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ACTORS UNDER CANVAS:
A STUDY OF THE THEATRE OF THE CIRCUIT CHAUTAUQUA, 1910-1933

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

R. Alan Hedges, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1976

Reading Committee:
Donald R. Glancy, Adviser
Charles Ritter
John A. Walker

Approved by

Donald R. Glancy
Adviser
Department of Theatre
DEDICATION

To My Parents:

My Mother, for instilling in me the confidence and desire to pursue my utmost in education;
My Father, for arousing in me an intense interest in the Circuit Chautauqua
I AM WHAT I AM

I am the Spirit of Joy. At my coming children rejoice, and men and women are glad.

I am the Festival Spirit. I call men, women and children by the healthful magic of music, eloquence and entertainment. They come in throngs, forgetting life's cares and monotony, yielding themselves over unto gladness. Thus it comes to pass that human hearts in many hundred towns look forward to my annual visits as their times of refreshing.

I am the Spirit of Neighborliness. I am a social melting pot. I fuse aggregations of individuals into communities. I ignore and erase lines of division, and bring together in happy fellowship members of all religious faiths, all political parties, all social classes. In this fellowship they come to know each other—to find that the aspirations and ideals they had thought peculiar to a few are cherished by many; that movements in which they had thought themselves interested are dear to the hearts of many who merely await a leader's call before openly avowing their allegiance.

I am the Spirit of Earnestness. I bring joy, and I entertain. But I do more. I provoke, outside of partisan or sectarian limitations, that discussion which is essential to intellectual health and national welfare. I encourage community progressiveness. I inspire ambitions and arouse unselfish purposes. I am not a school but each year because I touch their lives hundreds of young people determine to complete their unfinished educations. I am not a church, but I strengthen every moral purpose, and quicken the sense of social responsibility.

I am the Spirit of Freedom. Those who speak for me, speak without fear or hindrance the things they believe. Neither creed nor platform fetters their utterances. Their voices seem sometimes contradictory and discordant. Then they are the disharmonies of a great symphony—the symphony of full and perfect liberty, to which we may not attain until all voices are heard and blended.
I am the Spirit of Optimism. I believe in better lives, better homes, better towns, better cities, better government; in joy, purity, sweetness, beauty. Those who sing or speak for me are minstrels or heralds of good-will and good cheer. I point the way.

I am because a group of forward-looking citizens, whose spirits were like unto mine, have, without hope or possibility of monetary reward, brought me into being.

I am the Chautauqua. Will you co-operate with me:

Copyright, January, 1921, by the Swarthmore Chautauqua Association.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish first to acknowledge my indebtedness to my father, Robert M. Hedges, who, while an Assistant Archivist in the University of Iowa Libraries Special Collections, catalogued the university's extensive holdings in Redpath Lyceum and Chautauqua Bureau materials, and subsequently convinced me of the value of researching the theatre activities of the circuit chautauqua. Secondly, I wish to thank my mother, Margaret Hedges, who so willingly spent many hours editing the manuscript and who offered so many valuable suggestions to me throughout my writing of this work.

Next, I must thank the many persons who talked with me, whether in person or through the mails, concerning their memories of chautauqua. Foremost among those who aided me are William and Genevieve (Tobin) Keighley, who so graciously entertained my wife and me at their New York apartment; Billy Miles, who met with us at his Palisades, New York, home; James and Betty (Peffer) McCracken of Quaker Hill, New York, who generously invited us to a Sunday afternoon visit on the spur of the moment; and Dr. Sam Couch of Canton, Ohio, who sat with me for an
entire evening recalling in splendid detail his experiences
in various crew capacities for Redpath circuits in the
late twenties.

Through the mails, Edward Wright and Mrs. C. Benjamin Franklin provided me with extensive and in-
valuable information that was unavailable elsewhere.
Mr. Donald Blaisdell, father of my mentor, Nesbitt
Blaisdell, also sent to me several pages of his snapshot
album, which contains rare photographs of tents and
personalities taken during his chautauqua days. Others
who responded to my inquiries were Mrs. John Griggs,
George Matthews (husband of the late Anna Lauers
Matthews, Crawford Peffer's private secretary), and
Raymond DaBoll.

Finally, I must give special notice to Thomas Kline
of Canton, Ohio, who always found work for me to do and
thus enabled me to remain financially solvent during the
period of my doctoral studies, and, above all, to his
daughter, my wife, Sharman, whose unending patience and
steadfast concern continued with me, helping me to focus
on my goal throughout the many months of study and writing.
VITA

November 29, 1940  ............................................ Born, Iowa City, Iowa
1963  ............................................ B.A., Culver-Stockton
       College, Canton, Missouri
1964  ............................................ M.A., The University of
       Washington, Seattle, Washington
1964-1966  ............................................ Instructor of Speech and
          Drama, Iowa Wesleyan
          College, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
1966-1967  ............................................ Graduate Assistant,
          Department of Theatre,
          Tufts University,
          Medford, Massachusetts
1967-1972  ............................................ Assistant Professor of
          Speech and Drama, Mount
          Union College, Alliance,
          Ohio
1972-1974  ............................................ Graduate Assistant,
          Department of Dance,
          The Ohio State University,
          Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Theatre

Studies in Dramatic Theory: Professors Donald Glancy
                               and John Morrow

Studies in Theatre History: Professors Charles Ritter
                               and Alan Woods

Studies in Theatre Production: Professor Russell
                               Hastings

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INTRODUCTION

Just prior to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when Republicans of the North were still waving "the bloody shirt" and members of the "me too" party of Jefferson and Jackson were unsuccessfully devising programs designed to distinguish them from their opponents, two men of strong faith and long vision began to cultivate an idea that was to have more political influence and stronger social impact on rural America during the ensuing fifty years than either of the major political parties. In the summer of 1874, as hordes of Rocky Mountain locusts ate practically every particle of vegetation throughout the newly settled plains, as Wall Street businessmen were still staggering from the 1873 depression, while Davy Crockett and Evangeline were exciting audiences "up town" at Niblo's Gardens, and Clara Morris was boldy characterizing Camille at the Union Square, a Methodist clergyman, John Heyl Vincent, and an Akron businessman, Louis Miller, offered their first training session for teachers of what later came to be called Sunday School, at Fair Point, New York, on Lake Chautauqua. Undreamt of by these men, a movement was being initiated that about three decades later was to take some of the best of the
world's music and some of the most popular of the New York plays to thousands of small, rural communities throughout America.

For that first meeting, Messrs. Vincent and Miller envisioned a broader program than the usual Normal School studies that were designed to prepare young women for teaching careers; their school was to be based on sound and broad humanitarian ideals. The school was to expand all human faculties—mental, social, moral, and religious—for everyone, without exception.¹ Vincent's authoritative, early history, The Chautauqua Movement, clearly stated the message and mission of his infant constitution. "It exalts education," he said, sounding the key note which was to be preeminent for nearly sixty years. It aimed, he continued,

to promote a combination of old domestic, religious, educational, and industrial agencies; to take people on all sides of their natures, and cultivate them symmetrically, making men, women, and children everywhere more affectionate and sympathetic as members of a family; more conscientious and reverent, as worshippers together of the true God; more intelligent and thoughtful as students in a universe of ideas; and more industrious, economical, just, and generous, as members of a society in a work-a-day world.²

Just as his idealism was to set the movement apart from other cultural activities of the period, so were the

²Ibid.
means he and Miller used to disseminate their message and mission. They avoided the atmosphere of classical education by holding their meetings out-of-doors in "God's temple," and they avoided the suggestion of camp meeting orgies by replacing sermons with lectures pre-luded by moral entertainment, primarily music. 3

Finally, they dedicated themselves to the ideal of "social regeneration through religion and education."4

With an expanded vision of American education and by a shunning of sectarian and parochial considerations, they were during the summers subsequent to 1874 able to lure the best speakers and entertainers to their meetings at Lake Chautauqua. The roster of talent of those early years read like a list from Who's Who--Ulysses S. Grant, James Garfield, Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, William Jennings Bryan, Vachel Lindsay, Evangeline Booth, Booker T. Washington, Carrie Nation, John Erskine, Eugene V. Debs, Walter Lippmann--the list seemed inexhaustible.5

The idea of popular adult education founded on solid religious principles was so appealing to land-locked


Americans that ways had to be found to bring the Chautauqua Lake culture to communities too remote for the summer's visit. Vincent, recognizing the need, not only to serve the more distant areas, but also to maintain the summer program through the winter, found one way: in 1879 he inaugurated a form of study group called the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle (C.L.S.C.). Hundreds of C.L.S.C. groups sprang up in midwestern towns, serviced by the Chautauqua Press and governed by an unsalaried "Committee of Six." In 1885, the Chautauqua Press catalog listed ninety-three titles. Those early paper-bound books, each containing about one hundred pages and selling for ten cents, included such material as poems by William Cullen Bryant, a beginner's astronomy, a life of Socrates, the educational theories of Horace Mann, a history of art, readings from the classics, and a half-dozen historical titles by John Heyl Vincent himself. In all, those publications were the forerunners of the materials of reading societies, book clubs, correspondence schools, and extension courses that have now become available everywhere.

A second way that was found to expand the chautauqua idea was simply to establish other summer retreat grounds closer to the more distant patrons. One of the first such

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7Ibid.
8Tozier, p. 70.
assemblies was begun at Lakeside, Ohio, in 1876; it was a complete facility with "a pavilion in a grove of trees, sleeping tents scattered throughout the camp, [a] community dining table, and [an] identical overlay of respectability." Soon, other such local or "permanent" assemblies were established in many other locations. Their founders engaged lecturers, announced classes, promoted culture, and generally promised personal uplift and education, all the while faithfully following the format of the original institution at Lake Chautauqua by adhering to the guidelines set forth by Vincent and Miller. Those local assemblies, too, boasted that, in Miller's words, "the scientist and statesman, the artisan and tradesman, [could] bring their latest and best to the altar of consecration and praise." Here, continued Miller, "The tourist and pleasure-seeker [could] . . . stop and find their best place for reveries." Those local assemblies, then, became a kind of social, cultural, and intellectual resort, from whence the participants could return strengthened to their respective fields and once there, "weave into the fibre of the home-work the newly gathered inspiration and strength."

The development of the Chautauqua movement came at a crucial time in American social life. It began at a

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9Case, pp. 17-18.  
10Case, p. 18.  
11Vincent, p. vi.  
12Ibid.
PLATE I

A Typical Tent Chautauqua Scene

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time when, to most Americans, the Civil War was still a vivid memory, the war that for urban families had signaled an end to the earlier, transcendental philosophy based on the romantic, the optimistic, and the supernatural, as well as had marked a giving way to the onslaught of social Darwinism and pragmatism. For the people of rural America, however, toward whom chautauqua was primarily oriented, such "modernist" theories had little influence or meaning. While the people of the larger cities were experiencing the deterioration of the older American values under the economic impact of industrialization, thus earning Mark Twain's appellation, "The Gilded Age," the chautauqua movement maintained for the rural people the core of the earlier philosophy with its emphasis on God as the supernatural force that could and did intervene in the affairs of men together with its belief in the preevolutionary doctrine of man's "divine grace," which set him above all other animal organisms. The men behind chautauqua endeavored always to present a world that was both cheerful and comforting.

Eventually urbanism, industrialism, and social Darwinism infused even the most isolated areas of rural America, and as the Great Depression deepened, the remains

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14 Ibid.
of the mid-nineteenth-century social philosophy were erased, thus wiping away the need or desire for the outmoded ethic the chautauqua movement had sustained for over fifty years. Those vast social and cultural changes were fatal to the chautauqua movement during the 1920's because they presented the chautauqua managers with an unavoidable dilemma: if the movement was to be true to its original principles, it had to encourage the presentation of every important issue and popular type of cultural attraction; yet, to support the modernist lecturers and the more liberal cultural programs was to condone philosophical and religious concepts that contradicted its own. The managers ultimately chose to present modernism, primarily for financial reasons, a decision that within a few years so diluted the movement's true purpose and reason for being that the summer programs ceased to provide significant or necessary material to its audiences. Furthermore, by that time, the chautauqua patrons had begun to discover the exciting immediacy of the newer forms of cultural entertainment, the motion pictures and the radio. Weakened from within and presented with overwhelming competition from without, most chautauqua activities quietly ended in 1933.

It is quite possible, however, that if it had not been for the thousands of local chautauquas and the millions of rural Americans who never missed a summer's program, the shock of the social transition between the Civil War xvi
and the Great Depression would have been much worse:
America might have been the loser had not the chautauqua
programs carried the strengths of the nineteenth-century
philosophy well into the twentieth century.

From the beginning of the movement at Fair Point
in 1874, throughout a half-century of rapid growth and
until the technical and philosophic changes of the twentieth
century stripped it of its meaning, the basic principle
of all chautauqua societies remained surprisingly con­
sistent. That principle, which could be found on programs
nationwide, can be summarized as follows: to provide a
high level of moral teaching, religious instruction, and
upright entertainment in an informal, nonsectarian at­
mosphere. In the words of Gay Zenola MacLaren, one of
chautauqua's indefatigable troupers, it was to "uplift
the community and bring inspiration, education, and pure
wholesome entertainment to everyone's starved lives."15
That philosophic core was so pervasive that even one of
the largest independent circuit chautauquas, the Swarthmore
Chautauqua, promoted similar goals. In 1921, this
chautauqua's management published a credo entitled "I
Am What I Am."16 In it were emphasized the "Spirits"
of Joy, Festival, Neighborliness, Earnestness, Freedom,

15 Gay Zenola MacLaren, Morally We Roll Along (Boston,

16 An unidentified flier from the Swarthmore Chautauquas
maintained in the University of Iowa Chautauqua Collection,
Box 579. See frontis piece for a complete copy.
and Optimism. Each of those concepts had a place in the life of a chautauqua experience. The patrons of chautauqua meetings were a happy people, who enjoyed life and friends in the common goal of popular education through the free exchange of contemporary ideas, each earnestly seeking better, more productive lives in an atmosphere of optimism and religious reverence. The credo ends with the query, "Will you co-operate with me?" Thousands did cooperate, year after year. Chautauqua's popularity grew until, by the second decade of this century, the New York Times felt obliged to print for its readers a list of ten points of chautauqua policy:

"1) A saner and more normal family life; 2) An education which treats the child as an individual; 3) Association of church life with everyday life; 4) Promotion of physical health; 5) No more war: and a recognition that individuals and nations are mutually dependent; 6) A recognition that governments are for people, not people for governments; 7) The refusal to subordinate humanity to industry; 8) The making of business a means, not an end; 9) The conservation of personal and natural resources; 10) The development of leaders, especially among the youth of today, in our social, political, and economic life."

By 1926 the chautauqua movement became so widespread and had so permeated American social life that Frank Bohn observed that "Chautauquas hear everybody gladly: the chautauqua platform is probably the most liberal ever erected in the history of the world." After referring to

the movement as "a vast social laboratory," he concluded that, "He who does not know chautauqua does not know America."  

In spite of the fact that half a dozen books have been published in the last fifty years concerning the chautauqua movement, the information provided in those publications relating to the considerable theatrical activity on chautauqua platforms is negligible. Although every chautauqua manager for the fifteen years following 1915 sent out two or more fully staged productions on every weekly tent circuit program, no significant research has heretofore been conducted to reveal the nature of that activity, its origin, growth, impact, significance, or relevance to the mainstream of American theatre. W. L. Slout, in Theatre in a Tent (1972), and Phillip C. Lewis, in Trouping: How the Show Came to Town (1973), brought to the surface the facts relating to the rural repertory and the stock activities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; yet, neither author dealt in any depth with the pervasive and ubiquitous chautauqua productions, which boasted ticket sales of 40,000,000 per season in over 10,000 rural communities nationwide.

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Primary material exists that reveals the true extent and importance of this grass-roots theatre movement: the State University of Iowa has extensive holdings of primary materials concerning the Redpath Chautauqua System. Several other libraries have similar, but quite limited materials. Beyond those sources are the thousands of newspaper articles that appeared during the annual chautauqua week in each of the towns the chautauqua circuits visited. There are also various eye-witness accounts and reports in scattered periodicals. Finally, there are yet living a few persons who were directly involved in the chautauqua play productions, foremost of whom is William Keighley, who was the director of the Redpath Play Bureau for fifteen years.

Altogether, such sources have revealed a vast system of popular theatrical activity that brought to much of hinterland America easily accessible performances of professional quality theatre at very reasonable prices.
CHAPTER I

THE CIRCUIT CHAUTAUQUA

During the closing twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, the instructional sessions that had been begun in 1874 by John Heyl Vincent and Louis Miller at Fair Point, New York, grew rapidly. Not only had the simple educational meetings on Lake Chautauqua been expanded from a few days of Normal Training to a full summer's program of instruction and culture, but also hundreds of communities throughout the Midwest had set up their own week-long series of lectures and entertainment, commonly referred to as "Chautauqua." By the year 1900, the time was ripe for a second era of chautauqua expansion, the circuit chautauqua.

While Vincent and Miller correctly felt the pulse of rural America philosophically, they did not have the means for the mass dissemination of talent that was to make the chautauqua movement the powerful social organ it became. While the permanent assemblies that had been designed more-or-less closely after the pattern of the Mother Chautauqua at Fair Point had sprung up
throughout the Midwest, hundreds of towns and thousands of people would never have been touched by the chautauqua movement if a few enterprising young men had not developed a means of taking the programs and message of chautauqua directly to the doorstep of innumerable small communities from Maine to Oregon, from Michigan to Georgia. That process was to be brought to the chautauqua movement principally by Keith Vawter of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who, in turn, had learned the methods of talent management under the leadership of James Redpath, a most successful manager of the eastern lyceum business.

To understand the sudden, almost explosive expansion of the chautauqua movement by way of the circuit system as it was devised by Keith Vawter and others, it must be recognized that the circuit methodology had already been proven a successful means of placing the right talent before the right audiences by another talent-hungry public service organization, the Lyceum. The Lyceum movement was born in 1826, when Josiah Holbrook, of Millbury, Massachusetts, organized his farmer neighbors into an association for mutual intellectual improvement. Mr. Holbrook said,

It seems to me that if associations for mutual instruction in the sciences and other branches of useful knowledge could be started in our villages, and upon a general plan, they would increase with great rapidity, and do more for the general diffusion of knowledge, and for raising the moral and intellectual caste of our
countrymen, than any other expedient which [could] possibly be devised.¹

Illiteracy was general in the early part of the nineteenth century, so the chief concern of the early lyceum groups was the improvement of the common schools.

By 1840, when the local lyceum groups numbered in the thousands, the character of the movement shifted from an orientation towards the education of the young to adult education. The dragon of ignorance had been slain on the school house doorstep; now it was time to raise the caste of those of the previous generation whom the dragon still confounded. At first, local talent was depended upon to bring the elevating lectures, mainly on science. But as the local talent was exhausted and there was no one capable of giving talks on more advanced topics, the local leaders began to seek out specialists to speak at their meetings.² Soon, hundreds of lyceum groups were competing for a very small number of qualified men; some means had to be found to match speakers with requests.

James Redpath, "a bearded crusader, pamphleteer, war correspondent, and shrewd promoter," saw the need and developed the means.³ After witnessing the appearance of Charles Dickens at Boston's Tremont Temple in 1867 and

²Case, p. 23.
³Harrison, p. 31.
subsequently hearing Dickens and his manager complain of the "outrageous" American accommodations, Redpath was quoted as saying,

There should be a general headquarters . . . , a bureau for the welcoming of literary men and women coming to our country for the purpose of lecturing. They should be made to feel at home among us and the business of arranging the routes of travel and dates for lectures should be in charge of competent workers and an established fee agreed upon.⁴

In 1868, therefore, Redpath set up the Boston Lyceum Musical Bureau, designed to furnish the eastern lyceum movement with high-quality talent.⁵ Able to offer lecturers guaranteed wages and regular employment on manageable schedules while similarly supplying local lyceums with a high quality of talent at reasonable fees, the enterprising bureau manager succeeded handsomely.

James Redpath's lecture bureau was a success from the start. The great and the near-great performers, who had been journeying as far as Ohio and other accessible corners of the land, suddenly discovered that there was a man who would, for a small fee, eliminate much of the risk and some of the hardships of the lecture business. Moreover, that man could promise most speakers six paid engagements a week, and for ordained ministers there could be a Sunday engagement as well.⁶ During his

⁴Ibid., p. 32.
⁵Tozier, pp. 70-71.
⁶Harrison, p. 33.
James Redpath
bureau's first few years Redpath handled the bookings for Bayard Taylor, P.T. Barnum, humorists Billings and Nasby, Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips, James C. Blaine, and dozens of others. 7

The philosophy undergirding Redpath's Bureau was strikingly similar to that of Vincent and Miller. He felt that a lyceum lecture would be a failure if it succeeded only in imparting instruction. "It should impart pleasure as well," Redpath said. His goal was not only to improve America's intellect, but to "tickle its risibility" as well. 8 It is "an impertinence to attempt to instruct an audience unless you can do it pleasantly or eloquently," he said. 9 Redpath further believed that the strength of a booking agency must not be merely notable lecturers, but notable lectures. In accepting the responsibility of handling the bookings for the lyceum movement, he believed that the lyceum was an institution that would last for all time. He was wise enough to understand that "platform success based soley upon the prominence of the individual could not be permanent." 10 Pledging himself to the lyceum as a "preëminently American institution,"

7Ibid.
8Ibid., p. 35.
10Ibid., pp. 186-187.
and having faith in it because it "represented his belief in the ability of the people to secure for themselves things of education and culture," he established the principles that were to be the backbone of the circuit chautauqua that was later to be so frequently operated under his name.

James Redpath did not live to see the era of the great circuit chautauqua, but he had bequeathed to his followers "a practical foundation, a taste for controversy, and an abiding sense of decency." In 1875 Redpath sold his Boston bureau to two of his employees, George H. Hathaway and Major James B. Pond. Hathaway then bought out Pond, but the bureau under his management did not succeed. In 1901, in an effort to salvage the bureau, Hathaway divided it into three area offices, one for himself in Boston, one for Crawford A. Peffer in Philadelphia, and one for Keith Vawter in Chicago. It was Peffer and Vawter who were to take Redpath's organization to the doorstep of chautauqua and, thereafter, chautauqua to the nation.

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11 Ibid., p. 188.
12 Harrison, p. 38.
13 Ibid., p. 36.
14 Ibid., p. 38.
Keith Vawter was the first of the Redpath men to apply the winter lyceum talent operation to the summer chautauqua programs. Vawter had been in charge of the Standard Lyceum Bureau of Des Moines, Iowa, since 1899. When he acquired the Redpath management in the Midwest, he moved his office to Chicago. Recognizing the need to balance the winter lyceum business with some similar summer activity in order to operate his bureau economically, Vawter noted that local, permanent chautauqua assemblies were in need of just the sort of talent he already controlled for his lyceum bookings. Enlisting the aid of another eager young entrepreneur, J. Roy Elliston, of Bozeman, Montana, Vawter arranged to furnish programs for several permanent chautauqua assemblies in Iowa. Under the title of the Standard Chautauqua Bureau, Vawter and Elliston offered to arrange the programs of those "independent" assemblies in order to offer quality talent at significantly reduced fees. With a central booking office, Vawter and Elliston could arrange the schedules of the available talent to eliminate delays, holdovers, long jumps, and off days. They then persuaded nine permanent assemblies to accept

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17 Ibid.
PLATE III

Keith Vawter
their prearranged programs at their special price. Nine towns not being enough for an efficient circuit, Vawter selected five intermediate towns, \(^{18}\) and despairing of finding local pavilions in which to present their programs, bought a circus tent. Chautauqua for the first time was conducted as a purely commercial enterprise.\(^{19}\)

The first circuit consisted of fourteen towns in Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska.\(^{20}\) By overlapping the schedules, Vawter was able to schedule programs of either eight or eleven days' duration in each town and still complete the circuit in eight weeks.\(^{21}\)

At the end of their first season, Vawter and Elliston had lost several thousand dollars.\(^{22}\) Too many local committees had requested schedule changes or talent substitutions. Besides, the circuit contained too many long jumps. But both men agreed that with tightened schedules and stricter insistence on the use of a single contract and roster for every town, the plan would undoubtedly succeed.

\(^{18}\)George S. Dalgety, "Chautauqua's Contributions to American Life," \textit{Current History} XXXIV, 39 (April, 1931), p. 40. (This source asserts there were 33 original towns.)

\(^{19}\)Case, p. 29.

\(^{20}\)Orchard, pp. 121-123.

\(^{21}\)Harrison, p. 59. See Appendix for the actual program copy.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 80.
An Early Redpath Tent
It was at that point that the true circuit plan emerged:

First-day talent remained first-day all season, second-day remained second-day, and so on for the seven days. Thus all groups traveled the same routes for the first time, and railroad-riding and programming became simplified.

In 1907, Vawter and Elliston tried again.

For the second attempt they devised a new contract. This time they would ask some local group to sponsor the entire cost of Chautauqua; they would bring tents, equipment, and the complete program and make no concessions for local talent or pavilions. They would sell the 'Chautauqua idea' to the community as a duty, a privilege, a consecration of local spirit. They would not talk about profits or financial values to the town but hold fast to uplift, inspiration, and culture. They would, in short, set in motion a system of Chautauqua that would inevitably sweep the country.24

And sweep the country it did. Vawter shared his recipe for circuit success with his partner in New England, Crawford A. Peffer, also a man of high dedication and long vision,25 and with Charles F. Horner, a man of considerable selling ability, who in 1906 had managed Redpath bookings west of the Missouri.26 During the next several years, with Peffer promoting along the East Coast, Horner handling the area west of the Missouri, and Vawter scheduling appearances throughout the central states, the circuit concept became increasingly popular. By 1911, Vawter alone had contracts with 140 communities.

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23 Ibid., p. 81.  
24 Case, p. 30.  
25 Thornton, p. 11.  
26 Orchard, p. 154.
PLATE V

PROGRAM

First Day
8:30 A. M. CONCERT
MISS TESS SHEEHAN, Entertainer
MISS MARY SALTMARSH, Trombone and Piano
MISS DOROTHY DYER, Accordion and Pianolegs

8:30 P. M. PLAY. THE MASTER COMEDY
"THREE WISE FOOLS"

Second Day
8:30 A. M. MYSTERY AND ILLUSION.
MORA, The Magician

2:30 P. M. COSTUMED SKETCHES BY THE ARTIST ENTERTAINERS

6:00 P. M. PRELUDAE THE MAGIC MELODY"
MISS BETTY BOOTH,
HUGO BRANDT, and PAUL CLARK

6:15 P. M. DINNER
SENATOR BROOKHART of Iowa for Debenture Plan, and CONGRESSMAN PURNELL of Indiana, or FORT of New Jersey, will take turns in Opposition.

Third Day
9:30 A. M. STORIES OF ANIMAL LIFE

2:30 P. M. LECTURE-ENTERTAINMENT, "WILD ANIMALS IN CAPTIVITY."
GEORGE F. MORSE

2:30 P. M. PLAY. GREAT AMERICAN DRAMA
"SUN-UP"

Fourth Day
6:15 P. M. CARTOONS AND RAG PICTURES

2:30 P. M. "THE WIT AND WISDOM OF CHALK AND CLAY"
J. FRANKLIN CAVENY

2:30 P. M. POPULAR BALLAD OPERA, COMPLETE CAST, CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA
"THE BOHEMIAN GIRL"

Fifth Day
2:30 P. M. PRELUDAE, THE PARISIAN ARTISTS
Mlle. THERESE QUADRI, Soprano
Mlle. MARCELLE FALLET, Violiniste
Mme. BERTHE FALLET, Pianiste

2:30 P. M. LECTURE. "THE GENIUS OF JAZZ"
BERNARD C. CLAUSEN

2:30 P. M. PRELUDAE, THE PARISIAN ARTISTS
2:30 P. M. LECTURE. "THE CONQUEST OF THE AIR"
LADY MARY HEATH

Sixth Day
8:30 P. M. JUNIOR CHAUTAUQUA—"THE PUPPET FOLLIES"
SUE HASTINGS' MARIONETTES

9:15 P. M. PLAY. UPONARIOUS COMEDY
"SKIDDING"

A Typical Circuit Program
During the second decade of the twentieth century dozens of independent managers attempted to set up their own circuits. Some of them continued for only a few seasons. Others were successful within localized geographic areas, such as the Lincoln Chautauqua Series of Illinois; the Jones, Acme, and the Travers systems, based in Iowa; the Midland Bureau of Chicago; the Cadmean of Topeka, Kansas; the Pennsylvania Chautauqua Association of Swarthmore (who scholarly manager was Dr. Paul M. Pearson, father of Drew Pearson); and the Ellison-White Chautauqua System of the eastern states. None of those bureaus, however, matched the geographic expanse covered or the numbers of performers employed that the Redpath System could claim. The Redpath name was represented in Kansas City by Charles Horner; in White Plains, New York, by Crawford Peffer; and in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, by Keith Vawter himself. By 1912 those worthies were joined by two brothers, Harry P. Harrison, with an office in Chicago, and Vernon Harrison, with an office in Columbus, Ohio. George Hathaway in Boston still retained control of the lyceum bookings for Redpath and was President of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau. Peffer was Vice-President; Vawter, Secretary; and Harry Harrison, Treasurer.

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27Harrison, p. 82.
28Ibid.
29Thornton, p. 12.
30These names were taken from 1923 letterhead, SUI, 164.
After 1910 the idea of circuit chautauqua caught on rapidly, and during the following dozen years scores of enterprising managers mapped out circuits that were to blanket the nation with summer culture under canvas. By 1913, for example, the Redpath-Horner Chautauquas boasted a total of 135 chautauqua assemblies with an estimated attendance of 150,000; the Redpath-Vawter Chautauquas claimed 251 assemblies in Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Missouri; the Redpath Chautauquas of Chicago operated 110 assemblies along the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys; and the Associated Chautauquas of New York and New England, under Peffer's management, provided entertainment and programs to over 100 more eastern towns. Altogether, these Redpath-associated chautauquas totaled more than 600 assemblies with a combined annual attendance of nearly 600,000 persons. 31

To that figure must be added scores of other chautauqua bureaus, large and small, throughout the country. For example, the Jones Chautauqua System, managed by C. Durant Jones of Perry, Iowa, claimed 126 assemblies in 1912 and 190 by 1913. In Pennsylvania, Paul M. Pearson, manager of the Swarthmore Chautauquas, reported a total of 102 assemblies located throughout eastern Pennsylvania,

31Lyceum News (July, 1913), p. 17.
Front Row (left to right): George S. Boyd, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Harry P. Harrison, Chicago, Illinois; Crawford A. Peffer, New York, New York; Keith Vawter, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Vernon Harrison, Columbus, Ohio.

New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia. In Chicago, competing with Harry Harrison's Redpath management, was Alonzo E. Wilson, who managed 167 assemblies for the Lincoln Chautauquas. Beyond those bureaus were many smaller circuits as well as the nearly 700 Independent chautauquas. In all, it has been estimated that in 1913 there were over 2000 chautauqua assemblies across the country.³²

During the ensuing few years there was considerably more circuit expansion as an increasing number of small towns organized committees and located guarantors to support the summer's program. Although the Redpath chautauqua bureaus continued to grow in numbers of assemblies, the Ellison-White Chautauquas operating from Louisiana to Washington state claimed to encompass the largest geographical area. Ellison had even set up some assemblies in Canada.³³ In the south, new bureaus included Alkahest system of Atlanta, Georgia, and the Radcliffe attractions of Washington, D.C. At their height, those two systems represented some 250 southern towns. Farther north, Louis J. Alber operated his Coit-Alber Chautauquas from Cleveland, Ohio, which provided culture to 235 towns in the eastern mid-west. To the west, the

³²Ibid.
³³Case, p. 194-198.
newer bureaus were the Travers-Wick system, with offices in Des Moines, Iowa, and the White and Myers system, which operated a circuit from Kansas City that serviced some 300 assemblies in the Plains' States. 34

At its height in the mid-nineteen twenties, the Redpath Bureau alone served more than 40 million persons in 10,000 local communities, with other bureaus serving thousands more. 35 At least one of every eleven persons in the United States was estimated to have attended a lyceum or chautauqua program in every year of the first quarter of the twentieth century. 36 The nation was "drenched with culture and good, clean fun," Harry Harrison remembered:

Tents popped up in vacant lots, and all America swarmed down the aisles. Chautauqua had taken hold. At times, among the smaller operators, it was a cut-throat business, but not among the Redpath Bureau managers. . . . To those of us who embarked in 1912 on this exciting enterprise, it looked as if it could last a hundred years, thanks to Keith Vawter. 37

During the third decade of the century, the trend was reversed as the chautauqua circuit idea had not only significantly permeated rural America, but also had

34 Ibid.
35 Tozier, p. 71.
36 Thornton, p. 13.
37 Harrison, p. 82.
The Redpath Five-Day Circuit of 1929
(Skidding and Take My Advice)
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reached the point of saturation. Both talent and travel became more expensive while at the same time chautauqua was receiving competition from newer forms of mass cultural dissemination such as the radio and the moving pictures. As a result, there was considerable bargaining going on to combine various neighboring circuits in order to economize. The manager who most successfully took advantage of the changing condition was C. Benjamin Franklin, a young, aggressive, and optimistic entrepreneur from Kansas City. Under his bureau title of Associated Chautauquas of America, Franklin bought out the Ellison-White, Cadmean, Standard, Mutual, Redpath-Vawter, White and Brown, Acme, and Midland chautauquas. By 1930, he owned over one-half of the operating circuits in the Midwest.

In spite of the large numbers of bureaus in operation and the huge number of persons called upon to lecture or perform throughout the country, there was a remarkable consistency of programming from one circuit to the next and from one geographical area to the next. Each competing manager seemed to eye the other's schedule with shrewd scrutiny each season so as not to be taken by surprise by some new gimmick or some crowd-attracting new type of talent or program. More often than not, it was the Redpath Bureau that led the others in innovation in the midwest and along the east coast, with Pearson's Swarthmore in
An Amateur Photograph of a Redpath Set-up
Showing the Crew Tent to the Left
the forefront in the central eastern areas. Pearson, Vawter, Horner, the Harrisons, and Peffer were always ready to try new forms of program material and were always careful to select only the best talent available for a reasonable fee. For example, it was the Redpath Bureau that first brought Shakespeare to the chautauqua platform with Ben Greet as director, and it was Pearson's Swarthmore Chautauquas that first offered play contests and performed winning plays for his chautauqua patrons.

The most consistent programming of all was the offering of plays. The Redpath Bureau was the only bureau to set up a play producing office as well as the only bureau that could boast such a dynamic leader as William Keighley to be their play director and coordinator for 15 consecutive years. Thus, it was the Redpath Bureau that led the nation in play selection and presentation for chautauquas. The professional nature of the Redpath casts and the undisputed appeal of their Broadway-proven scripts meant that most smaller bureaus simply chose for their circuits the same plays that Redpath had previously chosen. Consequently, nearly every circuit community throughout the nation was able to see a production of Smilin' Through from 1924 through 1927.

The circuit chautauqua idea was born in 1904 and grew rapidly for twenty years. The causes of its sudden decline is the subject of Chapter VII. By 1933, every
circuit in the country had ceased to function. In spite of its somewhat ephemeral career, the circuit chautauqua had left an indelible cultural mark on the hearts and minds of millions of rural Americans.
CHAPTER II

THE INTRODUCTION OF DRAMA TO CHAUTAUQUA AUDIENCES

In contrast to the sudden expansion of the chautauqua movement immediately following the inauguration of the circuit concept, the introduction of dramatic elements into the programs was not only painfully slow, but was also sporadic and inconsistent. In the beginning all cultural offerings were suspect because of their tendency to bring too strong a worldly influence into the chautauqua meetings. From the very first meetings at Fair Point, however, Vincent and Miller viewed the singing of hymns and the playing of sacred music as a part of their program of religious instruction, which, between the lectures and sermons, imparted some moments of elevating, as well as relaxing, pleasure. Music afforded a change of pace, and since music was commonly regarded as amoral, it could not be accused of lowering the high tone of any chautauqua program.

It was not long, however, until music began to overshadow all the other aspects of the chautauqua program. In a time before radio, when the only available musical
entertainment was to be found in the second-story "hall,"
where it was performed all too frequently by troupes, in
Orchard's words, of "the flimsiest and cheapest grades
without reputation or recommendation,"¹ the music pro-
vided by chautauqua managers was a true feast for rural
Americans. By 1900, the music of the chautauqua--bands,
singers, quartets, instrumentalists, entire companies of
musicians from widely scattered foreign countries--became
so popular¹ that it finally came to be regarded not as
merely essential but as synonymous with chautauqua pro-
grams themselves.² Even today (1976) the promoters of
the Chautauqua Institution, while continuing to advertise
"Personal enrichment through Education, the Arts, and
Recreation,"³ still emphasize "Chautauqua's summer school
which attracts nearly 1,500 persons of all ages to a
variety of formal courses, particularly in music. . . ."⁴

Very different from this easy acceptance of music
was the inauguration of dramatic programs, which, "when
the tent Chautauqua first blossomed along the circuits . . .
had most of the connotations of sin itself."⁵ If a town
did allow plays, those plays were not given in "theatres"
but in "opera houses," and those who attended had to

¹Orchard, p. 274. ²Case, p. 43.
³The 1975 Summer Announcement of the Chautauqua
Institution, Chautauqua, New York.
⁴Ibid. ⁵Case, p. 51.
ignore the scornful looks of a local pastor, who, with the Reverend W. G. Elliot, might have found it necessary to recite a "Lecture on Amusements":

It is a fair objection to the theatre, that, as an amusement, it is too exciting... To older persons it may not be so hurtful, but for the young man, I do not know of any habit... which is more injurious, or more fraught with serious danger, than that of theatregoing. It stimulates the imagination too strongly; it awakes dormant passions; [it] overtasks the sensibilities, and generally makes more quiet and less exciting amusements seem flat and tasteless... I feel justified in advising [the] young strongly against it.

For chautauqua managers to win dramatic converts single-handedly without some prior whetting of the rural appetite for culture would have been, no doubt, impossible. However, prior to 1900, and in spite of the admonitions of the backwoods clergy, some inroads into the fundamentalist interior had already been made by reputable dramatic companies. Riding on the 93,000 miles of shining new rails, some 1,300 touring companies were carrying the theatre into hundreds of those landlocked American towns that boasted a town hall or opera house. Repertory companies playing melodramas with vaudeville between the acts and charging admission prices of ten, twenty, or thirty cents had come within easy access of even the most

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7W. L. Slout, Theatre in a Tent (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1972), p. 2.
isolated areas. Finally, the flood of "Tom Shows" became available almost at the farmer's doorstep and won over large segments of hitherto disdainful Americans. Philip C. Lewis has observed that after an unlikely beginning in September, 1852, George C. Howard and George L. Aiken's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became so popular that "companies took to the road until even the town that had never seen or expected to see a show were seeing Uncle Tom and Little Eva."\(^8\) Where the railroads ended, wagons were hired; where the town was too small to support a hall, tents were rented. By 1900, the inhabitants of few communities had not been exposed to the lure of stage action.

Besides the factor of nearly universal exposure to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there was another element that served to soften rural resistance to the theatre. Beyond the alluringly strong appeal of the plays, which alone mellowed many sterner minds, there was evident for the first time in popular American drama a forthright moral position that even clergymen could hardly find reason to denounce. In 1852 the manager of the first "Tom" company, realizing the commercial benefit to be reaped from an expanded clientele, prepared his new-found audiences with the following notice:

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The question has been asked would it be improper for clergymen and church members to visit the National Theatre during the performances of this piece? Our answer would be, as there is no other theatrical representation given with it, there would be no impropriety in the religious portion of the community witnessing it. It is a moral, religious, and instructive illustration of the justly celebrated work of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and is most faithfully dramatized. The representation of Little Eva, by little Cordelia Howard, should be witnessed by every lady in the land.

