

THE THEATRICAL HISTORY OF WICHITA, KANSAS

1872 - 1920

by

Patricia Ann Mather  
A.B., University of Wichita, 1945

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**Redacted Signature**

~~Instructor in charge~~

September, 1950

**Redacted Signature**

~~For the department~~

## PREFACE

In the following thesis the author has attempted to give a general, and when deemed essential, a specific picture of the theatre in early day Wichita. By "theatre" is meant all that passed for stage entertainment in the halls and show houses in the city's infancy, principally during the 70's and 80's when the city was still very young, up to the hey-day of the legitimate theatre which reached its peak in the 90's and the first decade of the new century. The author has not only tried to give an overall picture of the theatre in early day Wichita, but has attempted to show that the plays presented in the theatres of Wichita were representative of the plays and stage performances throughout the country.

The years included in the research were from 1872 to 1920. There were several factors which governed the choice of these dates. First, in 1872 the city was incorporated, and in that year the first edition of the Wichita Eagle was printed. Second, after 1920 a great change began taking place in the theatre. There were various reasons for this change. The most important was the increased competition of the motion pictures which resulted in fewer traveling stock companies. This, in turn, was followed by the expansion of the Little Theatre Movement. The years between 1872 and 1920 were a great period of development in American drama. Between these dates, an American drama relatively free from English and French influence emerged. The author considers it reasonable that our study of the early theatre in Wichita should fall between these dates.

During the period of research, information was gathered from two sources. The Wichita Eagle, recorded on microfilm, was the chief source of information. All editions published by the Wichita Eagle with a few

exceptions (the complete list found at the end of the thesis) were scanned for news stories related to the theatres. The second source was found in interviews with persons who were old time theatre men or who had first-hand information dealing with the theatres of the earlier days. Men such as L. M. Miller and John Reed were able to furnish information which could not have been found in any other way. L. M. Miller is the former manager of the Princess, Orpheum, Palace, and Miller theatres; and John Reed is a long time resident of Wichita who at one time was associated with the Palace Theatre. Victor Murdock, were he still living, would have been the greatest source of information. Murdock was the former owner of the Wichita Eagle and a civic, state, and national leader. As all who know of him are aware, he wrote prolifically; and it was the author's privilege to look through many of his old scrapbooks and gather scattered bits of information which he himself had written concerning the early theatres.

Motion pictures and vaudeville are briefly mentioned. They were included because they were rivals of the stage drama, and thus they helped to relate a more accurate account of the theatres during the years included in the discussion. No attempt was made to elaborate on them. Names of actors, plays, and theatres have been used profusely throughout the thesis; and as the thesis progresses, it will be apparent that many quotations and excerpts from newspapers have been used. They were included in the hope that they would enhance the interest of the reader as well as help to complete the picture of the theatre.

For the purpose of clarity the paper will be divided into three periods: the years 1872-1890, the years 1891-1910, and the years 1911-1920. The thesis will have the following organization:

- I Theatrical history of Wichita between 1872 and 1890
  - A. The theatres
  - B. The actors
  - C. The plays
  - D. List of plays presented during that period
  
- II Theatrical history of Wichita between 1891 and 1910
  - A. The theatres
  - B. The actors
  - C. The plays
  - D. List of plays presented during that period
  
- III Theatrical history of Wichita between 1911 and 1920
  - A. The theatres
  - B. The actors
  - C. The plays
  - D. List of plays presented during that period

After studying the information concerning the early theatres, it became obvious that the material tended to arrange itself into the three periods just cited. Any writing relating to history necessitates strict adherence to an outline; therefore, by writing with the use of the preceding organization, the information contained in the paper should be made clear. The author will try to guard against repetition although a certain amount such as names of plays, theatres, and actors will be unavoidable.

The late Victor Murdock expressed the desire that if anyone ever attempted to write the history of the theatre in Wichita, it should be Harry Sefton, now deceased, who was the former manager of the Orpheum Theatre. It was Murdock's belief that Harry Sefton had the greatest amount of knowledge pertaining to the Wichita theatres. The writer hopes that if Victor Murdock were alive today, he would not be too displeased that a candidate for a Master's Degree, not with first-hand information, but with diligence, hard work, and hours spent in the "morgue" has thumbed through most of the pages of "his" Eagle and collected information which she has compiled into what she hopes will be an informative and entertaining history of the theatre in early day Wichita.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
CHAPTER I	1872-1890	
A.	The Theatres	1
B.	The Actors	16
C.	The Plays	24
D.	List of Plays	31
CHAPTER II	1891-1910	
A.	The Theatres	37
B.	The Actors	42
C.	The Plays	48
D.	List of Plays	58
CHAPTER III	1911-1920	
A.	The Theatres	74
B.	The Actors	79
C.	The Plays	84
D.	List of Plays	88
SUMMARY		94
BIBLIOGRAPHY		97

CHAPTER I  
THE THEATRES  
1872 - 1890

The desire for dramatic entertainment seems to be an innate characteristic of the human race. Men of all ages have turned to drama for their enjoyment and satisfaction as they have turned to music, dancing, literature, and art. The writer is speaking not of the desire to express one's self through the medium of the drama, but merely of the desire to be entertained by others who find, or at least think they find, their talents are best displayed in this particular art form. So men who establish a new community will establish some form of dramatic entertainment as a part of their new life unless they are of the few whose religious dictates forbid any such diversion. Oftentimes their theatre will be only an old abandoned building or maybe a second story above a grocery store, and the entertainment may be crude and sometimes vulgar. For the time being, however, it satisfies their desire for dramatic entertainment; for through all ages there has been something magic about the theatre, and it is this "magic something" that has been responsible for the immortality of the theatre.

When the West was settled, an "opery house" was one of the first buildings erected in most of the towns and villages; and it became the home of a few professional touring companies and of the numerous home talent shows. Back in 1872 in the gaslight days of the theatre, a little village, located in the southern part of Kansas and considered "away out West," seemed to have a special love for the drama; and before it had reached the age of ten years had attracted many show troupes from the East. No doubt, it was much like most of the towns of the early West except that it seemed to be a little

wilder and a little more uproarious. In fact, its main intersection, known as Keno Corner, now the corner of Main and Douglas, was considered the most riotous spot between the two seas. Throughout the city variety shows and red light districts flourished. Wichita was a second Monte Carlo; but as one Eagle reporter put it: "In Monte Carlo the sky was the limit, but in Wichita the sky was punctured and the limit was seven flights up from there." Signboards were posted at the four conspicuous entrances into the town and read: "Everything goes in Wichita. Leave your guns at Police Headquarters and get a check. Carrying concealed weapons strictly forbidden." Amidst a community whose citizens were mostly cow punchers, gamblers, prostitutes, vagrants, or renegades, the first theatre was opened.

