document," "Shadows of the Homeland," "Joe, the Waif," and "She, Queen of Kar."\(^1\)

William Gillette and his company presented "All the Comforts of Home," on May 5, 1892. The Fiske Jubilee Singers, colored singers from Fiske University in Nashville, Tennessee, gave a concert on May 5, 1892. Jessie Yeamans was presented as "Jane" in "Jane, Queen of Comedies," by the Madison Square Comedies Company on May 9, 1892.

The Miller Brothers Company brought "Kajanka" to Provo on June 2, 1892. The Rustler Minstrels with a cast of thirty played on Friday, June 16, 1892. "O'Dowd's Neighbors" with Mark Murphy, Sam J. Ryan and Clara Theopp, played in the Opera House on June 24, 1892. The Gordon's Minstrels played for one week beginning July 21, 1892.

The Frank Daniels Comedy Company presented "Little Puck" on August 6, 1892. The DeLange and Rising Company presented "Tangled Up," on September 30, 1892. On October 3, 1892, the John T. Kelly Company presented "McFee of Dublin."

Several volumes of the paper, The Daily Herald," are missing between June 1892 and June 1893. The collection in the Provo Public Library was begun in 1903. The memories of the older thespians are not sufficiently reliable to substitute

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}, \text{April 27, 1892.}\)
the names of the plays in lieu of the newspapers accounts.

The New York Theatre Company presented six nights of theatre to Provo beginning on September 21, 1893. Their plays were "Celebrated Case" or "Soldier of Fortune" on September 21, 1893; "Pearl of Savoy" on September 22, 1893; "Great Bastille" on September 23, 1893; "Under Two Flags" on September 24, 1893; "Fanchon" on September 25, 1893 and "Great Bastille" as a repeat performance on September 26, 1893.

The Charles L. Davis Company presented "Alvin Joslin" on Saturday November 4, 1893. The record is incomplete. The next entry is in April 1894. "The Spy of Atlanta" was presented by Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Belcher on April 11, 1894. On April 18, 1894, the M. E. Leavitt Company played "The Spider and the Fly." Thirty of the sixty artists in this company were from European theatres.

On May 18, 1894, Jeffreys Lewis and Company presented "Forget Me Not." On May 19, the same company performed "La Belle Russe."

The next theatrical entry was in December of 1894 when "Jolly Old Chums" was presented. Gustave Frohman's Company played "The New Boy" on January 12, 1895.

In February the Snow Matson Company played "The Striker's Victory" and the Pat Rooney Comedy Company presented "Lord Rooney Up to Date" on February 2, 1895. Nellie McHenry and her Circo Comedy Company with "Night at the Circus" was the March offering. Effie Ellsler, Frank Weston and Company in "A Woman's Power," on May 14, 1895, was the only play presented in May.
"Faust" with its calcium lights and complete electric light plant on stage was the June theatrical. It was presented on June 3, 1895. The Syke Opera Company played "Tar and Tartar" on July 18, 1895 and the Clement Bainbridge New York Company presented "Alabama" on July 3, 1895.

The Sherman and Morisey Company played "A Jay Circus" on September 9, 1895. "The Pay Train," in which an uncoupled train crossed the stage at full speed was the attraction for the month of October, 1895.

In January 1896 the Opera House opened its theatre season with "A Lottery of Love" by the Henry E. Dixey Company. "Uncle Josh Spruceby" was played on January 18, 1896, complete with the "wonderful realistic saw mill scene, a full working sawmill with 36 inch steel saw on the stage."\(^1\) The last play presented in January of 1896 was "The Defaulter" on January 25, 1896. This play was also a "thriller:" capitalizing on scenic effects and the "double leap for life."\(^2\)

On March 10, 1896, the Frawley Company of the Columbian Theatre in San Francisco brought "The Senator" to Provo for presentation. Katie Putnam and her Company returned to present "The Old Lime Kiln" on March 26, 1896.