The ten-twenty-thirty companies had opened the territory and established a strong foothold. Also, the Tom Shows not only provided an acceptable subject, but brought that subject within the reach of many rural Americans. Only one final step was needed to make drama both palatable and desirable to every man and to make the stage a respectable thing to sit and watch: assurance to the theatre-goers that the audience would be courteous and orderly. The manager quoted above concluded his notice by assuring his audiences that every precaution had been taken "that no disorderly person be admitted to the theatre during the performances of this great production."^{10}

The typical chautauqua audience was a correct and morally self-conscious body; nowhere to be seen were the typically rowdy and noisy theatre audiences of the local opera houses. Under the protective aura of established respectability, the chautauqua managers would soon find

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⁹Lewis, p. 61.  
¹⁰Ibid.
Eugene Knox is a character impersonator—a superb entertainer—a genius of versatility—an unusual artist.

He has been in the public eighteen years.

He has succeeded because he pleases. He pleases because his characters are represented true to life.

He was no make-up; yet his impersonations are fully as striking without it.

His Eugene is uncanny, and in the current sketch, uncanny.

Eugene Knox is an entertainer and an artist.

Mr. Knox has given over 5000 engagements.

Eugene Knox: One of the Hundreds of Readers Who Paved the Way for Professional Plays on the Circuits.
it possible to present plays far less sanctified than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

As chautauqua managers began to expand the scope of the summer programs, they became aware that dramatic presentations could very well become an important drawing card. Almost accidentally, those managers selected a method for introducing drama into the programs that was quite similar to the method used two centuries earlier by those early settlers who wished to present plays under the watchful eyes of the Puritan fathers. As described by Howard Taubman, that method was to "invent subterfuges" to get a play before the public. The simplest way was for the promoter to call the play a lecture or a moral dialogue. Chautauqua managers continued this tradition by stressing the educational values of their culture, including drama. Taubman has claimed that such subterfuges could be condensed into an American axiom: "The more instruction and the duller the performance, the more suitable the entertainment because of the less peril of defilement."  

Although the early attempts at drama on chautauqua platforms were not advertised as dull, they were usually billed as instructional. After 1860, when McGuffey added

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12 Ibid.
a Speaker to his shelf of Readers, and 1896, when the Dellarte Method of elocution appeared in America and was strongly promoted by Steele MacKaye, both educators and dutiful parents encouraged the art of elocution. During the last years of the nineteenth century, chautauqua managers realized that their audiences were eager for programs of elocution, and they booked hundreds of "readers," as the performers were generally called, for the chautauqua platform. It was apparent that, as Harrison pointed out,

Many people wanted the thrill of drama, the fun of make-believe, but none of the trappings of the play. They wanted performers who for a rapturous hour could transport them out of the drab, mud-bound world into fictional far places and other better times, but they did not want actors.

Thus, a whole list of readers appeared on the various chautauqua platforms around the turn of the century. A profusion of titles and techniques was attributed to them: Eleanor Randall was a "dramatic artist" who read modern plays and performed opera dramatizations; Jeannette Kling was a "mono-actress" whose "vivid, sharply outlined, clearly staged characters and crises were delightful and amusing"; Maude Willis was a "reproducer of great plays" and "the Maude Adams of monologists"; Phidelah

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14Harrison, p. 181.
Rice was a "monactor"; Margaret Stahl was called a "play interpreter." There was also William Sterling Battis, who had understudied with Joseph Jefferson, and who, as the "Dickens Man," was always careful to use chalk and charcoal instead of grease paint for his character changes. He was also careful to apply what makeup was necessary in full view of his audience. Albert Armstrong gave readings from *The Little Minister* with the aid of a magic lantern. Montaville Flowers brought before his eager listeners the full expanse of the scenes of *Ben Hur* with only the aid of his voice.¹⁵

¹⁵The above information was culled variously from issues of *Platform World*, 1930-1931, as well as from Harrison, pp. 196-197. The eagerness of rural audiences for dramatic material, with or without scenery, was well illustrated by an incident involving Flowers. Of Flowers, Harrison relates: "At Lincoln, Nebraska, one fall, Flowers arrived by train for his *Ben Hur* program to find the station platform abustle with camels, horses, chariots and stage sets which were being loaded into five cars.

'And what is this?' he asked.

A bystander explained that a *Ben Hur* road company, with a cast of one hundred, was leaving after three successful nights.

'Three nights of *Ben Hur*? Flowers exclaimed. 'I'll make it four, then,' and that evening, in an auditorium that still echoed to the frightening clatter of the treadmill on which chariots had raced, he presented his one-man show.

The town of Lincoln, which had liked the first three performances, also liked the fourth. In other words, people like *Ben Hur*."
Typical of the woman readers was Margaret Stahl, "America's Premier Play Reader." Miss Stahl gradually became widely applauded on chautauqua circuits and, in 1913, for example, played in nearly fifty Ohio towns, in many of them more than once. In 1915, her repertoire consisted of the Unseen Empire, billed as "the greatest peace drama of modern times"; Everywomen; The Servant in the House; The Dawn of a Tomorrow; Madame Butterfly; The Mother; Enoch Arden; The Lottery Man; The Man From Home; and Strongheart. Before her appearance in Fremont, Ohio, she was publicly praised for her previous appearance in Richmond, Indiana, late in the summer of 1915:

As to Miss Stahl—her platform art is consummate. She handled the play deftly, skillfully and with dramatic finesse. Her ability to paint a series of pictures and throw into relief a diversity of figures, giving the latter color, form and type, is a gift of dominating proportions. Miss Stahl can do this because she has personality and temperament and well-controlled artistic impulse.

She was also widely admired by other circuit readers and became a model for the younger talent eager for success. MacInnes Neilson, writing in Lyceum Magazine, classified her as a "portrayalist" who brought stage reading "out of the region of declamation and bombast and into the sphere of reality." As opposed to earlier dramatic

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
artists, Miss Stahl was found by the critics to be "simple, unaffected and natural." She was considered sincere in her performances, and her characters were "utterly free from the chromo qualities that make the declaimer odious to the intelligent listener."¹⁹

Miss Stahl's technique was based on a psychological approach to character study. She would study the script to "assimilate the spirit of the time, the event, the character," in order to express the precise proportion and exquisite taste of the piece. She was dynamic without being aggressive, never allowing "emotional tendencies . . . to degenerate into mere weakness."²⁰

Comments such as these also typified most of the other readers hired by chautauqua managers. Chautauqua audiences disapproved of the emotionalism that they knew existed in both camp meetings and opera halls. Chautauqua audiences, only recently liberated from Puritan restraints, looked for the same qualities on the stage that they held proper for themselves: propriety, decorum, restraint, and reason. Thus, when Miss Stahl and others kept gesticulation to a minimum, with "no labored physical demonstration, but an inner sympathy or experience revealing itself through personality," they

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Lyceum Magazine, XXIII, October, 1913, p. 78.
were well attuned to the desires of their listeners. 21 Throughout circuit chautauqua's thirty years of existence, its patrons always sought personality above everything else. To them, a man was more to be admired than his message. This preference was later to be an advantage to the play companies, for the audience would search more carefully for flaws in the actor's performance than in the script.

Miss Stahl also typified her peers in her personal philosophy, which guided her selection of readings. She chose scripts not haphazardly, but first of all because they carried with them a note of traditional success and, secondly, because a message could be "sent forth on a worthy errand, with a moral purpose, and in the hope that it [would] come back bringing sheaves with it." 22 Showing her full understanding and appreciation of the idea of the chautauqua movement going as far back as James Redpath and James Vincent, Miss Stahl asserted that

There is not so much the desire to teach as there is to touch, and the general appeal running thru [sic] them all is—that no matter where men are, and no matter how small the work they are doing, everyone should be a soldier, fighting for a new and greater human race, wherein both men and women shall be the happier—and the more interesting. 23

No chautauqua audience could hope for more.

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21 Lyceum Magazine, XXIII, December, 1913, p. 33.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
Noah Beilharz: Chautauqua Entertainer
Another popular reader was V. L. Granville, a British actor of wide accomplishment, who had appeared in productions staged by Sir Herbert Tree, Sir Charles Wyndham, Lewis Waller, and Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson. In *Paolo and Francesca*, Granville "was the essence of poetry and of youthful passion. . . ." As Malvolio to Julia Marlowe's Viola in New York, Granville was "droll, quaint, and conceited, but withal [he] rang true--so true that one felt a strange pity for the foolish misguided steward and almost anger with those others who had so gullied him. . . ."  

From that background, Granville was enticed by the chautauqua platform during the 1920's. Some of his more popular character portrayals were Job, Francois Pernet the Archer, Hamlet, Lady Wishfort of William Congreve, Uriah Heep from Charles Dickens, and Ivan from Chekhov's *A Tragedian in Spite of Himself*. Granville called his program "Dramatic Interludes" and, contrary to Miss Stahl's practice, restricted his readings to selected sketches rather than entire plays. For his presentations, the audience would not see much on stage: "a large chair and a small one; a couple of tables on one of which wigs and hats are partially revealed, just a glimpse of them, only enough to tempt speculation as their future uses; a

cushion and a drapery here and there."\textsuperscript{27} At that point Granville would enter, giving a brief introduction concerning great actors of the past. Shortly, reported one reviewer, "The lights vanish, darkness looms everywhere, save for a single glimmer on the table holding the fascinating wigs and hats. Intently the audience watches a deft movement or two and listens to a brief description of the character they are soon to see.... Then the Narrator is revealed reading from the Book of Books the deathless story of Job."\textsuperscript{26}

Chautauqua readers always took care not only to give their presentation the casual appearance of education through descriptions and introductions, but also to begin their programs with established and universally accepted literature—in this case, the Bible. Granville, like many readers, also "read" a considerable number of selections from Shakespeare, another safely elevated source.

The variety of readers and readings was nearly endless. Miss Stahl primarily read judiciously cut plays. V. L. Granville did dramatic sketches. Jessie Ray Taylor, "a noted impersonator," was a woman who specialized in

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
portraying older male characters through extensive make-up and vocal gymnastics. Paul J. Barnaby presented "the best in verse, monolog and story, varied by the introduction of Musical Readings and Pianologues with original music." He also read such plays as The Road to Happiness, The Fortune Hunter, and The Will, the latter described as a "serious drama revealing the truth that wealth does not always bring happiness."

Perhaps the most highly paid reader of complete plays was Gay Zenola MacLaren. Her first contract with the Redpath management was for eleven months for $4,000 plus transportation. By 1916 she was appearing in Harry Harrison's Chicago-based "Seven-Day Deluxe" circuit. In that year she was also reading for Ohio Lyceums and appeared for the Lyceum Bureau of Columbus, Ohio, at the Broad Street M. E. Church, reading Daddy Longlegs. In her publicity she was often referred to as "The Human Speaking Movie." Her manner of preparing for and presenting plays was retold by one of her fans to the authors of A Million and One Nights: The History of the Motion Picture:

30Lyceum Magazine, XXV, April, 1915, p. 11.
31Ibid.
32MacLaren, p. 87.
34Platform World, June, 1930, p. 3.
Her unique performances consist in giving entire plays, in the voices and actions of all the members of the casts, attaining a high degree of stage illusion. Her process of acquisition requires merely that she see five performances of the play as a member of the audience... It is a function of what is termed her 'camera mind.'

She used what was to become a typical chautauqua stage arrangement, both for the early readers and for the early productions of full-length plays as well; as the reporter suggested:

With only a setting of a table and two or three chairs, [Miss MacLaren] produces that entire stage picture down to the most incon siderable detail of action by the sheer perfection of pantomimic reproduction of that action... The entire play with its infinity of pantomimic details and rapid-fire spoken parts, so essential to the multiple character delineations, flows on through a single personality with all the ribbon-like continuity of a film.  

Besides her remarkable memory, she was said to possess a powerful gift of vocal variation. It was said of her that she had an "almost ventriloquistic power of changing her voice to portray a seemingly unlimited number of characters," and it was due to that rare and remarkable gift that she could present entire plays successfully.

\[35\] MacLaren, p. 88.

\[36\] Ibid.
Miss MacLaren not so much interpreted plays as imitated productions she had seen. A report of her method said that, "In preparing for her recitals, she attends only great productions, sees the interpretation only by the best actors and in the leading playhouses of her home city, New York."\(^\text{37}\) She imitated Laurette Taylor in *Peg O' My Heart*, Emma Dunn in *The Governor's Lady*, David Warfield in *The Music Master*, and John Barrymore in *The Fortune Hunter*. Other plays in Miss MacLaren's repertoire included *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Enemy*, *Jimmy*, and one by her own hand, *Father and Dad*.\(^\text{38}\)

There were hundreds of other readers on the chautauqua programs, who brought as many plays in as many styles to the eager ears of thousands of rural patrons of culture. Plays of every description were "read," from Masterlink's *Bluebird*, read by Jeannette Kling, to *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, read by Mrs. M. C. Hutchinson.\(^\text{39}\) Mrs. Hutchinson also read Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows* and Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. She enraptured her chautauqua audiences "by changing her voice,

\(^{37}\)Ibid.

\(^{38}\) *Platform World*, June, 1930, p. 3.

\(^{39}\) The program of the Lincoln Chautauqua as presented at Union City, Indiana, 1915.
making love to herself, responding as a mild shrinking maid, [and] creating and maintaining the illusion to the last curtain. . . .”

Other varieties of play readers ranged from Mary B. Robert's presentation of Peter Pan to Phidelah Rice reading Robertson's David Garrick and Candida. The audiences seemed to enjoy all types of play readings and readers equally, whether the play was Mary Jane's Pa, Six Cylinder Love, or Hamlet.

All the plays were undoubtedly mercilessly cut, as the presentations were seldom allowed to run more than one-and-a-half hours, but no one seemed to object to telescoped plots and abbreviated characterizations. In spite of the limitations of time as well as the restrictions on makeup, costume, and scenery imposed on the readers by their audiences, play readers thrived on every circuit from the turn of the century until the circuit system collapsed in 1933.

Even after full-length plays were being regularly produced on every circuit during the 1920s, audiences still hungered for all types of dramatic presentations, and the readers continued to be in great demand. For example, on the Waterville, Maine, program for 1920,

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40Case, p. 52.
41Ibid., p. 54-55, and Harrison, p. 192.
Nothing But The Truth was given on the second night with a complete cast while Gay MacLaren appeared with a program of play selections on the fifth night. On the Swarthmore circuits of 1922 Turn to the Right was scheduled for the fifth night in a full production while Brooks Fletcher performed his "The Martydom of Fools" on the fourth night and Beryl Buckley did a dramatic reading of In Walked Jimmy on the second afternoon. Even in 1932 Agnes Mathias Cherry appeared in her "My Neighbors in Review," and Captain Frank Guy Armitage presented his "The Laughter Barrage,"—"a presentation in semi-costume, and without the use of grease paints, of many famous characters from the works of Dickens."  

Such readers, under the guise of disseminating education and cultural uplift, prepared the chautauqua audiences of the first and second decades of the twentieth century for the fully produced plays of the second and third decades. Dramatic representations did not dilute the standards of chautauqua; chautauqua purified and elevated the theatre, thereby reforming dramatic representations and returning them to the plane of respectable entertainment. The talents of the readers may frequently

\[42\text{The above information was selected from various circuit programs in the author's possession.}\]

\[43\text{The program of the 1932 Waterloo, New York, chautauqua.}\]
have been limited, and the scripts too often may have been pared practically beyond recognition, but the readers had developed in their audience first a tolerance for, and then a hunger for, drama—a hunger which could only have been satisfied by seeing live actors performing fully staged plays. As Victoria and Robert Ormond Case have summarized: "First the impersonator, then the presenter of scenes from great plays, and finally the one-man or one-woman complete plays—these were the successive steps whereby the stage reached the Corn Belt."

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44Case, p. 55.
CHAPTER III

FULL LENGTH PLAYS ON THE CHAUTAUQUA STAGES

It is impossible to identify a specific performance or even a certain season as being the one during which fully produced plays first appeared on chautauqua platforms. To do so would require an arbitrary determination of whether two people reading a heavily cut script, or a cast of six enacting a slightly cut script meant for a cast of fifteen, was the first staged play. Even were it possible to make such a determination, available material as to the exact nature of the presentation of plays after the turn of the century is extremely sketchy; it is doubtful that accurate assessments could be made, even under the best of conditions. It is clear, however, that some time between 1900 and 1910 a few companies had begun to perform staged versions of classic and popular plays. During the second decade of the century, that movement developed so fully that, between the years 1920 and 1930, drama became not only accepted, but necessary. By 1924 Bruce Bliven, writing in the New Republic, could

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authoritatively state that "the most popular feature of the whole Chautauqua program is the play."^1

Dramatic activity beyond the level of play readings began in earnest between 1900 and 1915. The readers were offering more selections from plays with a corresponding smaller amount of poetry and prose. As the audiences began to tire from the repeated philosophic and scientific lectures, they began to demand more pure entertainment. To meet that demand, the managers encouraged the readers to do more and longer cuttings from plays. Sometime before 1910, entire scripts were read by groups listed as "companies," a term which in chautauqua usage could mean as few as two persons. For example, at Lake Chautauqua, Everyman, The Sad Shepherd, Love's Labor Lost, The Romancers, Macbeth, As You Like It, and Doctor Cupid are all found in a list of plays presented between 1903 and 1910. Several of the plays were presented by a group called the Coburn Players, who probably performed the plays in what would have to have been called staged readings.^2 The early circuits and some of the larger Independents also listed from time to time the presentations of play companies, the plays having been selected from the

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^2 These titles appear in an undocumented play list in a special collections file at the Smith Memorial Library, Chautauqua, New York, presumably gathered from programs of the Chautauqua assemblies during those years.
established classics that might most likely have been found in the school children's literature books.

The first documented appearance of completely staged, professionally acted plays took place when Ben Greet, an actor-manager of a touring company from England, was hired by Crawford Peffer to tour his New England Circuit in 1913. Greet was a natural selection because his reputation as a Shakespearean scholar was already established in America from his tours under Frohman's sponsorship and because his repertory primarily consisted of plays by Shakespeare, an author chautauqua audiences found it hard to disdain.

Ben Greet was born on September 24, 1857. Encouraged by his father, the young Greet appeared on the stage for the first time on November 1, 1879. By the year 1883 he was acting in Cymbeline with Sara Thorne. Soon afterwards Greet became a member of Henry Irving's company. In 1897 he began his own company, in which he was to give early training to such later notables as Robert Loraine, Charles Rann Kennedy, Edith Wynn Matthison, Mrs. Pat Campbell, Sybil Thorndike, Leon Quartermaine, and Sidney Greenstreet. The most prominent early success of Greet's company was a touring production of Everyman, produced in England in 1901.

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4 Crawford Peffer, History of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau, published privately by the author, 1956, p. 34.
5 Ibid.
In 1902, Greet was enticed by Charles Frohman to undertake an American tour, consisting of Shakespearean and other classic plays, to be performed in his characteristically outdoor, rustic settings against minimal scenery. The following year, Greet began his tour at Harvard with his company of "Woodland Players," performing *As You Like It* in the afternoon and *The Comedy of Errors* in the evening. The afternoon production was staged with University buildings as the backdrop and the sun for lighting; for the evening performance the only change was the addition of artificial light. Unique to American theatre, Greet's productions were well received: the only complaints stemmed from the artistic distraction caused by the "constant view of the sky, of the greensward, of the trees," and the other elements of "real life." The delivery of the text was especially praised for its fluidity brought about by the elimination of scenic pauses, "each scene successively following scene including many bits of dialogue with which . . . acquaintance has hitherto been made only on the printed page." The stage business did not depart from the standard English interpretations, according to one reviewer, and as might be expected, the players displayed a thorough knowledge of their author,

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6 Isaac, p. 86.  
7 Ibid.  
8 Ibid.
Sir Philip Ben Greet
which enabled them "to suit the action to the word and the word to the action." One reviewer was led to summarize Greet's meticulous direction by commenting that, although delightful in many ways, his productions contained "greater elements of scholarship and precision than of spontaneity and brilliancy."

Such criticisms would never be heard west of the Hudson, however, for there, audiences contained neither eyes nor ears sensitive to such discriminations. They loved seeing theatre outdoors, and they had learned to love Shakespeare from their "readers." Fully aware of those facts, Peffer, having seen performances of Greet's company on various eastern tours, realized that there was the ideal type of production with which to introduce fully staged plays to rural America. In Ben Greet, Peffer had found an actor who exuded coveted English dignity and decorum and who was exhibiting presentations of the irrefutable plays of the Bard of Avon in surroundings that suggested almost nothing of the undesirable associations of theatres. (Greet was outspoken on the subject of scenery and was opposed to the currently popular American propensity toward monumental scenic realism. To Greet's neo-Elizabethan thinking, the play was the thing, not the scenery.) Peffer saw in Greet's style of production the

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9Ibid., p. 87. 10Ibid.
very simplicity that would form a ready sequel to the scores of chautauqua "readings" of Shakespeare which, unwittingly, had been carefully preparing the way for theatre of truer substance.

Peffer also saw in Greet the idealized qualities that would appeal to chautauqua managers and audiences alike, for although Greet was humble about his acting ability and frequently had taken minor parts, he was to be best known in America as an educator. Like Vincent and Miller of a quarter-century before, Greet had a vision of seeing the arts provide not only pleasure, but also purpose to ordinary people's lives. His productions, which toured America both in and out of chautauqua management variously for twenty years, were designed not for the elite or the critics, but for the English and American "Everyman," to be performed within walking distance of everyone's front door, that their lives might be enriched, their vision widened, and their tolerance and understanding deepened by personal experience with the performance of classic literature.

\[11\text{Ibid.}\]
The REDPATH BUREAU Announces
Return American Tour

SIR PHILIP BEN GREET
and the
BEN GREET PLAYERS

Unrivaled Shakespearean interpreters of the English speaking world. Returning to America by insistent demand of leading universities and cities that had them last season and those that wanted them but were unable to secure them last season.

Sir Philip Ben Greet—greatest of all Shakespearean producers—will return with his all star cast of brilliant players in a more extensive repertoire.

They have what most productions lack—the magnetic power of drawing crowds.

They open their season in October and close it in April.

The Greatest Feature Attractions are Always

REDPATH
Accordingly, after Greet had performed before hundreds of select audiences at colleges and universities between 1902 and 1910, he was given an offer by Crawford Peffer to perform for the select Redpath Lyceum audiences during the winters of 1910 to 1913. Greet's company was enthusiastically accepted by the lyceum patrons and thus passed the preliminary tests that Peffer had been careful to arrange. Peffer was then ready, in 1913, to introduce Greet to chautauqua audiences.

Peffer and Greet agreed on two plays for the first summer: *A Comedy of Errors* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Although Greet himself did not appear on that first chautauqua tour, several of his leading actors, including Percival Vivian and Grace Halsey Mills, traveled with the company on Peffer's New England circuit. Noteworthy, also, on that first tour, was the presence of a young assistant manager whom Peffer and Greet had chosen to assist Eric Blind with the company: William Keighley.

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12 One such performance by the Greet Company occurred in Columbus, Ohio: "For the benefit of Camp Johnson, the camp of the First Social Settlement Society, two performances of the Ben Greet Players will be given on the State University Campus, Monday afternoon and evening, July 14. The productions to be given are *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Mr. Greet, notwithstanding the recent report that he would retire from the stage, is still with his company and has important parts in both of the plays to be presented." Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch, July 7, 1913, p. 14.

13 Isaac, p. 118.
Keighley was to remain for fifteen years with Peffer as his director of the play companies, a story that is to be told subsequently.

After some judicious cutting of its scripts, the Greet company was ready to begin its tour. True to Greet's original production conception, the plays were presented, Harry Harrison remembered, before a plain backdrop stretched behind the stage. "There were no sets or scenery," he recalled, for "in the summer, playing out-of-doors, the strolling Greets had no need for extra scenery; grass, trees, sky, and entranced imaginations were enough." Still uncertain of their reception, the managers waited for the possible shouts of indignation. No such reaction materialized. Instead came shouts of praise. Harrison remembered that by the time the company had reached Michigan, the western limit of its tour, crowds would gather at the big brown tent several hours before the program was to begin.

Reassured by that first season's response to classic drama on the hallowed chautauqua stage, Peffer confidently secured Greet's company performing *Taming of the Shrew* for a second season. For the third season of

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14 Harrison, p. 199.
15 Ibid., p. 200.
A Chautauqua Scene from a Postcard
Showing the Ben Greet Players
as a Featured Attraction.
the Greet company's tour, Much Ado About Nothing was chosen and, wisely, was placed on the third day of program activities, where it would be eagerly awaited and also would build crowds for the remainder of the week. ¹⁶ When each local chautauqua chairman stood to give his customary opening greetings to the evening crowd, he probably prepared the audience for their treat by quoting from one of the glowing bureau press releases: "One of the greatest triumphs ever scored in behalf of Chautauqua goers," he very likely began, "is the securing of the Ben Greet players..."¹⁷ The play selected for that season, he may have continued, "reveals the great dramatists in a delightedly funny mood which bubbles over in rich profusion, from first to last." As the play was directed by Greet himself, and as he was considered by the popular press to be the ablest living authority on Shakespeare, the manager could elaborate without fear of contradiction from his rapt and trusting listeners, telling them that the play would show scenes and costumes of ancient Greece "correct in every detail." Then with surprising erudition that was undoubtedly taken directly from a circuit promotional leaflet, the manager

¹⁶From the official programs of Kennebunk, Maine, 1923, and Gouvenour, New York, 1915, respectively.

¹⁷Ibid.
Ben Greet Players - Redpath Chautauqua.

The Ben Greet Players
might have concluded with great oratorical finesse:

"The play is presented after the manner of the Shakespearean age when the acting and dialogue were made prominent rather than the stage settings and mechanical effects." The audience members would by then be on the very edges of their seats, not realizing that neither on that night nor on any other of the hundreds of nights to follow was there any other way to produce plays than the sparse style of Greet. On their stage the audience saw living beings enacting wonderfully moving scenes, which caused them to laugh often and to weep occasionally—surely a treat not to be missed. Just before the curtain rose, the manager could toss out his closing lure, designed to snag the attention of the most reluctant farmer:

Don't get the idea that, because this is Shakespeare, it is too "highbrow" for the folks. No indeed, it is just the thing, and [you] will all laugh, and laugh, and then laugh some more, as [you] have not done for a long time.18

Thus, the members of the audience relinquished whatever feelings of reservation they might have retained and impatiently waited for the curtain to rise. The story was to be repeated dozens of times in the Gopher Prairies of America, not only for that season but in the following

18 Ibid.
seasons as well. In 1916 The Merchant of Venice was toured, and in the following year, As You Like It was given. By that time, however, Greet and his companies had been away from their homeland for over a decade. Pressure was exerted on them from their supporters in England to perform once again at home. Shakespeare's plays were not to be again seen regularly on the chautauqua circuits until the early 1930's, when, for a few seasons, Greet made a final series of American tours.

The groundwork had been done by Greet, however, and done well, for a yearning for drama had been aroused in chautauqua audiences that was not to be quelled during all the following years of chautauqua activity. When the Jane Cowl vehicle, Smilin' Through, was toured some years later, the play bill reminded the audiences of the contribution of the Greet companies. "It was the Redpath Bureau," the fulsome notice announced, "who first made drama available to chautauqua audiences." Beginning with Greet's productions and soon moving on to "well-known New York successes," the Redpath policy had made it possible for the smaller cities and towns of America to see really great plays in their own home towns.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) The official circuit program, SUI, 229, Smilin'.
After reminding the audience that the cast consisted of only professional Equity players, "selected and coached by our official director;" the notice went on to quiet the latent Puritanical fears that some rural breast might yet have harbored:

The Church was the mother and the promoter of the earlier theatre. It was used to teach religious messages and spread education. The influence of the drama on history has never been denied. That it has sometimes fallen into evil hands and been misdirected is not questioned. It is the ambition of the Redpath Bureau to help restore it to its rightful place, and by presenting clean wholesome plays to replace the unclean ones.21

The brief article concluded with an ironic note: the Redpath Bureau "seeks to offer plays of such a class and standard that they will appeal to all and offend none."

The extent to which the Bureau lived up to such an ideal as well as the corner into which it boxed itself while trying to "appeal to all" was summarized by Bliven in 1924, when he wrote that

Those who deplore the combined influence of the movies and high railroad rates in destroying traveling theatrical companies should not overlook these [chautauqua] productions which offer ten million of our fellow citizens [their] only contact with spoken drama from one year's end to the other. The plays selected are of the aggressively "clean" type, as sterilized and sterile as a glass-tube toothbrush.22

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21 Ibid.

22 Bliven, op. cit.
Compromise was eventually necessary; however, to settle the inherent conflicts in a policy that contained such lofty and unrealistic goals as "clean and wholesome," "New York proven," "comic," and "appealing to all."

At about the same time that Crawford Peffer was introducing quality drama on his New England circuit, Harry Harrison in Chicago and Charles Horner in Kansas City were also investigating ways of upgrading the platform reading of drama to the production of fully staged plays. Horner, who had always been deeply committed to supporting the arts in general and the theatre in particular, and who later made his support concrete in the founding of the Horner Institute of Fine Arts in Kansas City, found in Zangwill's *The Melting Pot* a script that he hoped would play a pioneer role in preparing his circuits for full scale drama. Many of the Redpath regional managers had realized that the circuit audiences "had grown tired of the endless chain of lectures and concerts and the like, and if the business was to continue, a new element had to be introduced."²³ Peffer's successful use of the Greet company had given them the idea they looked for. Thus, summarized Clarke,

"the theatre, with its plays and its actors, furnished the element, the bone and sinew that enabled the work to continue."24 At first quite cautious of the outcome, the managers were to learn that the actors were not going to destroy chautauqua, but rather they were to "increase its vigor" and do their share to "make it a permanent institution."

The Melting Pot was carefully selected. Its plot and action displayed all the qualities chautauqua managers always asked of the cultural offerings: humor, patriotism, reverence, brotherhood, optimism, and even romantic love thrown in as added spice. "It is a play of action," Horner pointed out to his somewhat nervous local superintendents, who were always quite leery of any new offering that might jeopardize their ability to recruit the needed guarantors from the local businessmen to insure a successful season the following year. "It is a play of life and dramatic intensity," he continued to argue; "every minute has something that will hold the auditor in spellbound attention."25 Reviewing Zangwill's theme, Horner suggested that "this great country is the laboratory and our people the instruments which in God's

24Ibid.
25From an unidentified publicity notice, SUI, 163.
hands will work out that plan of civilization for which the hearts of the patriots for centuries have yearned."\(^{26}\)

At that point the superintendents were reassured but not convinced. Horner then added the *coup de grace*: in this play, "every possibility for humor has been used to the fullest extent." The skeptics were won over, now convinced that the play would make their circuit towns better communities and "every man and woman better citizens."\(^{27}\)

Homer sent *The Melting Pot* out on his circuits in 1914 and met with unquestioned success. Not far behind was Harry Harrison who, not to be outdone, had engaged the William Owen Company to perform another carefully selected play, Kennedy's *The Servant in the House*, for a tour in 1915 on his Midwest circuits. After observing his counterpart, Peffer, succeed in New England with Shakespeare, and seeing that "the Ben Greet Players had bridged the old canyon of moral indignation," Harrison wondered if chautauqua audiences would accept a company playing a modern play?\(^{28}\) Harrison's reservations were perhaps even stronger than Horner's; therefore, before

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26Ibid.
27Ibid.
28Harrison, p. 200.
sending out on his summer circuits a company playing a modern comedy, he decided to try the play out on the more sophisticated audiences of his winter lyceum programs. The "unprecedented" appearance of the non-classic play was rationalized on that basis that although the lecturer can grapple with the issues of the hour, "there are thousands of people who can be reached by the drama who can be reached in no other way." 29

Harrison, too, however, just as Horner and Peffer before him, had to convince his managers and superintendents that adding drama to the programs was not a step backward. He assured his employees that the addition of The Servant did not mean that Redpath was entering the theatrical business. He insisted that every effort would be made to avoid "those properties of the theatre which have so long been the subject of censure." His bureau would, Harrison told his listeners, "present no play that does not carry a great message." Beyond that, he continued, "It will be the policy to place upon the Lyceum platform no actors except those who are as clean and wholesome morally as our lecturers and entertainers." 30

30 Ibid.
Harrison then concluded with a point he may very well have received from Horner:

In the beginning, the drama was the handmaiden of the church. Since then it has wandered far. The greatest exponents of the church today recognize its power and force for good when rightly directed. [We] look forward to the time when it will again come into its own. The introduction of this play by the Redpath this season is, we believe, a long step in the right direction.31

Harrison recognized that Kennedy's play was not a great play, but it was "wholesome" and "highly moral, a sermon on humility" in five acts. The humble servant was, of course, Jesus, a point no audience was allowed to overlook. He had returned to a modern, selfish world, but before the final curtain, "the Master had solved the problems and virtue triumphed over selfishness and deceit."32

Out on the circuits, the play was just as successful as Peffer's Shakespeare and Horner's Zangwill. Respected religious journals reviewed it enthusiastically. Harrison, jubilant, exclaimed at the end of the season:

At long last, thru [sic] centuries after young Will Shakespeare put on his shows beside London River, smalltown America was ready to pay hard-earned half-dollars, and finally dollars, to see high-class, decent plays, ready to accept the haunting odor of grease paint. The play was in, the reading on the way out.33

31Harrison, p. 200. 32Ibid., p. 201. 33Ibid.
Reviewing their mutual successes, Peffer, Horner, and Harrison agreed that, as with the rest of their organization, the plays should be prepared by an arm of Redpath itself, not by random companies. Consequently, in 1916, a separate office was set up in New York to select and prepare plays for all the circuits serviced by Redpath. Just as Peffer's managerial discernment was keenly attuned to the untested dramatic sensibilities of the chautauqua audiences when he persuaded Ben Greet to put a Shakespeare company on his Eastern circuit, his business judgment was keen when, upon the encouragement of Horner, Vawter, and Harrison, Peffer set up the Redpath Play Bureau in the Knickerbocker Theatre Building with one of Greet's students, William Keighley, as its head. Keighley brought a strength and continuity to the play productions of Redpath that was not found in any other portion of that massive talent organization.

William Keighley (Keɪ-leigh) was born August 4, 1889, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His mother, Mary Hausel Keighley, was an avid playgoer, and she encouraged William, who was eager and willing, to enroll for dramatic training at the Ludham School of Dramatic Art. He subsequently continued his studies at the Alliance Francaise in Paris.

35 Ibid.
In 1912, Ludham introduced Keighley to Greet, who was playing in Philadelphia for a three-week run. Greet immediately asked Keighley if he could play Caius Ligarius, and, although Keighley did not even know in which play that character appeared, he eagerly agreed. He soon proved his talent, and Greet quickly assigned many other minor roles to Keighley. When the company left, first for Chicago and later for the Ben Greet Outdoor Theatre at the Cincinnati Zoo, Keighley was among them.

Under the watchful eye of Greet, Keighley learned the importance of Greet's two primary guidelines: education and simplicity. Thus, when Peffer was seeking a man to head the new Redpath Play Bureau, he found in Keighley both dramatic understanding and sympathy toward the aurally oriented production policy of the Redpath Bureau.

Keighley brought to chautauqua not only his experience with Ben Greet, but his varied professional experience as well. His first New York professional role had been in the road company of Officer 666, in 1914. Soon

36George Geltzer, "William Keighley: Actor, Director, Photographer, Artist," Films in Review (October, 1974), p. 470. The accuracy of this article was corroborated by Mr. Keighley himself during a personal interview with the author in New York City on April 12, 1975. The dates in Current Biography are to be considered in error.
William Keighley in Costume for a Ben Greet Company

1913
after that, he appeared in the road company of Little Women, also in 1914. In the next season, he was given a minor part in Inside the Lines, a spy drama by Earl Derr Biggers, with Lewis Stone playing the leading role. Keighley continued his regular professional career between chautauqua assignments in many productions, including John Barrymore's Richard III (1920) and Arthur Hopkins' Romeo and Juliet (1922), which starred Ethel Barrymore. Keighley played Paris.37

Keighley's first directorial assignment with the Redpath Bureau was to manage The Melting Pot for the winter lyceum schedule of 1916.38 Keighley himself played the role of Quincy Davenport, Jr. The play toured lyceum engagements again in 1917.39 Then, in 1918, Peffer assigned Keighley to prepare both The Melting Pot and It Pays to Advertise, the former for the New England circuit and the latter for Keith Vawter's Midwest circuit. Each play had a cast of eight players.40

The Melting Pot had been chosen as the first contemporary play for general distribution because it proved

37Ibid., p. 471-474.
39SUI, 163, The Melting Pot.
40Ibid.
AT CHAUTAUQUA
MONDAY, AUGUST 24

WILLIAM J. KEIGHLEY
and His Broadway Players in

"Capt. Applejack"

"AN ARABIAN NIGHT'S ADVENTURE"

THRILLS—MYSTERY—LAUGHS

THE BIG NEW YORK AND CHICAGO SUCCESS

Adv. No. 19—2 Col. x 7 inches—Total 14 inches

A Redpath Circuit Flyer Sample
tasteful not only to Lyceum audiences of 1916 and 1917, but also to the chautauqua audiences of Charles Homer's circuit in 1914, as previously mentioned. The second play directed by William Keighley from his new office in New York was *It Pays to Advertise* by Roi Cooper Megrue and Walter Hackett. It had been chosen primarily for its innocuous humor and was advertised as "A Farcical Fact in Three Acts." A brochure announced that "The central idea of the play is an old one. It is the familiar story of the rich father and the idle son. The father, a soap manufacturer, makes a wager with his stenographer that she cannot induce the son to go to work." After summarizing the plot, the program notice then read, "Does she succeed? Listen!" Also billed as a "laughing triumph," which had played for a whole year at the George M. Cohan Theatre in New York, the play was, in the words of the Redpath publicity office, "Unquestionably ... one of the liveliest of all twentieth-century comedies."

Unfortunately, it was the latter play, a work of questionable dramatic merit, rather than plays like *The Melting Pot*, which was to set the standard for the plays that were to be chosen for circuits in the coming years. Nearly all the plays chosen by Keighley with the consent

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41 From an undated brochure of the play in the author's possession.
42 Ibid.
of his superior, Peffer, had had successful runs in New York. Except for the offerings of a few unaffiliated companies and the return of Greet's company in 1929, chautauqua audiences were to be fed a consistent diet frothy fare and mediocre domestic comedy.

For principally financial reasons, the Redpath managers and Keighley, too, underestimated the cultural capacity of their audiences. It would have been easy for them to have brought more plays of superior quality to the hinterlands by way of the great circuits they controlled. (Redpath alone controlled fifteen circuits nationwide, for which as many as twenty-six companies were prepared and sent out. Beyond those circuits were the countless smaller circuits and the numberless Independents, which continued to reject the circuit plan and to schedule afresh each summer their own talent, frequently drawing on local dramatic talent or small, unknown companies to provide their plays.) The hunger for drama, any drama, stimulated by Peffer and his colleagues was becoming insatiable. The most reliable source of plays was the

43Bob McCown, assistant archivist at the University of Iowa Special Collections Department has stated that exact verification of many dates and play companies is impossible because a considerable portion of the Redpath records were lost in two separate disasters, one a warehouse fire in Chicago, and the other a flood which damaged the material en route to Iowa City.
only too accessible popular comedies being performed on the New York stages. In a New York Times article of 1926, a reporter observed that plays were drawing larger audiences than other program items. Since religious opposition to the drama had ceased in rural America, he continued, "the growth in the appreciation of good music and plays" was "phenomenal."[44]

In spite of the clearly inferior quality of many of the chautauqua scripts, the play bureau under Keighley's guidance succeeded in acquainting rural America with many of the dramatic offerings previously enjoyed by the Broadway audiences of the day. Actually, the circuit chautauqua was the only organized theatrical movement remaining to carry urban culture to the hinterlands. Moses in 1926 found the old-time extensive theatrical circuits to be deserted. In his Introduction to Representative American Dramas, he concluded that

Economic reasons have forced the manager to give up all but a small territory. Disorganized stock, independent Little Theatre groups, an occasional braving of the road by some individual actor—and the theatre-loving people outside the large cities of the present limited theatrical circuit are left to shift for themselves.[45]


During the summers, at least, theatre lovers of the towns and smaller cities could still see a few recent comedies by subscribing to the season tickets of the local chautauqua circuits. Since the casts of those chautauqua performances were composed primarily of experienced professional actors, their quality equalled if not surpassed that of the remaining road companies still touring the larger land-locked cities.