Its location was somewhere in the first block on North Main Street. The exact site is not known. A reporter stated in the Eagle May 14, 1941: "It was south of the residence of Thomas Lynch, a one-story frame building later used as a carpenter shop. The show was termed a 'variety' and acting was nil, but it had plenty of music, songs, and jokes to draw hilarious laughs from men only. It is not recorded that women of the young community considered it at all genteel to attend this first theatre of the city."<sup>1</sup> A person attending one of the early performances would hardly have guessed that this was the community whose citizens would at a later date be applauding the famous Emma Abbott, the great Sarah Bernhardt, Booth and Barrett, Joseph Jefferson, and Kate Claxton, all of whom were to grace the boards of the leading theatres in a few short years.

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<sup>1</sup>Wichita Eagle, May 14, 1941. Further information or quotations unless otherwise indicated will be considered as taken from the files of the Eagle.

Records from the Eagle say that this first theatre was managed by a Johnnie Redding, known as the "Peerless Prima Donna" of Wichita. He was a female impersonator who sang in imitation of the gentler sex. He must have been very versatile; for he was credited with abilities as a comedian and tragedian, a wizard at sleight of hand, clog dancer, banjo picker, juggler and acrobat.

The North Main Street theatre was not the only theatre Wichitans attended in the early 70's. There was another of a similar type with the very ordinary name - Lewellen's Hall. It was nothing more than a long room above Lewellen's Grocery at the extreme north end of Main Street at a point where Elm Street now is. The seats were kitchen chairs placed at one end of the room, and a platform with a black draw curtain in front of it was the stage. Kerosene lamps provided illumination, and a blank wall furnished the background for the performances. For costume changes, the performers had to pass through the audience to a small room on the opposite side of the hall. The theatre opened with Hester's Colored Comiques - eight negroes with, according to reports, fine voices and the ability to dance. The jokes were broad and a Punch and Judy show was given between the acts. The hall eventually became popular as a lodge center for secret organizations as well as a theatre. A local character known as Uncle Jack Peyton, whose specialties were theology, theocracy, and free time spent in the saloons, was said to have used the hall for his numerous lectures.

Still another of the early show-houses was a barn-like structure built on Douglas Avenue near the spot where the Vail Jewelry Store used to stand. It differed from the others in that it had the distinction of having real opera chairs and a curtain that went up and down rather than

to the sides as heretofore all Wichita curtains had done. The theatre flourished for a few years, but finally fell into disrepute because of a shooting incident which took place there. After this the theatre quickly degenerated into a variety house and finally into a museum which exhibited physiological freaks and wax masks of famous men and women. The building burned in 1882.

The theatre one hears most about during the first decade of the city's history, the first one to be considered "a fitting and proper place for the ladies," was Eagle Hall, which was also used as a concert and lecture house. It stood where Hinkel's Department Store now stands. It is the theatre which will, undoubtedly, remain longest in the memory of the old timers. Many were the times that the early Wichitans, dressed in their best frocks and tail coats, got in the surrey or buggy and drove to Eagle Hall "cause Uncle Tom was bein' acted tonight." It was in Eagle Hall that the old timers saw everything from extravagant hokum to black villainy.

Many stories are told concerning some of the early shows at Eagle Hall. Probably one of the most humorous is the one retold in the Eagle in the winter of 1916. Said the Eagle: "Now days an audience if it is bored with the show, merely yawns and acts bored; but in the days when Wichita was young and Eagle Hall was the show house of the town, actors or those who posed beneath that much embracing term, wooed the Thespian muse to the tune of 50¢ to \$1 each from citizens of the small but pleasure loving city." The story went on to say that the early theatre goers had been duped more than once into paying their money for a bad performance, but for lack of other amusement continued to attend the shows. The quality of the performance had fallen off, but the audience would suffer, if not

in silence, at least without doing physical violence to those behind the kerosene footlights.

A show troupe, which was advertised to be of high merit, was booked for a performance at the Hall. The town was packed with cowpunchers. The audience tramped upstairs, some of the members in cowhide boots that thumped the wooden steps with thundering racket and, no doubt, deafened the ears of C. W. Bitting in his grocery store below. Soon a gentleman stepped from behind the curtain and announced that the troupe had missed the stage coach from El Dorado and would not appear; but rather than disappoint the large gathering, he himself would endeavor to give them their money's worth. This gentleman, who kindly agreed to entertain the assembled audience, was attired in a costume of long stockings which, failing in their efforts to meet the lower edges of a pair of swimming trunks, left bare parts of each leg above the knee. A sleeveless jersey completed his costume.

During his performance, which consisted of a series of ridiculous gymnastics, many in the audience were seen to leave and then return. For his finale the entertainer announced that he would perform an act of mystery rivaling that of the famous Davenport Brothers, who, when tied hand and foot and bound together in a dark cabinet, by some mysterious means untied themselves and left the cabinet. The entertainer asked for a committee from the audience to step to the stage, tie him hand and foot, and place him in the cabinet. The committee stepped to the platform, did as the performer requested, and then instead of placing him in the cabinet placed him directly in front of the footlights and shouted, "Let him have it." Immediately there rained upon the half clad creature streams of

eggs! His bathing trunks dripped as if he'd been swimming in a yellow sea.

During the performance some of the audience had gone below to the grocery store and purchased every egg, both fresh and aged. The audience carried the performer to the box office and demanded that their 50¢ be returned. This was done, and all the audience left except a few who stood around and suggested the affair be made more enjoyable by a kettle of tar and feathers. At this moment the police arrived. The entertainer was arrested, rushed to jail and before dawn the next morning, before the cow-punchers who had been about the previous night were astir, given his passport out of town. He never returned to grace the boards of Eagle Hall again. Whether or not the reception given this man caused an improvement in the drama, the chronicler of the article did not say; but certainly the suffering audience of one night felt the entertainment well worth the 50¢ admission.

Old timers could probably recount many similar stories of such hostile audiences, but entertainment was limited back in the 70's; theatres were patronized even though the standards of the performances were low. Many of the show troupes must have been fairly good, however, because of the enthusiasm with which they were received.

Eagle Hall continued as the leading show house of the city until in the late 70's when it was replaced by another theatre, which was to be known as Turner Hall. It was the first theatre of the young city built especially for theatrical entertainments. This very popular show house was built by a German Society known as the Sons of Herman and stood on the site of the present Lassen Hotel. It was officially dedicated in 1879.

All of Wichita turned out for the dedication ceremonies which consisted of speakers, acrobats, piano duets, and dancing.