"The American Girl" played in Provo on April 9, 1896. This is the first play to which the newspaper ascribes outside advertising. This play according to the April 9, 1896, Daily

\(^1\)Ibid., January 18, 1896.
\(^2\)Ibid., January 25, 1896.
Enquirer, was advertised on billboards and handbills. Also included in the Opera House's April schedule was "Finigan's Ball" on April 18, by the Murray and Mack Company.

The following review was published on June 9, 1896, concerning "Josephine, Empress of the French" which was presented the night before.

The drama is insight into the life of Napoleon and Josephine as given in Rhea's production of 'Josephine, Empress of the French,' is a treat. The stirring historical incidents of the time of Napoleon are faithfully reproduced by Rhea and her company. Many of the most exciting incidents in the marvelous career of Napoleon are reproduced in the play. The only fault to be found was that the company last evening at Provo rushed the play through too fast, to catch the train for Salt Lake. Mlle. Rhea plays well but speaks broken English. Fair attendance.

On June 15, 1896, the Payton Comedy Company presented "Golden Giant" as the first presentation of their week's engagement. They presented "The Octoroon" on June 16, "Joshua Whitemomb" on June 17, "Mother and Son" on June 18, and "Rose Garland" on June 19. This company had always played for high prices but "finding the West so dull" Mr. Payton tried the lower prices to bring his crowds. Provo rewarded him with a good crowd every night of his stand. The Daily Enquirer said the Payton Company was the strongest popular priced company ever to play in Provo.

"A Yenuine Yentleman" by the Yon Yonson Company with Gus Heege played in the Opera House on September 26, 1896.

In October the Opera House presented "A Bowery Girl"

1Ibid., June 9, 1896.
2Ibid., June 17, 1896.
with Miss Lillian Keene and the Harry Williams Company; and, a repeat performance of "The American Girl." On October 9, following the October 8 performance of "The American Girl" the same Company presented "The Silver King."

"Si Perkins" played in the Opera House on October 31, 1896. Sam J. Burton and Miss Lillie Coleman brought their own band. This band played at noon and again just before curtain time to draw the crowds into the theatre. "The Tornado" by the Carter Company was a highly exciting type of play that was very popular. The company was one of the few traveling companies who rated press comment.

"The Tornado" is rightly named; it is as furious as the wind from start to finish. The play seems to have been written to suit Mr. Carter's stage inventions; and really he has some good scenic effects. The tornado was a wild and realistic production and the sinking ship was not bad. But the play was full of so many narrow escapes that they almost gave one the tired feeling so often mentioned in public print. Many of the jokes were decidedly loud. The audience that witnessed the play was large.¹

The theatre schedule in 1896 ended with the December 14, presentation of Jule Walters and Company in "Side Tracked;" and the December 24, production of "Molly Baum" by the Irish Company.

Professional theatre continued to occupy the stage of the Provo Opera House until the commencement of World War I. These traveling companies received little or no competition from local dramatic associations. The local dramatic activities were taken over by the various ward groups. The productions of these groups were on a small scale and involved

¹Ibid., November 1, 1896.
only a few members of local church groups. Therefore, they are not classified as community theatre.

Just as one national issue, the Edmunds-Tucker Act, figured prominently in the death blow that felled Provo community drama; so another national issue, World War I, was influential in the curtailment of the traveling companies' activities.

The Home Company was unable to rally after the brief period of inactivity brought about by the prosecution of the Edmunds-Tucker Act and was replaced by the traveling companies. The traveling companies were unable to recuperate after World War I and were replaced by the moving pictures.