It was not only the huge Redpath Bureau that successfully promoted modern plays. The enthusiasm for drama infused every circuit during those years prior to 1920. Remarkably, there was notable consistency in the plays chosen for presentation from circuit to circuit. For example, *Smilin' Through* was seen on various Redpath circuits in 1924 and again in 1927, performed by Keighley's professional companies. A few years later, private, mostly amateur companies were also performing *Smilin' Through* to their own audiences. Apparently, the non-Redpath circuit managers often followed the program material already proven successful by the managers. Unfortunately, none of the other circuits could boast the continuity of Keighley's leadership and direction in the selection and casting plays from his office in the theatre center of the country. The secondary circuits had to be content with college companies or companies organized by various semiprofessional
directors in the larger centrally located urban centers such as Chicago or Cleveland. For example, the Cleveland Playhouse furnished play companies to Mother Chautauqua for some years as did a community theatre organization in Pittsburgh. Without the solid financial backing and the rather high level of professionalism the Redpath management was able to support, the smaller circuits found producing quality drama on a regular basis far more difficult.

A typical early private dramatic company, which continued under various names for many years, was the Arden Drama Company under the management of Elias Day. In 1915 the company was organized "for the sole purpose of presenting only the highest form of drama." The Arden players traveled on various circuits for several bureaus including the White, Mutual, Alkanest, Addison-White, and Coit-Alber chautauquas. In 1915 they offered Taming of the Shrew, billing it as "a Shakespearean comedy brimful of fun and humor." Because he found that the brilliancy of the lines stood out in a marked degree, Day selected

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the William Winter cutting, which was advertised as having been first used by Edwin Booth.\textsuperscript{47} The company was costumed "historically" and "accurately"; they were to play their parts "according to the best methods of modern acting."\textsuperscript{48} In 1920 Day prepared companies that performed \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream} and Kempy for Redpath.\textsuperscript{49} He continued to prepare companies for chautauqua bureaus, including some Redpath circuits, until about 1930, often under his own name.

Many other such private, free-lance companies served the secondary chautauqua bureaus between 1915 and 1930. The Salisbury players performed \textit{The Easy Mark}; and The Bergmann Play Company presented \textit{Smilin' Through}, \textit{New Brooms}, \textit{The Awakening of Peter}, and \textit{The Big Pond}. The Merton Dramatic Company presented \textit{Mr. Pim Passed By} and \textit{Taming of the Shrew}; The Freeman Hammond Players gave performances of \textit{Laff That Off} and \textit{Shavings}.\textsuperscript{50} Other small companies were The Charles Craig Players, the Harry Byrd Kline Company, the Eugene Lockhart Company, the

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.} See Appendix for a copy of Day's contract with the Redpath Bureau.

\textsuperscript{50}The foregoing information has been culled variously from the brochures and letters of the Redpath office contained in the SUI Collections, 164, 1043, and 1048.
Moroni Olson Players, the Neff-Allen Players, and the Randall Ensemble Players. Each of those companies was active for a few years. They sold their productions to any interested bureau manager and moved about the country in gypsy-like fashion, carrying with them theatrical culture and dramatic literature and running the entire gamut of drama from the Shakespearean classics to pot-boilers.\footnote{For a thorough discussion of the operations of such companies, see Bob Hanscom, \textit{Pioneers in Greasepaint}, Bradenton, Florida, 1975.}

As might be expected, friction occasionally developed among the various circuit managers because so many companies were on the road, possibly doing the same play in towns which were on separate circuits but only a few miles apart. For example, Horner of the Kansas City Redpath office was accused of tying up the rights to \textit{Smilin' Through} by the manager of the Mutual Bureau, who in 1922, along with Redpath, had the play in rehearsal.

Also, as might be expected, there were not infrequent offers from private companies to travel for Redpath, particularly out of Chicago. Horner himself was approached by a Chicago producer who was preparing \textit{Friendly Enemies} in hope of securing a contract, but, as Peffer pointed out to him, there would be no savings and a possible
sacrifice of quality as well. Peffer wrote to Horner and reviewed the issue, remarking, "I note with special interest what you say with regard to having saved $4,000 by having two companies of Friendly Enemies produced in Chicago. It seems there must be some mistake about this. . . ." After computing railroad fare, salaries, and production costs, Peffer concluded that there could be a savings of only $118.00. Peffer suggested other possible means of savings besides preparing companies in Chicago; he wrote to Horner that a Chicago-based company might not only cost more financially but would result in a lowering of their production standards. He finally asked Horner, "I would be interested to know just how the matter actually figures out, for we must be able to produce these companies just as cheap in New York as in Chicago for the same grade of talent."  

Peffer was seldom persuaded to use other than New York talent. Keighley reigned alone in New York for fifteen years, and, with only a few exceptions in the early years of the touring play companies, he single-handedly prepared and sent out hundreds of companies on the Redpath circuits. Other companies aspiring to the chautauqua platform usually

52 A letter dated December 1, 1922, SUI, 229.
53 Ibid.
had to be satisfied with accepting engagements on the circuits of the smaller bureaus, and those bureaus had to be satisfied with locally secured, often amateur, companies with an inferior "grade of talent." Ideologically, Redpath maintained a monopoly on what drama rural Americans were to see. From the beginning of the circuit movement to its end, the Redpath organization not only secured the finest dramatic talent for its audiences, but also set the economic and theatrical standards that other circuit managers strained to follow.
CHAPTER IV

THE OPERATION OF THE PLAY COMPANIES ON THE CIRCUITS

President Garfield once said, "It has been the struggle of the world to get more leisure, but it was left for Chautauqua to show how to use it." ¹ In the beginning, chautauqua audiences were given only large doses of religious and inspirational lectures, but managers from Vincent and Miller on realized that the audiences would need and demand more. Always affirming that "entertainment which, by direct implication or even by remote suggestion, attacks honest, wholesome standards of living is dangerous to public welfare," ² the circuit managers made every effort to present only the highest, most moral type of cultural programs, which usually meant the selecting of only musical offerings. But after many years of lofty lectures and irreproachable music, the voracious popular appetite for leisure-time

¹Vincent, p. vii.
amusement demanded something more. The popularity of the play readers suggested that plays might be the answer.

During the years when drama was still new to the circuits, however, many patrons were not only suspicious of the influence of drama on the chautauqua platform, but spoke out strongly against it. Such people kept fresh in their minds the forceful and uncompromising principles of the early lyceum leaders, who always regarded as dangerous "any propaganda or any influences foreign or otherwise, in amusements, in books or in newspapers, that [struck] at . . . American principles"; they objected especially to the plots of dramas on the legitimate stage, and in moving pictures; for example, "the story which involves so-called triangle love affairs . . . attacks one of [the] cardinal principles of life, the sanctity of the home." If such things were to be injected into books, stories, dramas, or moving pictures, they insisted, then "the truth [should] be told—that one who violates eternal principles of life suffers the consequences."  

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3 Horner, p. 207.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
Conversely, the early lyceum and chautauqua leaders also realized that the rural public's demand for amusement had increased many fold because of the reduction in its working hours, its improved living conditions, and its more universal prosperity. During such times, people quite naturally turned more attention to sources of amusement. Realistically, the leaders were forced to admit that entertainment which added directly to the happiness of a people and which served to fit them better for their natural duties could not be too highly commended.

Therefore, although the plays were introduced primarily to reinvigorate the program, they were carefully billed as being educational and morally instructive, capable of making a better man or woman of every viewer.

To the few outspoken dissenters who claimed first that the dignity and usefulness of "this great American institution" were being endangered, and second that the influx of "cheap actors and trashy plays" was demeaning to the audiences' sensibilities, Clarke in Equιty unashamedly responded:

In the first place, the modern plays that are done on the Chautauqua Circuits are all clean, wholesome plays that have been genuine

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6Ibid.

7Ibid.
Metropolitan successes. . . . Of the Shakespeare plays I will not speak, but William was accounted a fairly competent playwright [sic] in his day and is still well thought by some of our best people. As to the actors who interpret these plays, well, all I can say is, they compare more than favorably with many of the actors who make up the best of the touring companies that play the theatres in our interior cities where a $2 top is charged. There is little or no scenery used, but as for the acting, it is of a good, average quality and done by actors of intelligence and experience who for reasons of their own prefer a Summer season of one night stands under a tent, at comparatively small salary, to one of idleness.8

Such was the scene between the years 1916 and 1932 while William Keighley directed the dramatic activities of the Redpath Play Bureau. Although "the altruism that had made the original Chautauqua a unique product of American earnestness faded out of its commercialized off-spring, and the traveling chautauqua became a genteel vaudeville,"9 the enormous popularity of the platform plays cannot be denied. With as many as fifteen circuits and twenty-six separate companies each year, the Redpath Bureau produced for rural Americans over fifty full-length, commercially successful plays. Surveying all the chautauqua circuits

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8 Clarke, pp. 21-22.

between 1915 and 1930, Bob Hanscom counted 214 different titles in all.\textsuperscript{10}

Although Keighley worked for the Redpath Bureau only during the summers, he personally trained over 300 companies to tour the chautauqua platforms. Since his office was the largest and most productive play bureau in the nation, its operation may be taken as the epitome of all chautauqua bureaus' preparations of play companies for summer tours.

Keighley's first responsibility in preparing for each season was to select the two plays that were to be toured on the circuits the following summer. He ordinarily chose two recent professional successes; but he frequently was sent considerable advice during the winter while he was making his choices, not only from his employers in the various Redpath district offices, but also from individual local superintendents along the circuit routes. Typical of such advice was a 1919 letter from Timothy B. Duker, a member of the Cleveland Advertising Club and the area representative for chautauqua fund-raising. Duker suggested that Keighley produce The Seven Keys to Baldpate

\textsuperscript{10}Personal correspondence with the author, June 10, 1975. See play lists in Appendix.
to follow the previous year's selection of *It Pays to Advertise.* "It is a great show," he suggested, "and I think is admirable for chautauqua." "The properties are not hard," he continued, and, showing some unexpected dramatic discernment, concluded by remarking that, "It has lots of laughs but in addition a great deal more dramatic merit than *It Pays to Advertise.*" 11 T. E. Torpitt, the proprietor of the Sebring (Ohio) Times, also felt that *It Pays to Advertise* was not a strong offering. In his letter to the Redpath office he commented that "we had that play in the Sebring High School (Lyceum) course last winter, and I did not think it was in the same class as the chautauqua plays we had last summer." Expressing the desire that *It Pays to Advertise* not be selected, he reminded his bureau managers that he was hoping for scripts of a high quality: "We are counting on two plays drawing large crowds and leaving a good impression." 12

Suggestions of possible scripts usable on the circuits also frequently came from the circuit managers themselves, who would trade their opinions concerning certain scripts during their regular business correspondence. Keith Vawter once sent copies of his opinion of *Every Day* to

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11 A letter dated December 4, 1923, SUI, 1043, Cleveland.
12 SUI, 1046, McConnelsburg, Ohio.
each of his colleagues: Horner, H. P. Harrison, Peffer, and W. V. Harrison. "I read this [play] some time ago and thought it was bully stuff and arranged with Mr. Peffer to use it in chautauqua last year. Then my lieutenants read it," he continued, "and had it read by some others and they objected strenuously against its use." But Vawter was convinced of the play's merits and continued to argue for its inclusion in the schedule:

Last week I read the revised manuscript rewritten for five people and have been giving the thing considerable thought since and my judgment is that properly cast Every Day would be a cracking good play for either lyceum or chautauqua, but it would need three carefully selected people. The Judge should be a big man, who could do the pompous stunt plenteously. The Wife should be a very meek and lowly girl, and Aunt Edith a good one. These three can furnish sufficient comedy to put it over in great shape. 13

Keighley himself would sometimes write to the various managers for advice concerning play selection. He had a cosmopolitan background and perhaps lacked the sensitivity to rural dramatic tastes that the country-bred Horner and Vawter possessed. In February of 1921, for example, Keighley wrote to his friend Harry Harrison with the following suggestion:

13 A letter dated December 4, 1923, SUI, 72, Every Day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Professional Opening</th>
<th>First Redpath Circuit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam and Eve</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applesauce</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1926</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Big Pond</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1930</td>
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<td>Broadway Jones</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<td>Broken Dishes</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>1930</td>
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<td>The Bubble</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<td>Cappy Ricks</td>
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<td>Captain Applejack</td>
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<td>The Climax</td>
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<td>1923</td>
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<td>The Detour</td>
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<td>1927</td>
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<td>Fine Feathers</td>
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<td>The First Year</td>
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<td>The Fool</td>
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<td>Friendly Enemies</td>
<td>1918</td>
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<td>The Goose Hangs High</td>
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<td>1927</td>
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<td>Grumpy</td>
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<td>1930</td>
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<td>Her Husband's Wife</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>It Pays to Advertise</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1918</td>
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<td>Journey's End</td>
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<td>Lightin'</td>
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<td>The Man From Home</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Melting Pot</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Professional Opening</td>
<td>First Redpath Circuit</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Message From Mars</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<td>The Mollusc</td>
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<td>New Brooms</td>
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<td>1927</td>
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<td>Nothing But The Truth</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<td>Other People's Money</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<td>A Pair of Sixes</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1922</td>
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<td>The Patsy</td>
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<td>Peg O' My Heart</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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<td>Figs</td>
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<td>A Servant in the House</td>
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<td>The Seven Keys to Baldpate</td>
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<td>1920</td>
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<td>The Show-off</td>
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<td>1926</td>
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<td>Six Cylinder Love</td>
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<td>1924</td>
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<td>Smilin' Through</td>
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<td>So This is London</td>
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<td>1926</td>
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<td>Sun-Up</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take My Advice</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Wise Fools</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tommy</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turn To The Right</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Witching Hour</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1923</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the event of Mr. Peffer's not getting Turn to the Right, why not do The Melting Pot? There has never been a time when the message of Zangwill's play has been more apropos than right now. With hordes of Europe pouring into this country as at present, his plea for Americanization and amalgamation of race and creed is certainly a message of moment. The patriotic appeal in the play is stirring and when properly done as it was when I first produced it for Mr. Horner, nothing can duplicate the deep and lasting impression it leaves in a town.14

As is turned out in this case, Peffer did acquire the rights for Turn to the Right, so the question became irrelevant.

Keighley's play selections were almost always well received, and he would then be given permission to "go ahead and get up a company just as cheaply as [possible] and at the same time have a good company."15 However, in the case of Applesauce, the situation was different; and he was sent a pointed letter from the Redpath headquarters warning him against committing the same mistake in selection twice.

I sure hope that this Patsy will make good, and that you have had the play set up for chautauqua. The Applesauce company on our Seven Day last year cost us more than the salary list of the company. I know that both you and Peffer think that it was not a flop. It was the heaviest we have ever

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14 SUI, 4.

15 A letter from Peffer to J. P. Young dated April 26, 1928, SUI, 245, Tommy-2.
had on our Seven Day, and, believe me, we will not let another company of that kind go through the season.\textsuperscript{16}

The Redpath management established specific but unwritten guidelines for choosing a play: first, the script was to meet a strict chautauqua literary standard of decency and, second, the play was to be a proven modern comedy.\textsuperscript{17} Laughter was essential. If the play did not carry sufficient inherently funny lines and situations, it still might be accepted if it would bear the addition of laughter-evoking business. Furthermore, once a play had received preliminary approval, two additional considerations arose: first, since many of the plays contained possibly objectionable innuendoes as well as potentially offensive lines, some of which could not be cut, Keighley and his employers were to ask themselves if such elements could not be covered by some judicially placed humor; if the answer was yes, then the second question was asked: could the script in question tolerate fairly extensive cutting, thereby limiting its length to one and a half hours and reducing the number of characters to no more than seven. If, after these revisions the

\textsuperscript{16}A letter to Keighley dated March 8, 1927, SUI, 124, Keighley.

\textsuperscript{17}This conclusion derives from a thorough review of all the Bureau's play-related correspondence at the University of Iowa.
script still displayed recognizable and decent moral values for the audience and a full portion of humor at every turn, then that play was ready to be cast and put into rehearsal. In order to carry on such extensive operations on the scripts, the managers usually stipulated in the contracts with the playwrights that they be allowed to "chautauqua-ize" the script. Few playwrights objected, for cut or not, the royalty would be paid and the plays would be subsequently performed for millions of patrons nationwide.

Whatever reservations may have been expressed by members of the Redpath staff during the play selection process, once a script was chosen, it automatically became "a great play." Almost without exception, every play sent out on the circuits from Keighley's office was heralded by unashamedly bold publicity. For example, The Witching Hour, which appeared on the Vawter-Redpath circuit in 1923, was blatantly promoted as "one of the greatest dramas the theatre has ever known." The notice further announced that it was "calculated to carry a strong moral principle, as well as afford a vast deal of keen entertainment." Every script promised the audience

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decency, value, and laughter, attributes that were universally stressed by those who handled the publicity for the various circuits.

Publicity notices reached first the local superintendents, who had to secure guarantors in each town along the circuit. Guarantors were solicited from persons or institutions who would contractually promise to underwrite the cost of their town's five or seven days of chautauqua, sources who in turn depended on their own townsfolk to back them up with season-ticket purchases. Second, notices were sent out with the advance men along with pictures and posters usually copied from the New York runs of the plays. Those men "papered" the circuit towns a week or two in advance of the arrival of the tent and talent. Notices would also be sent to various Independents who had to secure their own talent afresh each summer. Frequently, the Redpath offices sold talent to such Independents for September appearances after the circuits closed in late August. Typical of such notices was the one sent to the local sponsor of the Plain City, Ohio, independent chautauqua:

Dear Sir:

We have just arranged to bring from New York for some chautauqua dates this Summer
the great dramatic comedy success, Friendly Enemies, with a New York cast of six players.
This is the play that President Wilson commended so highly on its premier in Washington.
It played for over two years in New York,
then in most of the large cities of this
A Copy of the Type of Publicity News-sheet put out by Various Chautauqua Bureaus.
country as well as in England, meeting applause everywhere. If you are interested in a date for your chautauqua, we should be glad to quote terms, send circulars, etc.20

Similarly, Redpath wrote to L. F. Fulwiler in Bloomington, Illinois, about his 1925 season program:

We have just completed arrangements for Apple-sauce, which, as you probably know, was one of the most popular plays produced on the stage the past year. The original company has just completed a long season in New York and is now playing in Boston. We believe it will be the biggest drawing-card in the line of a play that has ever been at chautauqua. . . . We have booked at Chautauqua, New York; Lakeside, Ohio; Winona Lake, Indiana; and Bay View, Michigan, as well as at the smaller chautauquas in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa.21

After two plays had finally been chosen for the season, Peffer would acquire contracts with the authors. The typical payment to an author for releasing his play to Redpath was $50 per week, which covered the usual six performances of each play each week. The Redpath Bureau office in New York would secure the production rights for all of the plays for all of the circuits. The managers of the individual circuits, then, had to divide the royalty payments among themselves; the payments were pro-rated according to the number of performances of each

20A letter dated January 20, 1922, SU1 1048, Plain City, Ohio.

21A letter dated January 15, 1925, SU1 1048, Piqua, Ohio.
play that were to be given on each circuit. For example, in 1922, *The Meanest Man in the World* was contracted for the usual $50 per week fee payable by each of the three managers who secured companies to tour the play: Vawter with his Seven-Day Circuit, Peffer with his New York and New England Circuit, and Harrison with his central Seven-Day Circuit based in Chicago. Likewise, in 1923, *Give and Take* was similarly secured from the playwright, Aaron Hoffman, who was to receive an initial payment of $500 from the Redpath Managers, of which Harrison and Peffer each owed half, the remainder to be paid in amounts of $42.90 per week. The $50 weekly fee for royalties and production rights remained essentially the same

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23 A letter from Peffer to Harrison dated December 5, 1923, SUI, 86, *Give and Take*. The variation seen here from the usual $50 fee was due to the contract stipulating payment for a seven-day week; since the chautauqua circuits seldom presented plays on Sunday, there was a corresponding reduction in the weekly fee.

The letter goes into detail concerning Peffer's problems in obtaining the rights: "We have had many hitches with regard to *The Meanest Man in the World* and George Cohan's lawyer is surely it. The contract that he finally obliged us to sign contained enough terms and conditions for the purchase of a city block from forty-seven different owners."
Reduced Copies of Redpath Publicity Brochures
throughout all the years of plays on the circuits.
As late as 1928, Tommy was secured for $50.24

Once the production rights were secured and the
publicity notices were sent out, Keighley began to se-
lect his casts. Auditions were held in February and
early March at the casting office in the Knickerbocker
Building, the actors being mostly Equity members after 1920.
Rehearsals were then scheduled from March through April
and ended just as the first circuit opened in the South,
traditionally about April 26th. The actors all signed
a standard "Run-of-the-play" contract.25 The rehearsals
were held in various buildings in New York, most frequently
in the 71st Regimental Armory Building.26 Since each cir-
cuit had a minimum of two plays and there were as many
as fifteen circuits under the Redpath banner in the
strong years, Keighley would find himself supervising as
many as thirty separate companies with a total of over
one hundred actors.

In the Armory there were large, empty rooms, where
Keighley and his stage managers would set up minimal fur-

See Appendix for a typical contract. The contract did
stipulate that after the one-hundredth performance, the
royalty would decrease to $40 per week.

25 See Appendix for a typical contract.

26 The Miles interview. Keighley cast Miles in The
Patsy in 1927 and in Skidding in 1929.
niture for each rehearsal. Rehearsals were usually called
twice a day, late morning and late afternoon, which left
the evenings free for the actors to perform in other pro-
ductions or to attend plays themselves. Keighley would
spend his time moving from one room to another "like
a floor nurse" as Miles put it, giving terse notes on
business or line readings.27 There was no great effort
at Antoinian direction, it appears; the rehearsals were
more like Reinhardt's, in which each actor was given
certain characteristic details from which he was to ex-
pand his characterization. Keighley's main concern was
to keep the blocking clean and simple and the lines fast
and funny. Since the actors, although mostly young, were
experienced, standard blocking was strictly followed in
a simplified setting copied directly from the New York
production. Keighley did not attempt to discover new
interpretations or to uncover hidden talent; the rehear-
sals were strictly business with the single intention of
sending out as quickly and as efficiently as possible
replica companies patterned on the New York productions.

27 This information and a considerable amount of the
following material was provided to the author in personal
interviews with Billy Miles and with William Keighley.
Miles loaned to the author his personal diary of his Redpath
tours.
"We knew our business," said Miles, and the rehearsals were conducted almost in an assembly line manner. An important advantage of the assembly-line rehearsals Keighley conducted, Miles pointed out, was that there would be in several adjoining rooms actors rehearsing the same part; an actor could, during his breaks, walk from room to room to see his particular part in rehearsal, smugly concluding always that his own execution was superior to all of the others.

The only effort required of the chautauqua company actors was to learn the lines and the blocking. Character study was minimal, with the standard interpretation having been set either by the actor of the previous Broadway production or by simple stereotype. As was claimed in the chautauqua play publicity, the primary goal was laughter, not truth. All plays, regardless of type (including Shakespeare), were performed in the same simplified realistic style that was typical of most American popular productions in the first half of the twentieth century, with perhaps a few melodramatic tendencies evident in the work of the older actors and some of the sophomoric younger ones.28

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28From the taped personal notes of Ed Wright, former Redpath actor, made for the author on April 29, 1975. Wright said his teacher, Elias Day, claimed he "could do anything with four actors and a telephone."
Throughout Keighley's years as the Redpath play director, he employed hundreds of actors. Some were with Redpath for only one summer; others returned summer after summer. The strongest enticement for the actors who had not previously traveled on the road for Redpath was 1) to have a steady, summer-long job during the off season, and 2) in Miles' words, "to see the country." Depending on which circuit his company was assigned to, an actor might travel the length of the Atlantic Coast on the "Atlantic Fives" or from Florida to Canada on the great Redpath "Seven Day DeLuxe." Whichever circuit his company traveled, said Miles, an actor "would get to know America and her people as one could in no other way."

Typical of a Redpath company was the cast for Give and Take on one of the circuits in 1924. The part of John Bauer was played by Emmett Shackleford, who began acting for chautauqua companies in 1919. After his appearance in Give and Take, he was seen in So This Is London in 1926, as Mr. Thurber in Tommy in 1928, and as Judge James Hardy in Skidding in 1929, among others. Shackleford was also the company manager for most of those companies. His background was summarized in a publicity notice that was issued during the run of Give and Take in 1924:

29Miles and Keighley interviews.
Emmett Shackleford is an actor of many years' experience, both in Broadway productions and in stock organizations. He has played in some of the country's most excellent stock companies, including those of San Francisco, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Denver, in addition to a season in Honolulu.

His record on Broadway, under some of the city's most eminent producers, includes leading roles in The Squawoman, The Traveling Salesman, Everywoman, Three Live Ghosts, and others.

Mr. Shackleford has also appeared in support of such stars as Blanche Walsh, Cecilia Loftus, and William Faversham.30

In the cast of Give and Take with Shackleford was Clarence Bellair, who had begun his Redpath career in 1923 and had appeared in Adam and Eva in 1925 and in Three Wise Fools in 1929. His publicity notice for his part as David Drum listed his previous experience:

Clarence Bellair . . . has been identified with the New York stage since the early 80's. He is an accomplished and versatile actor, who has a long list of Broadway engagements to his credit. He appeared in The Gingham Girl during its long run in New York.

Mr. Bellair also played in The Lone Chef, in support of Leo Canillo, in Up From Nowhere, in which Norman Trever starred, and in Pietro, in support of Otis Skinner. He was prominently cast in Omar the Tentmaker, a starring vehicle for Guy Bates Post, and in The Cure for Curables, with William Hodge.31

30SUI, 86, Give and Take.

31Ibid.
Also in the *Give and Take* cast was Page Spencer, who first appeared with Redpath in 1923 and who continued with various companies for several years. He appeared in *Adam and Eva* in 1925 and in *So This Is London* in 1926. He was also given the responsibility of company manager. Spencer's professional experience was not as extensive as Bellair's or Shackleford's, but he had had many Broadway engagements in farces and musical comedies.\(^{32}\)

Playing the part of Albert Kreuger in the company was Louis Frohoff. He had been with Redpath for several years before Keighley selected him for *Give and Take*. In 1923 he played Fred Leggitt in *The Meanest Man on Earth*; in 1925 he was James King in *Adam and Eva*; and in 1926 he appeared as Pa Robinson in *Applesauce*. He was publicized as "an excellent actor, and one who is widely known in theatrical circles."\(^{33}\) In New York Frohoff appeared in *Saturday Night*, *The Little Bigamist*, *Immodest Violet*, *Never Too Late*, *The Man Who Came Back*, and *Within the Law*. He also had ten years of stock experience.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
The fifth member of the Give and Take company was Nat David, "a widely known stock juvenile leading man." Besides stock experience in Canada, Massachusetts, and New York, he had appeared on the West Coast for two years in motion pictures.\(^{34}\)

The only woman in the cast was Islea Oslrich, a graduate of the University of Iowa. She had had some stock experience in the Midwest, and for Redpath she was playing Marion Kreuger.\(^{35}\)

On the Gulf Deluxe circuit the cast list and salaries for the Give and Take company were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Bauer</td>
<td>William Friend</td>
<td>$ 60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Bauer</td>
<td>Russell Brice</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Kreuger</td>
<td>Milton Boyle</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion Kreuger</td>
<td>Peggy Boland</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Craig</td>
<td>Alan Lee</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Drum</td>
<td>James P. Houston</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Total**        |                       | $350.00 |

Business Manager ... Milton Boyle  
Stage Manager ... James P. Houston

For the "Atlantic Five-Day" circuit, the salary schedule was listed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Bauer</td>
<td>Douglas Hope</td>
<td>$ 65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Kreuger</td>
<td>Joseph Clavey</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Bauer</td>
<td>George F. Ertell</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion Kreuger</td>
<td>Isabel Travers</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Drum</td>
<td>William Marsh</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Craig</td>
<td>Pennington Young</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Total weekly salary** |                      | $325.00 |

\(^{34}\)Ibid.\(^{35}\)Ibid. The salary list for this particular company is missing. The figures are essentially identical for each company.
In the Gulf circuit cast, several members had considerable non-Redpath experience. Milton Boyle, with Redpath since 1919, had begun his career in vaudeville, where he made "six characterizations with eleven changes in eighteen minutes." In New York, besides being with Weber and Field's company, Boyle had "successes" in The Jungle by Upton Sinclair as well as in Ruggles of Red Gap. 38

A second experienced actor on the Gulf circuit was James Houston, the circuit stage manager, who had come to Redpath with fifteen years of acting experience and who at that time was in his fifth year with Redpath. His previous leading roles included parts in Prince of India by Lew Wallace, King of Nowhere with Lou Telligan, The Show Shop, and Helen of Troy. 39

The cast lists, actor's level of experience, and the salaries paid were consistently similar for

37 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
the entire fifteen years of the play bureau's activities. Most companies carried six actors, whose combined experience averaged about fifty years, whose chautauqua experience varied from one to five or more years, whose ages ranged from college age to nearly retired, and whose total salary amounted to between $325 and $375 per week for a twenty-week tour. The Redpath management, together with Keighley, made concerted efforts to achieve balanced casts.

"I always think it important," wrote Peffer to Harrison about the 1928 tour of Tommy, "that a Chautauqua play company have at least one good actor who has had Chautauqua experience." Peffer indicated that he was pleased that he was able to get Emmett Shackleford for one of the Tommy companies (and for $5 per week less than the previous year) since he had been with Redpath for nearly ten years. Peffer was also pleased, he said, to have for that company an older actor, John Hickey, who was willing to take less than the usual minimum of $50 per week.

"But," commented Peffer, "there is generally some 'out' with regard to an old actor who is willing to

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40 SUI, 245, Tommy-4.
go for less than $50.00. The trouble with Hickey is that it takes about a week of performances for him to get set in his part. In closing, Peffer mentioned to Harrison what must have been a perennial problem in play companies: "Both Miss Mackey (Mrs. Bellair) and Hickey had a terrible time with their lines during rehearsals, but each of them went through the last rehearsal without a break or stop of any kind."^41

The rehearsals in New York were usually completed three days before the opening of the circuit on which the company was to appear. At that time, Keighley or the stage manager of the company conducted a final run-through together with some last-minute advice for the cast members new to chautauqua tours. An article by Arthur William Row, "The Actor in Chautauqua" suggested the nature of such advice: "Chautauqua audiences are the most virgin soil in America," the neophytes were told: "It may sound unbelievable, but many in the audiences have never been inside a regular theatre." In addition, Row

^41 Ibid.

^42 Ibid.
also cautioned the actors that since chautauqua audiences were "God-fearing, God living, and knew their Bible and their Shakespeare--in short, the greatest literature, the purest, most explicit English--it would be fatal to try to act down" to them. The chautauqua actor, moreover, was encouraged about his forthcoming experience, for during his tour, his art would be "enriched and benefited":

His art is broadened and strengthened because he must face, control, dominate, and galvanize all kinds of audiences--audiences that are often most primitive and elemental.

Most of the Redpath circuits opened in the South, Florida or Georgia, and worked toward the North during the summer. For example, Harrison's Seven-Day Deluxe circuit traditionally opened in Columbus, Georgia, in late April, which was true of the season Billy Miles was in the cast of The Patsy. The train ride from New York to the the South generally took the company two-and-one-half days. The cast members would arrive at about noon on the day of their first performance to be met by local representatives, who took them to their hotel. After checking into their rooms and paying the $1.25 hotel bill

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44Ibid.
that had to come out of their weekly salaries, the cast members would go directly to the tent. Once there, they quickly conducted a run-through to accustom themselves to the loaned furniture provided by area merchants. The company manager was in charge of that rehearsal; Keighley seldom appeared for an opening as he was either still in New York rehearsing companies that were to open later, or he was already on the road acting in a company himself. Keighley's absence distressed some of the Redpath administrators, one of whom on one occasion wrote to him, "Wish you were going to be down there to see how things go off."45 Once the preliminary rehearsal had taken place, the actors usually spent the rest of their first afternoon sightseeing and resting.

The play was often the only program item listed for the evening, except for some brief musical numbers offered prior to the curtain if there happened to be musical talent available from the afternoon program. The performances would run less than two hours, so the audience could be on its way home by ten o'clock. The cast members were often invited to a private home for refreshments after

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45 A letter to Keighley from the Redpath Office, March 8, 1921, SUI, 124, Keighley.
a performance; the rural patrons were always eager to meet the actors in person and to brush shoulders with persons whose profession a few short years earlier they would not have deigned to condone. Particularly eager were the students of the local teachers of elocution, who were admonished to emulate the chautauqua actors in their own work.

The following morning, the company would drive or take a train to the second circuit town. In the case of Miles's Patsy company, the second day was Saturday, and, as Saturdays were always pay days and the banks closed promptly at noon, the cast members would leave especially early so as to arrive in the next town in time to receive their checks from the circuit superintendent and cash them immediately. During the afternoon, another brief rehearsal was called to deal with the problems caused by the daily change in stage furniture. Following that, the male members of the cast might frequent the local swimming hole, eat supper (for under a dollar), and then go to the tent to prepare for the evening's performance. The daily routine remained about the same throughout the

46 The Wright Interview.
47 Ibid.
summer, except for Sundays: the "blue-laws" were still strictly enforced, so the chautauqua programs were modified on Sundays to include only lectures and music. In some cases where a lecturer was not available, the actors were asked to perform, not in their play, but to sing, read poetry, or play an instrument. Wright recalls that while he was touring with a Redpath company, he was asked to provide a program for a Sunday afternoon. Having nothing prepared, he proceeded to inform his audience that he was going to lecture on capital punishment, with the assistance of his colleagues. The company then proceeded to give The Valiant verbatim, without costumes or props.48

There were few exceptions to that established pattern. Occasionally, a storm would threaten. If the winds were not too high, the only inconveniences were the noise of the drumming rain on the tightly stretched canvas, above which the actors learned to project, or an especially loud thunderclap, during which the actors found an excuse to pause until the roar had abated. Rarely, the winds would become so severe that the management deemed it best to cancel the performance; in a few such cases the tents were blown down. Wright recalls one very severe storm

48 Ibid.
in the Midwest in which a woman was killed as the tent poles broke and fell, but such instances were most infrequent.

Travel at that time was also undependable and occasionally a performance would be missed due to missed connections or mechanical failure. Wright remembered having seventeen tire punctures in one day in South Dakota and, as a consequence, missing his evening performance. Gay MacLaren relates numerous circuit adventures of traveling difficulties in her book; but, overall, very few audiences were left watching an empty platform. In two years of traveling, and with more than 200 performances, Billy Miles never missed a performance.

Once the companies were on the road, few reports were received by the circuit headquarters concerning the activities of the actors or the impact of their performances. Occasionally money would be requested to purchase new hand props and other expendable items used during the performance such as paper, fruit, ice, liquids, and even light bulbs. For those the company manager was responsible. He was further required to send in an itemized list weekly in order to receive reimbursement. Occasionally, too, one of the company would become ill and the manager would wire the nearest Redpath office
to request a replacement. Harrison, centrally located in Chicago, maintained a list of available substitutes who, on a moment's notice, would take a train to some remote and isolated town to fill in for a day, a week, or, in a few cases, the remainder of the season.

There were also a few cases in which reports from the local patrons were sent back to one of the Redpath offices to complain of some breach of conduct. When The Servant of the House was on tour in 1915, a circuit superintendent wrote his Redpath offices that "the play dragged fearfully and lasted over two hours." The Redpath office immediately instructed the company manager to avert a repetition in the next circuit town, where a bad report could mean the loss of guarantors and consequently, the loss of the town for the circuit:

There is [no] reason why that play should drag, but . . . the entire effect of the play is spoiled when it does drag and the audience becomes weary. [Is it] not possible to speed up the parts? This is such a serious matter, because in nearly every course The Servant in the House is the standard number and to disappoint them means a slump in the attendance of the other numbers.

Now, dear friend . . . call the company together and read them this letter or

49 A letter to William Owen, October 18, 1915, SUI, 224, A Servant in the House.
talk to them. . . . but let them know that
the play must get punch in it. 50

A slightly different complaint was received concerning
the Nothing But the Truth company when it played
Covington, Indiana, on August 2, 1921: the company
manager was sent a letter by an anonymous official of
the Redpath office who had heard that some of the members
of the company had gotten into the habit of playing cards
in the dressing rooms during the performance. The dress-
ing rooms were masked off from the stage and the main
tent only by canvas drops, so the actors were easily
overheard. . . . "In the theatrical profession this
would cause no offense as you know," began the letter,
"but it is altogether contrary to the ethics of the
chautauqua. We have to consider the chautauqua as on
a higher plane than the average theatrical performance,"
the official continued. At that point, the correspondent
felt obliged to go into more detail:

Some of our patrons have had their attention
called to the loud talking and the betting
that has been carried on in some of these
games, and you may be sure if such word is
talked in our towns, that it would give us
a very bad standing in the community. Of
course, we have nothing to say about the
conduct of your people in their rooms, but

50Ibid.
we cannot permit the use of our tent at any time for this practice.51

In order to compensate for the reprimand, the official somewhat reassuringly concluded by commenting that "Nothing but praise from our superintendents and patrons is heard in all our towns, and we know that it is the wish of all your company to maintain this splendid reputation."

More often than not, any references to the play companies by patrons or superintendents were "nothing but praise." After all, as Miles remembered, the audiences had waited all year for the chautauqua to come: it was unquestionably the entertainment highlight of their year. Typical of the eager response of the audiences was a review of a performance of Cappy Ricks at Lake Chautauqua in 1923. The sub-title of the article read, "On Friday Evening to Great Audience--Laughter Ran Riot":

The play story, a dramatization of Peter B. Kyne's book, contains some very clever lines and offers an adroit actor many opportunities for producing laughs by the Redpath Players of last night who gave a clever and amusing presentation thru-out [sic] the evening providing a continuous flow of laughter during the three acts of the comedy dramatization.

51 SUI, 179, Nothing But the Truth.
Altho [sic] stage business was rather noticeable in the acting during the second act when it bordered dangerously close upon obvious ridiculousness, there could be no doubt but that the audience was enjoying the blustering and changeable moods of Cappy Ricks, the old sea captain around whom the play centers. There were many chances for characterization which on the whole was aptly done.52

The actors could learn much from their chautauqua experience and many who acquired early experience on its platforms were to go on to either the New York stage or to a new and alluring medium, the moving pictures.53 Miles and Wright both argued against the idea that the performing of the same role for 100 nights was less instructive than acting in repertory; both felt that the experience of giving the same role to widely differing audiences weeks at a time was powerfully educating to the young actor. Not only did he learn to use his craft efficiently and flexibly, but he also had to develop the "crowd voice" few modern performers need.54

The constant pressure of nightly performances that were punctuated with constant travel frustrations also

52Chautauqua Daily, July 28, 1923, p. 3.

53Ed Wright remembered several actors whom he had known personally who had gone into the movies after concluding their chautauqua tours.

built character and endurance in the actors. Row admitted that "in the continually dressing and undressing there is something killing."

The psychology of this is a mystery---let the pathologists explain it if they can. The daily travel is wearing on the temper and nerves. If it were not for the kindness extended to us in the towns we visit it would be unbearable.55

In fact, Row had to conclude, "if it were not for the wholehearted cooperation of the people entertained, the institution known as Chautauqua could not exist."