The following excerpt concerning the dedication ceremonies was taken from the Eagle of November 12, 1879. Said the Eagle:

".... Mr. Julius Junkerman, editor of Staats Anzeiger of Topeka, was then introduced and delivered the opening address in German. Being familiar with the sound but not the sense of the oration, we are not just now prepared to speak of its merits; but knowing the ability of the speaker we do not hesitate to pronounce it an appropriate and scholarly effort .... The scenery was painted by Messrs. Stchudy and Blomberg, now residents of this city, both accomplished scenic artists, educated in the East. The drop curtain, the frescoeing of the sides of the stage, the stretchers, are all creditable to the skill of these gentlemen. The drop curtain is a copy of Conway Castle and the picturesque and romantic scenery of mountain and lake that surrounded that old feudal castle .... The gas apparatus and fixtures were put up by Frank Barclay and is a skillful piece of workmanship. There are three systems. Those for the stage and auditorium are under the control of one man, and can be raised or lowered instantly, producing any degree of illumination."

The stage of the theatre was said to have been fifty-eight feet wide, one hundred thirty feet deep, and thirty feet from floor to ceiling. It was complete with trap doors, reflecting lights, and five sets of scenery. Wichitans were to see many fine actors and actresses in productions at the new Turner Hall. Such names as Maggie Mitchell, Ada Richmond, Fannie Davenport, Sol Smith Russell, and Louis Lord appeared on the bill boards.

Many Wichitans have recollections of this old theatre. Charlie Carey, when a very small lad, used to sell tickets at the entrance. His father, John B. Carey, was not a theatre going man and, while walking past Turner Hall one day, discovered his son in his new business; whereupon he immediately brought to an end his son's theatrical venture. However, when his old friend, L. M. Crawford, took over the place, the son was permitted to resume his former business.

Perhaps the most celebrated character associated with Turner Hall was a man by the name of Dave Payne, a great leader of the Oklahoma boomers, who used to purchase tickets for every boy who was around the box office at show time. Many lads remembered an enjoyable evening spent at Turner Hall because of the generosity of Dave Payne.

Eagle Hall and Turner Hall played important roles in the early theatre history of Wichita; but the greatest role was to be played by the Crawford Theatre, which was to become the most famous of the early show houses. It was known throughout the Southwest, and for years it was the theatre which advertised such famous names of the legitimate theatre as Marie Prescott, Fay Templeton, Helen Modjeska, and Thomas Keene.

It was the old Turner Hall, remodeled, which was to be the first home of the Crawford Opera House. There seems to be disagreement as to the exact date of the opening of the Crawford Opera House, but most of the evidence points to sometime during the year 1886. The Eagle of March 10, 1929, printed an article by Howard Fisk entitled "Some Recollections of the Folks Who Trod the Boards at the Crawford Theatre in 1886." Mr. Fisk restated an advertisement that appeared in the Eagle in the fall of 1886. There is no proof, however, that this was the first performance at the Crawford. The ad read:

Crawford Opera House  
L. M. Crawford, Manager

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One Week and Saturday Matinee  
commencing  
Monday, November 15

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The People's Favorite Everywhere  
The Clark Comedy Company  
And the Handsome and Charming  
Comedienne and Vocalist  
Fannie Frances  
A Carefully Selected Repertoire of Favorite  
Standard Plays Supported by an  
Excellent Dramatic Company

---

Entire Change of Bill Nightly  
Monday Evening the Greatest Sensational  
Comedy Ever Written  
The Queen's Evidence

---

People's popular prices. Admission 10¢, 20¢,  
and 30¢. Positively no higher. No extra. A  
magnificent silver water pitcher will be given  
away Saturday night. Doors open at 7:15, over-  
ture at 8:15 sharp.

On February 25, 1887, there appeared an article in the paper announc-  
ing the construction of a new opera house which was soon to be begun by  
Mr. Crawford, O. C. Daisy, and P. V. Healy and was to be located at the  
corner of Topeka and William. According to the proposed plans there were  
to be one thousand seats and six private boxes, fourteen sets of scenery  
(three drops above - the Rocky Pass, the Horizon, and the Cut Wood), a  
front curtain which was a tropical seaside view, gas fixtures which gave  
the effects of day or night, incandescent lights along the sides of the  
stage, and carbon arcs out front. The cost of the theatre was to be near  
\$100,000. It was to be elegantly furnished with many decorative balconies  
and rich tilings.

The following description appeared in the Eagle concerning the pro-  
posed construction:

"It will be built from stone, brick, and iron harmoniously  
mingled together .... The front on Topeka Avenue will be massive

and very noticeable with its large two story windows, its round, projecting miniature tower, its large gable, all of which can be better seen when built .... Mr. Masters is making a special effort to give the Queen City 'the opera house' of the West, allowing Wichita to stand at the head in theatre as she does in so many things .... This entrance will have an inclined floor of encaustic tile, while the walls and ceiling will be richly frescoed in modern style and lighted by incandescent lights. From this entrance we pass into a broad stairway to the balcony. The side of the corridor next to the auditorium will be full of openings covered with rich portiers and the entire walls and ceiling will be brilliantly frescoed.

"The auditorium will be oval in shape with curtain opening 38' wide and 28' high. The proscenium will have two boxes on the first floor and one on the balcony on each side, and this part of the house will be highly ornamental in design and the decoration is to be very unique and rich in treatment. The boxes will have curtain and lambrequins in keeping with the rest of the work.

"There will be a parquet to seat 500, balcony will seat 450, and gallery to seat 600 .... The parquette will be seated with the latest improved opera chairs upholstered in plush. The balcony will have similar seats upholstered in leather. The gallery will have good seats .... Every effort will be made to have a very complete set of sceneries and everything to allow any play of modern times to be produced. The size of this house and stage will be larger than two-thirds of the theatres of Chicago."

The opening of this theatre in February, 1888, is, undoubtedly, one of the most important dates in Kansas theatrical history. It was indeed a gala event advertised weeks in advance. Everybody who was anybody turned out. The ladies were in their best finery; even the men were in formal attire. There were no celebrities to bring a crowd; there was no need for any. By the time the overture had begun, the leading citizens were in their seats; and when the performance was over and the people had entered their waiting carriages, they had only extravagant adjectives to use in describing their new theatre. The following news item appeared in the Eagle the morning after the opening:

The Crawford Grand  
Opened Last Night With the  
Gypsy Baron

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A Brilliant Society Event and a  
Superior Production of This  
Beautiful Opera by a  
Strong Company

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"Last night in the opening of the Crawford Grand Opera House occurred the most important event in the amusement annals of Wichita. This magnificent dramatic temple erected by the enterprise of Wichita citizens is not yet entirely completed, but what is now done gives an idea of the ultimate beauty and grandeur."