Provo community theatre after 1896 was infrequently revived by small groups. Except for spasmodic efforts Provo enjoyed no legitimate theatre until the Speech Department of the Brigham Young University was organized by Dr. T. Earl Pardoe in 1920. From that date the theatre has been carried, almost entirely by the Brigham Young University.
RESUME

Provo, Utah, was settled in 1849. The theatre became a prominent part of Provo community life four years later in 1853. The citizens of Provo were typical of the Latter-Day Saint settlers; they fostered and promulgated the cultural aspects of life. They followed close in the pathway of the better equipped and better staffed Salt Lake Theatre. They presented the citizens of their community with theatricals that rivaled the professional traveling companies.

The first theatre in Provo was a log house within the old fort. A saloon, a private residence, and various small halls served the Provo public as subsequent theatres. During the period of 1877-1883 dramatic activity reached its zenith with two rival dramatic companies competing for the community's favor and patronage.

The Provo Dramatic Union was organized under the leadership of Henry Maiben, a former member of the Salt Lake Theatre company; and the Home Dramatic Company was organized and directed by John C. Graham, formerly a very prominent member of the Salt Lake Theatre company. These two companies eventually merged in September 1880 as one company, the Home Dramatic Company, with J. C. Graham as the director.

By 1887 the "Little Theatre" movement in Provo had begun to wane. Here, then, was a community that experienced the beginning, rise, and fall of "Little Theatre" activity before
"Little Theatre" activity was recognized elsewhere in the world.

Through the columns of the Daily Enquirer the citizens of Provo were kept aware of the fine points of each company and the theatrical education of this community reached a very high point for a small pioneer settlement. Second rate performances were not tolerated or patronized. In the later years when the traveling professional troupes came to the Opera House the players were amazed to find such connoisseurs of dramatic art. They were delighted with the audience reactions, and at times, chagrined when their very few second-rate performances were railed at in the press and rejected by public patronage.

The Provo Opera House was dedicated on the evening of July 22, 1885, and Provo was ready for the fine Home Dramatic Company productions and the traveling companies with their wide range of plays. The Opera House was in constant use by the Home Dramatic Company until the year 1897 when the efforts of the playing group dwindled to very infrequent appearances; and the traveling professional troupes, with their elaborate costumes and expensive sets, filled the void. The small and poorly financed home town players gave up their organized dramatic plans in the face of professional competition.

Enforcement of the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1888 forced many local actors to quit the stage. John C. Graham, with others, spent time in prison for violation of this act. Some actors left the State. This enforced retirement was the end
of the Home Dramatic Company, for it never again attained the organization or the enthusiasm to carry successfully a complete season of plays. The teen-age Provo Thespian Club tried for several years to replace the Home Dramatic Company but was forced into retirement through the competition of the traveling companies.

By 1896 the activities in the Provo Opera House were limited to a few traveling companies, dances and other types of entertainment. The local dramatic activities were taken over by the various ward groups and are not to be classified as community theatre.

When the First World War commenced in 1914 the activities of the traveling companies ceased abruptly. After the war, the moving pictures replaced the traveling companies and the theatre became a picture house.

The Provo community theatre, beginning in 1853 and ending in 1896, has been revived infrequently over the years by small groups. However, except for spasmodic efforts Provo had enjoyed no theatre until the Speech Department of the Brigham Young University was organized by Dr. T. Earl Pardoe in 1920. From that date the theatre has been carried, almost entirely, by the Brigham Young University.
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Bailey, Mrs. Nellie, Provo, Utah. September 21, 1951.

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Eggertsen, Mrs. L. E., Provo, Utah. December 22, 1951.


Haws, Mrs. Sadie Graham, daughter of J. C. Graham, September 3, 1951.

Hicks, N. C., Editor and part owner of the Daily Enquirer since death of John C. Graham. December 10, 1951.

Jones, Sam, Provo, Utah. November 20, 1951.

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Keeler, Mrs. Essie, Provo, Utah, daughter of J. Marinus Jensen, December 13, 1951.

McEwan, Mrs. Nellie, December 21, 1951.