Chautauqua managers were criticized for turning from the original idealistic values of Miller and Vincent in order to make money; even during chautauqua's declining years cries of "commercialism" were to be heard. The truth of that accusation is not easily verifiable. It is true that as the managers discovered the strong impact that the performing of plays had on the total attendance figures, they took steps to encourage the interest in drama. They added more and more plays to their schedules, and they moved the plays from early in the week to late in the week. With the plays placed at the close of the summer's program, when the superintendent needed to sign up the wealthy patrons as guarantors for the following

55Row, p. 4.
season, "if there was any doubt in the superintendent's mind if he really was to get his contract for next year--and there usually was--the play proved a veritable pièce de résistance and so mesmerized the guarantors by its sheer charm that they [eagerly placed] their August signatures on the contract for the following year."\(^{56}\)

When the actual financial figures are examined, however, it becomes clear that if Pearson, Harrison, Vawter, Peffer, Horner, and the other circuit managers were in the business for substantial profits rather than Vincent-inspired service, they were to be greatly disappointed. The tent equipment as well as the talent and their travel expenses were all expensive, and with single admission tickets sold at seventy-five cents, and a patron's season ticket (good for ten or fourteen events) at three dollars, profit margins were quite low. For example, on a weekly basis the expenses might have run as follows: actor's salaries, $350; royalties, $50; train fares, $800; crew and local staff salaries, $600; tent repair and equipment maintenance, $100--a total of $1900. When the expenses were subtracted from the gross receipts, only $100 remained as clear profit, from

\(^{56}\)Ibid.
which had to be subtracted publicity costs and the maintenance of the national bureau offices.\textsuperscript{57} There is ample evidence that the managers had all they could do to keep the great system operating in the black. When national economic conditions weakened, especially among farmers after 1925, most of the circuits began to show losses rather than profits, and the managers were forced to sell out or go bankrupt. None of the managers were able to retire in financial comfort. Other evidence notwithstanding, the chautauqua circuit managers must be given credit for the continuation of the educational and cultural values originally established on Lake Chautauqua and extended by the vision of James Redpath. With respect to plays in particular, the chautauqua circuits were instrumental in prolonging the fading touring-stock-company era of American theatre well into the twentieth century and provided thousands of otherwise theatrically ignorant rural Americans with professionally produced, commercially proven, contemporary comedies.

\begin{footnote}
This information is summarized from Donald Linton Graham's Circuit Chautauqua: A Middlewestern Institution, an unpublished dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1953, pp. 52-60. Graham cites various figures in different years which show that Vawter's circuit, for example, showed yearly total figures of anywhere from a loss of $4,631.31 to a profit of $12,023.45. Other Redpath circuits showed similar fluctuations during the years between 1915 and 1930; often one circuit would realize a profit that would be used to off-set a loss accrued by another. See the Appendix for additional financial information.
\end{footnote}
CHAPTER V

THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT OF THE CIRCUIT COMPANIES

The responsibility for all the necessary equipment that was brought to the typical empty baseball field, public park, or school playground where the large brown tent would suddenly mushroom one summer's day was handed down along an extensive chain of command that began with the circuit managers such as Peffer or the Harrison brothers and extended down to each of the individual crew boys, who were usually college students. Ultimately the circuit manager had to hold himself responsible for any failure, either of personnel or of equipment. The manager had to have at his fingertips a vast library of ready information concerning talent, crews, schedules, finances, and transportation as well as well-developed sensitivity to the current appetites of some thousands of widely scattered clients. Orchard observed that every manager had to have the following unique talents:

He must not only keep fully abreast of the times, but actually ahead of the times. He must have the faculty for sensing the trend of things; must possess a kind of
prophetic vision of what will be apt and profitable in thought leadership a year or years in the future. To be so equipped he must of necessity be a constant reader, an argus-eyed observer, and a keen and accurate analyst of the heterogenous thoughts, passions, and prejudices that daily utter the innermost life of the world.\(^1\)

The largest single concern of the managers beside the talent was the tent and its equipment. Keith Vawter was the first manager to put the chautauqua talent under canvas in 1903.\(^2\) Despairing of a pavilion in which to perform in some of the first circuit towns that he selected, Vawter bought a circus tent to house his performers. With his "canvas auditorium," Vawter and his followers could place their program in any town at any time; all that was demanded of the local promoters was a financial guarantee.

When the circuit system first became popular, the managers began to plan a yearly meeting at which they would "exchange box-office reports on musicians, entertainers, lecturers, and dramatic troupes."\(^3\) They would also frequently "confess, with loud guffaws, the mistakes they or the talent had made during the season."\(^4\) At

\(^{1}\)Orchard, p. 225. See Appendix for copy of a manager's Handbook.

\(^{2}\)Case, p. 29.

\(^{3}\)Case, p. 205.

\(^{4}\)Ibid.
A Circuit Tent Scene
Showing the Stage Extension on the Right Side of the Tent; the Crew Tent is to the Far Right
those winter meetings also they would exchange information concerning their equipment, including repairs to the old and the purchase of some new.

Each circuit maintained not only its own personnel consisting of the platform manager, the crew, and a junior girl, but also a heavy load of poles, stakes, ropes, canvas, lighting equipment, tools, advertising, a ticket office, platform decorations, costumes for the children's pageants, and many other things. A typical complement of equipment for each circuit was appraised at as much as $10,000, which included twenty-five percent a year depreciation on the tent. Therefore, the discussions at the winter meetings most often dealt with the economics of purchasing, maintaining, and touring the circuit paraphernalia. A technical innovation that was found successful on one circuit might very well appear the following summer on many of the others because of the eager exchange of ideas at the managers' meetings. Most such changes were inaugurated to save either set-up time or material costs. One such change was described by Horner for his Redpath circuits, on which at one time

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5Horner, Strike the Tents, p. 69.

he had forty tents "in the air" on any given day. To save the shipping costs of the hundreds of poles and masts that were used to support the canvas, Horner found a way to make up quarter, side, and wall poles from timbers secured in each town on the circuit; in addition, he bought carloads of main poles and stakes and kept a set stored in each town along the circuit. "In the long run," Horner concluded, "that was less expensive than to ship from place to place." 7

To avoid the suggestion of either a circus or a tent vaudeville during those early years, Vawter and the other pioneering circuit managers had their tents especially made of brown canvas. As Slout later pointed out, "The white tents of strolling entertainers aroused suspicion in the more Puritan minds." 8 Besides, the managers learned that the brown color did not become dingy so quickly, and it made the tent seem cooler on a sunny day. . . ." 9

Because of the circuit schedule, which required one tent to be in transit, a second one to be available for a new set-up, and five others already set up and in use, a five-day circuit necessitated seven tents, whereas a seven-day circuit required nine tents. For example, the

7 Hornet, Strike the Tents, p. 70.
8 Slout, p. 40.
9 Harrison, p. 96.
two extra tents allowed the crew two days to tear down, travel, and set up the tent again in the next place, seven or nine towns away. "As the last programme was given on the seventh day," Harrison recalled, "the big canvas was taken down and shipped ahead to the tenth town." Following such schedules, the tents could be used safely for only a few seasons; thus, one recurring heavy expense each winter was the replacement of several of the forty to fifty tents were used by each of the bureaus. In 1912, Redpath-Chicago had to buy nine new brown tents for their five- and seven-day circuits at a cost of $3,500 each, because the previous summer's canvas had received its "last repairs."

The type of tent most often used by the circuit managers was the "square-end tent." Inside, as many as 2,000 people could be seated. In the early years, the audience was seated on planks set on bales or boxes, but later on benches were built by the local assemblies or folding chairs were rented for the week. In order to accommodate the large numbers of people, the chautauqua managers had to alter the standard circus tent by adding a forty-

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10 MacLaren, p. 223.
11 Harrison, p. 95.
12 MacLaren, p. 223.
foot section in the center, which brought the final
dimensions in the smaller tents to about 70 by 140 feet
and the larger ones to 125 by 175 feet. \(^{13}\) In a typical
tent, the canvas was supported on two center-poles, each
thirty to forty feet tall, plus eight quarter-poles set
half-way out from the center to the edge, and many shorter
edge- or wall-poles which supported the sides of the tent.
At first, the center-poles were wood, but as excessive
difficulty was encountered in the transportation of
such long pieces, and the possibility of splintering and
breakage was always present, during the early 1920's
metal poles became standard, those poles being composed
of two twenty-foot telescoping pieces for easy transpor-
tation. \(^{14}\)

Inside the canvas auditorium, in addition to the poles
and the benches or chairs, stood the stage. Here, too,
Vawter was an innovator. In the oval canvas tops pop-
ular for circus use,

to provide a platform for use of talent meant
to place it either at one end or in the center
at the side, projecting far out into the audi-
torium and presenting an unsightly and awkward
appearance. . . . It was Keith Vawter who

\(^{13}\)Orchard, p. 239.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., and the Couch interview. See Appendix for
a sample of the tent property list.
conceived the idea of an extension built into the tent at a side center, which he finally developed into a complete stage with arch, curtains, wings, dressing rooms, and every convenience of a play house.\textsuperscript{15}

The stages, as well as the tents, varied somewhat in size from circuit to circuit. On the average, the stages were about twenty feet wide and fifteen feet deep, somewhat larger on the seven-day circuits, "with special drops to be used for the dramatic and opera companies and a good lighting system."\textsuperscript{16} On the ground level on each side of the stage were dressing rooms for the talent, concealed by canvas walls, stage right for the men and stage left for the women. Temporary stairs led to the stage, which was elevated on detachable saw-horses three to four feet high. To mask the stage, tan canvas legs were hung at each side to enclose the proscenium area, with a similar canvas across the front of the apron to conceal the stage supports. A front teaser curtain was rigged to snap across the top of the proscenium opening. Next to it was snapped a three-tab act curtain. The usable opening averaged twenty feet wide and ten to twelve feet high. To complete the

\textsuperscript{15}Orchard, pp. 133-134.

\textsuperscript{16}MacLaren, p. 223.
A Circuit Tent Scene
Showing the Ten-foot Canvas Curtain Around the Tent
masking, legs and a backdrop, usually blue or purple, were hung down the sides and across the back of the platform, leaving a depth of about sixteen feet with a cross-over behind the backdrop. There was usually a split in the backdrop to accommodate the nearly universally required upstage center doorway. The upstage curtains were hung from a specially constructed, demountable wooden grid made up of two-by-four lumber cross-pieces.  

The circuit platform itself was quite often a flimsy affair. Although a few professional companies, according to Slout, had experienced with truck or trailer beds, "equipped with sides that let down to form an expanse of floor," the chautauqua managers typically sent out an assembly consisting of flatboards placed across two-by-six stringers held up by wooden jacks.  

On a typical four-day Redpath circuit of 1924, the stage was described as being eighteen feet wide and fourteen to sixteen feet deep, the exact dimensions depending

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17 The Couch interview.
18 Slout, p. 46.
19 Ibid., and the Couch interview.
PLATE XXIII

Inside the Tent
on "the lumber with the boys [could] secure in their towns." The vertical dimensions were given as nine feet high at the front and eight feet high at the back.

These tents use the curtain cable frame for our green curtains. The side curtains taper from twelve feet at front of stage to eight feet at rear. The base curtain is fourteen feet wide by eight feet high. If the company could use curtains in place of scenery and hang them over the cable it would be very simple.21

By comparison, a five-day stage of 1923 was twenty-four feet wide and fourteen feet deep, with a flexible height at the front tapering to eight feet high at the back.22

The actual size of a tent stage was dependent on the particular placement of the tent quarter poles. Keighley had the arrangement explained to him in 1924 by the Redpath management:

I hardly know what measurements to give you on the Seven-Day stage. The opening in front is 28' wide by 11½' high. The distance between the first quarter pole to the back quarter pole is 15'. The distance between the back quarter poles is the same as the front, 28'. We are planning to put a 2 X 4 on each side of the stage from the front quarter pole to the back quarter pole. On

20 A letter to Mrs. Bennett dated June 9, 1924, SUI.
21 Ibid.
22 A letter to Peffer from a five-day manager dated March 1, 1923, SUI, 247, Turn to the Right.
this we will be able to support all of the scenery that we will have. At the back quarter pole this 2 X 4 will be 11' above the platform. At the front it will be 14' above the platform. If you care to make the cyke [sic] so it will go all the way around the stage, we can draw a wire from one of these 2 X 4's to the other within 2' or 3' of the back of the platform, or we can place the backdrop right at the rear of the platform. You remember that we have a cross-over behind our platforms.23

On smaller circuits, such as the three- to five-day Redpath circuits that frequently served towns with populations of less than 5,000, smaller tents with correspondingly smaller stages were used. Occasionally, such small circuits had surprisingly poor facilities. Willis Hall, the stage manager of a 1929 Skidding company related that,

In Washington I found the funniest, cutest, and most useless chautauqua equipment I can have ever seen. A cute little egg-shaped tent from Kansas City; a funny little platform with no tormentors or masking of any kind, just a platform at one side of the tent and a useless front curtain which I had to overhaul before I could use it. We carry enough stuff to be able to mask the frame we managed to make a respectable set.24

There was a surprisingly rapid theatrical sophistication of the circuit stage platforms prior to 1910, and there is reason to question whether perhaps Vawter had

23 A letter to Keighley dated March 8, 1924, SUI, 124, Keighley.
24 A letter to Harrison from Willis Hall dated August 20, 1929, SUI, 228, Skidding.
seen canvas theatres before he made his own experiments. He had always been a keen observer of the theatre, and there were shows regularly performing under canvas during the early years of the century. Because of numerous and rapidly changing social and economic conditions (summarized by Slout in Theatre in a Tent), theatrical entrepreneurs, who had been "looking to improve an increasingly grim situation," began to consider the canvas pavilion used by the circus as a promising solution.  

The tent that eventually was used by the theatrical managers toward the end of the nineteenth-century had evolved from the existing circus tents. Those tents were typically round and from fifty to ninety feet in diameter. As some circuses expanded, the managers enlarged the tents by adding center sections, and thereby they created the familiar rectangular tent. By 1854, P. T. Barnum was setting up a tent with four center-poles that was one-hundred and ten feet long. An ever larger tent was used by the Ringling Brothers, whose circus tent of 1893 required a plot of ten acres for an adequate set-up.

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25 Slout, pp. 23-34. Slout enumerates the following factors: changes in the copyright laws of 1897; a general decline of road companies and a concurrent growth of the repertory system; the appearance of the vitascope and nickelodeon; new fads for bicycling and roller-skating; and the rise of the theatrical Trust.

26 Nye, p. 89.
Thus, when the theatre managers began to consider the tent as an alternative to the opera house, the tent technology was already in use. They had only to add the stage, some rigging, and sufficient seats to convert the circus tent into an easily portable theatre.\(^{27}\)

The most popular road companies that traveled with canvas prior to the circuit chautauqua were those performing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As many as ten tent companies toured in a single year.\(^{28}\) Those tent companies used various special apparatuses to avoid having to place a center pole directly in front of the stage platform. One method was to substitute an A-frame for the center pole next to the stage. The top of the "A" served as the tip of the center pole, holding up the canvas at the stage end of the tent. The A's crossbar, which gave the angled joints support, horizontally spanned the front of the stage above the proscenium openings, and the legs of the A below the crossbar stood on each side of the proscenium opening.\(^{29}\)

A second type of tent platform arrangement was the "dramatic-end" tent, which by description was more nearly similar to the chautauqua tent set-up than the A-frame

\(^{27}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.\) Slout reviews the use of canvas to house theatrical performances as far back as the Roman civilization.

\(^{28}\)Slout, p. 39.

\(^{29}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 40.\)
type. The dramatic-end tent used taller quarter poles at one end, the added elevation allowing the stage to be pushed farther to the rear of the tent and away from the first center pole. To accommodate the stage protrusion in the end, a square or gabled end piece was used instead of the circus-type round end. Such tents were commercially built by the United States Tent and Awning Company of Chicago beginning about 1910. However, theatrical managers of professional touring companies usually rejected the dramatic-end type of tent principally because of one unavoidable idiosyncracy. The extended canvas over the stage had no pole to support it midway along the proscenium line, which allowed a water pocket, destructive to the canvas, to form over the stage in heavy rain storms.

The chautauqua managers generally chose the rectangular tent, but to avoid having the annoyance of a center pole just in front of the stage, the standard arrangement was to place the stage platform in the side, rather than the end, of the tent, the extra canvas being supported by two special quarter poles placed closer to the perimeter of the canvas than normal. The additional canvas spread over the stage, however, still allowed a water pocket to

\[30\text{Ibid., p. 41}\]  \[31\text{Ibid., p. 42}\]
A Ground Plan of a Dramatic-End Tent
PLATE XXV

A Ground Plan of a Typical Chautauqua Tent and Platform
form above the stage, a condition that was described vividly by Harry Harrison:

Our tents, all tents, seemed to have one idiosyncrasy. They were so built that when it rained hard, water would gather in a great pocket, not at the sides or rear, but always, perversely, just in front of the stage. Crew boys would have to take a long pole with a cross-board and push against the pocket.32

Once active on the crews of the Redpath circuits (1927-1929), Couch33 described how, in order to save the tent from collapsing from such a danger during an exceptionally hard rain, he himself had on occasion climbed up under the great puddle over the stage. Although afraid of being instantly inundated by the trapped water, he would take out a hunting knife and slit the canvas. The stage, the talent, and the properties would be deluged by the cascading torrent, but the tent would thereby be saved. In fact, usually the performance was continued after a brief interruption, in spite of the impromptu skylight.

Not only was the dramatic-end tent in use just prior to Vawter's first tent circuits, but so also was a system of rigging for the tent stage, which was designed to accommodate all the traditional theatrical necessities.

32Harrison, p. 95.
33The Couch interview.
An Aerial View of a Rural Tent Set-up
It consisted of a wooden framework suspended above the stage proper from which scenery could be hung. Such a framework appeared over the chautauqua tent stages sometime during the early 1920's. It was frequently alluded to in the Redpath office's correspondence. A letter from an unidentified circuit manager concerning the touring of The Patsy, described the framework:

Battens made of one-inch pipe are most satisfactory and if used should be hung on three sets of ropes, the middle one to prevent sagging... If a wooden frame is built it should be 12 feet high and care should be taken that no upright come in the direct center of the back as there is a door there.

The note went on to suggest that "the dimensions given are the maximum, but our scenery can be reduced if necessary to almost any size." Similarly, Milton Boyle, the stage manager of the Give and Take company, received a letter from the Redpath office that promised instructions for a framework. The Redpath office assured Boyle that most local committees would provide the needed material as well as have the framework already made. However, the official warned that to be on the safe side, the scenery or drapery should be arranged so that it could be hung on cables if necessary. "That is the way the company did last

34 Slout, p. 45. 35 SUI, 192, The Patsy.
36 Ibid.
37 A letter dated July 9, 1924, SUI, 87, Give and Take.
year, and we hope that you can do this with your material this year." 38

Since many of the companies, after completing their circuit tour, continued performances with various Independent chautauquas for a week or two in late August and early September, they were often asked to adapt their masking and scenery to the larger stages of permanent auditoriums. However, few of those stages maintained any stage equipment, some were not even able to provide a visiting company with a workable act curtain. For that reason, company managers like Morris Greet of the Turn to the Right company of 1923 were especially instructed to carry additional masking pieces and a temporary act curtain for the Independent stages that had no such equipment. 39

Similarly, as the companies left their regular tent schedules and moved indoors, they were frequently sent additional rigging so that the legs and backdrops that they had used in the tents could be used in the permanent buildings as well, thus avoiding the expense of supplying new, hard scenery such as was generally used in the indoor theatres. 40 To make up for the difference in stage

38 Ibid.
39 A letter dated June 22, 1923, SUI, 247, Turn to the Right.
40 A letter dated March 6, 1925, SUI, 249, Bennett.
dimensions, the indoor stages being half again as large as the largest tent platforms, a few extra pieces of downstage masking were sent to each company just prior to its first Independent engagement in order to reduce the prosceunium opening to the twenty or less feet that the tent stages provided. Occasionally, as with the Cappy Ricks company of 1923, an extra large cyclorama was furnished by the Redpath Bureau to be used in the large Independent theatres where additional legs or tormentor masking would not be sufficient. In that way, Peffer told the company managers, "We will then have something practical for every Independent Chautauqua." 41

The method of lighting those circuit platforms was crude indeed. At first, the theatrical companies borrowed the lighting methods of the circus tents, which, at the end of the nineteenth century, consisted either of pine-knot torches or of tallow or sperm candles ranged in ranks and tiers on wooden frames hung from the center poles and commonly called "star candles." In 1892 Ed McGill introduced to the circus the pressure-fed gasoline star clusters, which added brightness as well as danger (canvas was highly flammable at the time). 42 At about that same time a

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41 A letter dated June 27, 1923, SUI, 41, Cappy Ricks-2.
kerosene pressure system was introduced, and Vawter was experimenting with naphtha lamps hung on the center poles of his tents.

Electricity had been introduced to canvas theatres in 1879, but it was not until after 1910 that a feasible system for producing sufficient amperage was developed. What was needed was a portable generator like the type finally developed and produced by the Brush Light Company of Cleveland, Ohio, which eventually was able to furnish units for both circus and chautauqua tents. However, the expense and bulk of such a system prohibited many managers from incorporating electric lighting into their programs until well into the twentieth century.

An additional means of obtaining sufficient brilliance was to use acetylene gas to heat calcium carbon to incandescence—which was referred to in theatrical circles as the "lime light." The details of the instrumentation of that type of lighting were supplied to the Redpath office in various letters from companies that manufactured such equipment. One such letter came from the St. Louis Calcium Light Company:

44 Ibid., p. 39.
45 May, p. 241.
46 Ibid.
Dear Sir:

Your letter of recent date received. Regret to have to inform you that we do not ship any smaller size than the regular 50 ft. tanks. At this rate our Tanks are to be returned to us within one month from Date of shipment if not returned to us within this length of time it will cost you 50% per Week for the Rent of the Tanks. You pay all Express or freight Charges to & fro [sic] also all Damages done to our Tanks if any. We give no Credit for Gas returned to us as we overcharge all our Tanks. Our Terms are Cash with Order. We require a Cash Deposit of $35.00 for the safe return [sic] of one set of Tanks or $50.00 for more than one set. Owing to the Distance you are away it would take at least three sets to keep you in steady supply for such service we require #50.00 [sic]. You will need the following Connections if you have not already got them: one Wrench Key 25¢ one pair of Couplings $1.00 Ten Ft. of best Quality Rubber Tubing $1.00 Lime Pencils $1.00 per dozen Test Gauge to assure you of amount of Gas you have in the Tanks & to enable you to order more before you run out of same with Clamp Connection $5.00. Best Quality Calcium Burner $8.00.47

The quality of such lighting was also quite unsatisfactory in that it gave a light that Harrison called a "sputtering white glare,"48 which emanated from the center poles. Consequently, efforts were finally made to convert all tent lighting to electricity. The precise year that electricity first appeared regularly in circuit tents is

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47 A letter to M. L. Shirley from A Rosso dated December 8, 1913, SUI, 606.
unknown, but evidence suggests that by 1915 electric footlights in a crude trough across the apron of the platform had come into use.\textsuperscript{49}

Because many rural communities prior to 1920 had only rudimentary electric service, the Redpath office decided to send with its tents an electric generator to supply all the lighting needs. To the generator were connected several large floodlights hung in front of the proscenium, generally from the center or quarter poles, together with a row of twenty-eight footlight bulbs along the front of the platform.\textsuperscript{50} However, such a system, which must have been the first minimally adequate illumination for the chautauqua stage, was not carried by every circuit crew. That such an inadequacy remained on many circuits for several years was suggested by an article in \textit{Lyceum News} in 1915, which gave the following "hints" for good stage lighting:

Good stage lighting is absolutely essential to the most favorable presentation. . . . When the features of the performers can be distinctly seen by the audience, it adds materially to the enjoyment of the evening. Where the stage lighting is poor, fix two lamps, one on each side of the stage about six feet from the floor of the stage with pieces of tin or even pasteboard as reflectors, then

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Lyceum News}, December, 1915, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{50} A letter to Keighley dated March 8, 1924, SUI, 124, Keighley.
focus these lights on the center of the stage about the level of the speaker's face and you will be surprised at the result. When the face of a speaker is partially hid by a shadow or dim lights, he cannot possibly get the best results. There is always some way by which poor stage lighting may be remedied.51

In spite of the conversion to electricity, sophistication was very slow to come to chautauqua tent lighting. All during the 1920's, attempts were made to improve the quality of lighting within the limitations of expense and portability. Unfortunately, it was not until a few years before the collapse of the entire circuit system that regular stage spotlights were introduced and that the lighting of the play productions could operate on the basis of a lighting "plot."

One such late development in the quality of the lighting came as a result of the recommendations of the Display Stage Lighting Company of New York. In 1926, the New York circuit was provided with several new "Aluminide" border lights to replace the standard floodlights and footlights that were in general use throughout the circuit system.52 The new system was so successful


52*SUI*, 606, Display Stage Lighting.
that the circuit managers urged Keighley to incorporate the new lighting on all of the Redpath circuit stages for the lighting of the plays. The new pieces of equipment were wired in three circuits so that, with the insertion of three colors of rondels, various cues could be written. For the first time, the mood of the lighting could reflect the mood of the play. How many of those lamps were actually put into service on any other circuits than Peffer's New England circuit is not known.

While on the road, the electrician often found it necessary to replace the lamps as well as other elements of the lighting equipment. A representative weekly list submitted to the Redpath office listed various sized lamps, conduit, and wire totaling $12.35. The types of pieces bought suggests both the replacing of border lamps of various wattages, which had burned out or been broken, and the purchase of some additional material for special effects. Because colored lamps were unavailable en route, the electrician carried an ample supply of red, blue, green, and yellow bulb dye in which ordinary bulbs were dipped to provide the proper coloring for the necessary cues.

53 SUI, 124, Keighley. 54 Ibid. 55 SUI, 1041, Mansfield, Ohio. 56 The Couch interview.
There were generally very few cues for lighting executed during a circuit play. Although Couch affirmed that while he was a circuit electrician for Redpath during the late 1920's, each play company would give him a few cues to learn, such cues could not be executed on a lighting board consisting of dimmers because dimmers were never used by the Redpath play companies he traveled with. Any change of lights had to be executed on a series of knife switches attached through cables to the various foot and border lights and arranged by colors.\textsuperscript{57} A typical cue that had to be performed on such an awkward system was referred to in a letter to Harrison from Keighley. That cue was in the last act of The Melting Pot: "When the sunset faded, the torch on the Statue of Liberty was lighted and the strain of 'My Country 'Tis of Thee' was heard in the distance."\textsuperscript{58}

Occasionally, a letter would be sent ahead to the circuit electrician asking that he have ready both amber and blue footlights, and amber and blue in the borders, "hooked up so as to be used on dimmers."\textsuperscript{59} The specific use of such lighting was elaborated in a letter from Keighley to John Chambers of the Redpath Bureau concerning

\textsuperscript{57}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{58}\textit{SUI, 124, Keighley.}  \\
\textsuperscript{59}\textit{SUI, 87, Give and Take.}
the 1924 Smilin' Thru companies:

I saw your Smilin' Thru set yesterday and it is the best looking scenery that we have ever sent out. . . . We will have three borders with leg drops, so if you can have three strips with a circuit of blues and one of straws for each border, five lights each of the blue and straws to each circuit, it would answer the purpose.

It would be much better to have your foots and front borders cut into two circuits, as dimmers to carry as many lights as I think you have in your foots would be very heavy to carry around. I must know as soon as possible as I wish to order the dimmers.  

Dimmers were seldom if ever sent out on the circuit, however, and the only performances with cues that were regularly executed on dimmers were those in the permanent auditoriums of the Independent Chautauquas that were toured late in the summer.  

Some special lighting effects were attempted from time to time. Small spotlights, chandeliers, electrical properties that were to be switched on at the right moment, and other such equipment was sent out on the circuits to enhance various productions underway. Although far from being in general use, such special electrical cues were

60 A letter dated April 2, 1924, SUI, 229, Smilin' Through.

61 Couch asserted that as late as 1929, the Redpath seven-day circuit on which he served as electrician was still using knife switches rather than dimmers. He could remember no circuit ever using dimmers.
found to be "mighty effective," and were given credit for adding "one hundred percent to the show." When special cues were used or added, the special equipment had to be forwarded to the company electrician since he could not secure locally the theatrical specialty lamps such as the No. G30 or the Mazda C. For example, the special 250-watt spotlight lamps needed for the 1928 Tommy company had to be shipped from the Chicago Stage Lighting Company at a cost of $20.18 each. Often included in such shipments were several lengths of cable necessary to wire the equipment since those could not be purchased en route either.

The type of special equipment described above must be considered the exception rather than the rule for most of the thirty or more companies sent out every year by Redpath. It would be even more rare on the circuits of the smaller chautauqua bureaus. Electricity at that time was far from universally available, and the equipment for stage use was in the main quite crude prior to 1930. It was neither practical nor necessary to consider special lighting effects; the audiences had been nurtured on play readers who used no props or lighting at all, in most cases, and since few chautauqua audiences had ever seen

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62 SUI, 245, Tommy-3.
a fully staged and lighted production, they did not expect what they did not know. As Barrett Clark wrote in an issue of the Chautauqua Daily, "Too elaborate scenery causes the play itself to lose its attraction." Managers and audiences alike were inclined to concur.

Late in 1930, when it was too late to be of any practical use to the circuit managers and electricians, a series of articles appeared in The Platform World on stage lighting, written by C. M. Cutler and Dean M. Warren of the General Electric Company's Engineering Department. In those articles were described the most advanced lighting systems of the day, including spotlights, spherical mirrors, prefocus lamps, reflector spots, and strip lights. The articles were complete with pictures of "modern" installations and charts of focal lengths and intensities. They also covered the theory of stage lighting, which included the practical distribution and angle of light through the use of various advanced types of instruments. The information was worthy of any textbook of lighting of the day, but by the time the managers could begin to follow in practice the guidelines set forth in the articles, all the Redpath circuits' lighting equipment had begun to collect dust in a warehouse in White

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Plains, New York. Soon abandoned and obsolete, the rusted spotlights and rotting cables were later scrapped, under whose eye and at what time no one could ever remember. 64

The assemblage of all the equipment from the tent to the footlights was assigned by the general circuit managers to the circuit superintendents, each of whom supervised all of the seven- or nine-tent complexes on his circuit. The circuit superintendent would travel back and forth across the circuit, usually being available for each new set-up, one every week day except Sunday all season long, May to September. He was the local representative for the general circuit manager and supervised all aspects of the program, the talent, and the crews.

The basic crew that traveled with the platform manager and his tent complex for the entire season consisted of four or five persons, most of whom were college students. They were the gatekeeper, the electrician, the property man, (who was in charge of all the tent equipment including the canvas and the stage with its dressing), and the "story lady," or "junior girl." The latter traveled with the tent crew and was assigned to prepare

64 The Betty Peffer McCracken interview, April 13, 1975.
the children's activities each morning of each town's chautauqua week. 65

It was the running crew that traveled with the tent who carried out the actual set-up under the watchful eye of the superintendent. About fifteen local men were paid $2.00 each to assist the raising of the canvas, and the tent was ready for use within twelve hours after its arrival in each town. First, the plot of ground assigned to the tent was scrutinized for holes, soft spots, and dangerous trash. Next, the positions of the stakes were laid out with mathematical precision. Then, when the canvas sections were lashed together and placed in position, the sidewall poles were pushed into their pockets around the perimeter of the gigantic piece of canvas and raised so that the tent resembled a huge saucer. After the poles were secured with ropes and stakes, the quarter and center poles were placed, raised, and then firmly secured with an additional set of four-to five-foot long stakes. 66 The last step was to place the canvas "wall" around the tent, about twenty feet away from the sidewall poles; that arrangement allowed

65 The Couch interview.

66 Horner, Strike the Tents, p. 69.
air to circulate through the tent without allowing non-paying spectators to view the platform. The operation would go smoothly in most cases, but in damp or rainy weather, when the canvas increased its weight as much as three times from several tons to a dozen or more, the task became especially trying.

After a week of culture, the process was reversed. The tear-down began immediately at the close of the last performance and took only a few hours. It was concluded only when all the 1,000-pound bags of canvas, the separated center-poles, the quarter and edge poles, the stage assembly, the lighting, and the rest of the miscellaneous equipment had been packed in a sixty- or eighty-foot railroad baggage car to be sent seven or nine towns ahead on the summer circuit schedule. Frequently, the crews would go along in the train, sleeping in the baggage car on the canvas bags. Such an accommodation was a break from sleeping in the usual crowded crew tent, which during the week was set up for the male members of the crew behind the main tent.

Separate from the regular tent equipment were the company props and scenery. Since the play companies traveled

67 Ibid.
68 The Couch interview. The Junior Girl was quartered in private homes.
Preparing to Set Up a Tent
to a new location every day, they had to carry their own equipment on the train with them. For that reason, the properties, scenery, and special lighting equipment were kept to a minimum. During the height of the play companies' popularity, however, the Redpath management found it expedient to send many of the companies along the circuit in a vehicle called a bus, which was, in fact, a crude, open, panel truck that carried baggage in the back and seven to ten people in double seats toward the front.

Typical scenery for a play company during the 1920's consisted of a door frame or two (one usually to be placed upstage center), perhaps a framed window, and a few curtains for masking. Occasionally a backdrop was used with matching painted legs designed to be clipped to the wooden grid above the stage or to cables stretched between the quarter poles at the sides of the stage. For example, the stage manager of a Cappy Ricks company sent out in 1923 wrote ahead to the tent crew that

all I need to hang present equipment ... is a wire suspended ten feet from the floor the wire should be eighteen feet across the stage, twelve feet up and down the stage on each edge, making our curtained space forty feet altogether. The curtain snaps on the wire. No frame is used; just supports for the wire. 69

69A letter to Miss Weiskoff from W. Woodall dated July 3, 1923, SUI, 41, Cappy Ricks-2.
The curtain, which was delivered with "doors in proper places" and was made of a "material to be buff or any other color than green so as to give the play a good variation" on the stage cost fifty dollars. The Friendly Enemies companies carried a similar curtain scene about forty feet wide and ten feet high. That also was to be buckled onto cables that the company carried.

The scenic or visual philosophy of the Redpath administration remained consistent throughout the era of the play companies on the circuits. Although the original concept was based on Ben Greet's aurally presented Shakespeare, it is likely that Greet's rule of simplicity soon became a rationalization to hold down production and travel expense. As late as 1930, Platform World contained an article supporting such a rationalization for minimal scenery:

"Shall we say that the drama is coming to address itself more to the eye and less to the mind or that the public is using the eye more and the mind less? Anyway, after fighting against it for years, the drama now answers to the name

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70 A letter to E. B. Persons from Harrison dated August 2, 1923, SUI, 41, Cappy Ricks-2.

71 A letter to Paul C. Adams from the Redpath office dated July 11, 1923, SUI, 1043, Cadiz, Ohio.
of "Show." It has been claimed that Chautauqua offered inadequate opportunity for staging a play. . . . All of these things show how the play has become, in our minds, subordinate to its garb.72

The writer went on to decry the infusion of the strong visual aspects into production:

Our wonderful stage innovations may or may not be a boon according to other's use or abuse.

... it is significant that with every step forward in mechanical perfection the poetic element has waned. Despite (or because of) our advanced civilization, we have lost appreciation of idealism and symbolism enjoyed by the masses of two thousand years ago. Our imagination is dying of stagnation.73

In spite of Greet's leadership with idealized and simplified productions for the chautauqua circuits, by and large the paucity of scenery on the chautauqua platforms was the result of economics and not of philosophy. Proof of that assertion were the frequent injunctions from the various managers "to carry as little equipment as necessary" without sacrificing "any artistic or professional effect for the sake of excess baggage."74

Although for many of the companies such a suggestion meant traveling with no more than curtains, some companies


73Ibid.

74SUI, 247, Turn to the Right.
such as the 1924 companies of *Give and Take* had more specialized scenery. That company carried painted scenery for which Peffer paid $107.19 plus a $38.00 charge for the painting done by the Stagecraft Studio.  

Similarly, the *Applesauce* companies of 1926 carried a curtain enclosure with the following added set pieces: "3 door pieces; 1 window piece; 3 solid pieces; 3 border pieces; 3 backing pieces." That company also carried two sets of drapes, one blue and another in cream color, nine pieces in each setting, so as to enable the cast to create two separate settings. Those curtains were made of Sakana satin and sateen at a cost of $116.95 for each company.

The Redpath administration's frugality was applied to each company each season and also to productions of other plays in succeeding seasons. There were many years that the same hangings were used over and over for a succession of plays. For example, in 1927, Leonard Ide, a company manager, was instructed that since "the scenes for *The Patsy* and *The Show-Off* are both living rooms . . . .

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75 An account notice sent to the Redpath office dated April 9, 1924, SUI, 86.

76 A letter dated September 2, 1926, SUI, 10, Applesauce.

77 An account notice sent to the Redpath office dated March 29, 1926, SUI, 10, Applesauce.
why [not use] The Patsy hangings . . . for The Show-Off." 78 Similarly, in 1927 Keighley wrote to Harrison to ask if the backings used last summer for Applesauce could be used for his next production of The Patsy. 79 Harrison responded that all the requested scenery was being used on his other circuits. 80 It appeared that no scenery was ever discarded until it became so worn that no production could be dressed in it.

Regardless of whether or not the original script demanded more, all the early chautauqua productions were staged by Keighley in one or, at most, two sets. The only scenic pieces allowed were a few selected openings for entrances and possibly a window. Occasionally, one or two scenes would be all that the script demanded. For example, Applesauce required two settings: "The sitting room of the Robinson home" for Acts One and Two, and for Act Three, the "upstairs over a drug store." Cappy Ricks also required two settings: "Cappy's office" and Cappy's garden." 81 Captain Applejack and Broken Dishes required one setting, whereas The First Year and New Brooms required two. There were many plays that Keighley sent

78SUI, 192, The Patsy.

79A letter to Harrison from Keighley dated April 4, 1927, SUI, 124, Keighley.

80Ibid., dated April 7, 1927.

81From scenic notices as printed on various programs for the Redpath plays.
out, however, that originally required three or more scenes. So *This Is London*, which was sent out on the circuits in 1926, required three sets: Act One took place in "The Drapers' suite at the Ritz, London," Act Two in "Sir Percy Beauchamp's living room in Brimshot," and Act Three in "Lady Duckworth's drawing room."

The *Meanest Man in the World*, performed in 1923 by the Redpath companies, also required three separate settings, and *Broadway Jones*, performed in 1921, required four settings. Both of the latter plays, as well as most other multiple-sets scripts, were produced for chautauqua in one or two sets of hangings with only minor changes of furniture between the acts.

Toward the end of the chautauqua circuit movement, Keighley and others attempted to send out more elaborate scenery. For example, *Shepherd of the Hills*, sent out in 1928, was to be played with a variety of backdrops, borders, and tabs, practical doors, platforms, and a three-dimensional window.\(^{82}\) However, as the costs of traveling such a heavy show were high, and as the economic stability of the Redpath circuits had been under severe strain for several years, the managers were reluctant to

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\(^{82}\) SUI, 226, *Shepherd of the Hills*. 
allow productions to go out with such extensive baggage, and the play was performed on one circuit only.

Since for both aesthetic and practical reasons the circuit managers insisted on the utmost scenic simplicity, the stage properties were depended upon to suggest the necessary changes of scenes. Whereas the company either carried with it or purchased en route the small hand props, it depended on each local committee to provide the larger pieces such as chairs, tables, and sofas. Typical of such a request to the local patrons was a letter from the Redpath office to a manager of a company touring The Patsy:

What about furniture, etc., for both plays that must be furnished locally in each town? If you will send us a list of what is needed, we will send the lists out in advance to each town, so that the properties will be sure to be ready for you.\(^{83}\)

Such a list would consist of items similar to those requested for a Melting Pot company of 1915:

- Piano and stool on stage
- Small table or desk
- Large table
- Four straight chairs
- One arm chair
- Settee or sofa
- This furniture should be of the old horse-hair style if possible.\(^{84}\)

\(^{83}\) SUI, 192, The Patsy.