An account of prominent citizens who attended the performance followed, and then the article was concluded with: "The balcony was well filled and the gallery was crowded to the utmost. The audience was an enthusiastic and appreciative one and the many beauties and gems of the opera were received with merited applause."

And so the Crawford Theatre became one of the most important theatres in Kansas and the Southwest. Other theatres were to open and close their doors, but the Crawford remained the one theatre devoted exclusively to legitimate drama up until the day it burned - April 1, 1913.

Certainly no mention should be made of the vast part the Crawford Theatre played in theatrical entertainment throughout the Southwest without calling attention to the man who was responsible for it all - a man who for years was one of the big names in show business throughout the country - L. M. Crawford.

It is said that Crawford came to Kansas when only 14. He arrived in Topeka in 1858 and began a career as a printer. It was while he was working as a printer for the Daily Commonwealth that he came in contact with

show people through his position as city circulator. A show came to town which featured the Wallace Sisters in repertoire. The manager, an Englishman, suggested to Crawford that he put the show on for 35% of the profits - 35% for himself and 65% for Crawford. Crawford was a little skeptical, but the Englishman refused to take no for an answer. A contract was drawn up which stated that the first \$60 should go to Crawford. He agreed and made \$176 on the deal.

That was the venture which launched Crawford in show business. Two years later he purchased the Costa Theatre, the theatre in which the Wallace Sisters had played. Crawford's name was later to become synonymous with show business from St. Louis to Los Angeles and from Lincoln to El Paso. At one time Crawford had a string of forty theatres throughout the country. He made two fortunes and was one of the most noted theatre owners of his time. No doubt, Crawford made many cherished contacts with actors and actresses. In his time he booked such great names as Richard Mansfield, Thomas Keene, Lily Langtry, William Crane, John Drew, Joseph Jefferson, and Lawrence Barrett.

L. M. Crawford has been dead for several years now, but his name was long ago recorded in the annals of the theatre not only in Wichita but throughout the country. One theatre still bears his name and stands next to the site where his first theatre in Wichita was erected.

The Crawford Theatre from the time it was opened remained the leading theatre of the city. However, there were still others that presented leading actors and actresses and were able to attract large audiences. Wichita was theatre conscious and was able to support many theatres.

Perhaps mention should be given next to the Garfield Opera House.

It had previously been known as Memorial Hall or the G.A.R. Hall and was located at First and Water above the Post Office. Unfortunately, the files of the Eagle do not furnish us with a great deal of information concerning the Garfield Opera House. However, the author was extremely fortunate in having the opportunity to read a scrap book which had been kept by Fred Dixon, who was the manager of the Garfield Opera House when it was formally opened March, 1887. In fact, Dixon was the director of Robert McCaire, the first production which was given at the theatre. He was later to make a name for himself in show business. A few of his achievements were: eight years as stage director of the Bostonians; producer of Robin Hood; the original Koko in The Mikado; stage manager for the Manhattan Athletic Club; producer of The Mikado in the Emma Abbott Company; and a member of the Carl Rosa Opera Company and the Royal Italian Opera Company.

While Dixon was manager of the Garfield Opera House, he was responsible for the appearance of the famous Emma Abbott. One edition of the Eagle carried a news item on the Abbott Opera Season. It was, undoubtedly, the big event of the year to which "the refined and cultured turned out." Plans had been made for the redecorating of the hall; women bought new finery; parties were organized from adjacent towns to visit the opera. Four operas were presented - Faust, The Bohemian Girl, Martha, and Linda. An excerpt from an item in Dixon's scrapbook has this to say about the Emma Abbott productions:

"Well, it's over; to say it was a success would be to put it mildly. It was a triumph - a series of triumphs - both musically, dramatically, and socially, and the city may feel proud that her citizens have shown their musical taste and appreciation of about

the only superior troupe of the season. The great event, of course, was the night performance of Linda, and there was the same brilliant and cultured audience assembled - gentlemen in evening dress, ladies in elegant toilets and flowers in profusion - one would have thought that our people would have been tired of so much opera .... One pleasing little feature deserves especial mention. The home company which opened the house took the opportunity to publicly congratulate Colonel Stewart and his lady on their success with the Garfield Opera House, and presented as a souvenir a handsome photograph album which contained their portraits and also those of Miss Abbott and her leading artists. The idea was a pretty one and the audience cheered and applauded to show their appreciation."<sup>2</sup>

Another item, appearing in Dixon's scrapbook, stated that the Wichita Opera Club had opposed the presentation of the Emma Abbott production of The Mikado and, as a result of the club's ban, Fred Dixon would probably resign the management of the Garfield Opera House and rejoin the Abbott Company on a two year's engagement. Said the article: "He probably finds, like Victor Hugo's hero in The Toiler of the Sea, that there is little glory or profit in fighting the octopus of the theatrical waters of Kansas."<sup>3</sup> No item was found to confirm the resignation of Dixon, but we do know that his association with the Garfield Opera House was not a lengthy one.

For a time the Garfield Opera House was the scene of many fine professional productions, but it gradually became a place for home talent productions, lectures, and concerts. It was destroyed by fire a few years prior to 1922. The Garfield Opera House most certainly played no "bit part" in Wichita theatrical history.

Few people are living today who would remember one of the most unique show houses of the city. It was the Wichita Museum which was, undoubtedly,

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<sup>2</sup>From Fred Dixon's Scrapbook.

<sup>3</sup>From Fred Dixon's Scrapbook.

modeled after the Barnum Museum owned by the famous P. T. Barnum of circus fame. The Barnum Museum was located in New York City and was devoted to a display of rarities, such as an old emaciated negress whom he displayed as a nurse of George Washington. The Museum also contained a "moral lecture room," which was the scene of more stage successes than moral lectures.

The exact location of the Wichita Museum is believed to have been 231-233-235 North Main Street. It was divided into three parts - the museum, the auditorium, and the lecture hall. It was advertised as the only entertainment place in town open the year around. In the museum were exhibited such freaks as the elastic haired lady, the woman with the longest hair, the human pin cushion, and other performers such as glass blowers and contortionists. Speakers appeared in the lecture hall and dramatic and musical entertainments were presented in the auditorium. Glancing at the list of shows presented at the Wichita Museum, we find that there were some of considerable merit. In the summer of 1887, a series of operas were scheduled with the leading artist, Jessie Hatcher, from the Casino Opera Company as the star. A Dr. Barnes from Chicago also came to be a leading vocalist with the group. As a usual thing, however, the Wichita Museum presented shows of a cheaper nature.