Walker, Lucille, Pleasant Grove, Utah, writing a history on Pleasant Grove dramatics which contains much information on Provo dramatics. October 17, 1951.
THE PROVO OPERA HOUSE
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Provo Opera House.

NOVEMBER, 21, 1890

J. C. GRAHAM, Manager.

Provo Opera House.

ONE NIGHT ONLY, THANKSGIVING DAY.

Thursday, Nov. 27

THE SEASON'S BIG SENSATION! TRIUMPHANT DEBUT!

IMPOSING AND IMPRESSIVE PRODUCTION OF THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL MELIORAMATIC SUCCESS,

THE STOWAWAY

“'To hold as well as win success, keep all your play well promises.”

—W. H. CARTER

Prices: 25, 60, 75 and 81. Seats on sale at the box office, Nov. 17th.

Provo Opera House.

Wednesday Night, November 18th

THE TORNADO.

Lincoln J. CARTER'S Mammoth Scenic Production

The awful Tornado. The Great Rigging Scene. Six Tars Furling a Monster Sail.

The Collision of Two Ocean Liners at full Speed.

The Mighty Oceanic Scene, with Waves Running Mountain High. Dissecting Room of Medical College. Chicago Harbor at Night, and many other Scenic Wonders.

FRANKENSTEIN MYSTERY

AND THREATS OF 25 EDUCATED MONSTERS

AND TRICKS OF 25 EDUCATED MONSTERS

HISTORIC ADVENTURE OF PROFESSIONAL HEADS

3 SHOWS ESTIMATED TO BEAT ALL RECORDS

Andraes $100,000.

November 21, 1890

Cliff's Theatre.

NO EXAGGERATION.

FAIR AND SQUARE ARE THE TERMS.
GRAND ANNOUNCEMENT
PROVO OPERA HOUSE
THE LYCEUM
STOCK Co.

For THREE Nights and Wednesday Matinees
COMMENCING
Monday Eve, April 15
IN FOUR OF THE GRANDEST PLAYS
ON THE ROAD:
Jack O'Diamond, Ranch 10, Jane, Hearts of Oak
WILL LITTLE JUBBLE CONSISTS a Play?

CLIFF'S THEATRE!
After considerable preparation, the Great Drama
in 7 acts, entitled,
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN
OR LIFE AMONGST THE LOWLY!
WILL BE PRESENTED ON
Saturday & Monday Evenings, June 5 & 7,
WITH A SPLENDID CAST OF CHARACTERS,
APPROPRIATE MUSIC, SONGS, CHORUSES, ETC.
NEW AND MAGNIFICENT SCENERY,
"RIVER OF FLOATING ICE!
AND A
GRAND APOTHEOSIS
EVA in THE ASCENSION CAR.

Following is the Cast:

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Reserved Seats for both nights can be leased at once.

THEATRE
TO-NIGHT
Her Majesty's Ship Pinafore
TWO SPECTACULAR PICTURES
ERNEST MALTRIVERS!
JACOB EARWIG

Performance will commence at 7:30.

THE HOME DRAMATIC COMPANY
will make its appearance on
Saturday Evening, Jan. 31, 1880.

MR. J. C. GRAHAM,
 Appealing to the American Charms of JANET EARWIG.

The Performance will accompany with Abner and Priscilla Temple-Dance.

For Tickets apply to
CLIFF'S THEATRE,
THE THEATRE
TO-NIGHT.

Her Majesty's Ship Pinafore

LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR.

Note that the tickets are to be obtained on presentation of this notice.

Neeta, who was saved from the wreck, is now a sailor's wife. The story is one of adventure and romance, with a sad ending. The music is of the highest order, and the acting is admirable. The play is produced by the American Dramatic Company, and is a great success. The performers are: Neeta, Martha; Jack O'Diamond, Ranch 10; Jane, Hearts of Oak; and the rest of the cast.

Ernest Maltravers

JACOB EARWIG

Performance will commence at 7:30.