\(^{84}\) A Redpath circuit bulletin dated December 18, 1915, SUI, 163. See Appendix for additional properties lists.
Needless to say, there must have been many towns in which the correct period furniture was not available. The variety of stage furniture provided from town to town was a major concern to the circuit actors. Miles remembered that the warm-up rehearsal each afternoon for the actors was not so much to check lines or blocking as to practice getting into, or out of, and around the unfamiliar furniture each town had been able to provide. The timing of a line could have been seriously affected if the actor sat too high or too low on a chair or sofa that was lower or higher than the one used the evening before.

Usually, the furniture requirements were kept to a minimum. All that was needed for It Pays to Advertise in 1919 was: "1 library table; 1 small square table; 1 arm chair; 5 straight chairs; 1 typewriter." These were to be "secured at any furniture store" and then placed at the tent in plenty of time for the performance. The care with which such requests were carried out for each of the nearly 100 performances in as many different towns must have often been negligible.

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85 A bulletin to the seven-day managers dated May 29, 1919, SUI, 163. See Appendix for additional properties lists.

86 Ibid.
PLATE XXVIII

Typical Redpath Bureau Prop Lists

Turn to the Right (1921 circuits), to be carried by the company:

- Letter file (box)
- Paper file
- Inkwell stand and two inkwells
- 2 penholders and pens
- 1 cardboard portfolio, large size
- 3 telephones
- Electric bell and battery
- Buzzer push button and battery
- Check book
- Business papers for Rodney
- Contract for Countess
- Wire basket
- Stamp pad
- Card tray (5 x 19)
- Money
- Phone books
- Sleeve protectors for Mary
- Footstool
- Papers and envelopes

Turn to the Right (1923 circuits), to be furnished by the local committee:

- One settee, good
- 4 kitchen chairs
- 2 kitchen tables
- 1 small table
- 1 large old-fashioned rocking chair
- 2 large stew kettles
- 1 oil lamp
- 1 large pitcher
- 1 clothes tree
- 1 garden wheelbarrow, with sides
- 1 bucket
- 3 peach baskets
Give and Take (c. 1925 circuits), to be furnished by the local committees:

1 office desk, 3 feet by 5 feet
3 office chairs--straight back, no arms
1 rug--2 feet, 6 inches by 3 feet
1 hall tree
1 waste paper basket--office type
1 stand table--24 inches or 18 inches
1 phonograph
1 band record--march (loud)
1 small bunch of flowers
1 10 foot step ladder
6 50 watt electric light bulbs
The company had to carry with it or buy locally the rest of the small properties. For those that had to be purchased, the company manager kept a list and sent an itemized bill to the Redpath headquarters every week for reimbursement. A weekly report would often request reimbursement of from $5 to $10 for such things as snaps and eyes, paper, envelopes, ink, cigars, apples, paint, miscellaneous hardware for maintaining the scenery, matches, tacks, and dozens of other necessary items.

Rarely, a request for a very special property was sent to the Redpath office. For example, Keighley wrote the following note to Harrison:

This is a mild request but would it be possible to get a small automobile on the stage for The Man From Home? It would be such a great departure from previous attempts of stage setting that if it is possible, it seems the result would justify the trouble. It would have to be a small car. I thought that the crew people, for instance, might request their dealers in each town to furnish one.

Frequently, such requests would succumb to bureau economizing as did a managers request for extensive properties for The Bubble company of 1923:

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87 See Appendix.
88 SUI, 124, Keighley.
In answer to your letter of November 2nd, we will ask that you send out the property requirements of The Bubble that we sent you on October 4th instead of the one sent on October 1st, inasmuch as the one sent you on October 1st was too elaborate.89

There was also a minimum of elaboration with regard to costuming and make-up. Almost without exception, the plays chosen by the chautauqua manager were contemporary plays, with little or no need for unusual costumes. Street clothes of the time were generally satisfactory for the man, whereas only the character women in most cases, often only one to a company, needed an article of clothing not found in her own wardrobe. The costumes could seldom be cleaned; Miles remembered that one of the first things each actor had to do on arrival at each circuit stop was to air his costume, since usually the costume had been packed still damp with perspiration late on the previous night. The actor also had to wash out in the hotel basin every night or two his cuffs and collar, as these were the only parts of his costume to come in contact with the make-up and stage dirt.

Thus, the use of scenery and properties on the circuits can be summarized as follows: first, the scenery

89 A letter to the Redpath office from N. M. Lowery dated November 5, 1923, SUI, Cappy Ricks.
generally consisted of one or two sets of drapes with spaces for doors and a window. Standard tormentor and border drapes were hung from cables or wooden grid. No flats were used and only occasionally were drops used as a background. There was minimal changing of scenes.

Second, the larger properties were used to "set the scene." Those pieces included rugs and miscellaneous pieces of furniture that were acquired in each town along the circuit route. There must have been a substantial discrepancy between the styles and types of these pieces; any attempt to maintain period accuracy would have been doomed to failure.

Third, selected important hand props were carried by the members of the company in their costume trunks. Other consumable small props such as cigars, fruit, paper, and so on were purchased en route and charged to the Redpath offices.

Finally, those scenes of the 1920's were lighted quite simply, with minimal equipment consisting of border lights in two or three colors, two floodlights, and an occasional baby spot for special effects. Few companies traveled with dimmers; the standard knife switches were used to change the light readings for the necessary cues.
CHAPTER VI

THE CHAUTAUQUA PLAYS

The years between 1910 to 1930, during which the chautauqua managers were in the market for scripts to produce for their summer circuit platforms, were a markedly transitional period in American drama. It was a period marked, on the one hand, by such extremes in popular taste as *Ben Hur* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, clearly melodramatic residues of the nineteenth century, and, on the other hand, by examples of the slowly emerging American social realism of Rice, O'Nells, O'Neill, Anderson, and Wilder, playwrights whose works evidenced nascent dramatic values and experimental theatrical techniques that were only to be fully realized during the 1930's and 1940's.

To illustrate that shifting theatrical landscape, Howard Taubman has suggested the career of Clyde Fitch, "the golden boy of the century's turn,"¹ who in 1901 had four plays running in New York: *The Climbers, Barbara Fritchie,*

¹Taubman, p. 115.
Lover's Lane, and Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines. Taubman, reviewing these plays, suggested that "great changes" were impending in current play writing. 2 Alan Downer summarized the change as one in which the playwrights moved away from theatricalism and toward drama. He observed that the new playwrights were experimenting with increasing realism, albeit in an excessively superficial manner. 3 A. H. Quinn fixed the change in dramatic fare in the year 1906, in which plays that displayed a new emphasis on the individual's right to self-expression appeared. 4 Seen in New York in 1906 were Fitch's The Truth, Gillett's Clarice, Belasco's Rose of the Rancho, Mitchell's The New York Idea, Moody's The Great Divide, and Crother's The Three of Us. Quinn pointed out that such plays revealed a new concern "with the salvation of man's personality from the dangers that lay in the increasing complexities of the social organization, in the standardization of life, [and] in the prejudices and stupidities which prevented a full and free expression of each human soul." 5 The following seasons confirmed that trend. Produced in 1907 were such plays as Thomas' 

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2Ibid., p. 116.  
3Downer, p. 22.  
4Quinn, p. 4  
5Ibid., p. 6
The Witching Hour, Kennedy's The Servant in the House, and Walter's Paid in Full. The year 1908 saw the arrival of Sheldon's Salvation Nell, Walter's The Easiest Way, and Tarkington's A Man From Home.

As the twentieth century matured, numerous experimental types of dramas appeared. Among those to be later selected for chautauqua showing were plays by Eugene Walter, W. A. McGuire, Owen Davis, Lula Vollmer, Barry Conners, George Cohan, and George Kelly. Although many first-quarter twentieth-century producers were criticised for lavishing the bulk of their attention on "flashy, empty rodomontades that would sell," many playwrights of that period were consciously striving for characters and situations more closely akin to the empathy levels of the general American audience than the European-derived plays of the nineteenth-century playwrights had shown. The new realism of the early years of this century was developed partly from a keener consciousness of realistic mechanical effects, in which the practical experience of the melodramas was modified by a closer observance of actual American living. That realism also included a new situational verismilitude designed to "draw the spectator into the action personally

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6Taubman, p. 133.
and completely," a realism of action that looked suspiciously on artificial plots and on such threadbare devices as *deus ex machina* and poetic justice.⁷ Beyond those changes, there was also an attempt to mold those more realistic actions into an overall realism of theme. Whereas the nineteenth century dramas selected thematic material from moralistic truisms unrelated to actual life (familiar equations were, love is wonderful and overcomes all evil, fallen women are beyond redemption, and "one American is worth four of the citizens of any other nation"), the plays of the early twentieth century evidenced the playwrights' felt need to confront popular stereotypes: "the inviolability of marriage; the sanctity of mother love; the heroism of war; and the respectability of commerce."⁸ Although such a realism was admittedly frequently a superficial one that too often tended toward "sentimentality, homely familiarities, and tear-soaked melodramas,"⁹ it was a pronounced advance in dramaturgy over the poetic and romantic tragedy of European descent that had characterized the plays of the former period.

⁷Downer, pp. 40-45.
⁸Downer, pp. 46-47.
⁹Taubman, p. 98.
The movement toward realism was given added impetus by the social and economic changes brought about by World War I. Robert Sklar, in *The Plastic Age (1917-1930)*, has noted that "American culture was newborn in the twenties." "It was a time for naming all things new," he observed, "a task for language at which the novelists and poets, the critics and historians leaped as if predestined. In the span of a decade," he concluded, "they created the most brilliant and varied literary culture that America had ever known."\(^{10}\) The war caused a national reassessment resulting, in drama, "in an examination of the institution of marriage, the relations of parents and children, and the relations of the individual to society."\(^{11}\) Quinn suggests that this second change in dramatic focus in the twentieth century did not cause a new selection of themes as did the first change prior to 1910, but a new emphasis, particularly an emphasis toward a more thorough analysis and more careful scrutiny of the individual that Dickinson referred to the "little man."\(^{12}\) Quinn suggested further that the true significance of that scrutiny of the individual was revealed in the playwrights' attempts "to deal sincerely with

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\(^{11}\) Quinn, p. 207.

\(^{12}\) Dickinson, p. 145.
character."\(^{13}\) Beyond all that, however, was the unavoidable impact caused by the production of O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* in February, 1920, an occurrence after which, Atkinson perhaps too hurriedly concluded, "Hokum dramas like *The Easiest Way*, *Salvation Nell*, and *The Witching Hour* became impossible."\(^{14}\)

However, while the main current of the American drama was rapidly maturing toward sophisticated realism, rural America, even after the war, held onto the older, stereotyped themes of love, family, and a Utopian morality. Those Americans continued to hold fast, almost desperately, to the older ideals in spite of the arrival of the automobile, radio, and "silver screen." Ultimately, however, the great Depression was to tear brutally from their hands all those cherished American dreams of social equality and happiness for every citizen.

The chautauqua managers and their audiences along the far-flung circuits continued to live in the fading light of that pioneer perfectionism. Consequently, the managers selected and the audiences thoroughly enjoyed the plays of the newly emerging realists whose strings had not as yet been severed from the nineteenth-century idealism, but

\(^{13}\) Quinn, p. 208.

\(^{14}\) Atkinson, p. 195.
whose themes were reaching out toward a stronger personal and empathic identification with the peoples of the farm, the village, the market, and the factory. Except for Greet's early productions of Shakespeare and a few other classics sporadically produced by various ephemeral amateur companies, the plays chosen by Peffer, Keighley, and their counterparts in the other bureaus were plays written tentatively in hopes of capturing the heart beats and pangs of the evasive American Everyman—The First Year, New Brooms, The Show-Off, Sun-Up, Turn to the Right, and Broadway Jones were a few such plays Redpath chose for tours. Admittedly inferior dramatically to plays of the later realists like Odets, Anderson, Miller, and Williams, many of the chautauqua-selected plays must be regarded as necessary links between the melodramatic nineteenth and the realistic twentieth-century dramas. Although the bridge constructed by the transitional playwrights was, as seen in retrospect, unstable, heavily flawed, poorly engineered, and based on superficial imitations of Scribe's "well-make play" formula (popularly abridged to plot advancement, character revelation, and the arousal and maintenance of suspense\(^{15}\)), the American

dramatic movement survived the crossing as it progressed toward a truer theatrical realism. Two plays chosen by chautauqua managers that well illustrate that transitional period of play writing are Owen Davis' *Detour* and Lula Vollmer's *Sun-Up*.

Owen Davis was a prolific journeyman writer of melodramas, who at one time had as many as seventeen plays being produced simultaneously.\(^1^6\) His formula, Davis said, consisted of a painfully virtuous leading man, a leading woman in love with him, a faithful friend of the hero who was funny, a worthy soubrette, a villain who was wicked for no reason but pure cussedness, a heavy woman who was in love but always unhappy, and, finally, a good title, which carried one-fifth of the success of the play.\(^1^7\) All that remained, concluded Davis, was to arrange those characters into the following acts: "Act One starts the trouble; in Act Two things look bad; in Act Three the stage carpenter gets busy and saves the leading woman; and in Act Four, the lovers are united and the villain is punished."\(^1^8\)

After World War I, however, when the Broadway theatre began to mature, Owen Davis, tired of trash, "had the talent

\(^{1^6}\) Atkinson, p. 77


\(^{1^8}\) Ibid.
and the experience to keep pace with it." In 1921, Davis left his favorite genre to attempt two plays in the style of the new realism: Icebound, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, and The Detour, which was chosen for chautauqua tours in 1922 and 1928.

In The Detour, Davis consciously rearranged his melodramatic techniques to concentrate on the reproduction of the life of ordinary people caught in the backwater world of rural Long Island. Moses has suggested, that having had extensive experience with such playwriting tricks, Owen knew they would work again with audiences anticipating a truer picture of life. The story focused on the Hardy family, who were truck farmers, and on their young neighbor, Tom Lane, who had just had the misfortune to open a garage on a road subsequently closed temporarily, forcing all traffic, and with it all urban life, to detour around both his establishment and the culturally starved lives of the Hardys. Each character displayed his own personal ambition, or "dream" as Mrs. Hardy referred to it. Mr. Hardy had his eye on the expansion of his lands for which he had only $500 of the $1,500 necessary for a

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19 Atkinson, p. 77.
20 Moses, p. 491.
down payment; Kate Hardy, his twenty-year-old daughter, carefully counseled for many years by her mother, wanted a career in painting for which the two women had saved enough money from egg sales and the sale of family heirlooms to send Kate to New York to study; and Tom, the garage owner who had the land Mr. Hardy wanted to buy, and who needed to sell it to save his garage, which "the detour" had brought to the brink of financial ruin. Davis, without much effort at concealing his devices, manipulated his dramatic elements so that if Kate Hardy gave her father the $1,000 she and her mother had saved for her to use to escape their cultural isolation (and she might as well give it to him since she was told by a visiting artist that her paintings displayed no significant talent), Mr. Hardy could buy the land he wanted from Tom, who in turn could use the money to save his garage until the road was opened once again. As the final curtain fell, Tom and Kate were seen together in the moonlight, while Mrs. Hardy, observing them, had a new dream to nurture unfolding before her, and felt her heart "swell with eternal hope." The episodes leading up to such an ending, concluded Dickinson in his criticism, were "in the last degree mechanical and forced, but the characters were true to life and the mass
impression of the play was satisfying."\textsuperscript{21} Quinn agreed, suggesting that Davis owed his more than customary realism of character delineation to Ibsen.\textsuperscript{22}

Such realism would easily strike a familiar note with chautauqua audiences, who were beginning to realize their cultural isolation and who personally had experienced walks along financial precipices similar to those of the Hardys. Whether in Long Island or in Iowa, rural Americans cherished dreams, nourished hopes of better lives, especially for their children, but accepted with reverent resignation the realities that farm life too often enforced on those who lived it.

With the blossoming of the modern age with its millions of automobiles, fast trains, and instant communications proclaiming the glories and wonders of urban life, the Kate Hardys could go to seek the realization of their dreams, talent or no, with little expense or effort. As that day arrived in America, not only did plays like The Detour portraying "the unquenchable determination to outwit environment to rise higher than circumstance"\textsuperscript{23} become dated, but also chautauqua itself

\textsuperscript{21}Dickinson, p. 204. \textsuperscript{22}Quinn, p. 217. \textsuperscript{23}Moses, p. 494.
had been abandoned—dreams easily realized did not need the service of the vicarious life offered by the plays of the chautauqua platforms.

Lula Vollmer's *Sun-Up* (1924), stimulated by Frederick Kock's work in North Dakota and North Carolina, was also an example of transitional realism, although more regionally limited than *The Detour* and, therefore, somewhat less generally appealing. It was toured on chautauqua circuits in 1929, after a concentrated and virulent dose of frothy comedies, giving the unsuspecting audiences a large portion of American folk drama unique to grassroots stages.

As in the phenomenally successful comedy, *Lightnin'*, the main character, Widow Cagle, was confronted by "the law," a seemingly hostile force, which to the Widow violated her hillbred ethics. The foreign force that robbed her of her father and her husband (for operating an illegal still) threatened also to take her son, who was avoiding the Draft. Clues to the appeal of this play to chautauqua audiences can be found in Vollmer's character descriptions. Widow Cagle was a "frail, but wiry, type of woman" who displayed "a very positive character, but the tenderness in her nature shows in spite of her efforts to conceal it." Rufe Cagle, the widow's son, was also positively described as having a
"gentle and kind" manner and being of a "build to suggest great physical strength." Pop Todd, an old character reminiscent of nineteenth-century repertory characters, was described by Vollmer as "of the hound-dog type." All of the play's characters were delineated with a rural warmth and sensitivity empathically attuned to chautauqua heartbeats. Thematically as well, familiar cords were struck when it become obvious that in spite of family precedents, the son must serve his country to save his own home. The folk material was used timidly, Downer has suggested, but it satisfied the purpose of telling the people of their own life and thus made the theatre "a personal ritual experience instead of a time-passer merely."25

Much more typical of plays chosen to be presented on chautauqua platforms were the "racy, sophisticated, and facile" dramas of Cohan, Craven, and Smith, whom Dickinson chided for representing American life in such elementary symbols that it caused them to ring untrue.26 Such typical chautauqua comedies were in the tradition

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25 Downer, pp. 79-80.
26 Dickinson, p. 239.
of Harrigan's formula of humor and sentiment typified by a play not toured for chautauqua, *Abie's Irish Rose* (1922), which enjoyed a five-year run. Gassner reviewed Harrigan's contribution by observing that "with his successors in vaudeville and in lowbrow comedy he brought into the theatre the robustness of the American spirit," and the result was actually "far more exhilarating than anything that the literary theatre was producing.""28

Especially representative of that tradition as seen on the chautauqua circuits was Winchell Smith and Frank Bacon's *Lightnin'* (1918), a play that stemmed from the same native gift for "broad type characterizations and hearty laughter" that had been begun by Harrigan, but contained a stronger suggestion of nascent American folk realism. The stronger plays of that type conveyed at least a suggestion of actual life and genuine, authentic characterizations, whereas the weaker ones, like Craven's *New Brooms* or *The First Year*, conformed more closely to the old political maxim from China repeated by Dickinson, "amuse them, tire them not, let them not know."30

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29 Ibid.

30 Dickinson, p. 128.
Lightnin', with Frank Bacon as its star, ran in New York for 1,291 performances and closed on June 15, 1921. \(^{31}\) Chautauqua ad men billed the play as "the most American of American plays." Advance notices encouraged the local superintendents to praise the play for being so human and the characters for being so typical of people "whom you know that you almost forget it is a play and think it is a page from modern life." \(^{32}\) Although after the plays of O'Neill and Williams, Lightnin' hardly seems "a page from life," to the untrained eyes of chautauqua audiences who saw the play presented in a relaxed, homespun style, its presentation would have appeared real enough in 1927.

Bacon originally played Lightnin' Bill as the lineal descendent of Rip Van Winkle and Joseph Jefferson he was, \(^{33}\) in a style undoubtedly imitated to advantage by the actors trained by Keighley at the Redpath Play Bureau. This character-lovable, sometimes bumbling, while at the same time unconsciously clever-fearlessly walked the fine line.

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\(^{32}\)Redpath press release, SUI, 573, Morningside, Iowa.

between breaking the law on the one hand and outsmarting the true crooks on the other. Although Lightnin' Bill never did anything bad, he and his compatriots spent much of their time dodging the unfair pursuits of the Sheriff by hopping from the California to the Nevada side of the Calivada Hotel lobby. This highly contrived circumstance, heavily salted with interludes about love and human eccentricity as well as a full portion of hearty homespun humor, was typical not only of sentiment-softened satire and farce of the early twentieth-century Broadway fare, but of Broadway's self-appointed rural proxy, the circuit chautauqua, as well.

A second characteristic farcical play that toured quite successfully for chautauqua was *It Pays to Advertise* (1914) by Megrue and Hackett. That play was the first native comedy to be selected for extensive chautauqua tours and was the first in a long line of plays about American business practices. To follow were such plays as *Adam and Eva* (1919), a "refreshing story of a family of 'wasters' turned productive through necessity,"34 which delineated the metamorphosis of a young man of fashion content to sponge off of rich relatives into a productive, dutiful son; *Not So Fast* (1923), Captain

34Redpath press release, SUI, 2, *Adam and Eva*.
Conrad Westervelt's "irresistible" comedy drama exhibiting the financial wizardry of various characters who invent numerous schemes to enrich their Kentucky estate; The Easy Mark, Jack Larrie's comedy drama about the business practices of a small midwestern family; and New Brooms (1924), Craven's comedy about the financial generation gap between a blue-chip father and a dilettante son. One of the principal themes of all these plays was well summarized by one of the characters in Winchell Smith's The Fortune Hunter (1909):

All you have to do is to select some small country town, far enough away from the city, where you can content yourself to settle down to the simple life for a while and make yourself solid in the community by your exemplary habits, combined with good clothes and polite manners.

Such themes proved to be immensely popular with chautauqua audiences.

All such comedies of the first quarter of this century, "conceived in noise and reared in perpetual motion" as Moses remarks, were in the tradition of the slapstick humor of Hoyt, to which had been added a touch of truth and reality. "Realism," suggested Moses, "joined hands

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35 Redpath press release, SUI, 179, Not So Fast. Keighley played the lead in Redpath's premier production of this play.

36 Dickinson, p. 156.

37 Moses, p. 329.
with incongruity, and we began to get the modern farce."

It Pays to Advertise was the epitome of such plays, in which "the characters become mere pawns on a board, moved deftly, swiftly, unerringly, crossed and recrossed with incidents and coincidences that fit in a network of fun." Such action, Moses concludes, "scintillates," but it "does not bear too much scrutiny." The result was a "bustling combination of romance and slapstick," sewn together by the threads of one of the current national business crazed, national advertising.38 Besides the inevitable romantic love theme in the play, seemingly a prerequisite for chautauqua selection that began with The Melting Pot, an unusually large number of chautauqua plays contained strong elements of the paternal love theme, which also began with The Melting Pot (in which the relationship is set up between David and his uncle, Mendell) and continued through the elder and younger Martin in It Pays, Jackson and Jones in Broadway Jones, to Tom and Bates in New Brooms.

The Martins were successful second-generation businessmen in soap, as were the Bateses in brooms and the Joneses in chewing gum. The sons, however, showed little interest

38 Downer, p. 121.
or ability in their enforced vocation at the opening of each play. As the plot unfolded, then, each was duly converted to the true greatness of American private enterprise. The thinly veiled plot objective was fueled by the American ethical disgust with idleness and waste, an ethical position the playwrights honored by portraying the reformation of the errant youth through various traditional methods of comic correction. The comic contrivance in *It Pays to Advertise* was that Mr. Martin lured his seemingly lazy son, Rodney, into a bet that tricked the supposedly unknowing Rodney into setting up a "paper" soap company in direct competition with his father's. With the slogan, "Thirteen Soap—Unlucky for Dirt," Rodney set out to prove that "hen's eggs are widely consumed where duck eggs are discarded because the hen makes no bones about announcing the availability of her product."³⁹ Mr. Martin was finally forced into buying out his son's business, had to accept Rodney's conversion to business, and had to admit to his own conversion to the effectiveness of advertising. The playwrights arranged such incidents to bring about dual conversions in order to show that there was value in the outlook of both extremes of this vocational generation gap.

³⁹Ibid., p. 121.
In 1914 in New York, the farcical veneer obscured all these contrivances sufficiently for the play to be reviewed as a "triple-plated mirth convolution," and to be likened to "riding past a million billboards in a ninety-horse motor car." Moses chose *It Pays* for his 1925 edition of *Representative American Dramas* to represent "American farce at its best and most popular." Its construction was the model of its period, Moses contended, full of good humor and never-ending wit whose preaching was the one skein that held its mechanical ingenuity together. The characters of the play were mere semblances, symbols of outward life—the businessman, the rich man, the foolish son, the poster heroine—all types readily understood by any audience, not only because of their utter simplicity, but because they were always found in situations familiar to every American, situations about which everything but the exact number of pratfalls was known as the curtain rose for act one.

But chautauqua audiences never tired of seeing their homey ideals reinforced, of seeing better Americans doing more efficient work at the end than at the beginning, of seeing the "direction [of] human thought and interest to

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41 Moses, p. 329.
the worthwhile things of life," as Keith Vawter once remarked.\textsuperscript{42} The chautauqua audiences did not realize that those plays were not comedies in the best sense, partly because "they did not get down to cases."\textsuperscript{43} Dickinson explains that "there is nothing more insistent than comedy getting beneath the surface to the underlying reality; there is nothing more cruel than true comedy."\textsuperscript{44} Recalling the classical form of comedy, he concluded that "our playwrights of the popular school have lacked that cruel edge."

Few, if any, chautauqua patrons were familiar with the classical theories of comedy; what they sought was the reinforcement of existing values by repetition. The ethical statements were made more palatable by humor that was based primarily on the exposing of minor character flaws together with some clever dialogue usually built on the element of surprise. None of those elements were very often intrinsically related to the form of the play. The ideals of chautauqua, however, first laid down by Vincent in 1886, were still to be upheld by the presentation of these plays; that is, the plays as was the case with all chautauqua talent, were intended

\textsuperscript{43} Dickinson, p. 239.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
To take people on all sides of their natures and cultivate them symmetrically, making men, women, and children everywhere more affectionate and sympathetic as members of a family; more conscientious and reverent, as worshipers together of the true God; more intelligent and thoughtful as students in a universe of ideas; and more industrious, economical, just, and generous, as members of society in a work-a-day world.\textsuperscript{45}

The early religious plays, \textit{A Servant in the House} and \textit{The Melting Pot}, decried bigotry within the crucible of America's cities as they absorbed their new burden of immigrants, while Cohan's Jackson Jones, Craven's Tom Bates and Rodney Martin were seen to improve their socio-economic standing as the plays progressed. Unfortunately, few plays after 1920 lived up to those high ideals. Some titles among the later comedies suggested their lack of redeeming social concern and uplift: \textit{Everyday, Give and Take}, \textit{In Love With Love, Smilin' Through}, and \textit{Tommy}, for example.

Quite typical of the low order of comedies presented by chautauquas during the 1920's were \textit{The First Year} (1920, toured in 1925) by Frank Craven and \textit{Applesauce} (1925, toured in 1926) by Barry Conners. Both were billed as domestic comedies, and each examined the wonders of young married life against a backdrop of the toilworn, discordant

\textsuperscript{45}Vincent, p. 4.
marriages of the doting parents. Both plays also achieved more immediate credibility than time was to allow them to retain. Dickinson, for example, admired in The First Year the "freshness of humor . . . , the domestic emotions . . . , the faithful adherence of theatrical motive to the motive of life and of stage fate to the teaching of experience" which the play exhibited. Quinn, too, praised the characters for exhibiting a "highly colored chromo," and although he found the plot contrivances so absurd as to be irritating, "yet the hilarity was continuous," which raised Craven's play "above the mass by the human touch which led thousands to remember their own difficulties in a similar period of life." The enactment of such mundanity hardly seems praiseworthy even if there was a touch of verity in the obstacles to happiness that were portrayed. However, the only too obvious reinforcement of desirable domestic behavior squared with laughter was found appealing over 700 times to New York audiences and throughout the chautauqua constituency. Dickinson correctly remarked that although such plays are not great art, "they are not lies"; the truth, however flimsily presented,

46 Dickinson, p. 156.
47 Quinn, p. 119.
was the only evidence of significance that was demanded by the easily satisfied audiences of the 1920's. "It is something new," noted Dickinson, "for ordinary people to have any interest in their own affairs." Admitting the degrading result of catering to common popular interest, he lamented that "now that they have obtained control, their own affairs become their only interest."

Reaching far too hastily for an artistic rationalization of the theatre's sudden preoccupation with the domestic microcosm, Dickinson concluded that "the stage must come down to the sidewalks and floors on which we live." Fortunately, Dickinson's Gorkian suggestion went unheeded by American playwrights.

Frank Craven's play, as the title suggested, concerned the simple adventures of a young couple during their first year of married life. Burns Mantle summarized the appeal of the script as "one of those true, homely little comedies which are a perfect blend of character, keenly observed, and with human comedy situations, overlaid with a suggestion of farce." It was one of the first of those shallow sentimental dramas whose weak plot was masked by carefully placed comic business.

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48 Dickinson, p. 156.  
49 Ibid.  
Similar scripts included *Cinderella Man*, a play designed to manipulate "the heartstrings of sentiment in a most fascinating manner";\(^{51}\) *Two Fellows and a Girl* and *In Love With Love*, plays about young things who could not make up their minds with plots described "as delicate as a cobweb yet as clean and strong as a cable";\(^{52}\) *Six Cylinder Love*, another of those little dramas of home life among newlyweds,\(^{53}\) whose plot concerned the social changes that were beginning to surface at the opening of the automobile age;\(^{54}\) and *Tommy*, another comedy of young people that was supposed to be like "a page from everyday American life."\(^{55}\)

Five years after *The First Year* opened, the bureau manager's preoccupation with domesticity was still disappointingly prevalent and was typified by their decision to tour Barry Conner's *Applesauce*. The play was written

\(^{51}\)Press releases, SUI, 578, *Cinderella Man*.

\(^{52}\)Press release, SUI, 115, *In Love With Love*.

\(^{53}\)Burns Mantle, *The Best Plays of 1921-1922* (Boston, 1922), p. 163; and Quinn, p. 120.

\(^{54}\)Press release, SUI, 578, *Six Cylinder Love*. The play was cleverly described as a drama which jumped along "as a forty-five mile clip," furnishing an evening of boisterous laughter and at the same time [preaching] a sermon against extravagance that you cannot dodge."

\(^{55}\)Press release, SUI, 245, *Tommy-1*. This play boasted a publicity notice that claimed its scenes were "filled with genuine laughter and pathos that sparkles and shines like the trousers of a blue surge suit."
to uphold the simple virtues of the "loving blarney" that a young wife, Hazel Robinson, received from her impecunious husband, Bill McAllister, a semi-worthless young man who supported himself and his wife with well-placed flattery. When it was selected for chautauqua tours in 1926, the play was touted by the Redpath management as being "the biggest drawing-card in the line of a play that has ever been at Chautauquas." However, at the close of the season, some managers had changed their minds. In spite of a report from a local superintendent that Applesauce was "a big hit over our circuit," Harrison in Chicago felt otherwise. He wrote to Keighley that local reports to the contrary, he considered its tour on his circuits "a flop." "It was the heaviest we have ever had on our Seven Day," continued Harrison, "and, believe me, we will not let another company of that kind go through the season." Scenically ponderous and dramatically vapid, Applesauce had but a short-lived appeal. Upon its opening in New York after a long and reasonably successful

56 Press release, SUI, 10, Applesauce.
57 Letter to Mr. Pulwiler dated January 15, 1925, SUI, 10, Applesauce.
58 Letters to Keighley dated January 31 and March 8, 1927, SUI, 124, Keighley.
run at the La Salle Theatre in Chicago, Conner's play re-
ceived restrained reviews. "One of those synthetic
concoctions," wrote one reviewer; "it is of homely America
small-town virtues, sweet girlhood, glib young men, and
violent jerks at the heart-strings that are calculated
to send the customers out into the night bigger and
better men and women," just the sort of recipe that
chautauqua audiences could not resist and that managers
were only too glad to send out. "The exquisite cleanli-
ness, the homeliness, the truth of it," the reviews
continued, "paints a joy in the listeners' memory which
clings and goes out laughing to itself." "With its wit,
great humor, and splendid realism," one reviewer con-
cluded, "Applesauce is going to be one of the long-run
pleasures of this winter."61

The phrase "splendid realism" that was dropped so
casually into the reviewer had a very ironic sound when
placed in the proper perspective of American dramatic
history: at the time of that writing, Beyond the Horizon
was five years old; Desire Under the Elms had just been
written; Eva Le Gallienne was reviving repertory with
plays by Ibsen, Chekhov, Girandoux, and Schnitzler;

59 "Applesauce" Drama Calendar, October 12, 1925, p. 5.
60 Redpath press releases, SUI, 10, Applesauce.
61 Ibid.
Street Scene would soon be written; and staging practices were turning from Belasco's literalism to the more romantic and theatrically valid New Stagecraft of Jones, Simonson, and Mielziner. The supposed realism of plays like Applesauce on the professional stage would soon be proved scant indeed; the sentimental mantle was then to be passed on to the writers of film scripts. In spite of that trend in the legitimate theatre, however, chautauqua managers remained unaware of such changes and continued to maintain their preference for the sentiment-softened satire and farce so typical of American comedy during the first quarter of the century. Scripts like Applesauce, which were by no means "weighty vehicles" and in which denouncements were achieved abruptly and conveniently under a "subtle satire" continued in high demand throughout the years of chautauqua activity.

The wide popularity of such trivial themes that appeared first in the drama and subsequently in motion pictures was partially explained by the fact that many of the playwrights of the period were conciously or unconsciously trying to conform to various formal aspects of comic literature, imitating in some degree the classic

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62Downer, p. 369.
models of comic writing without allowing their subjects to achieve any significant magnitude. Classic as well as modern dramatic critics generally agree that the structure of the comic plot is episodic: for example, the pattern is not, according to Susanne Langer, "a complete organic development reaching a foregone, inevitable conclusion, but is episodic, restoring a lost balance, and implying a new future." The norm or equilibrium of human action is broken, momentarily, by foible, carelessness, ineptitude, or stupidity, causing the expected patterns to disappear and leaving the embarrassed characters out of step, scurrying to readjust to the norm and restore the equilibrium. Playwrights of the early twentieth century often very obviously manipulated their characters, both in the beginning to set up the comic aberration and then at the end to correct it. For example, in The First Year the marriage of the young couple is made difficult by poverty only to be corrected by an unexpected stroke of financial farsightedness on the part of the young husband. As Feibleman points out, comedy is a kind of "exemplification of the proposition that nothing actual is wholly logical," which gives the playwright license to tamper with his

contrived actuality without too much regard for logicality. Comedy, Feibleman continues, "consists in the indirect affirmation of the ideal logical order by means of the derogation of the limited order of actuality," an affirmation that the playwrights of the chautauqua period attempted to achieve thematically rather than structurally. Their assumption was that a homespun environment would engender a virtuous ideal order.

Structurally, the playwrights whose plays were representative of chautauqua fare used the comic episodic form more as a license than a guideline. They believed that once the equilibrium of order was broken and the thread of actuality lost, the writer was free to manipulate his characters and their interreactions in any manner that suited his externally imposed purpose rather than to allow the comic corrective to grow out of the inherent qualities of the play form itself. No valid correlation was developed between content and form: the events were simply placed within the structural framework to achieve the greatest immediate comic impact rather than to serve any possible intrinsic comic pattern of progression.

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Logic is ordinarily sacrificed at the end of comedies. As Kerr had pointed out, the denouement of comedy "bears no organic relationship to the body of comedy," and thus the finale is merely "an extraordinarily convenient device for cutting short an action that might have been improvised indefinitely." Molier did not write his endings to be believed, he wrote them to let everyone go home.65 However, a weaker comic playwright often moves his structural machete at random through his script, cutting and hacking up his characters and their actions to achieve a maximum of laughter with a minimum of effort. Although he may occasionally achieve an element of surprise, he sacrifices any development of suspense as well as the subtler elements of the comic form. The result is not so much that the abnormal is drawn to the norm in these flimsier plays, but that the norm is simply reinforced for the audience and paraded as desirable. The socially dangerous patterns of behavior are not expelled or corrected, but the acceptable patterns are blindly applauded as being inviolable.

In chautauqua, then, the quality of comedy was typically only superficially developed, consisting too

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often of a limited series of contrived situations, each seeding another until the play's two hours were spent, at which time the parents forgave the children for a hasty marriage, everyone finally parting happily. The structural level exhibited was seldom more sophisticated than Wilkie Collin's formula: "make 'em laugh, make 'em weep, make 'em wait."\textsuperscript{66} To avoid boredom and monotony, the playwrights added large portions of passion and sentiment along with a salting of the simpler comic devices of repetition, irony, and surprise.

As chautauqua audiences had no developed sense of dramatic discrimination, they would enjoy the most threadbare and trite characters and situations. They were content with what Langer refers to as "livingness," the quality of seeing virtual life enacted on their platform. As virtual life is diffuse and incomplete, as opposed to actual life, the chautauqua audience easily followed virtual life's visible path into the future, participating in its intensified, exaggerated tempo until "the exhibition of vitality \textsuperscript{rose} to a breaking point, to mirth and laughter."\textsuperscript{67} It was that human "life-feeling" that the chautauqua audiences craved, that feeling that their own

\textsuperscript{66}Short, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{67}Langer, pp. 135 ff.
often monotonous, slow, and eventless lives lacked. Knowing of nothing more sophisticated or complex than those ephemeral lines or actions that caused them to laugh, they continued to feed contentedly on the same bland diet for a dozen years, never taking note of the constant repetitions of both characters and devices.

Nowhere was such repetition more blatant than in the characterizations. The characters drawn by Craven, Conners, Flavin, Laurence, and Lindsay, among others, were remarkably similar, due in large part to the fact that each playwright was content to use the most broadly generalized, stereotyped characters: the gruff but loving husband; the garrulous, meddling mother, the innocent, naive and all-too-trusting girl of twenty; the loquacious young man of little means but inbred wit; and the plodding, successful, but lackluster and unromantic young man whom everyone was supposed to emulate.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century a series of stock characters in this minor drama evolved into a pattern of types not altogether unlike the character delineations of the Commedia del Arts. As a result of a group of playwrights selecting similar characters and situations for their material, character types emerged in American drama. For example, characters were frequently
selected from the American business world. To that outline were then added the too familiar complications of romance and marriage. In those situations, the audience members were not asked to perceive verisimilitude, only to recognize a consistency of behavior. Styan points out that as comic characters are not expected to undergo a change or reversal as is true of the characters in serious drama, the playwright is obligated only to present the same characters in Act Four as he introduced in Act One.\(^68\) However, minor plays typical of those that chautauqua selected displayed a short-cut to this consistency: on the one hand they portrayed well-established, easily recognizable types whose consistency had already been established by tradition, while on the other hand their imitations revealed only the most superficial level of development. The chautauqua play directors were forced to rely heavily on the personality of the actors to provide the necessary character depth and variety. Moses suggests that plays without literary pretensions such as those of the early twentieth century were utterly dependent on the actor.\(^69\)


\(^{69}\) Moses, p. viii.
For example, during the Broadway performances of those plays, various "stars" gave credence to the flimsy characters through the dynamics of their own stage personalities: Allan Dinehart, Jessie Crommette, and William Holden in *Applesauce*; Myrtle Tannehill and George Cohan in *Broadway Jones*; Cyril Maude in *Grumpy*; and Ralph Morgan, Henry Hull, Lynn Fontaine, and Robert Strange in *In Love With Love*, to name a few. Such actors and actresses were depended upon to provide essential character particulars that the playwrights either did not or could not provide. When such plays were sent out with less experienced companies that lacked star leadership, some of them were not as successful as the management had hoped. That there were significant successes and general popularity was due in large part more to the nondiscriminating audiences than to either the dramaturgy or the acting.