So from 1872 to 1890 the number of theatres in Wichita multiplied, and during this time the class of entertainment improved. In addition to Eagle Hall, Garfield Opera House, Turner Hall, and the Crawford, there were a few less prominent theatres that were visited regularly by traveling stock companies. These were the Main Street Theatre, the Rink Bijou, and the Peoples' Theatre. The entertainment wasn't always of the highest type, but it was usually able to attract large audiences.

## THE ACTORS

1872 - 1890

Who were the actors and actresses of the 70's, 80's, and 90's who cast their magic spells across the footlights? We have already mentioned a few: Booth and Barrett, Emma Abbott, Maggie Mitchell, and Sol Smith Russell. These were some of the big names who appeared in the first part of the 80's, but in the first few years of the city's infancy big names were few. However, there were many traveling stock companies that were welcomed with great enthusiasm by the people who were citizens of the new community. The most popular were the Simon Star Comedy Troupe, the Kendall Comedy Company, and the Lords. The Simon Comedy Company was the first to visit the city, and records tell us that they used to appear for weeks at a time in the famous old Eagle Hall. The company was managed by Mr. and Mrs. Simon and their daughter. Many people like to tell the story of how, during the initial performance of the company, the curtain had to be rung down in the middle of the second act in order to quiet an audience which was composed largely of cowboys. The cowboys did as requested and the show went on.

During the first ten years of the city's growth the Simon Comedy Company came to Wichita many times. In September, 1876, when the population was only 3,000, the company played for three weeks to full houses. At the conclusion of the Simons' run, Wichitans turned out in force; and as a favorite player took a final bow, the audience showered upon the stage presents in the forms of flowers, coins, and jewelry. Then a committee of citizens arose and conferred upon Kitty Lougee, the outstanding actress in Wichita's eyes at that time, a token of community esteem and admiration. The Eagle of that date printed the note accompanying this

token and Kitty Lougee's acknowledgement but omitted to record what the token was. This was the beginning of Wichita's growing love for the theatre, a love which culminated in the glorious ovation given to the great Sarah Bernhardt while on one of her farewell tours of the United States. The pioneer people of Wichita were insatiable for shows.

The Kendalls, also, were popular among Wichita audiences. The following news item was reprinted in the Eagle June 6, 1942:

"Kendall's Comedy Company is billed for Wichita next week and will give entertainments from Monday to Saturday night.... Both Mr. and Mrs. Kendall are versatile, being equally at home in comedy, tragedy, or domestic drama. This was their third season in Topeka and that city is loud in its praise of the whole company.... The Wichita program does not give The Gilded Age but we must not let Kendall leave until he has given it - turnips, steamboat blow-ups, mules and all. Season tickets on sale at Herrington's."

The Eagle gave a detailed account of the company's performances and concluded by saying:

"Every night last week the hall was crowded with our best people and after much coaxing, notwithstanding the company was advertised for Lawrence, Mr. Kendall consented to remain over another week. Our people will have few chances to hear and see such accomplished players as comprise this group."

Just before Christmas in 1877 a theatrical company was announced with the following news item:

"Another series of delightful entertainments will fill up the nights of the coming week for such of our citizens as enjoy presentations of the true drama. Lord's dramatic troupe, well known throughout the West, will appear next Monday evening and for five succeeding nights at Eagle Hall. Louis Lord, the famous tragedian of national reputation, is with the company; also the sweet singer, Jennings Waltz, who has sung "Those Evening Bells" on half the boards of the continent, is still with the troupe. The advance agent, Mr. John A. Cummins, has been in the city two or three days making all the needful preparations. He says that the company headed by Louis and J. A. Lord is much the same as has appeared in Topeka for several winters and that they are well up in the new plays, Our Boys, Lemmon,

Miss Moulton, and Baby, all of which will be put on. Reserved seats 50¢. For sale at Herrington's."

Most of the shows which were presented in Wichita in the early 70's consisted of specialty acts by individual entertainers. They were commonly referred to as variety shows. However, as was stated previously, near the close of the 70's stock companies appeared. In addition to the Kendalls, the Lords, and Simon companies, in July, 1877, the Bernard English Opera Company headed by Caroline Richings gave performances at Eagle Hall. It presented The Bohemian Girl one night and Martha the second.

Perhaps this is the place to include a note concerning operas and operettas. Because a few notable opera companies appeared in Wichita, it would seem unwise to fail to mention them; therefore, they will be included in the discussion of plays found in each chapter.

In April, 1878, the city welcomed the Adah Richmond Burlesque and Comedy Company, twenty vocalists and specialty artists who appeared at Eagle Hall. The Eagle termed it "a fantastical, musical, and most laughable burlesque entitled Chow-Chow. 50¢ and 75¢, reserved seats \$1."

By 1881 traveling stock companies from north, south, east, and west streamed into the little city. Between 1881 and 1885 Wichita audiences were entertained by such stock companies as: Golden's Grand Dramatic Combination, the Boston Double Company, Clifford Dramatic Company, the Lennox Dramatic Company, Grottesque Comedy Company, Democratic Burlesque Company, and the Waites Union Square Theatre.

The Democratic Burlesque Company must have had a very unsuccessful engagement. The comedian, Dave Dale, seemed to have been particularly unpopular. The Eagle stated:

"We would advise Mr. Dale that rather than to play to the gallery and burlesque what is revered by the intelligent masses, that he struggle by honest endeavor to win by talent the approbation of his audience. He does not appear to have been accustomed to play to an audience where ladies formed a part as he concluded his hour's performance with an immoral yarn, which caused the few who were awake to blush with shame."

The appearance in 1881 of Mr. and Mrs. Golden, stars of the Golden's Grand Dramatic Combination, in Hazel Kirke and The French Spy was received by "an extremely enthusiastic audience."

The Clifford Dramatic Company came to Wichita many times. Concerning the performance of an unnamed play in December of 1884 the Eagle stated:

"This play is of a most pronounced sensational character, and many excellent opportunities occur throughout its five acts to display to advantage the emotional powers of the star..... Miss Bertha Somerville did some exceedingly clever acting.... she rose to a great dramatic height when portraying her wrongs, fairly tearing a passion to tatters from which she instantaneously changes into a pleading mother. It earned for her unbounded applause."

Little information could be found concerning Waites Union Square Theatre, but it might possibly have been a permanent Wichita stock company for a time as Mr. Waite was a resident of Wichita.

One of the most popular of all stock companies appearing in Wichita was the Boston Double Company, which was famous for its production of Uncle Tom's Cabin. It appeared many times before Wichita audiences.

Most of these stock companies had third or fourth rate actors who, undoubtedly, were unheard of before their appearance in the city. 1884 was the year in which Wichitans got their first glimpse of a popular star when Charlotte Thompson played in Jane Eyre and Camille. Concerning Miss Thompson's performance in Jane Eyre, the Eagle stated: "A very large and refined audience received Miss Thompson. The title role was assumed in a most intelligent and highly satisfactory manner." Charlotte Thompson was

to be welcomed again and again. After Miss Thompson's appearance many more stars were billed in the city. In the spring of '89 May Wilkes was a popular actress at the Rink Bijou Theatre. In that same year Fay Templeton performed two nights in La Belle Coquette, and Lizzie Evans appeared in Maud Muller and Fogg's Ferry. Of Miss Evan's performance the Eagle stated: "The star does not possess a really pleasant voice nor is her laughing or weeping free from suggestion of the stage; yet she is bright, cute, and winning to an eminent degree and enlists the sympathy and commands the enthusiasm of her audience." Also playing an engagement in Wichita in 1885 for the first time was Sol Smith Russell, who performed at Turner's Opera House. He, too, was to come to Wichita many times in succeeding years.

Kate Putnam came to Wichita for the first time in '85 in the play, Crazy Patch. She appeared again in '86 in Erma the Elf. In regard to this performance the Eagle stated:

"....interesting and realistic....character of Erma well suited to the acting of Miss Putnam.... Robert Raikes, the heavy villain, was well played by L. P. Hicks, especially in the third act where he thinks his paper stolen, and in revenge endeavors to take the life of his wife, does he appear to good advantage."

Also included in the season of '85 were: The Lennox Dramatic Company starring Miss Beatric Lief, "strong in emotional parts," W. E. Sheridan and Company in Othello, Robert Wade in Rip Van Winkle, Laura Dainty in Mountain Pink, Julian Anderson, the Two John's Comedy Company, Januschek in Macbeth, Kate Forsyth, Fannie Frances, and the Alvin Joslin Comedy Company.

It was the English actress, Adelaide Moore, appearing with the Casino Opera Company, who opened the eyes of the theatre goers in '86.

Nothing was said about her talent, but a great deal was said concerning the lavish way in which the actress traveled. Her \$52,000 railroad car, which was always open for inspection, was built especially for her. It was lined with embossed leather, amaranth wood, and satin wood inlaid with mother of pearl and ebony. Adelaide Moore appeared in Wichita many times.

The winter of '87 was the outstanding season of the period. It fairly sparkled with famous names. Such stars as: Minnie Maddern, Marie Wainwright, Louis James, Emma Abbott, Booth and Barrett, and Kate Claxton made it an exceptional season. In this year Charles Dickens, Junior gave the immortal Bardwell versus Pickwick case and other readings of his father's work. Then there was the never to be forgotten appearance of the Mary Garden of her times, the prima donna Emma Abbott. The following comments by the star were to be found in the Eagle after her Wichita appearance:

"Oh, yes, indeed my engagement here has been most pleasant and I shall ever remember it with pleasure. Today I have been called upon by so many and such pleasant people. My audience, too, have been such as any singer may well be proud. Your ladies dress so nicely, so elegantly. Why, don't you know that we have among ourselves, here, said it reminds us greatly of a Baltimore or Louisville audience, where, as you know, there are such a number of beautiful women. But best of all I am glad to see the appreciation shown. I have studied so hard both in America and in the old country, and it is a pleasure highly enjoyed by us all to see our efforts appreciated and to know that what we ourselves think the strong points of our opera are equally observed by others, to be sure. I hope that soon I shall return to Wichita for I must confess I am charmed and in love with the city."

When Louis James and his wife, Marie Wainwright, outstanding actors in tragic repertoire, appeared with Lawrence Barrett's Company they, too, were received with great enthusiasm. This was the season that marked the performance of Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett in Julius Caesar and

Othello. In a later season they came to Wichita on a coast to coast tour of Hamlet. Booth played the melancholy prince, and Barrett played the role of the ghost. Also in '87 Minnie Maddern appeared in In Spite of All and Caprice. Her last performance in Wichita was to be in 1926 in The Rivals. In addition there were other stars such as: Mattie Vickers, Marie Prescott, Nellie Boyd, Maggie Mitchell in Little Barefoot, George C. Miln in Hamlet, Othello, and Richard III, and Mrs. Dion Boucicault in My Geraldine.

It is unfortunate that the Eagle gave so little information concerning the performances of the actors in their reviews, but because of some of the actors' reputations we can well assume that the audience was thrilled by the "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I" in George Miln's Hamlet; they, no doubt, blinked away the tears when Kate Claxton, famous for her role of the blind orphan in The Two Orphans spoke the lines, "They have dragged her away from me. Oh! What shall I do? Alone! Alone! Abandoned. What will become of me? Alone in this great city; helpless and blind?" Wichitans were far from the show towns of the East, but they were having the opportunity of seeing some of the most famous names in the theatre of that day.

The season of '88 was not able to measure up to the brilliance of the preceding season, but it contained the following names: Marion Abbott, Lillian Olcott, Robert Downing in Spartacus the Gladiator, the return engagement of Booth and Barrett in Julius Caesar and Othello, H. S. Murray, distinguished Irish comedian and vocalist, J. H. Halladay's Colored Minstrels, Lizzie Evans, Charles Loder, German dialect comedian, Lotta, Eunice Goodrich, Irene Worrel, Edwin Keene, Kate Putnam, Maggie Mitchell, and

Marie Prescott in The Merchant of Venice.

Without doubt, the Lotta mentioned in the preceding list of names was the famous Lotta of West coast fame who sang and played her way into the hearts of thousands. Her real name was Charlotte Crabtree and she was the daughter of a Scotch gold-seeker. During the period of her career she was said to have amassed a fortune of not less than four million dollars.

The season of '89 was not particularly outstanding. In it were such names as: Edith Arnold and Willard Simms in Quenna, the Clair Patie Company, Effie Ellsler, John D. Griffin, Lotta, J. K. Emmett, and Cora Van Tassell. Concerning Cora Van Tassell the Eagle stated: "Incidental to and in keeping with the production, Miss Van Tassel will introduce her specialties and the great English Vaughn Dance." Others appearing in that year were the Criterion Dramatic Company, Milton and Dollie Noble, Charlotte Thompson, and Thomas Keene.

The season of 1890 did not glitter with the names of the stars of the day. It did, however, contain a few notables such as Marie Wainwright, John Dillon, and Maude Grainger.

Although the period 1872-1890 was begun with unknowns playing in cheap plays, it was only a few short years before the billboards were crowded with famous names. This, however, was only the beginning; the ensuing years were to bring to Wichita an even greater number of famous names in the theatre, and were to surpass the ever-to-be remembered season of '87.