Most of the plays selected for chautauqua were of the *Applesauce* type. A few others selected were examples of nascent realism such as *The Detour*, which was somewhat overestimated by Moses when he called it "one of our highest attainments in American realism for the stage"; more accurately he judged it as "an all too rare sign of the deepening of native dramaturgic art in the American theatre."70

70 *Moses*, pp. 494 and 492 respectively.
However, the most capable dramatic writing selected for chautauqua viewing came from two skillful craftsmen, George Kelly and George Cohan.

To the still cautious chautauqua playgoers of 1920 and 1921 when his plays were first selected for chautauqua tours, Cohan's expert sense of comic situation, the high style of his dialogue, and his undeniable flair for capturing the essence of American life were especially appealing. In both of his plays that were chosen, *Broadway Jones* (1912) and the mystery farce, *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1913), Cohan, "a completely native, though hardly modest flower,"\(^{71}\) exhibited characters of unmistakable American background and behavior, in spite of their being heavily manipulated by Cohan's comic plot machine. To the chautauqua audiences who had just learned to accept and appreciate live drama under the spell of both the play readers and the humorists, the fast-moving, Variety-based humor of Cohan's plays was quite agreeable.

The second of Cohan's plays to be toured for chautauqua, *Broadway Jones*, exhibited best his talent for revealing the quirks and foibles of the little man, and his treatment of that subject was perfectly suitable to chautauqua

\(^{71}\)Hewitt, p. 313.
audiences' tastes. As Dickinson suggested, "the self-consciousness of all of us demanded that deeper emotions should not be touched; a youthful optimism and a belief in good fairies demanded that he who walked the gutter today should ride in his limousine tomorrow."  

Broadway Jones, acted originally by Cohan himself, was a young man of great ambition, fancy schemes, and little money. He traveled up and down the Broadway scene, ignoring his growing debts and the absurdity of marrying a rich widow to solve his financial problems. The scene was to represent what rural Americans thought of New York: fun but naughty and ultimately destructive. The solution of the plot was well adapted to the chautauqua audiences' expectations—a return to the honest simplicity of small town life. Act One went on just long enough to convince the audience of the deep financial and personal trouble Jackson Jones was in. Once that was established, Cohan quickly shifted the scene to an "all-American City" sporting a considerable nineteenth-century viewpoint, Jonesville, Connecticut. There, Jackson was forced to assume the role of the son of the financially comfortable owner of a chewing-gum plant. As critic Arthur Ruhl observed at the time,

72Dickinson, p. 155.
The first impulse is to sell ou to the Trust for the millions they offer him and in the next three acts... Broadway's ingenious desire to get the cash at once is contrasted with the earnest attempts of the young woman secretary of the factory to make him see that his duty to his family... and to the hundreds of workmen... should make him buckle down and continue the business.73

Mixing "an old-fashioned sense of the theatrical with naive homespun philosophy," summarized Hewitt, Cohan softened "brashness, hardness, vulgarity, and cynicism" with "humor, naiveté, and sentiment."74

Also certain to appeal to rural Americans was the about-face Jackson Jones experienced, from a spoiled, practically useless young man to a true son of Horatio Alger, a change Jackson himself best describes:

Now I don't know anything about business and I don't know anything about money. I never did a day's work in my life for the simple reason that I never had to. The only thing I've entered into in the last five years is a contest to see who could stay up the longest. I've never had anything good to do. What I've needed all along... is an incentive, something to inspire me, something to spur me on...

Such dialogue generated admiration and contentment in the breasts of the chautauqua audience: the hero would be

74Hewitt, p. 315.
taught the proper lesson in American values, was seen fleeing from the ravages of the big and evil city, to become finally a quiet family man, a pillar of society of whom the nineteenth-century conservatives could be rightly proud.

The Seven Keys to Baldpate, though a play of a somewhat different nature, also displayed Cohan's sure use of dramatic elements. Besides a clever plot structure suggestive of the later mystery-dramas of Agatha Christie (the audience could not refrain from counting down the "seven keys" as each was necessarily revealed), the play revealed a carefully delineated main character in Mr. Magee. Magee was a young writer of cheap novels, who exuded not only Yankee ingenuity and cleverness, but the American propensity for taking on strange bets. In this case, Mr. Magee accepted a bet that he could lock himself inside a summer resort hotel in the middle of winter and, in twenty-four hours, compose one of his novels. Supposedly, he had the only key to the building, but as it turned out, six other people arrived who also had "only" keys, all of whom, together with a possible ghost and some stolen money, combined to provide enough excitement and action to fill several of Magee's books. Magee was handsomely adept at solving every quirk of the much-tortured
plot, his native wit being easily equal to the task put before him by his challengers.

The correspondence among the circuit managers prior to the selection of the play for chautauqua revealed how they ultimately came to choose it. In a typical letter it was highly recommended because it demanded little scenically and because it had "lots of good laughs." The letter also revealed that the management thought Seven Keys displayed "a great deal more dramatic merit" than It Pays to Advertise, which was the previous season's offering. Besides, although the original play had a large cast, it could easily be cut to only "a prologue and two acts." Chautauqua managers obviously were not seeking great dramas, or even good ones; their primary concerns were always phrased in just two questions: can it be done so as not to offend anyone (e.g., length, dialogue, actions, and morality), and can money be made on it.

Another example of the better comedies chosen by the managers for summer tours was George Kelly's The Show-Off. That play, which Heywood Broun called "the best comedy which has yet been written by an American," was expanded

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75 A letter dated December 27, 1919 to O. W. Thomas and another to L. G. Duker, n.d., SUI, 1043, Cleveland.

76 Quoted in Dickinson, p. 246.
from an earlier sketch entitled "Poor Aubrey." As summarized in the Chautauqua Weekly of 1927, Kelly's play was "an amazing story of the life of a typical American family." The reporter for chautauqua, however, somewhat distorted Kelly's script for the sake of his clientele. Aubrey Piper was a liar, a braggart, and a pretender who was "raised to significance in drama because he [was] consistently so." Far from being representative of the home life of the ordinary chautauqua patron, the characters of The Show-Off were involved in "a tragi-comedy of little stupid failures," which culminated in the death of Father Fisher at the moment that Aubrey, still pretending to riches he did not possess, got into a collision with a traffic policeman in a borrowed car. Stressing sentiment over farce, the reviewer in the Chautauquan continued to interpret the play according to chautauqua standards. "It provokes laughter and tears," the report went on (the tears or laughter somehow being added if the script did not normally call for them), "in connection with the tendency of American

78 Dickinson, p. 247.
79 Ibid., p. 248.
youth to marry where it will without any regard for needful economic consideration for the maintenance of a home later on." The reporter chose to stress the secondary themes of youth and love rather than Kelly's intentionally darkly comic handling of the very distasteful character of Aubrey.

A similar chautauqua-oriented report appeared in The Chautauqua Daily in 1926. There the writer chose a slightly different appeal, suggesting that although Kelly set his play in Philadelphia, "he might just as well have chosen Oshkosh, Kokomo, or Coshocton, for in every town there is a "Show-Off," someone who is "the town cut-up," "the wise guy," and the smart-alek." The chautauqua publicity staff was taking Kelly at his word then he subtitled The Show-Off "a Transcript of Life in Three Acts."

Professional reviewers saw more deeply into Kelly's comic abilities. J. T. Brein, reviewing the 1924 London production, called Aubrey a "gas-bag who lets off hot air in an illuminating ray of financial 'cuteness.'"

82 Moses, p. 611.
"Under all the palaver and braggadocio," he continued, "fired at us in volleys of vertiginous rapidity, there was a rich vein of satire, and a grain of truth as well as sentiment."\textsuperscript{83} Moses attributed the continuing success of the play to the completeness with which the playwright saw through his characters, the significant handling of their petty psychologies and their commonplace reactions, until out of it came "that thing which is life itself..."\textsuperscript{84}

Moses then suggested a fact about the central point of the play that would also be quite amenable to chautauqua sentiments: "It is monumentally splendid, this irony of Kelly's; an irony that holds the interest through the characteristically American good-humored way we have of laughing at our own foibles and of believing they are the other fellow's."\textsuperscript{85} In Broun's words, Kelly had placed on the stage a character at the center of a drama that was "satire of the most savage and penetrating sort," but since he "smiles as he slashes," the audience could do little but smile too. 86 In the end it is not Aubrey who has changed, but "our attitude towards him that has changed."\textsuperscript{87} Tolerance pushed through the sentiment to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Ibid., p. 612.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Downer, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Hewitt, p. 357.
\end{enumerate}
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teach the audience something about itself: the final affection for Aubrey brought about by Kelly's great dramatic skill, became a mirror wherein the audience could see itself sympathetically smiling back at itself, remembering all the stupid errors they had lived through to become what they were.

Nowhere is the superiority of Cohan's and Kelly's plays more readily seen than in their dialogue when it is compared to the use of dialogue in the minor comedies. The weaker playwrights gave their characters simplistic and superficial words, frequently in halting and awkward speeches. For example, in the second act of *Applesauce*, the two suitors of the naive and romantic Hazel are placed by Conners in a very contrived confrontation where they are found discussing both the object of their affections as well as marriage in general. Rollo, the stable and assured young businessman, and Hazel are engaged. Bill would have been Hazel's first choice except that Bill had only smooth talk to offer as security, an attitude not convincing to Hazel's parents. Bill's standard verbal smoke screen is based on what he chose to call "the truth."

"I don't care what anybody says about me" declares Bill, "as long as they don't tell the truth."
The dialogue continues:

Rollo. Bill! This is no joking matter. Say!
What's the idea of your coming here anyway? Hazel's engaged to me, isn't she?

Bill. (Stares at him in utter disbelief) Rollo! You don't mean to tell me--say--(Rises--goes to him) Why--I'm ashamed to say it myself. You don't mean you're jealous.

Rollo. Jealous! No! But I don't like it; and Hazel doesn't think it's very nice either.

Bill. Did she say that?

Rollo. If you want to know the blunt truth--yes.

Bill. Well, in a case like that, I'm glad I came.

Rollo. (Amazed) What--?

Bill. Why, I never dreamed of such a thing. I couldn't have dreamed--Do you mean to say--that you think--Rollo, I'm glad I came. (Pats him on the back) I'm glad of this opportunity. Will you listen to what I've got to say? I'm going to do you a favor.

Rollo. (Coldly) Oh, a favor?

This dialogue not only suggests verbal ineptitude on the part of a playwright who depends on dashes to convey meanings he probably cannot explain himself, but also reveals sudden changes in character relationships between Rollo and Bill with no preparation or motivation. This example displays more than one failure in character consistency as well as in dramatic continuity. Conners neglects all the rules of his trade for economy of situation and the subsequent comic set-up. As Conners has Bill admitting in the script, "Your getting engaged to Hazel was the greatest stoke of luck I ever had in my life." (Just a
few lines later, Rollo and Hazel break their engagement and Bill and Hazel go to get the marriage license.) As Bill continues his lie, he confides to Rollo that, "I think she's caught the greatest catch in town." A few lines later the supposedly stable Rollo is suddenly and unconvincingly duped by Bill's flattery:

Bill. That's what I think about you, Rollo
   ... from the bottom of my heart.
Rollo. Oh, is it?
Bill. Yes, and I wouldn't try to flatter you,
   Rollo.
Rollo. Huh!
Bill. No, you're ... a great chap. (Pats him
   on the back)
Rollo. (Softens a bit and swells up) Oh, thanks,
   Bill. Thanks. (Turns away)

As the conversation progresses along these lines with Rollo running hot and cold according to Conner's whim, the subject of money is suddenly brought up.

Rollo. Oh, I don't know about the expense.
   Two can live as cheaply as one--they say.
Bill. Don't you believe it. That's pure,
   unadulterated propaganda--originated by a tapeworm.
Rollo. What's the matter? What's the matter?
   What's the matter?

Conners finally discovers the line.

Rollo. Don't you think there are any happy
   marriages?

Despite the chautauqua publicity agents' claims
that the dialogue had qualities of being "snappy, fast,
and funny," often the actors had to overcome empty, repetitive chatter, and the laughter when achieved was not a result of inherently comic lines, but of a combination of artificially forced inflections together with contrived stage business.

A second example of uninspired dialogue comes from the pen of Frank Craven in _The First Year_. Domestic problems abound in this script, one of the most emphasized being a broken vegetable dish. The young wife and her husband exchange the following lines upon the discovery of the accident:

Tommy. I'm sorry, dear.
Grace. I'm sorry, too, but it doesn't help matters.
Tommy. Well, it's always darkest before dawn.
Grace. So they say. But we've had a long arctic night.
Tommy. I know, but we are going to have a whole life of sunshine now.

The remainder of Craven's dialogue seldom rise above such colloquial chatter.

Craven and Conners may very well have been awkwardly attempting to make use of a relatively new type of comic dialogue derived from vaudeville patter, the wisecrack, first successfully demonstrated, according to Downer, by George Cohan. Previously, playwrights had depended for much of their comic dialogue "on the long, formal speech,
elaborating a whimsical ides." Examples can be found in such nineteenth-century dialogue as Lady Gay Spanker's description of a hunt in London Assurance or Lord Dundreary's lengthy narratives in Our American Cousin.

Originally a European imitation, the American use of such comic speeches began with America's first native comedy, The Contrast. In that play, Tyler's dialogue was typified by the such overly elaborate, extended speeches as those of Charlotte's social chatter and Dimples' simpering.

However, after the rise of vaudeville, which influenced many early twentieth-century playwrights, principally Harrigan and Hoyt, brevity and surprise came to form the basis for much comic repartee. Once the pattern was established, Downer concluded, "there was no lack of skilled journeymen to put it into use." Typical of Cohan's snappy dialogue "the delicate planting of the remark for the sake of the answer," is the scene between Jackson Jones and the only too available, young, unspoiled country girl, Josie:

88 Downer, p. 119.
90 Quinn, p. 113.
92 Quinn, p. 115.

89 Ibid.
91 Downer, p. 119.
Jackson. You know, I think in time I'll become a model country gentleman.

Josie. This must seem strange to you after the life you've been living.

Jackson. What do you know about the life I've been living?

Josie. I mean New York—that great, big wonderful place! It is a wonderful place, isn't it?

Jackson. Have you never been in New York?

Josie. Never.

Jackson. Would you like to go to New York?

Josie. I don't think I'd like to live there. I'd like to see New York.

Jackson. Well, I can show it to you. It takes only four hours to get there. It took me five years to get back.

Josie. You had a long trip.

Jackson. Yes, I had a long trip.

Josie. What is Broadway?

Jackson. Broadway.

Josie. A street.

Jackson. Sure, it's the greatest street in the world.

Josie. Some people say it's terrible.

Jackson. Philadelphia people.

Josie. And some people say it's wonderful.

Jackson. That's just it: it's terribly wonderful!

Josie. I don't understand.

Jackson. Nobody understands Broadway. People hate it and don't know why. People love it and don't know why. It's just because it's Broadway.

Josie. That's a mystery, isn't it?

Jackson. That's what it is, a mystery.

George Kelly, the "young man with a busy eye and a notebook crowded with observations," also displayed verbal ability above the usual level of chautauqua comedies. In The Show-Off, Kelly specialized in planting speeches

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93Dickinson, p. 245.
for the retort, in which the response not only brought
laughter but also often carried the sting of satire with
it slightly below the surface. For example, after some
extensive speeches by the loquacious Mrs. Fisher in Act
One that set up Aubrey's character, Aubrey enters:

Aubrey. (Out at the front door) Right on the
job!
Amy. Hello!
Aubrey. The Pride of old West Philly! (He
laughs a bit, boisterously)
Amy. I'll take your hat, Aubrey.
Aubrey. Anything to please the ladies. (The
front door closes) The boy rode off
with many thanks and many a back­
ward bow.

Soon, Aubrey begins to get into his stride:

Aubrey. I don't know how you ever found this
place.
Amy. I don't know how you ever found West
Philadelphia.
Aubrey. Lot of people think they haven't found
it yet. (He bursts into violent laugh­
ter) Lost somewhere between the Schuykill
River and Darby.

It is Mr. Fisher, however, to whom Kelly gives the final
retort in this exchange.

Mr. Fisher. I wish to God he'd get lost some
night, somewhere between here and
the Schuykill River.

Shortly after this, Aubrey's mouth is at full gallop and
reveals Kelly's use of character monologue at its best.
Typically, Aubrey speaks in loaded, convoluted phrases:

\[\text{Quinn, p. 225.}\]
Aubrey. Stay right where you are, folks, right where you are. . . . Just a little social attention--going right out again on the next train.

Come on, Amy, step on the United Gas out there; customer in here waiting for the old aqua pura.

I want to tell those of you who have ventured out this evening, that this is a very pretty little picture of domestic felicity. . . . Father reading--Mother knitting;

and little Tommy Edison over here, working eighteen hours a day to make the rich man richer and the poor man poorer. (He gives Joe a tap on the back, then moves back again toward Mr. Fisher)

What about it, Popcorn? (Slaps him on the back) Shake it up! Right or raving?

Sign on the dotted line! and little old Popsy-Wopsy getting sore and going to leave us flat.

As Amy enters with the water, Aubrey continues, strengthening the character with each word:

Aubrey. And there she is herself, and not a moving picture. . . . Blushing as she gave it, looking down--at her feet so bare, and her tattered gown (Amy giggles, and her Mother looks sharply at Amy's shoes. Aubrey takes the glass of water and turns to Mrs. Fisher) How's that, Mother Fisher? Can't beat that little old Willie Shakespeare, can you? No, sir--I'd like to tell the brothers that that little old Shakespeare party shook a wicked spear.

So the dialogue flows through three caustic acts. Kelly skillfully provides humor, satire, and character delineation all at the same time, while carefully advancing the
negligible plot. None of the minor plays exhibited anything approaching this level of dramatic sophistication.

In the last act, the prattle continues, somewhat more caustic than before, as Kelly begins to assert the comic corrective to his wildly aberrant hero.

Aubrey. A man 'ud certainly have a swell chance trying to make anything of himself around this hut.

Mrs. Fisher. Listen, Boy--any time you don't like this hut, you go right straight back to Lehigh Avenue to your two rooms over the dago barber shop, and I'll be glad to see your heels.

Clara. Stop talking, Mom.

Mrs. Fisher. Nobody around here's tryin' to stop you from makin' somethin' of yourself.

Aubrey. No, and nobody's trying to help me any, either; only trying to make me look like a pin-head--every chance they get.

The play closes without the corrective being completely worked out, but Kelly has so sufficiently established his characters, as well as the norm-aberration synthesis, that the audience members cannot mistake the comic intent, nor fail to wish to correct any Aubrey tendencies that they might find in their own lives.

The fact that so few of the chautauqua plays were not of higher caliber cannot be held against Keighley or the circuit managers. They were, by and large, following Broadway's lead. The blame for the many shallow, insignificant
comedies during the period must be placed mostly on the shoulders of the American theatre-going public, who continued to pay to see comedies like *Applesauce* and *Broken Dishes*. As Atkinson has pointed out, not only was the New York theatre prudish in the early years of the twentieth century, but it was provincial as well.  

The assessment Nickels made for the plays of the tent repertory of the period can stand as a statement about most American plays presented prior to 1930:

> The companies always produced some of the old plays, and new plays written in the same style of the old plays. These plays echoed the prejudice and values of the audience. This was no drama to shock and make its audience think. It was drama to reaffirm what the audience believed in, a ritual carried out as aesthetic purgation for the audience.

Such "sub-literary" plays, as Gassner has called them, were products of the sentimental American self-satisfied optimism that was only too prevalent in the 1920's. Chautauqua audiences may have lacked sophistication in their dramatic tastes, but they were still very much a part of the continuing melting pot of American mass

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95 Atkinson, p. 78.
96 Nickel, p. 3.
97 Gassner, Masters, p. 945.
culture and could only be expected to reflect tastes more or less similar to those of the more knowledgable New York audiences. As Redfield Clarke observed in *Equity* magazine, chautauqua plays were not "trashy plays" done by "cheap actors"; plays on the chautauqua circuits were "all clean, wholesome plays that [had] been genuine Metropolitan successes," and were acted by "actors of intelligence and experience." With the arrival of the sound pictures, Hollywood began to serve that level of literary or artistic taste while the theatre moved on to explore, with much more significance, the expression, both comic and tragic, of American realism.  

98 Clarke, pp. 21-22.  
CHAPTER VII

THE INFLUENCE OF CIRCUIT CHAUTAUQUA ON AMERICAN CULTURE

The causes for the collapse of the circuit chautauqua system in the early 1930's have been the subject of much debate among its followers, both then and now. The collapse of the system nationwide was so sudden and so complete as to suggest that one or two simple reasons for its failure might be found. Such, however, is not the case: there were many contributing factors, both obvious and obscure, which must be taken into account.

The most popularly accepted summary, as well as the most colorful description, of the demise of the great circuits came from Harry Harrison, the president of the Redpath Chautauquas for almost two decades:

Traveling chautauqua, which took the road in 1904, had a glamourous and footloose life. It died in 1932 under the hit-and-run wheels of a Model-A Ford on its way to the movies on a new paved road. Radio swept it into
the ditch, and the Wall Street crash and the subsequent depression gave it the *coup de grâce*.1

Yet, as correct as Harrison's assessment may have been in general terms, others who also witnessed the chautauqua collapse stressed other elements. For example, when asked for his assessment of chautauqua's demise, Billy Miles stressed the impact of the radio. He argued that the ready entertainment at home being performed on the air by the best and most popular artists eroded much of chautauqua's rural monopoly on culture. On the other hand, Mrs. Betty McCraken, one of Crawford Peffer's daughters, when asked for her analysis of the last days as she remembered them, disagreed with Miles. She emphasized the effect of personal mobility brought to chautauqua's patrons by the very popular automobile, a mobility which brought the culture of once remote cities within many people's grasp. She also remembered the devastating effects of the Depression, which sucked out the already anemic financial blood of the circuit empires. A fourth contributing cause was suggested just prior to the collapse of the system by C. Benjamin Franklin, an energetic young man with great

1Harrison, p. xvii. Hoyt (page 24) cites similar reasons for the demise of the repertory system: "movies and radio put an end to touring repertory companies."
enthusiasm for reviving the chautauqua system. He wrote of that time that the circuit chautauquas of the twenties were in much need of "deflation," that the entire system had been overextended and greatly needed reorganization. If no concerted effort was made to streamline the circuits, they would become vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the American people's changing tastes and would not be able to adapt to the shifting cultural demands that were slowly but aggressively surfacing in the post-war society. However, even Franklin's efforts to slim down and economize the operations of the various chautauqua bureaus he purchased between 1927 and 1932 were to be unavailing, for his group of revitalized bureaus succumbed too, along with all the other remaining systems, in 1933.

The conclusions outlined above, which can be accepted as fair though limited appraisals of the changing chautauqua scene of the late twenties, are more accurately viewed as effects rather than causes: to ascertain the true causes, it is necessary to dig more deeply into the chautauqua structure and philosophy during the years prior to the final summer and to contrast the philosophical core of the chautauqua ideal with the new social philosophy that had arisen in the aggressive urban centers of America.
From the beginning, chautauqua was a rural movement, bringing culture to hinterland America, which on the one hand lived away from the expanding urban centers that could attract and support expensive, high-class talent, and on the other, could afford neither the time nor the money, nor had the vehicular means, to travel to those centers on its own. The chautauqua idea of bringing the mountain to Mohammed was designed and built specifically for such socially isolated and culturally deprived people. During the first two decades of this century, as those hardworking, soil-bound people prospered, so did their means of entertainment and informal education—chautauqua. But during the nineteen twenties, many rural Americans, despite the rosy economic view popularly held in the urban centers, were being brought slowly to desperation. Between 1919 and 1924, thirteen million acres of marginal and submarginal lands were abandoned. Farm income in 1920 was fifteen per cent of the national total; by 1929 it was only nine percent. The agricultural population dropped three million between 1921 and 1928. The average farmer's income in 1927 was only $548.00.\(^2\) As the rest of the country was experiencing a "boom or bust" prosperity, the pockets that carried the chautauqua dollars were becoming more and more empty.

\(^2\)Current, p. 695.
The effects of this rural economic plight were soon felt on the chautauqua circuit. The first noticeably poor season was that of 1927. Harry Harrison, after witnessing his profit margins dwindle, wrote to Paul Pearson, manager of the Pennsylvania Swarthmore circuits, asking if he had had the same failure. Pearson responded that he had.\(^3\) Both men agreed that the circuit chautauqua's plight resembled the story of the surgeon whose operation had been a complete success in all respects except one: the patient died. The programs were better than ever; the talent continued to be first class; the plays were the very latest comedies available; there was even an attempt to demonstrate a new rival from the platform--the radio--to maintain a modernist look.\(^4\) In spite of all that, however, "east to west, all circuits were suffering from acute box-office anemia."\(^5\) On Keith Vawter's circuits west of the Mississippi, the rural plight was apparent even earlier: the number of towns on his circuits dropped from 360 in 1922 to 296 in 1924.\(^6\) Vawter's profit margin was quite narrow during those years: in a total budget expenditure of $150,000 to $200,000, his profits were often under $5,000. By 1926, Vawter, who had entered the circuit business twenty-two years earlier at just the right time,

\(^{4}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 261.}\)

\(^{5}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 258.}\)

\(^{6}\text{Graham, p. 55.}\)
sold out at just the right time, with a net profit of $345.00.7

Harry Harrison's Chicago operations showed similar signs of strain beginning about 1922. In that year Harrison was operating four major circuits: the Seven-Day, the Gulf, the Atlantic, and the Five Night. All of them showed considerable profit except the Five-Night, which was abandoned in 1924. In 1925, the Seven-Day circuit lost $12,826.98, the Gulf made $5,274.78, and the Atlantic lost $2,812.56.8 1926 was similar. In 1927, Harrison sold three of his circuits to C. Benjamin Franklin, because, he said, "the financial handwriting on the wall loomed redder and redder. . . ."9 Two years later he sold the other two circuits.

Similarly, other managers sold out in the following few years, also mostly to Franklin of Kansas City. Franklin's Associated Chautauquas, an amalgam of more than a dozen financially stricken bureaus, revived temporarily at the moment of the Wall Street crash, and then

7Ibid., p. 56.

8Graham, p. 58. Graham did an exhaustive study of the financial records of the Redpath organization based on the records in the collection at The University of Iowa, the results of which were summarized in his dissertation, Circuit Chautauqua, A Middlewestern Institution.

9Harrison, p. 265.
succumbed to the chautauqua malaise, just as all the other bureaus had. In Keota, Iowa, in 1933, Franklin's last tent came down several days early, closing with a program of three plays. Nothing anyone could do, including Franklin's financial wizardry and the enticement of a trio of good plays, was to add any days to the already fated circuit business. Patrons disappeared, towns dropped out of the circuits, and, inevitably, the patient died.

Yet, as admittedly important as those financial considerations appear to have been, they alone could not have brought circuit chautauqua to an end. Another factor was at work, undermining the believability, the raison d'être of chautauqua. American society was changing, liberalizing, and seeking new, faster excitement in its entertainment; and American scientific and practical genius was ready and willing to serve. First came the automobile, which made urban culture more and more accessible to rural patrons who had been awakened to such pleasures by a quarter-century of summer chautauquas. By 1929 there were over three million cars in use. Next came the silver screen, then the radio (enjoyed by twelve million families

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10 Ibid., p. 270.
by 1924), and on October 12, 1927, The Jazz Singer—the voice of the radio wed to the images of the silent screen. Who could resist? Even theatre-proud New York succumbed to the allurements of the talkies and Broadway patrons saw many professional stages closed, "for renovation," only to see them open as movie palaces. Jere Mickel, referring to the passing of the non-chautauqua tent repertory of inland America, which had thrived since the mid-nineteenth century, observed that "as competing entertainment improved, tent show comedy deteriorated." He also pointed out that since much of the theatre's creative energy had become focused on Hollywood, there were no playwrights writing for the vanishing rural theatrical audience. With the old plays no longer relevant, with the New York drama outside the rural audience's ready comprehension, the tent companies, including the chautauqua players, had nothing unique or special to offer.

With the arrival of the automobile and the motion pictures, new ways of life were sweeping the American

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12 Harrison later pointed out that the closing of Broadway theatres during the late twenties was a "temporary boon" to chautauqua companies as hitherto uninterested but then unemployed actors suddenly longed for and readily accepted the summer's work the circuit stages offered. Culture Under Canvas, p. 264.

13 Mickel, p. 179.
scene, penetrating even the most distant outposts of rural conservatism. Women's modesty succumbed to short hair, shorter skirts, silk stockings, and lipstick. Sex was openly and frankly discussed. Couples were seen without their customary chaperons going everywhere together in their automobiles, everywhere including the easily accessible speakeasies. Jazz blared forth on the radio, and the Charleston was danced in the dance hall. Such a culture was immediately reinforced by similar scenes described in the tabloid papers and the motion pictures.\textsuperscript{14} For the first time, the entire nation was feeling the impact of a mass-produced culture. James Redpath many decades earlier had unknowingly forecast what chautauqua's fate was to be if the society were to change as it did. Speaking of his lyceum program, he said that the lyceum's level of entertainment was "best received during periods of highest national morality." It would suffer, he said, in consequence of moral laxity.\textsuperscript{15} Just such moral laxity became evident during the 1920's everywhere that chautauqua's brown canopies were found.

Ever since the early days at Fair Point, the conservative chautauqua programs had consisted primarily of

\textsuperscript{14}Current, p. 701.

\textsuperscript{15}Horner, The Life of James Redpath, p. 204.
sedate vocal and instrumental music, and of high-toned lectures on social responsibilities, scientific discoveries, or religious obligations. The lecturers were usually men schooled in nineteenth-century thought patterns. Even the plays, though mostly of recent copyright, were always carefully manicured and were selected to portray the American foibles and ideals of a once popular but rapidly fading American way of life. Such programs during the late twenties came to be woefully out of touch with the contemporary social and cultural scene promoted by the new media.16

Part of chautauqua's cultural lag must be attributed to the unchanging tastes of the managers and talent. Whereas in the beginning of the circuits, the chautauqua managers, the performers they selected, and even the crews they hired, were young men and women, nearly all of them under thirty years of age, by 1925, only the crew boys and a few of the performers were young. Even those young people, as Miles's diary attests, spent many hours of off-duty time during the tours frequenting local movie houses, one of the entertainment media most responsible for poor attendance in the brown tents.

16Tozier, p. 573.
It has been stated earlier that the circuit chautauqua movement in rural America had side-stepped the Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century by maintaining the core of the earlier philosophy with its emphasis on God as the supernatural force which could and did intervene in the affairs of men. But no gait was long enough, no step agile enough, to out-run the fleet-footed members of the "Lost Generation" on their way to the movies with the radio blaring, bootleg bottle in one hand and the wheel of their four-cylinder miracle in the other. Having already managed to carry the nineteenth-century ethics and social patterns twenty-five years into the twentieth century, the aging social elastic of conservatism and fundamentalism could stretch no more. When the sudden and fatal break occurred, the entire chautauqua complex, both physical and social, became so thoroughly forgotten that by 1935 it might just as well have died at its natural time on the social and cultural clock during World I.

It is noteworthy that the last talent to be seen on the fading chautauqua platforms was dramatic. By 1920 the plays had become the backbone of the chautauqua programs, more reliably bringing in audience dollars than any other type of talent, whereas in those same dirt-road hamlets a mere twenty years before, few respectable citizens
would have dared read a play, let alone spent hard-earned dollars to see one. As economic conditions grew worse, the managers came to depend more and more upon the plays from the Redpath Play Bureau, and it is evident from the titles chosen that Keighley was expected to get the very best of the most recent comedies available. For example, whereas the plays presented before 1922 had been usually several years away from their professional debut, after that time Keighley sent out plays a year or less away from the closing of the professional production and occasionally even secured the rights to such plays while road companies still held winter production rights: in 1928 Tommy was sent out after opening in 1927 at the Gaiety Theatre, and Broken Dishes was on the Redpath stages in 1930 after its 1929 professional appearance at the Ritz.

Proof also of the important place that was given to plays was that Peffer in the last days, in an act of des- peration, booked a proven comedy, Six Cylinder Love (1921), for his 1932 eastern circuit tour and paired it with Kelly's expensive The Show-Off (1924). But those plays were to be the last plays Peffer was to book. By that time Keighley had already joined the exodus from New York to Hollywood, where he was shortly afterwards to be success- fully directing such Warners Brothers' movies as G-Men
(1935), with James Cagney, Margaret Lindsay, Ann Dvorak, and Robert Armstrong; *The Singing Kid* (1936), with Al Jolson and Sybil Jason; and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), with Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone, and Claude Rains.\textsuperscript{17} He had defected to chautauqua's most deadly foe, having been lured away from the tent stages by the irresistible magic of sound film.

What was left in the wake of circuit chautauqua? At the time of this writing (1976), no one had made a careful assessment of the possible effects on American culture of the nearly thirty years of popular, grassroots theatre, which had been supported by the circuit chautauqua movement. Coming as it did at the close of other non-urban theatre movements—the stock companies, the professional road shows, and those theatrical cousins of chautauqua, the tent repertory companies like the Toby shows of the midwest—chautauqua might easily be said to have made no significant contribution to American culture. However, as Slout has pointed out, "the influence of Chautauqua on rural America cannot be over-estimated,"\textsuperscript{18} an observation first made by Gregory Zilboorg, who as early

\textsuperscript{17}Geltzer, p. 481.

\textsuperscript{18}Slout, p. 54.
as 1921 commented that it would "hardly be an exaggeration

to say that chautauqua is . . . the most powerful ap-
paratus and the most stimulating idea for the regeneration
of the American theatre."\(^\text{19}\) In its peak year, 1924, over
thirty million Americans in some twelve thousand rural


communities crowded into the brown tents.

Of primary concern is the influence of the plays on


the rural American's attitude toward theatre. That in-
fluence took two forms: the first is the informal change
in cultural attitudes toward theatre brought about by the
pervasiveness of the circuit programs; and the second is


the more direct influence chautauqua drama had on the
American theatrical scene in particular, especially with
respect to the nascent Little Theatre Movement.

In spite of the numerous rural productions given in


opera halls and in tents between 1875 and 1930, the regular


clientele of those performances was fairly restricted,


consisting mainly of the liberal adult segment of the towns
together with those younger clients who have always found the
stage a fascinating place to be near. As has been previously
noted, the stricter, more fundamental and conservative

\(^\text{19}\)Gregory Zilboorg, "Chautauqua and the Drama,"
The Drama, XII (October - November, 1921), p. 18.
elements in those same towns refused to condone stage shows of any sort and often openly forced such carryings-on out of town. But the brown tents of chautauqua at least superficially cleansed whatever talent appeared upon its platforms, including the once highly suspect stage plays. By so doing, chautauqua brought thousands of new faces under the spell of play acting. That upgrading of the drama in the hinterlands not only prepared the way for the movies by educating the public to the illusionary world of the stage, but was also to create a new general interest in the theatre as a respectable art, worthy even of academic study.20 (As college attendance increased during the years prior to World War II, the children who had participated in the Junior Chautauqua plays were enrolling in the newly offered theatre courses in young and growing speech departments of the various state universities, as well as in many of the smaller private institutions.) Little understood by most fundamentalist Americans was the fact that the theatre and play acting were not inherently morally degrading, mentally stultifying, nor intellectually demeaning for forthright citizens and their children. Not only the classic dramas first offered, but also many of the modern indigenous plays

20Case, p. 52.
were found to be more meaningful and far more exciting when seen than when read. To the hundreds of chautauqua players who behaved respectably before their thousands of eager viewers must go much of the credit for legitimatizing the theatre for non-urban America. As was noted during Chautauqua's heyday, just as the chautauqua movement probably did "more toward keeping American public opinion informed, alert and unbiased than any other movement" in the social, scientific, and political fields, so that same platform cleansed and elevated musical, operatic, and theatrical material.\(^\text{21}\) Harrison rightly asked, "how many musicians did the Claussens and the Estelle Grays encourage, or the warm-hearted Sam Schildkret unearth, with their belief in music for the masses?"\(^\text{22}\) And how many cast lists of Andy Hardy films or Cleveland Playhouse productions would reveal names of actors and actresses whose first taste for acting or scenery was whetted by Miss Cherry in her early morning children's activities along Redpath's trail, or by capable presentations of The Patsy or The Show-Off. Innumerable early and positive impressions were made on young minds during those special weeks each summer.

\(^{21}\)Harrison, p. 272.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., p.273.
The second area of lasting influence attributable to the chautauqua movement was the rapid growth in popularity of amateur theatre groups during the years between the world wars. For example, Little Theatre membership throughout America's mid-sections during the movement's rapid rise in the nineteen twenties and thirties must be seen as having been significantly encouraged by former chautauqua patrons who were seeking further realization of their theatre dreams, which had been first nurtured by the circuit plays.

The beginnings of the Little Theatre movement are obscure and its early development is variously traced. Evidence that has been presented by Kenneth Macgowan and Howard Taubman suggests that its primary growth occurred between 1905 and 1925. Macgowan referred to the growth of the Little Theatre movement as an "efflorescence." He attributed the rapid growth of the little theatre movement both to the decay of professional theatre activity outside New York and to the development of dramatic taste all over the country. Various factors surfaced after the First World War, Macgowan observed, including the fact that stock, repertory, and tent theatres had all been active long before that "efflorescence." Macgowan


24Macgowen, p. 41.
did not mention chautauqua, a relative new-comer to the mass dissemination of produced plays. The wide distribution of and the resultant craving for drama produced by chautauqua's dozens of plays before its millions of viewers, a phenomena examined in the preceding chapter, suggests that chautauqua's influence on American popular theatre must not be neglected. The play "starved and play educated audience" Macgowan described, which suddenly existed during the twenties and thirties, must to some extent have been a result of the several decades of chautauqua's general cultural exposure. No other cultural movement before the radio and motion pictures covered so wide a territory so thoroughly, nor touched so large a hitherto untapped audience for the arts. At the very time when professional theatre was languishing west of the Hudson, chautauqua companies were successfully drawing more crowds than any other cultural attraction.

Throughout the period of their popularity, the chautauqua organizations actively encouraged little theatre groups. In the chautauqua manager's publicity organ, Platform World, in 1930, Harry Byrd Kline, formerly the Producing Director of the Little Theatre, Port Author, Texas, called the Little Theatre movement "The Savior of Drama." "Without hesitation," he stated, "I commend [it] as the medium
through which the community dramatic impulse may be spent."\(^{25}\) Small cities, he pointed out, counted among their citizens numerous men and women of college backgrounds who have "drunk deep at the Pierian spring." Interested and encouraged in drama at their schools, their guidance, he concluded, "can turn every Main Street into a dynamo in the universal power-house of drama."\(^{26}\)

To encourage those with less educational background, another article appeared by Corine Jessop, which paid tribute to productions by "home talent artists." Miss Jessop's cause was not little theatre, whose patronage, she suggested, was "limited to the social elite," but the community theatre groups, who utilized large casts and furnished entertainment for the hundreds who attended as well as provided training for the scores who participated.\(^{27}\) She extolled the virtues of such amateur community productions and listed aspects that pre-chautauqua audiences would have shunned:

The fact is that the young and old alike gain by pretending they are something different than they are in ordinary life. It automatically relieves the monotony of stereotyped existence and wakens something akin to artistry in their beings.\(^{28}\)

\(^{25}\)July, 1930, p. 15.  \(^{26}\)Ibid.


\(^{28}\)Ibid.
Miss Jessop concluded with a practical enticement typical of the chautauqua approach:

Every performer gains in self-assurance and poise, regardless of his social or business status, . . . a great thing . . . in these days of organization campaigns, convention debates, . . . noon-day luncheon speeches, and . . . radio addresses.

Practical or not, chautauqua had awakened in hundreds of quiet, earth-bound souls a new and irresistible force that was to be satisfied by their attendance at more live theatre, by their creation of new educational facilities that would teach their children theatrical knowledge, and by their support and participation in local amateur productions.
AFTERWORD
No single study of so vast or ephemeral a movement as the circuit chautauqua can hope to be exhaustive, particularly when a considerable portion of the primary materials necessary to complete the record have been lost. Accordingly, there have been a few areas tangential to this study that could not be pursued during its preparation.

Perhaps the most important area remaining to be investigated is the careers of the actors who toured with various circuit companies, not only their careers during the years when they spent their summers on the road, but their subsequent careers for which their chautauqua experience, in many cases, probably had contributed valuable acting experience. There were literally thousands of actors involved in chautauqua dramatic activities and hundreds more in the similar work of the winter lyceum circuits. An attempt to compose a list of chautauqua actors or to develop their personal histories would be well beyond the scope of the present study. It is known that many actors whose initial experience was with chautauqua continued their careers in either the moving pictures or on the professional stage: each of the former chautauqua actors who were interviewed in connection with this study can remember one or two of his fellows who
made a name for himself. It is also known that when William Keighley left New York in 1932 to start a new career in Hollywood, he took with him many actors he had trained in his Redpath companies, but Keighley, today (1976) is unable to recall more than a few names. Only a thorough study of chautauqua cast lists, Equity records, and professional notices could reveal more.

Another possible area for further study would be the private play companies that prepared plays to sell to any bureau that would produce them. There were several hundred such companies nation-wide. Some of them were active for many years, particularly those connected to a school, but most were active for only a few seasons, leaving little record of their contribution.

A third area of further research could center on the Swarthmore chautauquas of Pennsylvania. That organization was next largest after the Redpath amalgam, and it made strong efforts to maintain a consistently high level of cultural material. During a number of seasons, the bureau held playwriting contests; each year's winning script was performed for the following summer's audience. There is a good deal of primary material extant in a few depositoires in the East.
A final area of further study suggested by this dissertation would be related to the plays performed on the numerous winter lyceum circuits. In many cases, the casts and the plays that were toured during the winter were the same as those sent out by the chautauqua bureaus. Since the plays were performed indoors during the winter, the principal difference was the type of technical support given to lyceum plays as compared with the summer tent productions.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

SELECTED MATERIALS ON BEN GREET
THE BEN GREET PLAYERS

DEC. 20,
KING'S THEATRE,
ALBIA, IOWA

"Merchant of Venice"
"Macbeth"

A TRAGEDY

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE

THREE WITCHES
VICTOR WATTS-WESTON
ENID CLARK
ADELA FERGUSON

A SERGEANT (wounded)
DONALD LAYNE-SMITH

DUNCAN, King of Scotland
BEN GREET

MALCOLM
REX WALTERS
DONALD LAYNE-SMITH

DONALBAIN
S. GILLESPIE

MACBETH
RUSSELL THORDIKE

BANQUO
W. E. HOLLOWAY

FLEANCE
VICTOR WATTS-WESTON

ROSS
KEITH BEER

LENOX
DONALD LAYNE-SMITH

LADY MACBETH
MURIEL HUTCHINSON

SEYTON
FRANK D. NEWMAN

MACDUFF
REGINALD JARMAN

A PORTER
BEN GREET

MURDERERS
PETER DEARING
GEORGE HARE

A DOCTOR
BEN GREEF

A GENTLEWOMAN
ENID CLARK

Scenes in Scotland and England

The Tragedy of Macbeth

First acted about 1605–6. Shakespeare probably wrote the Play to celebrate the Union of England and Scotland under King James I. This monarch was much interested in the occult and in witchcraft. Dr. Simon Forman states in his diary (Bedlam Library) how he saw the Tragedy acted on April 20th, 1610, at the Globe Theatre on Bankside.

The Play was first published in the Folio of 1623.

Costumes of the Period are adopted to keep the Text as close to Shakespeare's time as possible.

There will be two intervals to mark a lapse of time.

Historically, nearly twenty years elapse after Macbeth's last visit to the Witches and the final scene of the Play. Lady Macduff's murder is omitted as it is inexpedient to travel small children around the country.
Sir Philip Ben Greet
and the
Ben Greet Players
Present
"Twelfth Night" (what you will)
By William Shakespeare

CHARACTERS AS THEY APPEAR:
ORSINO (Duke of Illyria)......................................................CECIL MUSK
CURIOS
VALENTINE { (Gentlemen attending the Duke) } LAWRENCE JOHNS
WALTER GEER
SEA CAPTAIN.................................................................ARTHUR SIRCOM
VIOLA..................................................................................ALISON PICKARD
SIR TOBY BELCH (Uncle to Olivia)..........................RUSSELL THORNDIKE
MARIA (Olivia's Woman).................................................RUTH VIVIAN
SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK..............................................STANFORD HOLME
FESTE (A Clown).............................................................BRUNO BARNABE
MALVOLIO (Steward to Olivia).................................BEN GREET
OLIVIA..............................................................................THEA HOLME
ATTENDANT.....................................................................EDITH MAYOR
FABIAN............................................................................ARNOLD WALSH
SEBASTIAN (A Brother to Viola).................................PETER DEARING
ANTONIO (A Sea Captain, Friend to Sebastian).........KYNASTON REEVES

SCENE:—A City in Illyria and the Sea Coast near it.
The various Scenes are on the Coast—The Duke's Palace—Olivia's House and
Garden—A Street—and a Corridor.
Two Short Intervals—The Music is of the Period.

That the Play was written before 1601 is proved by the entry in the diary of John
Manningham, February, 1601:—
"February 2—At our feast we had a play called "Twelve Night, or What You
Will," much like the Comedy of Errors, or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and
near to that in Italian called Inganni. A good practice in it to make the steward
believe his Lady widow was in love with him, by counterfeiting a letter, as from
his Lady in general terms, telling him what she liked best in him and prescribing
his gesture smiling, his apparel, etc., and then when he came to practice, mak­
ing him believe they took him to be mad." (Harleian MSS No. 5333, now in the
British Museum.)

For all of the Shakespearean Plays presented by the Ben Greet Players the Stage
is set as far as practicable to indicate the simplicity of the Theatre of Shakespeare's
life time. The plays are acted in a manner approximating that of the Elizabethan
period, with such modern modifications as may be necessary. However, the purpose of
Ben Greet is not merely to reproduce dramatic conditions under which Shakespeare
worked, but to present the plays as they were written.

The Play is Produced by Ben Greet, Assisted by Peter Dearing
Costumes designed and executed by Doreen Errol, London.
Wigs by Clarkson, London.

Under the Management of
REDPATH BUREAU
HARRY P. HARRISON, General Manager
1328 Kimball Bldg., Chicago, Ill.
The Ben Greet Players

Present
(The First Quarto Version, 1603)

of the
Tragical History of

"Hamlet"

PRINCE OF DENMARK

By William Shakespeare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>FRANCISCO .......................................</td>
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<td>CORAMBI (Polonius) ............................</td>
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<td>AMBASSADOR .....................................</td>
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<td>OFELIA ...........................................</td>
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<td>ROSSENCRAFT ....................................</td>
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<td>FORTENBRASSE ..................................</td>
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<td>CLOWNES (First and Second Grave Diggers)</td>
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<td>A BRAGGART GENTLEMAN ......................</td>
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<td>PRIEST ..........................................</td>
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The First Quarto "Hamlet" was printed and published in 1603, and was probably acted for some years previously.

Only two copies are known to exist, one in the British Museum and the other in the Henry Huntington Library in California.

This Version being less than half the length of the Second Quarto (1604) and First Folio (1623) versions, it is acted in its entirety, not more than fifty lines being omitted.

The Play is Produced by Ben Greet, Assisted by Peter Dearing

Costumes designed and executed by Doreen Errol, London.
Wigs by Clarkson, London.
"Much Ado About Nothing"
A Comedy By William Shakespeare
Written and Acted before 1600 (Printed in Quarto 1600)

CHARACTERS
(In Order of Their Appearance)

LEONATO (Governor of Messina) .......................................... KYNASTON REEVES
ANTONIO (His Brother) .................................................. ARTHUR SIRCOM
BALTHASAR (Attendant on Don Pedro) ................................ CECIL MUSK
BEATRICE (Niece to Leonato) ......................................... THEA HOLME
HERO (Daughter of Leonato) ............................................. ALISON PICKARD
MARGARET ........................................................................ EDITH MAYOR
URSULA ............................................................................. RUTH VIVIAN
DON PEDRO (Prince of Aragon) .......................................... BRUNO BARNABÉ
DON JOHN (His Half-Brother) .......................................... STANFORD HOLME
CLAUDIO (His Kinsman) .................................................. ARNOLD WALSH
BENEDICK (of Padua) ...................................................... RUSSELL THORNDIKE
CONRADE .......................................................................... PETER DEARING
BORACHIO ........................................................................ WALTER GEER
DOGBERRY (A Constable) ................................................ BEN GREET
VERGES (His Man) ........................................................... GEORGE HARE
WATCH ............................................................................. LAWRENCE JOHNS
PRIEST ................................................................................ HENRY WILLIS

The Scene is laid in Messina
The Music is of the period The Pavan is arranged by Leslie P. French

ARRANGEMENT OF EPISODES

1. The young lords arrive on a visit to Leonato at Messina. Claudio is a suitor for Hero, his daughter.

2. Don John (a bastard), is designing to overthrow his brother and his brother's friends, and through a masquerade discovers an excuse for his plotting.

3. Don Pedro and Leonato plan to get Benedick and Beatrice into a marriage knot—in which Hero joins.

4. The play is founded on plots, serious and humorous, and the Constable and his watch arrest the chief conspirators and report their discovery.

5. The intended marriage of Claudio and Hero is interrupted by the fake accusations against Hero, through which Benedick and Beatrice become lovers.

6. The play ends with the trial of the slanderers and the confession that leads to the eventual righting of the lovers.

The Play is Produced by Ben Greet, Assisted by Peter Dearing

Costumes designed and executed by Dorcon Errol, London.
Wigs by Clarkson, London.
THE ARGUMENT

After an announcement by a messenger, the voice of "Adonai" is heard making the assertion that, as men are drowned in sin and cumbered with riches that they have forgotten Him, He has decided to do justice on them and "have a reckonage on every man's person." He bids "Death," his "Mighty Messenger" tell "Everyman" to prepare for his last pilgrimage.

On hearing the unwelcome message "Everyman" tries by pleadings and bribes to obtain a respite but only gets permission to take companions, if he can find any hardy enough to accompany him.

"Fellowship" enters and noticing "Everyman's" grief asks its cause, vowing his readiness to die for him. But when he hears his friend's request he flatly refuses to go a foot with him. Appeals to "Kindred" and "Cousin" are no more successful, and the dearly-loved "Goods" (Riches) simply mocks at "Everyman's" distress. At last in despair, "Everyman" seeks his long-neglected friend, "Good Deeds" who though lying weak and cold on the ground, so bound by his sins that she cannot stir, readily consents to do all she can for him.

She introduces him to her sister, "Knowledge" ("The discreet and learned advice which religion has at her service"), and she offers to be his guide. She brings him before "Confession," and from whom he receives the jewel "Penance, voider of adversity." The ardor of his supplications and the severity of his penance free "Good Deeds" and so strengthen her that she can go with him on his journey.

Having received the sacrament, "Everyman" sets forth, clad in the garment "Contrition," accompanied by "Beauty," "Discretion," and "Five-Wits." "Strength" deserts him, "Discretion" follows, "Strength" and "Five-Wits" bid him farewell. In despair he cries, "O Jesu help; all hath forsaken me!" But "Good Deeds" is steadfast, and "Knowledge" explains that, though she cannot accompany him, it is "for no manner of danger." With the words, "In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum!" (Into Thy hands Lord, I commend my soul) "Everyman" sinks into the grave. "Knowledge" announces that what he hath suffered we all shall endure, and "Angel"'s heard singing his welcome to Heaven.

THE CHARACTERS ARE ACTED BY

BEN GREET ARNOLD WALSH EDITH MAYOR
KYNASTON REEVES RUTH VIVIAN ARTHUR SIRCOM
RUSSELL THORNDIKE THEA HOLME WALTER GEER
BRUNO BARNABÉ ALISON PICKARD PETER DEARING
STANFORD HOLME CECIL MUSK GEORGE HARE

THE ACTION is continuous and lasts one hour and forty minutes. The audience is asked not to applaud.

The Music is of the period. The Play is of the Fifteenth or early Sixteenth Century period.

The Play is Produced by Ben Greet, Assisted by Peter Dearing
Synopsis of Plays by Ben Greet

"SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER"

This delicious and witty comedy of manners, written by the same author who wrote the beautiful "Vicar of Wakefield," viz: Oliver Goldsmith, was produced originally in London shortly before the separation of our two countries. The simple humor of the play appeals now to our sense of fun in exactly the same manner as it appealed to our forefathers in both Old and New England. It is known to have been acted frequently in Boston and New York at the latter part of the eighteenth century, soon after it was acted in London.

The reasons for selecting this comedy for the Redpath Bureau tour are manifold.

It is witty, clean, and exquisitely written.

The twenty characters are easily reduced to half the number.

The scenery is simple and will be composed of screens painted to represent an Old English Home of the Period.

The play has not been much acted in this country of recent years until it was revived by Charles Frohman for the Ben Greet Players at Daly's Theatre in the winter of 1904, since which time it has been several times given in New York and other cities by my company, also by Miss Elea­nor Robeson and Mr. W. H. Crane.

"THE COMEDY OF ERRORS" The choice of this comedy for representation in the Redpath Bureau tour program is threefold.

First: It is one of the earliest as it is one of the best written plays of William Shakespeare and is classic in form.

Second: It is very rarely given; is bright and natural and entirely clean.

Third: It is easily mounted and can be played with a limited cast almost in its entirety.

The scene does not change and can be used in conformity with the other comedy suggested. I propose giving these plays in a series of screens; those painted for the Shakespeare comedy will be suggestive of the Athenian background.

The costumes will be ancient Greek and strictly correct in every detail.

There are twenty characters in the play, which will now be reduced to half the number without altering the plot or spoiling the play.

Ben Greet
BEN GREEF PLAYERS

Shakespeare and Immortality

"There is no depression in Shakespeare if it is decently acted," said Sir Philip Ben Greet the other day. The Ben Greet company has acted Shakespeare much better than decently for many years, Sir Philip having close to a half a century of Shakespearean acting to his credit.

Ben Greet's troupe is just completing a tour of forty-six weeks, all of which gave them a hearty welcome. A million faithful students and admirers have seen them during their wanderings. They will, it is hoped, carry on for many more years to come. — NEW YORK TIMES, April 26, 1931.

"Hamlet" at Columbia

The first quarteto is supposed to be the original version of "Hamlet," just as Shakespeare wrote it. As Sir Philip Ben Greet and his company gave the first quarteto last night, it was an interesting drama, capable of easy understanding and to the point. I found it the more interesting principally because of its brevity. It was the first time the first quarteto of "Hamlet" had ever been given in New York. There was much genuine appreciation shown for a fine performance. — NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, April 24, 1931.

The First Quarteto at Harvard

By E. F. M.

Let the scholars have their arguments and their theories concerning the first quarteto version of "Hamlet." It should be enough for an evening to have on the footlights that here is a play to hold the attention and stir the senses, be its origin what it may.

Roundly the players set it forth. Both in his own person and in the company he has gathered Sir Philip has done his work well. Long may he persist in his labors with a Bard not commonly known.—THE BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT, Jan. 13, 1931.

"Macbeth" Thrills Princeton

The Ben Greet Players have come and gone, and we are all thrilled with the production they staged. I hear nothing but the highest praise. The head of the English Department is quoted as saying that he never saw "Macbeth" produced quite so well. I am happy to advise you that financially the venture was a success.—B. T. BUNN, The Triangle Club, Princeton University

Philadelphia Gives Warm Reception

Sir Philip Ben Greet and his band of English players paid another of their welcome visits to Philadelphia yesterday, returning after a year's absence. A large audience warmly appreciated theactor manager whose fifty years' service to the stage and efforts to restore Elizabethan simplicity to Shakespearean drama earned him a knighthood bestowed in 1929.

The Ben Greet Players develop their roles with remarkable smoothness and deliver their lines with a nicety of diction that is unfamiliar to American theatregoers. The staging follows that of the sixteenth century and maintains the extensive changing of elaborate settings characterizing modern productions.—THE PHILADELPHIA EVENING BULLETIN, Jan. 16, 1931.

Ben Greet's Method is Perfect

Ben Greet has found, or rather retained, the only perfect method of playing Shakespearean dramas. He plays them in the approximation of the same effects that were available to the director of the Globe. Of course, there are refinements of lighting that could hardly have been attained in another day but the swift flow of the play is not interrupted by the scene shifter and its accomplices. By this method the plays can be given in modern performance time.—THE SPRINGFIELD (Mass.) UNION, Jan. 31, 1931.

WIN HIGHEST PRAISE

Ben Greet Comments

By Wm. F. McDermott

Players saw the largest audience that has bid welcome to a play of Shakespeare's in Cleveland at any time within a fairly long memory and they saw a performance of "Twelfth Night," which was generally considered and more completely professional than any Shakespearean representation the town has entertained in at least two seasons.—THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, January 28, 1930.

Ben Greet Players Superior

The Ben Greet Players are far superior to any other Shakespearean troupes that have come this way in the last two seasons. Cast uniformly excellent. Crowded with school children in the afternoon. Memorial Hall rocked with laughter at the brilliancy of "Twelfth Night." "Hamlet" in the evening was a performance that approached our idea of this play as it should be done. Russell Thornbaker's lead was able and inspiring.—COLUMBUS DISPATCH, January 19, 1930.

Two Shakespearean Plays Thrill Big Audiences

Their diction is faultless, and the pace of their delivery of a fairly long lines is given instead of the modern colloquial tone of Shakespeare.—SPRINGFIELD ILLESTATE JOURNAL, February 12, 1930.

Great Players Score Big Hit

By Richard S. Davis

There were big moments of almost breathless excitement in the drama and that means something in this apathetic day. All in all the players gave their audience an evening to be remembered with full gratitude. Mr. Thornbaker was the Hamlet and a masterly one.—THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL, March 2, 1930.

Brilliant auditions in "Everyman"

By Casper Monahan

Their delivery was well-nigh perfect. There was no muffling of lines. In other words, you knew what they are talking about, no matter how far back in your seat you happened to be. And it was all done superbly easy. There was no hint of strain.—THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS, Denver, March 11, 1930.

Veteran English Actor Presents First Quarteto of "Hamlet"

Ben Greet has assembled an excellent company. He, himself, appears in every performance. In "Hamlet" he has both the role of Polonius and the First Grave Digger. He brings to the characters all the fineness of his innate artistry. Russell Thornbaker played the title role, giving it a splendid performance both in his reading and acting.—SAN FRANCISCO NEWS, March 25, 1930.

Shakespeare Given in Elizabethan Style

By H. T. Merk

Of the various itinerant purveyors of Shakespeare, Greet, perhaps, maintains the highest average of excellence. Presenting the various comedies and tragedies, each with its peculiar excitement, he does not fail to do the thing at all well is extraordinary; to do it as Greet does is phenomenal in the field of theatrical entertainment.—ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, April 27, 1930.

"Hamlet" Presentation Deeply Interesting

A large and brilliant gathering greeted the stirring performance of "Hamlet" at the Lyric last night. It was a deeply interesting and richly rewarding reading of this Shakespearean tragedy. There were more curtain calls at the end of the play than we recall at any previous presentation of "Hamlet."—RICHMOND M O N D A Y, VA, NEWS-LEADER, January 10, 1930.

Genuinely Good Company

The Ben Greet Players acted "Hamlet" as it should be done.—NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN.
APPENDIX B
CONTRACTS*

*Material reproduced by permission from the University of Iowa Libraries.
THIS CONTRACT MUST NOT BE ISSUED TO THE CHORUS

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION
115 WEST 47th STREET, NEW YORK CITY
6112 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles
1032-33 Masonic Temple Bldg., Chicago

RUN-OF-THE-PLAY
STANDARD CONTRACT

For "INDEPENDENT" New York Managers and others playing the same class of attractions

To be issued only to A. E. A. Members in good standing

Agreement made this __________________ day of ________________________, 19______ between ___________________________ and ___________________________ (Hereinafter called "Manager") and ___________________________ (Hereinafter called "Actor").

1. The Manager hereby hires the actor to render services, as such, in the part of ___________________________ in the play hereinafter mentioned, and the Actor hereby accepts the said engagement; such hiring to be subject to the terms hereinafter set forth.

2. The term of employment shall be the run of the play now called ___________________________ during the season of 19______ to 19______, which said season is agreed to be the period between the first day of September and the following first day of June.

3. The date of first public performance shall be the _________________________ day of ___________________________ or not later than fourteen days thereafter; employment herein shall begin upon the date of beginning of rehearsals, which date shall be not earlier than four weeks prior to the date of first public performance.

4. The Manager agrees, as compensation for services hereunder, to pay the actor the sum of ___________________________ Dollars ($_______.____) each and every week (on Saturday) commencing with the date of first public performance of the play, and continuing for and during the run of the production for which the actor is engaged.

5. The Manager agrees and guarantees that under this contract he will give the Actor not less than ___________________________ consecutive weeks' work, commencing with the date of the first public performance, and pay him therefor.

6. The Actor, if required, shall give four weekly rehearsals without pay; if further rehearsals are required, then, for each additional week or part thereof, the Manager shall pay the Actor, on Saturday of that week, at the rate of the full salary mentioned in paragraph four.

Rehearsals shall be considered to be continuous from the date of the first rehearsal to the date of the first public performance of the play as provided in paragraph three. If the above play is a musical play or a spectacular production, then, wherever the word "Four" appears in this paragraph and in paragraph 3 the word "Five" shall be substituted.

Notice of Closing

7. The Manager shall give one week's notice of the closing of the production and company for which the Actor is engaged.

Clothes

8. (a) The Actor shall furnish and pay for such clothes as are customarily worn by civilians of the present day in this country, together with wigs, boots and shoes necessarily appropriate thereto. All other clothes, wigs, shoes, costumes and appurtenances (including those peculiar to any particular trade, occupation or sport) and all "properties" to be furnished by the Manager.

(b) If the Actor be a woman the Manager shall furnish and pay for all dresses, hats, appurtenances to costume, and all "properties." Foot wear and wigs for modern plays to be furnished by the Actors.

Number of Performances

9. Eight performances shall constitute a week's work.

(a) Except as herein otherwise provided a week's salary shall be paid whether or not in any week eight performances are given. A sum equal to one-eighth of a week's salary shall be paid for each performance over eight in each week.
Transportation

10. The Manager hereby agrees to transport at his expense the Actor when required to travel, including transportation from New York City to the point of opening, and back to New York City from the point of closing, also the Actor’s personal baggage up to two hundred pounds weight. If the company is organized and its members are engaged outside of New York City, such place of organization is agreed to be substituted herein for “New York.”

Travel

11. The Actor shall travel with the company by such routes as the Manager may direct, and the Actor shall not demand compensation for any performance lost through unavoidable delay in travel which prevents such performance by the Company.

Lost Performances

12. It is further agreed if the Company cannot perform because of fire, accident, riot, Act of God, the public enemy, or if the Actor cannot or fail to be at any one or more places of rehearsal on account of illness or any other valid reason, then the Actor shall not be entitled to any salary for the time during which said services shall not be rendered.

Lay-Off

13. The Manager has the right during the season of 1919-1920 to lay off the Company without salary for the week before Christmas, and the week preceding Easter Sunday, or both weeks, if desired; thereafter these weeks shall be deemed to be played whether or not performances are given.

Duties of the Actor

14. The Actor agrees to be prompt at rehearsals, to pay strict regard to make-up and dress, to perform the services herein required in a competent and painstaking manner, to abide by all reasonable rules and regulations, and to render services exclusively to the Manager from the date of beginning of rehearsals, and not to render services to any other person, firm or corporation without the consent of the Manager.

Notices

15. All communications which refer to the Company in general shall be posted upon the call board. Notice to the manager may be given to him personally or to the stage or company manager.

Miscellaneous

16. Lay-offs, unless caused through the fault of the Actor, shall not be counted as part of the guaranteed period.

Arbitration

17. If the blank in paragraph 5 is not filled in, and no guaranteed period is agreed upon, the manager agrees that this contract shall call for a minimum guarantee of two weeks’ employment from the date of first public performance.

18. The Manager agrees that all actors in the company in which the actor is herein employed shall be and shall continue throughout such employment to be members in good standing of the Actors’ Equity Association. This contract is subordinate to the obligations of the actor herein to the Association, of which obligations the Manager admits notice.

19. In event any dispute shall arise between the parties: (1) as to any matter or thing covered by this contract; (2) as to the meaning of the contract or its application to any state of facts which may arise, then said dispute shall be arbitrated. The Actor shall select one arbitrator. The Actors’ Equity Association the second. If within three days these arbitrators shall not be able to agree, then within that time they shall choose a third, who shall not in any way be connected with the Theatrical Profession.

If they fail to do so, ...................................................... or his appointee shall be the third. The arbitrator shall hear the parties and within ten days decide the dispute or claim.

The decision of a majority of said arbitrators shall be the decision of all, and shall be binding, said decision shall be final.

The arbitrators shall determine by whom and in what proportion the cost of the arbitration shall be paid. The parties hereby appoint said board of its agents, with full power to finally settle said dispute or claim and agree that its decision shall constitute an agreement between them, having the same binding force as if agreed to by the parties themselves.

In Witness Whereof we have hereunto set our hands the day and year first above written.

_________________________________________________________________________  Manager

_________________________________________________________________________  Actor
THIS AGREEMENT MADE and entered into the fifteenth day of January, A.D. 1958, by and between the Redpath Lyceum Bureau, party of the first part, and the Elias Bay Associate Players of Chicago, party of the second part.

WITNESSETH:

1. That the first party employs the second party to furnish the following talent and company, to-wit: A play company with personnel as follows: Twelve actors and a director to play one performance of

"Mid-Summer Night's Dream" and one performance of "Kampy"

2. The second party agrees that said company will do good artistic work in the rendition of its programs and likewise will promote the harmony of said company and will preserve the good name of first party and the same to be played before February 15th.

3. AND IN CONSIDERATION of services of said second party's company, first party agrees to pay the sum of $1,140.00 for above mentioned plays.

4. IT IS FURTHER AGREED that the programs of said company shall be subject to the control of first party and shall be subject to change as first party may elect.

5. THE SECOND PARTY AGREES that said company will do good artistic work in the rendition of its programs and likewise will promote the harmony of said company and will preserve the good name of first party and the said company.

6. THE SECOND PARTY AGREES that said company will do good artistic work in the rendition of its programs and likewise will promote the harmony of said company and will preserve the good name of first party and the said company.

7. IN CONSIDERATION of first party's obligations hereunder, second party grants to first party the right to continue this contract for other dates, compensation to be agreed upon.

260
10. Said second party agrees to pay said company's expenses, which includes hotel bills, lunch and dinner, transportation to and from the various locations, and any other expenses incurred by said company, and except any transportation, including baggage consisting of stage properties or costumes, as may be approved by first party, livery hire when drivers are necessary, and sleeping car fare for necessary stage riders, which expense first party agrees to pay. Railroad fare is to be figured from Chicago, and return to Chicago. Second party shall furnish within fifteen days after signing the contract six show-case photographs suitable for high-class half-tone work.

11. It is further agreed that said company shall fill no engagements, nor appear for any other person, firm, association, corporation or society before the expiration of this contract, without the written permission of first party, during the season or seasons covered by this contract, in the territory mentioned in Article 1.

12. In the event of any failure or refusal of said company to perform their obligagements under this contract, all costs, charges and expenses which the first party may suffer shall be a part of a damages to be paid by second party to the first party on account of such failure or refusal.

13. The first party may at any time cancel this contract if, in the judgment of the first party, either said company cannot perfect their work to the time, amount or character, or if they fail, or refuse to contract themselves personally, that is to say, in a manner detrimental to the honor and welfare of the said company and to the interest of the first party. In the event of such cancellation the first party's liability shall be limited to the payment of compensation hereinafter provided, to the time during which said company shall have appeared under this contract, if

14. Second party agrees that said company will appear in the "Mid Summer Night's Dream" in "Kempy" protein at_____.

15. It is further agreed, in case of any dispute of the parties hereto growing out of this contract, both parties hereto agree, upon demand of said arbitrators, to submit said controversy to the Arbitration Committee of the International Symphonies and Concert Association, and abide by the decision of such arbitrators and the decision of such committee thereof shall be a condition precedent to either party bringing action in any court upon this contract.

16. This contract or the benefits thereof may be assigned by first party to any person, firm, association or corporation.

17. Second party agrees that all contracts made or to be made with members of said company shall be the Uniform Article's contract and all terms and conditions consistent with spirit and letter of this advertisement.

18. It is further agreed that the party of the first part is to furnish all musical programs and advertising material and four dances for "Mid Summer Night's Dream." Its is understood that "Kempy" is to play on the afternoon of the 12th or the afternoon of the 13th of February.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our names this 15th day of January A.D. 192__

[Signatures]

Form 9—Company.

Second Party.
CONTRACT AGREEMENT

This article of agreement, entered into this 1st day of March, 1928, by and between A. Milo Bennett, dramatist's agent, of Chicago, and Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., Chicago, witnesseth that the parties hereto have agreed as follows:

The said Bennett hereby agrees to lease and does lease the play, "The Shepherd of The Hills," to the Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., for exclusive use in Chautauqua in all territory in the United States East of the Mississippi River for the Chautauqua season of 1928, commencing on or about April 25, for twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per week for each company, payable for five weeks in advance.

The said Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., agrees to lease the play and does lease the play, "The Shepherd of The Hills," for their Chautauqua season in territory specified above for the Chautauqua season of 1928 and agrees to pay twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per week for it.

The said Redpath Chautauquas, Inc. further agrees to return all manuscripts and parts which they may take or cause to be made to said Bennett at the termination of the Summer season of 1928.

It is further agreed that said Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., shall have the option of continuing this contract for the Chautauqua season of 1929 on the same terms and conditions provided said option is exercised on or before February 1, 1929.

In witness whereof the parties hereto have set their hands and seals this 1st day of March, 1928, at Chicago, Illinois.

________________________________________
REDPATH CHAUTAUQUAS, INC.,

By ____________________________________
American Play Company, Inc.

Representing American and Foreign Authors

Plays Read and Sold and Leased for Original Production, Stock Performances and Motion Pictures, in All Countries of the World, and Manuscripts for Novels, Short Stories and Serials.

Telephone Longacre 8040

John W. Runsey
President

Elisabeth Marbury
Vice-President

Richard J. Madden
Secretary

Cable Address: Amplaco

Charles Hanson Towne
Manager, Literary

Henry A. Hubman
Manager, Motion Picture

Howard C. Runsey
Manager, Stock Department

53 West 42nd Street, New York City

March 5, 1925

Bedpath Lyceum Bureau
1400 Broadway,
New York City

Att. Mr. C. A. Peffer

Dear Mr. Peffer:

Referring to our mutual agreements of January 27th, for the use of the play Adam and Eva on Redpath Chautauquas in the states of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and other states, it is now understood that that arrangement is null and void and that a new agreement has been entered into on this date whereby the Redpath Bureau has the rights to use the play Adam and Eva on all Redpath Chautauquas in the United States with the exception of the following towns; for the Chautauqua season of 1925—beginning on or about March 15th and ending on September 15th:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beaver, Pa.</th>
<th>Logan, O.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butler, Pa.</td>
<td>St. Marys, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford, Pa.</td>
<td>Xenia, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock Haven, Pa.</td>
<td>Wilmington, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altoona, Pa.</td>
<td>Cambridge, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnesboro, Pa.</td>
<td>Findlay, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynesburg, Pa.</td>
<td>Lima, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgantown, W. Va.</td>
<td>Bryan, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairmont, W. Va.</td>
<td>Wauseon, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarksburg, W. Va.</td>
<td>Ashland, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth, O.</td>
<td>Salem, O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkersburg, W. Va.</td>
<td>Wellsville, O.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yours very truly,

AMERICAN PLAY COMPANY INC.

(signed) Howard Rumsey

This is certify that the above is an exact copy of a letter written by the American Play Company, under date of March 5, 1925, and on file in the offices of the Redpath Bureau, Columbus, Ohio.

Notary Public, Franklin County, Ohio
THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 28th day of November, 1923, by and between ALBON HOFFMAN of New York City, State of New York, party of the first part, and the REDPATH LYCEUM BUREAU, INC., a Massachusetts corporation with offices in White Plains, New York, and 1400 Broadway, New York City, party of the second part.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the party of the first part has the sole and exclusive right to license the play entitled, "GIVE AND TAKE" for Chautauqua production and the party of the second part desires to secure from the party of the first part, the sole and exclusive right and license for Chautauqua production of the said play for the United States of America, for the Chautauqua season of 1924, beginning on or about April 15th, 1924, and closing on or about September 15th, 1924.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the sum of ONE ($1.00) DOLLAR to each of the parties hereto to the other in hand paid and in further consideration of those premises and the payments to be made herein and the terms, covenants and conditions herein, the parties hereto do hereby agree as follows:

FIRST:—The party of the first part does hereby grant to the party of the second part the sole and exclusive right, license and privilege to produce and perform in Chautauqua the play entitled, "GIVE AND TAKE", in the United States for the period beginning on or about April 15th, 1924, and ending about September 15th, 1924.

SECOND:—The party of the second part does hereby agree to pay to the party of the first part, for the right, license and privilege as aforesaid, the sum of TWO THOUSAND ($2,000) DOLLARS as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 28th, 1923</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1st, 1924</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 15th, 1924</td>
<td>$1000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is understood and agreed that the said sum is for the aforesaid right, license and privilege to said play for FORTY (40) weeks performance, of said play, during the period aforesaid at FIFTY ($50) DOLLARS per week, each seven (7) performances being constituted as a week.

It is further understood and agreed that the party of the second part shall have the right, license and privilege to produce and perform in Chautauqua, the said play during the period aforesaid in the United States, for as many additional weeks as desired and for which the party of the second part does hereby agree to pay to the party of the first part the sum of FORTY ($40) DOLLARS for each additional week.

THIRD:—The parties of the second part shall report on July 15th, 1924, by statement, the number of performances given and where given, and also the number of performances booked and the places for the remainder of the Chautauqua season, and payment shall be made on that date for any balances due party of the first part for the additional weeks as provided for in paragraph two.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the respective parties hereto have hereunto set their respective hands and seals the day and year first above written.

(Signed) Lyceum Bureau, Inc.
Party of the first part

REDPATH LYCEUM BUREAU, INC.
by: (Signed) C. F. HOFFMAN
Vice-President and Manager
Party of the second part
CONTRACT AGREEMENT

This article of agreement, entered into this 1st day of March, 1928, by and between A. Milo Bennett, dramatist's agent, of Chicago, and Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., Chicago, witnesseth that the parties hereto have agreed as follows:

The said Bennett hereby agrees to lease and does lease the play, "The Shepherd of The Hills," to the Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., for exclusive use in Chautauqua in all territory in the United States East of the Mississippi River for the Chautauqua season of 1928, commencing on or about April 25, for twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per week for each company, payable for five weeks in advance.

The said Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., agrees to lease the play and does lease the play, "The Shepherd of The Hills," for their Chautauqua season in territory specified above for the Chautauqua season of 1928 and agrees to pay twenty-five dollars ($25.00) per week for it.

The said Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., further agrees to return all manuscripts and parts which they may take or cause to be made to said Bennett at the termination of the Summer season of 1928.

It is further agreed that said Redpath Chautauquas, Inc., shall have the option of continuing this contract for the Chautauqua season of 1929 on the same terms and conditions provided said option is exercised on or before February 1, 1929.

In witness whereof the parties hereto have set their hands and seals this 1st day of March, 1928, at Chicago, Illinois.

__________________________
REDPATH CHAUTAUQUAS, INC.

By _______________________

__________________________
REDPATH CHAUTAUQUAS, INC.

By _______________________

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE CAST LISTS*

*Reproduced by permission from the University of Iowa Libraries.
THE REDPATH CHAUTAUQUAS

Present

"The Servant in the House"

By

CHARLES RANN KENNEDY

A play of the present day in five acts, setting forth the story of one morning in the early Spring.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

James Ponsonby Makeshyfte, D. D.  The most Reverend, the Lord Bishop of Lancashire  .......... J. W. McConnell

The Reverend William Smyth, Vicar  George E. Byron

Auntie, the Vicar's Wife  Miss Sarah Willey

Mary, their Niece  Miss Margaret Ulrich

Mr. Robert Smith, a gentleman of necessary occupation  William Owen

Rogers, a Page Boy  Earl McBath

Manson, a Butler  William Lindquist

Time: An early morning in Spring.
Place: An English Country Vicarage.

Central Thought of This Great Play

"If a man says I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"
The Melting Pot

Produced Under the Personal Direction of Wm. J. Keighley.

CAST.

David Quixano—A Jewish Musician ___________________________Theodore Doucet
Mendel Quixano—His Uncle _____________________________Dore Davidson
Frau Quixano—His Uncle's Mother __________________________Louise Muldener
Kathleen O'Reilly—Their Household Help ______________________Jean Brac
Quincy Davenport—An Unemployed Millionaire __________________Wm. J. Keighley
Herr Pappelmester—Its Orchestra Conductor __________________Herman Gerch
Daron Revendel—A Russian Official ________________________Howard Boulden
Baronesse Revendel—His Second Wife _____________________Jean Brae
Vera Revendel—Her Stepdaughter ________________________Isabella Withers

ACT 1.—Living room in the house of the Quixano's in the Richmond Borough of New York. Five o'clock of a Friday afternoon in February.
ACT 2—The same. March afternoon.
ACT 3—Miss Revendel's room at the Settlement—April. In the afternoon.
ACT 4—Roof garden of the Settlement. Evening of Saturday, the Fourth of July.

Executive Staff for Redpath Lyceum Bureau:
Managing Director ________________________________Wm. J. Keighley
Stage Manager ________________________________Howard Boulden
Assistant Stage Manager __________________________Harry C. Edwards.

unque checked, the same point
with Walter Miller.
The Redpath Bureau
CHICAGO
HARRY P. HARRISON, General Manager
PRESENTS
"Applesauce"
A Comedy of American Life in Three Acts
by Barry Conners

CAST OF CHARACTERS
Ma Robinson..........................Mabel Wright
Pa Robinson..........................John Milton
Hazel Robinson.........................Kathleen Wallace
Matt McAllister......................Arthur Van Slyke
Bill McAllister........................Graham Velsey
Rello Jenkins........................George Ertell

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
ACT I—Sitting Room of the Robinson home. An Autumn evening.
ACT II—The same. Three months later.
ACT III—Upstairs over a Drug Store.

Manager of the Company, GRAHAM VELSEY
Stage Manager, GEORGE ERTELL

Staged by
Redpath Bureau's Producing Dept.
NEW YORK CITY
WILLIAM J. KEIGHLEY
Gen. Stage Director
CRAWFORD A. PEFFER
Manager
(Over)
THE REDPATH BUREAU
PRESENTS
“CAPPY RICKS”
A Comedy Dramatized by Edward E. Rose from Captain
Peter B. Kyne's Saturday Evening Post Stories

CAST
Alden P. Ricks
John Skinner
Matt Peasley
Cecil Pericles Bernard
Florence Ricks
Aunt Lucy Bartlett
Douglas Hope
Charles Fleming
Leo Chalzell
Robert Bentley
Margaret Leonard
Marie Pavley

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
ACT ONE—Cappy's Office of the Blue Star Navigation
Company, San Francisco.
ACT TWO—Cappy's Garden. Several Months Later.
ACT THREE—Cappy's Office. Some Months Later.