## THE PLAYS

1872 - 1890

In the preceding discussion concerning the actors, the names of a few plays which were popular at this time were mentioned. In this chapter it is the author's intention to go further and to explain the type of plays and entertainments presented during these years.

We were told that during the first few years of the city's growth most of the shows were variety shows. However, we do know that a few traveling companies such as the Simon Comedy Company, the Lords, and the Kendalls appeared in Wichita in the late 70's. There was little mention of the plays presented except for a few such as The Gilded Age, There's Millions In It, Our Boys, Lemmon, Miss Moulton, and Baby. We do know, however, that this was the time of the melodrama and, no doubt, many were the times that the audience saw the villain appear in front of the curtain between the second and third acts with:

"La---a----deez and gentlemen, on behalf of myself and the entire company I wish to thank you for the many courtesies extended to us during our stay in your beautiful little city. I wish further to say that never before have we been received with the whole-hearted enthusiasm with which you have received us here, and it has been taken into our hearts never to be forgotten. May I encroach upon your time for a moment more to announce the bills for the remainder of the week? On Thursday night we will present that old favorite, East Lynne. On Friday you will be treated to that stirring drama of the modern era, The Streets of New York, and on Saturday night we will close our pleasant engagement in your lovely little city with that favorite of all favorites, The Banker's Daughter. Allow me to say further that on Saturday night the lady holding the lucky number will be given the beautiful cut glass water bowl which has been on display in Frak's Jewelry Store window all week. I thank you, I thank you, I thank you. The curtain will now rise on the last act."

A few of the melodramas which still survive today are: East Lynne, Ten Nights in a Bar Room, The Banker's Daughter, and The Galley Slave.

We know that medicine shows were numerous, and in the late 70's the

minstrel shows became popular and retained their popularity for a number of years. Two of the most popular minstrel companies which appeared in Wichita were the McIntyre and Heath's Minstrels, and the I. W. Baird Minstrels, complete with slide trombonist, female impersonator, contortion feats, and clog dancing.

Then, of course, there was Uncle Tom's Cabin, the greatest of all American successes, which has been played by brilliant actors and fourth-rate hams. As John Chapman states in the introduction to The Most Successful Plays of the American Stage, "Only a notable basic work such as the Stowe novel could survive the monkey business which was done to it on the stage."<sup>4</sup> Uncle Tom was tampered with by all who presented it, but many companies liked to play it with bloodhounds, ice, slave market, ascension into heaven, and all. The most popular company to present this play in Wichita seemed to be the Boston Double Company, which appeared year after year. Many an early Wichitan has smiled at the actress playing Topsy when she says, "I's awful wicked, there can't nobody do nothing for me. I used to keep old missus a swearin' at me half de time. I 'spects I's de wickedest critter in de world," and then wept in the final scene when it closes with Uncle Tom's dying words, "Massa George, dat's all pass 'an gone now. I's right at de doh, goin' into de glory.... Oh, Massa George.... look, look - Dere's Massa St. Clair and li'l Eva.... I's comin', I's comin'." How many times did the audience weep buckets of tears when they witnessed Isabel's grief in East Lynne when she says, "Alas! What is to be the end of my sufferings? How much longer can I bear this torture of mind, this

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<sup>4</sup>Bennett Cerf and Van H. Cartmell, The Most Successful Plays of the American Stage, Garden City Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1943, p. 13.

never dying anguish of soul? Oh, I have sacrificed husband, home, children, friends and all that makes life of value to women and for what? To be forever an outcast from society, to never again know a moment's peace. Oh, that I could die and end my suffering and my misery." This was the day of the melodrama and Wichita had its share.

The first plays of merit to be presented in Wichita were Jane Eyre and Camille, which were presented in 1881 and starred Charlotte Thompson. Whether or not the citizens actually enjoyed these plays after their steady diet of melodramas, minstrel shows, and cheap variety shows, we do not know. We only know that the Eagle stated the performance was well attended and called the play "very pleasing drama."

Between 1881 and 1884 The Galley Slave was presented many times. In fact, if an actual count were made, it would be found that The Galley Slave was presented a greater number of times than any other play. The only plays of merit presented during the years between 1881 and 1884 were Solomon Isaac, Rip Van Winkle, and Baron Ludwick, a German comedy. We were told, however, that not a week passed in which the city was not visited by a traveling stock company. One notices as he glances over the list of plays presented throughout these years that German comedies were extremely popular, perhaps even more than the popular Irish comedies.

The roster of plays for the year 1885 tells us that Wichitans were getting more opportunities to see the better plays. The city was growing and was being infiltrated with a class of people who desired to see a higher type of entertainment.

In the year 1885 Wichitans witnessed productions of Othello, Hazel Kirke, Caste, The Mikado, Macbeth, As You Like It, Romeo and Juliet and

the usual favorites, East Lynne, Rip Van Winkle, and Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Some of the titles of the plays presented during '85 not only amuse us but immediately arouse our curiosity as to the type of play. A few of these were: Leah, The Forsaken, Led Astray, Mountain Pink, Only a Woman's Heart, Dad's Girl, Joe, or a Mountain Rose, The French Spy, A Hot Time, and Hoop of Gold.

Said the Eagle concerning Only a Woman's Heart: "Every minute, tears, laughter, and applause."

In regard to the Lennox Dramatic Company's performance of Hoop of Gold, the Eagle stated: "Scotty and his three leading friends were called before the curtain and given an ovation, while the villains were loudly hissed by the gallery thus demonstrating how well they performed their parts." Evidently the audience was not afraid to demonstrate its reaction to the characters and the play.

The production of A Hot Time was described as a "rollicking, jolly, indescribable comic gem, filled with the latest idea of modern humor, brightened by the most sparkling original music and catchiest selections from the greatest comic opera successes of London, Paris, and New York."

In the plays of 1886 elaborate scenery and costumes were stressed. This was the beginning of a trend that reached its peak in such productions as Ben Hur and The Fast Mail. Closely related to the "spectacle" drama, because of the emphasis placed on the lavish stage production, were the revues and musical extravaganzas. One of the first of the revues to appear in Wichita was The Devil's Auction.

Individual entertainers were still popular as evidenced by the review of a show presented by a Professor Grainger, who performed davenport

rope tricks, slate writing, and spirit writing. "Most heartily enjoyed was the mesmerism in which four persons were completely under his influence - fishing, dancing, swimming, partly undressing, looking for bumble bees, washing clothes, marching to music, and other antics at the order of the professor."

In addition to the old favorites, the season of '86 had its share of minstrel shows and magicians and the McIntyre and Heath's Minstrels were the most popular.