STAGED BY WM. J. KEIGHLEY
Manager, CHARLES FLEMING
General Stage Director for New York City Office of
THE REDPATH BUREAU
KNICKERBOCKER THEATRE BLDG., NEW YORK CITY
CRAWFORD A. PEFFER, Manager
THE REDPATH CHAUTAUQUAS
H. P. HARRISON, GENERAL MANAGER
O. W. THOMAS, MANAGER
PRESENTS

IT PAYS
TO ADVERTISE

BY ROI COOPER MEGRUE

CAST

Mary Grayson - - - - BERNICE FRANK
Johnson - - - - HENRY WILLIS
Comtesse De Beaurien - - - - ESTHER WELTY
Rodney Martin - - - - EDWARD LATIMER
Cyrus, Martin - - - - WILLIAM MARSH
Ambrose Peale - - - - CARL NORMAN
Marie - - - - HELENA COLLINS
William Smith - - - - SALVATORE MALTESE
Donald McC Chesney - - - - SALVATORE MALTESE
Ellery Clark - - - - ARTHUR ROW
Charles Bronson - - - - SIDNEY CARTER

ACT 1—The Library at Cyrus Martin's.
ACT 2—Rodney Martin's Office.
ACT 3—Same as Act 1.
TIME—The Present.

MANAGER OF COMPANY, S. MALTESE
STAGE MANAGER, CARL NORMAN

STAGED BY WM. J. KEIGHLEY.

GENERAL STAGE DIRECTOR FOR NEW YORK CITY OFFICE OF

REDPATH BUREAU
35 WEST 39TH STREET, NEW YORK
CRANFORD A. PEPPER, MANAGER
THE REDPATH CHAUNA QUAS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

H. P. Harrison, Manager

Present

"TOMMY"

Oscar with

A Comedy in Three Acts

By Howard Lindsay

and Bert Robinson

CHARACTERS

ACT I: The Living Room of the Thurber Home.
ACT II: The same. Two evenings later.
ACT III: The same. One hour later.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Manager of Company

Stage Manager

John S. Clubley

Emmet Shackleford

SIGNED

(REDPATH BUREAU'S PRODUCING DEPT.
NEW YORK CITY)

WILLIAM J. KEECHLEY
Gen. Stage Director

CRAWFORD A. PEPPER
Manager

7-DAY CIRCUIT


GEORGE
TODAY CHAULA WAS
SCHOOLING
"NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH"
by Jesse Lonton
From the Novel by Frederick Ishen

CAST

Robert Bennett 

Halston ........................................... Irving Mitchell 50

Clarence Wainwright ........................................... Will I. Chatterton 50

Nicolette Boxen ........................................... Georgey Femoo 50

Randolph Balston ........................................... Walter Woodall 50

Ora Balston, her mother ........................................... Kitty Arrows 50

Ethel Clark, a neighbor of the Balstons! ...................... Kitty Allin 

Beulah Jackson, a chorus girl ................................. Helen Conolly 50

ACT I - Uptown Office of "Halston & Co., Afternoon

ACT II - The Balston's country home, on the following day. Midday

ACT III - Same as ACT II - at 7:25 "

Manager of the Company

Walter Woodall

Staged by Mr. J. Haishley

General stage Director for New York City Office of

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Cochrane Building, New York City

Crawford A. Walls, Engineer

M.R. Harricon

Mar. 6, 1931
THE REDPATH CHAUTAUQUAS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

H.P. Harrison, General Manager
Present
"SO THIS IS LONDON"
A Comedy in Three Acts by Arthur Goodrich

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Hiram Draper, Jr. (Called "Junior")...Marvin Creek (Salary 65.; Driving car 10.) 65.00
Elinor Beauchamp..........................Margot Lester 60.00
Lady Amy Duckworth........................Elwyn Harvey 60.00
Hiram Draper, Sr. ..........................Emmet Shackleford (Salary 60.; managing Co. 5.) 65.00
Mrs. Hiram Draper............................Minna Philips 60.00
Sir Percy Beauchamp.......................Robert Nobles 60.00
Alfred Honeycutt............................Page Spencer (Salary 50.; stage managing 10.) 60.00
Lady Beauchamp.........................Ethel Munro 60.00

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I - The Drapers' suite at the Ritz, London
ACT II - Sir Beauchamp's living room in Brimshot; day later
ACT III - Lady Duckworth's drawing room; same day

Manager of the Company ........................ Ernset Shackleford
Stage Manager ................................. Page Spencer

STAGED BY WILLIAM KIRCHLEY
General Stage Director for New York City Office of
THE REDPATH BUREAU
Knickerbocker Theatre Building, New York City
Crawford A. Peffer, Manager

(Opening April 23, 1926
Columbus, Georgia)

(White Plains, N.Y., April 14th, 1926)
Dear Friends:

The salary of "The Easy Mark" company amounts to three hundred ten dollars ($310.00) as follows:

- Agnes Elliott Scott $50.00
- Isabel Travers 50.00
- H. Craig Neslo 60.00
- Dorothy Slaytor 50.00
- William J. Hackett 50.00
- Richard McEnery 50.00 $310.00

The author's royalty and production amounts to eighty dollars ($80.00), total three hundred ninety dollars ($390.00).

Kindly send check for the salary, three hundred ten dollars ($310.00) to Mr. H. Craig Neslo, the manager of the company to reach him so that he can get the amount cashed before the banks close on Saturday of each week.

Kindly send check each week for eighty dollars ($80.00) made payable to O. A. Peffer to 40 Depot Plaza White Plains, New York in payment of the author's royalty and production account.

Sincerely yours,

L.

Redpath Lyceum Bureau

White Plains, New York
October 3rd, 1927

Rochester Office
Pittsburgh Office
Columbus Office
Cedar Rapids Office
Chicago Office
SA.LARY LIST

H.P. Harrison

Atlantic Circuit 1923

"CAPPY RICKS"

------------------------------
Alden P. Ricks .................. Thaddeus Gray $60.00
John Skinner .................... Arthur Bowyer 65.00
Captain Matt Poasley ........... Earle H. Mayne 50.00
Cecil Pericles Bernard ......... John T. Veitch 50.00
Florence Ricks .................. Pearl Gray 50.00
Ellen Murrya ..................... Hazel Mae Dolores 50.00
------------------------------

Total Weekly Salary $325.00

Arthur Bowyer, Manager

Opening Woodstock, Ontario, Canada, July 27th, 1923

(July 24th, 1923)
THE REDPATH CHENAQUAS

Harry P. Harrison, General Manager

Present

"APPLESAUCE"

A Comedy of American Life in Three Acts by Barry Conners

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ma Robinson .................................. Carolyn Mackey 55.00
Paul Robinson ................................ Edward Power 55.00
Hazel Robinson ................................ Katherine Rogers 55.00
Matt McAllister ................................ Charles Hanna 50.00
Bill McAllister ................................ David Pritchard 65.00
(Remaining 55; managing, stage mgr., driving car 10.)
Rollo Jenkins .................................. Bruce Conning 50.00

300.00

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I Sitting room of the Robinson home. An Autumn evening.

ACT II The same. Three months later.

ACT III Upstairs over a Drug Store.

Manager of the Company ............... Charles Hanna
Stage Manager ............................... David Pritchard

6-Day Atlantic Circuit
Opening Dalton, Georgia
April 25th, 1926

WILL 22nd, 1926)
### SALARY LIST

**"ADAM AND EVE"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James King, a rich man</td>
<td>$85.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton DeWitt, his son-in-law</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie DeWitt, his oldest daughter</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva King, his younger daughter</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Smith, his business manager</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle Horace Pilgrim, his cousin</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Andrew Gordon, his would be son-in-law</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** $405.00

---

**Manager of Company:**

**Stage Manager:**

**George Clark:**

**Page Spencer:**

---

*H. Pe Harrison's 7th Day Company*

*Opening Columbus, Georgia April 22nd, 1938*
The Redpath Chautauquas
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
H. P. HARRISON, General Manager
PRESENT
"So This Is London"
A Comedy in Three Acts by
Arthur Goodrich

CAST OF CHARACTERS
Hiram Draper, Jr. (Called "Junior")..........................Marvin Otock
Eliza Beauchamp................................................Marget Leter
Lady Amy Duckworth............................................Bryn Harvey
Hiram Draper, Sr. .............................................Emmett Sheekfield
Mrs. Hiram Draper .............................................Mona Phillips
Sir Percy Beauchamp..........................................Robert Noble
Alfred Hamerwood.............................. Page Spencer
Lady Beauchamp................................................Beth Muro

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
ACT I—The Draper's suite at the Ritz, London.
ACT II—Sir Percy Beauchamp's living room in Brompton. Day later.
ACT III—Lady Duckworth's drawing room. Same day.

Manager of the Company, EMMET SHACKLEFORD
Stage Manager, PAGE SPENCER

Staged by
Redpath Bureau's Producing Dept.
NEW YORK CITY
WILLIAM J. KEIGHLEY CRAWFORD A. PEFFER
Gen. Stage Director Manager
(Over)

The Redpath Chautauquas
CHICAGO,
HARRY P. HARRISON, General Manager
PRESENT
"The Shepherd of the Hills"
Great Drama of the Ozarks
By Harold Bell Wright

CAST OF CHARACTERS
Jess Grant McFadden, Aunt Mollie..........................Martha MacDonald
Gode Bird, Fiancé of Samuel Low..........................Robert White
Peter White, Everybody's friend...........................M. H. Sorella
Henry Birdsall, Old Man....................................H. E. R. Bridge
Sammy Lee, Ward of the Mountains........................Prof. Gay
George Birdsall, Jr., Young Abbott.........................Roger Gaffney
Daniel Harvey, Doc, the Shepherd..........................Paul Therien
Fred, A Child of Nature....................................Harry Bumpers
Will Gilks, Leader of the located song.......................David Littigang

IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS
ACT I—Twelve miles from town; place. Early evening.
ACT II—Twelve miles from town; place. Next morning.
ACT IV—Same as Act II, following evening.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES
ACT ONE—Law offices of Richard Clarke, New York City.
ACT THREE—Garden of the Hudone Home. Seven weeks later.

Manager, GEORGE WESTLAE
Stage Manager, CHARLES SEAL

STAGED BY WM. J. KEIGHLEY
General Stage Director for New York City Office of
THE REDPATH BUREAU
KNICKERBOCKER THEATRE BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY
CRAWFORD A. PEFFER, Manager
APPENDIX D

TECHNICAL SUPPORT MATERIALS*

*Reproduced by permission from the University of Iowa Libraries.
June 9, 1924

Bennett Dramatic & Musical Exchange
35-7, Randolph Street
Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

In regard to the size of the stage in the four Bay tents, Mr. W. V. Hughes, Superintendent of equipment has written us as follows:

Stage width: 10 ft.
Stage Depth: varies from 14 to 16 ft. according to the lumber which the boys use in their tents.
Width of front curtain: 12 ft.
Height of front of stage opening: 9 ft.
Height at back of stage: 8 ft.

These tents use the curtain cable frame for our green curtains. The side curtains taper from 12 ft. at front of stage to eight feet at rear. The back curtain 14 ft. wide by 8 ft. high. If the company could use curtain in place of scenery and hang them over the cable, it would be very simple.

Quarto Cable outfit.

You are very truly,
REDPATH CHALMERS

By

OSB. UAB
Williamstown by Gaslight

My Dear Mr. Warakoff,

In reference to your letter of June 28th

I would like to see the intelligently
understandingly, specifically--

But I have already sent you a
description of all I have. See if

several standing may present equipment
are in a wheel suspended from the

same. The wire should

The lights are fastened across the stage

through the top and down the

stage on each side, making a

continuous figure eight altogether.

The curtain wraps on the wire. No

frame is used; just supports for the

wire.
March 10, 1927.

Redpath Chautauqua,
Kimball Building,
Chicago, Illinois.

Attention - Mr. J.P. Young,
Assistant Treasurer.

Gentlemen:

Inasmuch as our catalogue is not yet off the press we are unable at the present time to send you pictures of the new "Aluminide" equipment. However, if you will mail us detailed information as to your requisites we will be glad to furnish data.

Very truly yours,

DISPLAY STAGE LIGHTING CO., Inc.

E. F. Kook.

MANUFACTURERS OF EVERYTHING ELECTRICAL FOR THE STAGE AND THEATRE.

ALL AGREEMENTS MADE CONTINGENT UPON STRIKES, FIRE, ACCIDENTS OR CAUSES BEYOND OUR CONTROL. PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR FRAME WORK FOR PLAY COMPANY.

A frame work should be constructed on the platform as per plan attached herewith, upon which special draperies are to be hung. This frame work should be put up the morning of the day the play company arrives, as they may not arrive in sufficient time to oversee the construction work.

The four (4) uprights are 18 ft. high of 2 X 4 inch (2X4").

The rails around the top are of 1 X 6 inch boarding.

The two side pieces are 18 ft. long.

The back stage piece is 16 ft. long.

If you have no front curtain, a 1 X 6 inch rail, 24 ft. long should be placed across the front of the frame. It will be found best to make this of two 16 ft. 1 X 6 boards and let them lap 8 ft. If you have a front curtain it will be unnecessary to put this front piece on.

The draperies are light and frame needs but little bracing. If it is braced, be sure the bracing does not project inside the inclosure. Let the bracing carry off stage.

A single frame(12 X 10) 12 ft. high and 10 ft. wide of 1 X 4 or any lumber should be placed three feet back of the main frame on which to hang backings.

Should your stage or platform be wider than the 24 ft. width of the front of the frame, add two pieces to the front rail to extend beyond the 24 ft. opening, four ft. on each side.

Where "Give and Take" is to be given two extra 12 ft. 1 X 4 and one 16 ft. 1 X 4 will be necessary, ready for placement on the night of "Give and Take."
Bought of
Chicago Stage Lighting Co.

Electrical Stage Lighting Apparatus and Effects

112 North
La Salle St.
Telephones
MAIN 1278
MAIN 1322

Our Job No.
2406

Chicago.

M. The Redpath Okt. Willis Hall.

Your Order No. 13th Floor. Kimball Hall Bldg.

Terms: 1% 10 days, net 30 days.

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Paid by Check/ Willis Hall.

Please make all remittances in Chicago or New York Exchange.
Our Job No. 3478

May 9th, 1928.

Mr. Willis,

Our Order No.

Terms: 1% 10 days, net 30 days

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11.22

PAID

CHICAGO STAGE LIGHTING COMPANY,
55 West Wacker Drive.

PLEASE MAKE ALL REMITTANCES IN CHICAGO OR NEW YORK EXCHANGE
IMPORTANT: Report immediately to L. B. Crotty, Superintendent of Transportation and Equipment, each movement is made. Keep carbon copy for J. W. Cooper. Make report very accurate. Property is responsible for all property broken, lost or stolen. This is imperative.

REPORT OF PROPERTY MAN—REDPATH CHAUTAUQUA

Shipped from [Date] to [Date] Via [Via] R. R. Baggage Car No. [Car No.] to [Car No.]

1. CANVAS.
   A. Big Top.
      - Pcs. Tent Top (Ends) (____ Bundles)
      - Pcs. Tent Top (Center) (____ Bundles)
      - Pcs. Side Wall (____ Bundles)
   B. Fence (____ Sections)
   C. Crew Tent Complete (____ Pcs.)
   D. Dressing Tent (____)
   E. Accessories
      - Blocks and Tackles (____)
      - Storm Guys (____)
      - Guy Ropes (____)
      - Sway Ropes (____)
      - Bale Rings (____)
      - Tent Sacks (____)

2. POLES.
   - Center Poles (____)
   - Wall Poles (____)
   - House Tent Poles (____)
   - Fence Poles, 7 ft. (____)

3. STAKES.
   - Sand Stakes (____)
   - Iron Stakes (____)

4. INTERIOR EQUIPMENT.
   - Seats.
      - Braces (____)
      - Backs (____)
      - Folding Chairs (____)
      - Jacks (____)
      - Planks (____)
      - Wood Settees (____)
      - Canvas Settees (____)

ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

- No. 12 Brewery Cord (____)
- Weatherproof Sockets (____)
- Main Switch (____)
- Slip Connections (____)
- Cut Out Box (____)
- Plug Fuses (____)
- Spools 15 amp. Fuse Wire (____)
- Soldering Outfit (____)
- 70 W. Tungsten Lights (____)
- 75 X. C. F. Carbon Lights (____)
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5. MISCELLANEOUS.

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Articles above listed were shipped by me.

Name: ____________________________

Property Man.

Crew No.: ________________________
APPENDIX E

PROPERTY LISTS*

*Reproduced by permission from the University of Iowa Libraries.
Stay in Chicago. The following is a list of its contents, a description of which from sending to the

Hyman -Gerson in White Plains

1. Art work
2. Diamond plate - cups and saucers
3. Calendar
4. Bouquet of artificial flowers
5. Refrigerator
6. Bath clothes
7. Amazing Prints
8. Small "donkey" luncheon
9. Set of six "white" luncheon
Rug 9' x 12'
4 runner rugs
1 chiffonier or dresser with mirror
1 sofa
2 straight chairs
1 arm chair
1 Morris chair
1 library table (old)
1 small table
12 newspapers
23 wrapped boxes & packages (important)
Victrola & 2 band records
2 sugar barrels
2 small packing boxes
1 10-foot step ladder.

All furniture should be old and show signs of long wear.
The Detour
Cook stove
kitchen table
kitchen cupboard
4 kitchen chairs
1 small stand
rocking chair
water pail
1 dipper
wash pan
wash bench
small market basket
hammer
pail for garbage

Miss B. of West Tallowee
Sealed 7/17/17
Written by W. L. Melody 7/17
PROPERTY PLOT

"CAPPY RICKS" CO.

(Act One and Three)

1 Flat top desk
1 Swivel chair
4 Straight chairs

1 Typewriter table
1 Typewriter
1 Bookcase
1 Office bench
8 Large books
1 9 x 12 Rug
2 Small books
1 Waste basket
5 Small rugs
1 Eat rack or hall tree.

ACT TWO

1 Wicker table
1 " settee
2 " arm chairs
2 " small chairs
2 " " tables
6 Magazines

Thank you.
List of Properties

For

ADAM AND EVE

1 Library Table
1 Settee
2 Large Armchairs
1 Stool or Tabourette (to sit on)
1 Card Table
2 Pedestals
4 Straight chairs
1 Console Table
3 Sofa Cushions
Piano and bench

All these properties are absolutely necessary
and should be in the tent or pavilion by 12 o'clock (noon) on the day of the performance.
ACT I.

2 small writer tables
4 " " chairs
1 " " bench
2 auto tires
1 auto rim or wheel
1 Inner tube
1 Hammer and other auto tools
1 Auto pump

ACT II.

1 Settee
3 Fancy Chairs
1 " Table
1 Arm Chair
1 Table lamp— "practical"
Carpet and rugs
1 Telephone stand

ACT III.

1 Kitchen table
5 Kitchen chairs
1 Stand
1 Sideboard or cupboard
1 Trunk
List Of Properties
"SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS"

ACT 1. Back drop 34 x 12-1/2; 3 borders 2-1/2 x 34;
6 tabs 5 x 12-1/2; Set house tab 10 x 12-1/2;
1 built raised platform 8" x 10' x 4' to fold
in box; 1 porch roof 3' 8" x 10'; 2 posts;
1 well 3 x 3 x 3; 1 windlass; 2 fences 3' 6" x 4';
2 wash benches

ACT 2. Back drop 20 x 12-1/2; 2 side tabs 11 x 12-1/2;
2 borders 2-1/2 x 30 1 built practical door to
fold; 1 built window with frame to fold

ACT 3. 1 Tree tab 12-1/2' x 12"; 1 tree tab 12-1/2' x 16";
1 Mill tab 20' x 12-1/2'; 1 built platform to fold
6' x 3' 6" x 3' 1 Built Breakway Door to hinge with
frame to fold 3' 6" x 6' 6"; 2 built tree stumps,
1 Interior backing
Jenny - "Atlantic".

Chandelier: 6.95
1 spotlight: 10.00
1 - 20 watt globe: 1.75
25 ft. #16 wire: 2.00
2-insulated switches: 0.70
2 - 25 ft. #16 Stage Cable: 3.00
1 - 15 ft. " " " " " " 0.90
1 - 10 " " " " " " 0.60
1 - lamp plug connector: 1.10
20 ft. lamp cord: 1.10
1 plug: 0.30
4 sockets: 1.00
Tape: 1.25
5 lamps: 1.00
2 reflectors: 1.00
Trunk Transfer: 1.25
Lamp cord + sockets: 1.00
1 crew driven: 34.61
APPENDIX F

PLAY LISTS
Redpath Plays By Year

1913
Comedy of Errors (Greet)

1914
Taming of The Shrew (Greet)

1915
Much Ado About Nothing (Greet)

1916
The Servant In the House
The Merchant of Venice (Greet)

1917
As You Like It (Greet)
The Melting Pot (Lyceum)

1918
The Melting Pot
It Pays to Advertise

1919
It Pays to Advertise

1920
Her Husband's Wife
Nothing But the Truth

1921
Broadway Jones
Friendly Enemies
The Man From Home
Nothing But the Truth
Turn to the Right

1922
Friendly Enemies

1923
The Bubble
Capoy Ricks
Friendly Enemies

1924
The Meanest Man on Earth
Turn to the Right
The Witching Hour
Capoy Ricks
Everyday
Give and Take
Not So Fast
Six Cylinder Love
Smilin' Through

1925
Adam and Eva
Captain Applejack
The First Year
Give and Take
Not So Fast
Two Fellows and a Girl
Strange Bedfellows

1926
Adam and Eva
Applesauce
Give and Take
In Love With Love
Not So Fast
The Show-Off
So This Is London
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<td>Detour&lt;br&gt;The Easy Mark&lt;br&gt;The Goose Hangs High&lt;br&gt;A Message From Mars&lt;br&gt;The Patzy&lt;br&gt;A Servant in the House&lt;br&gt;The Show-Off&lt;br&gt;Smilin' Through</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Abe Lincoln&lt;br&gt;A Message From Mars&lt;br&gt;Shepherd of the Hills&lt;br&gt;Tommy</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Skidding&lt;br&gt;Sun-Up&lt;br&gt;Take My Advice&lt;br&gt;Three Wise Fools</td>
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<td>Broken Dishes&lt;br&gt;Journey's End&lt;br&gt;The Perfect Alibi&lt;br&gt;Her Temporary Husband&lt;br&gt;New Brooms</td>
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<td>The Show-Off&lt;br&gt;Six Cylinder Love</td>
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*This list has been drawn from programs and publicity at the author's disposal and does not claim to be exhaustive. Shakespeare and other classic authors are not included.
*Indicates a Redpath Bureau selection.
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<td>Mary's Other Husband</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>The Melting Pot</td>
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<td>The Mender</td>
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<td>Merely Mary Ann</td>
<td>Israel Zangwill</td>
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<td>A Message From Mars</td>
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<td>Frank Craven</td>
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<td>A Night in Arabia</td>
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<td>Not So Fast</td>
<td>Conrad Westervelt</td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>1924 f. R</td>
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<td>Nothing But the Truth</td>
<td>James Montgomery</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1920 f. R</td>
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<td>Old Crusty Takes the Air</td>
<td>Robert M. Sand</td>
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<td>Old Nobody</td>
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<td>Other People's Business</td>
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<td>Other People's Money</td>
<td>Edward Owings Rowne</td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<td>A Pair of Sixes</td>
<td>Edward Peple</td>
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<td>A Pair of Spectacles</td>
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<td>The Passing of the Third Floor Fack</td>
<td>Jerome K. Jerome</td>
<td>1909</td>
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<td>The Patsy</td>
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<td>1925</td>
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<td>Peg O' My Heart</td>
<td>J. Hartley Manners</td>
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<td>Pigs</td>
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<td>Charles Rann Kennedy</td>
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<td>The Seven Keys to Falldate</td>
<td>George M. Cohan</td>
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<td>Shepherd of the Hills</td>
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<td>George Kelly</td>
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<td>1926 f. R</td>
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<td>The Sign of the Cross</td>
<td>Wilson Bennett</td>
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<td>Six Cylinder Love</td>
<td>W. A. McGuire</td>
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<td>Skidding</td>
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<td>Smilin' Through</td>
<td>Allan Lengdon Martin</td>
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<td>So This is London</td>
<td>Arthur Goodrich</td>
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<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
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<td>Lula Volmer</td>
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<td>Sweet Lavender</td>
<td>Arthur Wing Finero</td>
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<td>Take My Advice</td>
<td>Elliot Lester</td>
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<td>Austin Strong</td>
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<td>To The Ladies</td>
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<td>Tommy</td>
<td>Howard Lindsay</td>
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<td>1928 R</td>
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<td>Turn to the Right</td>
<td>Smith &amp; Hazzard</td>
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<td>1921 f. R</td>
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<td>Two Fellows and a Girl</td>
<td>Vincent Lawrence</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1925 f. R</td>
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<td>The Whole Town's Talking</td>
<td>Emerson &amp; Loos</td>
<td>1923</td>
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<td>White Collars</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>The Witching Hour</td>
<td>Augustus Thomas</td>
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APPENDIX G

SELECTIONS FROM A SUPERINTENDENT'S HANDBOOK*

*Reproduced from the "Handbook of Information and Instruction" printed by the Associated Chautauquas of America, Topeka, Kansas, 1928.
Crewmen

The general appearance of the Chautauqua equipment is one of the main factors in determining the atmosphere of the Chautauqua and its success. This is the crewman's responsibility. He is one of the most important parts of Chautauqua service. He must have a sincere and conscientious desire to display the Chautauqua equipment to its best advantage. Here are a few suggestions given concisely and without explanation for the benefit of the tent men. While practically every circuit is in some ways different from the others, most of these suggestions are applicable to all circuits. If not applicable to your particular circuit, you will be given special instructions by the circuit manager.

The Set Up

The location will usually be selected before you arrive. If not, it should be off the main street somewhat to avoid noise and the appearance of the ordinary stock show but should be accessible to the majority of the population. You will be provided with a tent diagram by your circuit manager for your particular tent. Know it thoroughly. Lay out the stake line accurately if you expect a well balanced tent. Sink all stakes to within eight or ten inches of the tops and double stake the seams only. After the tent is up wrap the loose ends of ropes around stakes. Do not allow loose ends of ropes to hang from the lacing. Never put up a tent with any holes in it. A few minutes time will permit you to sew these up and thus prevent the wind getting under the tent and causing the damage that is always sure to result. Raise the tent to the proper height on the center poles. Low set-ups are no safer than high ones and are not as good looking. In raising the tent if you place a few of the edge poles on the side from which the wind is coming, the wind will help raise the tent for you. Stretching the tent properly is an art. Divide the help into two crews, one crew on each end guy rope and stretch so that the end of the tent is not sagging, then stretch likewise on the two end seam ropes, then on the two side seam ropes, always being sure to have one crew pulling at the same time opposite the other to keep the tent in balance. After all seams are stretched take the ropes between the seams pulling oppositely as on the seams. A well balanced tent will not ride the center poles. Bottoms of edge poles should slope in so that the whole pole is about perpendicular to the slope of the tent. The edge of the tent should be perfectly level. Quarter poles are the last to be put in. Tie all poles, edge and quarter, securely with the ropes provided for that purpose. This insures safety during storms. Keep the side wall rolled tightly at all times and do not allow it to agitate the edge poles. Side wall should always be kept down and tied out securely when wind is blowing.

Platform

General size of the platform is 16 feet by 20 feet, and 30 inches high. Do not use shingles, tile, etc., to build it upon unless it is absolutely necessary. Use four by fours, twenty-four by fours, twenty by four by fours, twenty by four by fours, twenty by four by fours, twenty by four by fours. To begin, lay three four by fours, twenty-four feet long, lengthwise of the to be platform; then across these lay four sixteen foot four by fours, boxing up. Again lay lengthwise three twenty-four foot lengths and cross with four of the sixteen lengths. Next lengthwise three twenty-two foot lengths and cross with four sixteen lengths. The top layer is made of three twenty foot lengths. Now cover with 2x12 planks fourteen feet long.

63
This has provided two steps at each end a perfectly safe and solid platform to which uprights may be attached easily. No nails are so far necessary. If you use the upright head board for the front of the platform the top of it should be 10 feet and six inches from the ground. The top of this board should be a one by twelve twenty feet long. If the visible dressing rooms are built, they should be built on full frames, so that all tops are perfectly even, curtains stretched tightly. Floor the dressing rooms always with something, provided it can be done without expense to the System. Car doors can usually be obtained at the elevator for this purpose. Provide plenty of nails on one by fours for hanging up clothes. Be sure to hang the back curtain of dressing rooms so that they are private. Keep the front pull curtain closed before each program. Provide the platform with plenty of straight back chairs and a small table, piano and bench. Have chairs for the dressing rooms also. Have a flag tacked up on the back of the platform. Sweep the platform before each program, arrange it as the company desires it, keep dressing rooms clean and empty of all outside material of any kind.

Seating
Get all the chairs available in town. If seats must be built use twelve inch planks for stringers and stand them upon four by fours laid cross wise. Seats are about 34 inches from front to front. Use about ten inch planks for the seats. For the upright stakes for the backs (always insist on backs,) use one by fours. A ten foot one by four will make four stakes when cut on bias. Keep tops of seats exactly even by using a measuring stick. Keep ends even also so that plates are regular. Leave plenty of aisle room. Slope the backs so as to allow a comfortable seat. Have plenty of seats but do not build more than the committee suggests will be needed. Allow extras for play nights. Do not put more nails in the lumber than absolutely necessary.

Lighting
The full lighting equipment is furnished in good condition. Keep it in the same shape by taping all worn places each week. Do not bond the wire in packing but roll carefully and load so that nothing else is loaded on it. Always keep to hand a couple of fuse plugs of the proper ampereage. Hang the house lights high, almost to the top of the ridge. Let there be about 200 watts in the house, 800 watts on the platform, 50 in each dressing room and rear, 100 in each yard and entrance socket. Take the entrance, yard and foot bulbs out each night after program to prevent being broke. Keep the yard line high so that people do not run into it. Be sure to turn on the platform lights for afternoon programs. Have the switch box in the men’s dressing room. Have the lead line from the city lines come in under the top canvas, not between a seam.

Fence
Put up all the fence. That is why it is sent out. Keep it in a nice curve at a uniform distance from the tent and well stretched. Do not allow it to sag between poles. Locate the entrance at the handiest place for people coming in. Lace and tie well the seams etc., at the entrance so that the fence will be held in shape after it is up. Put up the fence in the “one man style”. That is, stretch one length of the fence the entire length and then place a post in the middle of the section and
push out. Likewise continue placing a post in the middle each time until it is all stretched. Rope securely on the outside and about every alternate post on the inside. If you have to use poles that are higher than the fence dig a hole and sink them rather than letting them stand above the fence. Place a chair and table at the entrance for the ticket seller.

**Pup Tent**

If you are furnished a pup tent it is for the purpose of the crew's sleeping tent. Keep all personal property, cots, etc., of the crew in this tent. See that it is reserved for your own use and then allow the talent to have the dressing rooms exclusively. Never permit talent to sleep at either the big tent or the pup tent.

**Care of Tent While Up**

A half hour spent on the tent each morning will usually keep the tent in good shape barring accidents. It is well to select about three of the larger boys to help set up and care for the tent during the week. Let them in free for the week for helping. Have them pick up paper and keep the yard clean after each program. Keep everything neat, clean and well arranged. Repair the seats after each program and look over the lights to see that they are ready for the evening program each day. Stretch the tent and fence each morning. Keep wall rolled tightly, and all ropes rolled around the stakes. Keep all unused material such as canvas sacks etc., out of sight, preferably in the truck. Have any lumber not used hauled back at once. Loosen the tent a little at night as the dew will cause the canvas to shrink and tear if it is too tight. A most important thing is to cover the piano at night after the program, regardless of weather. The piano cover is not sent out for bedding. We will not be responsible for pianos damaged by rain or dampness. The cover will prevent this.

Keep a sledge and flashlight handy at nights near your cot in case they are needed in storms. In case of rain loosen the canvas as it shrinks but not any faster. It is not wise to drop the tent in any kind of a storm unless you are given special instructions by your circuit manager. Never allow a wind to get under the canvas. Then it is sure to go down.

**The Tear Down**

IT IS THE BUSINESS OF THE CREWMAN TO RETURN ALL BORROWED PROPERTY. Piano, piano covers, play properties for the play companies, stands, water buckets, and other miscellaneous articles that have been borrowed from members of the committee or individuals about town must be returned by the crewman. It is his business regardless of who did the borrowing.

Frequently we have kicks from committees after the Chautauqua has left town about missing articles. If these cannot be located they will be charged to the crewmen so be sure that everything is returned.

The same thing holds with regard to lumber. It is frequently reported that promises were made by the advance worker, superintendent of crewmen about the lumber being returned, or about it being broken. It is the business of the crewman to find out during the week just who owns everything that is used and what the disposition to be made of it. There is plenty of time to do this between the set up and tear down. This should be done by the crewman himself and in no case left to boys around the tent or other volunteers.

The tear down is easy and simple when properly planned. Have the
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electrician ready to handle the wiring and instructed so that he will have
lights for you during the whole tear down. Have the drayman ready to
haul back the piano as soon as the program is over. Have tent sacks all
properly numbered (numbers should be painted on sacks) and placed
where they will be needed, tied to the rope. Seats should always be taken
down and carried out and lumber piled before the top is dropped. Let the
platform stand except the uprights. Take special care to see that the men
do not break lumber. Set up the stake puller in the afternoon so as to
be ready to pull the stakes as soon as the program is over. About three
men should start on the stake pulling at once as it takes about as long
as taking all else down. The necessary thing in the tear down is to have
it planned and organized with all the extra material packed, tools in pro-
per place, etc.

On the Gate

Be on the gate at least one hour before program time and remain
there until the program is entirely over. This latter is absolutely neces-
sary. Crewmen should keep a notebook for the special purpose of a re-
cord of each program's ticket sales and the numbers. He is held respon-
sible for every single admission ticket and they must be accounted for.
When you check up each night make two copies of the cashier's daily re-
port (that night) one for the superintendent and one for the circuit man-
ger. Single admission tickets are to be turned over to the Superintend-
ent with the cashiers report. He will mail them to the office the last
day. Be neat in your dress while on the gate and always courteous with
a word of greeting for each person. You create a great impression for
the Chautauqua system by your attitude on the gate. Be make it a fav-
orable one. You need not wear a coat but always a clean shirt and neck-
tie and no hat. Never sit down at the gate when taking tickets.

Junior Work

The crewmen has a definite program in the Junior work. He is ex-
pected to help the Junior Supervisor as she requests. You will receive
special Junior instructions in other bulletins. The track and field meet
is one of the special duties. Make it a big event and get the high school
boys interested. It is a well planned pentathlon plan meet and appeal
boys of all ages. Each boy has a chance to win the medal, depending
upon his own ability only. Make a short speech of about two minutes
length the first night so that the parents may also know about the meet.
Then present the medals won before the prelude of the fourth night. The
meet should be held the fourth morning unless that day falls on Sunday,
then hold it the third morning. It will be a serious matter to omit the
track meet in a single town. Also be prepared to teach the boys some
interesting games. Give them an hour or two of your time each morn-
ing. Indoor base ball pleases them immensely. You can be a great
“hero” among the boys. They remember “that Chautauqua feller” for
years if he is the right type. Don't waste this excellent opportunity
to be a good example in speech, action and character.

Smoking

It is presumed that no crew men under the Associated banner smokes
during the season. The contract which you signed specifically provides
that you will not smoke during the season and we think we are employ-
ing only honorable fellows who keep their word.
There are two reasons for the ban on smoking. First of all is the example set for the boys of the community in line with the paragraph above. We want the Chautauqua men to be just as near perfection as possible. No one will criticize you for not smoking while a great many parents, including most men who smoke, would really prefer that their sons do not. The other reason is that there is a very real fire hazard. During several seasons, several different times the Associated organization has lost a tent through fire, the last one during the 1927 season. In most cases, the cause wasn't known, but evidence pointed strongly to cigarettes.

Frequently men are employed who admit that they smoke ordinarily, but most of our crew are athletes who are used to going in training during football, basketball or track season. We expect them to follow the same practice during Chautauqua season, and to cut out smoking entirely, either around the town, in the tent or on the road.

Not only are our crew men supposed to refrain from smoking themselves, but it is their duty to see that there is no smoking in the dressing rooms or around the tent. Superintendents should request the men in the audience not to smoke inside the fence, and if there is smoking the crew man is supposed to ask the man who is doing it to kindly refrain or stop outside the fence. Needless to say, no use of liquor will be tolerated for a second. A man who is found guilty of having liquor or drinking it with local people will be summarily dismissed for conduct unbecoming a gentleman, which means that he will have to pay his railroad fare home, and will lose all bonus.

A Few Tips

Be economical in your expenses. Your account is checked by the circuit manager each week and unnecessary items deducted. Lost tools, pails, etc., will be charged to crewmen.

You are responsible for getting out all the daily advertising that is supplied you. If you use the street A boards that material should be gotten out each night after the program for the following day. Get out the card hangers each night for which they are furnished. We expect this advertising matter to be used fully.

Always help the talent load and unload baggage. You alone are not to be held responsible for doing it but you must help them.

You are solely responsible for having all needed properties for the play on hand ahead of time. Help the stage manager set his scenery and be sure to have the lumber necessary ahead of time.

General Suggestions

You should always write your committee several days before you expect to reach the town. If arriving by train tell them the train on which you expect to arrive and ask them to have a dray ready to meet you unless you come in the middle of the night in which case the dray should be there early in the morning and men to assist you in putting up the tent. You can save half a day generally by writing your committee a short letter in advance. This letter should also tell them just what is needed in the way of lumber and poles and ask them to have this on the ground. It may be advisable to vary these requirements with the different tents, so we are not giving them to you now.

In traveling be sure that you know where your tent is every minute of the time. Do not go ahead of your tent. If your tent is left off the train,
stay with it and incidentally raise Cain with the railroad in general and
the baggage man in particular as you can do it if they hold up baggage
of this sort. Always ship the tent as baggage. You will seldom have
any difficulty at all in doing this, particularly if you go to the station
ahead of time, get the checks made out and put them on yourself. Ne­
ever wait until the tent is at the station to see about shipping it out.
A good crew man can always get the tent checked by using little diplo­
macy. You may find some stations where they will try to tell you that
a tent is not baggage and will try to make you express it. Don’t let
them put any such ideas over. A Chautauqua tent is theatrical baggage
and must go as such and does go as such through some of the biggest
stations in the west. Checking the tent lies almost entirely with the
man handling it. He can get it checked or he can send word to the office
that it was impossible to do so. If you handle the baggage man right
you will never have any difficulty.

Know the lumber bill thoroughly. But know it also so that you can
make substitutions. You will never be able to get the exact lumber
needed. For instance: If you cannot get a twenty-four length four by
four, use a fourteen foot length and a ten foot length and lay end to end.
Practically every item of the bill will allow substitution. Be careful in
handling the men who come to help you. Remember they are donating
their services and can not be “bossed” the same as hired help. Just sug­
gest what is to be done and take the burden of the work yourself. But
see that they know what they may be doing so that they do not feel they
are wasting their time. Above all do not set them at the stake driving
and you take the easy jobs. They are not used to this sort of hard
work. The handling of this labor is a very important thing to watch.
Make them feel that you appreciate their help.

In conclusion we want you to remember to keep everybody off the con­
voy when it is going up or coming down, to watch your tent on route es­
specially seeing that it is put onto the proper train at transfer points, to
keep it stretched right at all times, to sleep in it every night and be
ready for any storm that comes up and, to get it checked clear through
from one town to another, not pay express and hold down all expense
to a minimum.


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Hascom, Bob, June 10, 1975.


McC racken, Betty Peffer, April 16 and April 24, 1975.

Miles, Billy, April 4, May 22, and August 29, 1975.

Wright, Edward, April 29, May 28, and June 7, 1975; Mr. Wright also sent a tape recording of his personal comments about his acting for Redpath.