It has been stated that the year 1887 was a big year for theatre goers in Wichita. That was the year that saw the productions of Faust, The Bohemian Girl, Martha, Linda, Patience, Virginus, As You Like It, Hamlet, Othello, and Richard III. Wichitans were getting a taste of "real drama," but they still found enjoyment in the old favorites, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Ten Nights in a Bar Room, Queen's Evidence, J. H. Halladay's Colored Georgia Minstrels, Erma the Elf, The Galley Slave, The Banker's Daughter, and The Two Orphans.

As usual a few new plays appeared on the billboards: Excitement, The Sea of Ice, Led Astray or Tempted Tried and True, Alone in London or Women Against the World. Said the Eagle concerning The Sea of Ice: "There were several long waits between acts incident to a first performance but still, in spite of these, this play gave general satisfaction." Concerning Alone in London or Women Against the World, the program note read: "Do not confuse this drama with others by similar name, as it is entirely different in plot, scenery, and incidents."

Scenic effects were becoming so much a desired part of the production that they were advertised with the title of the play, actors, and actresses.

The following were listed in the Eagle as scenic effects for Burr Oaks:

The Murder in the Snow  
The Rescue from the River Rapids  
The Great Fire Scene

1888 was not a particularly brilliant year although it included productions of The Merchant of Venice with Marie Prescott as Portia and Julius Caesar and Othello with Booth and Barrett. A glance at the advertisements in the Eagle for that year tells us that the one word in plays was "spectacle." Many advertisements, such as the one that follows, appeared in the Eagle:

The Streets of New York  
A car Load of New Scenery  
Union Square by Moonlight  
Five Points, Baxter Street Etc.  
An Army of People on the Stage  
The Greatest Fire Scene Ever Witnessed

In addition to the above mentioned plays, Wichitans in '88 once more attended performances of Ten Nights In a Bar Room, J. H. Halladay's Minstrels, and a new play, White Slave, the story of which was said "to move along briskly with plenty of incidents and a most liberal allowance of situation."

The seasons of '89 and '90 brought several factors to our attention: many of the plays were written by leading actors such as the play, From Sire to Son, which was written by Milton Noble and starred Noble and his wife, Dollie; the shows seemed to be overflowing with specialties before, after, and in between acts; the popularity of the scenic extravaganza had increased.

Generally speaking the seasons of '89 and '90 were filled with an unusually large number of musical and extravaganza shows and the usual run of melodramas and minstrels. The chief highlights of those two years were

Marie Wainwright's performance in Twelfth Night and the W. T. Carleton Opera Company's production of The Mikado, the costumes of which were said to have been imported from Japan at a cost of \$12,000. It was acclaimed the best opera company to visit Wichita. In this same year Fanny Davenport appeared in La Tosca and Charlotte Thompson appeared once again in East Lynne, Jane Eyre, and Hearts Astray.

Wichita was still a good show town.

LIST OF ACTORS, ACTRESSES, AND PLAYS APPEARING IN WICHITA BETWEEN THE YEARS 1872 AND 1892. THE THEATRES IN WHICH THE PLAYS WERE PRESENTED ARE ALSO GIVEN, IF KNOWN.

1872 - 1875 There is no actual record of names of actors and plays during these years. We only know the type of entertainment and some of the first theatres.

1876

Simon Comedy Troupe (3 weeks) - - Eagle Hall  
(This was their first recorded performance; there is a possibility that they might have appeared earlier.)

1877

The Bohemian Girl - - Martha (2 nights) - - Richings-Bernard English Opera Company - - Eagle Hall

1878

There's Millions In It - - The Kendalls - - Eagle Hall  
Our Boys - - Lemmon - - Miss Moulton - - Baby - - The Lords - - Eagle Hall  
Chow-Chow (2 nights) - - The Adah Richmond Burlesque and Comedy Company

1878

No recorded performances

1880

Divorce - - Wallack's New York Star Combination

1881

Evangeline - - Rice's Evangeline Company - - Crawford Opera House  
Hazel Kirke - - The French Spy - - Golden's Grand Dramatic Combination  
- - (1 week)

1882

Princess of Paris - - Rose Eyttinge  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Boston Double Company

1883

1884

Jane Eyre - - Charlotte Thompson - - Crawford Opera House  
Peril - - Clifford Company  
Democratic Burlesque Company  
La Belle Russe - - Effie Ellsler - - Crawford Opera House  
Uncle Reuben Lowder - - Waite's Union Square Theatre - - Crawford Opera House  
The Galley Slave  
Solomon Isaacs - - Baron Ludwick  
Francescia Remecyi - - Clifford Dramatic Company

1885

La Belle Coquette - - Fay Templeton (2 Nights)  
Maud Muller - - Fogg's Ferry - - Lizzie Evans  
Alvin Joslin  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Boston Double Company  
Hoop of Gold - - Lennox Dramatic Company - - Turner Opera House  
Othello- - W. E. Sheridan and Company  
Jane Eyre - - Charlotte Thompson  
The French Spy - - Kansas Volunteer - - Dora - - Simon's Comedy  
Company  
Led Astray - - Bijou Opera Company  
Ticket of Leave Man - - Rink Bijou Theatre  
It's a Cold Day When We Get Left - - Turner Opera House  
Hazel Kirke - - East Lynne - - Caste - - Leah, the Forsaken - - May  
Wilkes - - Rink Bijou Theatre  
Crazy Patch - - Kate Castleton  
Rip Van Winkle - - Robert Wade  
A Hot Time - - Louise Sylvester  
Black Diamonds - - Simon Comedy Company - - Rink Bijou Theatre  
Felix McCusick - - Sol Smith Russell - - Turner Opera House  
Mountain Pink - - Kathleen Mavourneen - - Laura Dainty  
Only A Woman's Heart - - Julian Anderson - - Turner Opera House  
Two John's Comedy Company  
Joe, or a Mountain Rose - - The Goldens - - Turner Opera House  
The Mikado - - James G. Peske's New York Comic - - Turner Opera House  
Dan'l Sully's Corner Grocery - - Sam'l E. Ryan

1886

Clark Comedy Company - - Fannie Frances (1 week) - - Crawford Opera  
House  
Queen's Evidence  
Little Barefoot - - Maggie Mitchell - - Crawford Opera House  
George C. Miln  
Uncle Tom's Cabin  
Erma the Elf - - Kate Putnam - - Crawford Opera House  
Halladay's Colored Minstrels  
The Unknown - - Passion Slave - - Nellie Boyd - - Crawford Opera House  
Virginus - - Louis James and Marie Wainwright  
Banker's Daughter - - Crawford Opera House  
The Galley Slave - - Crawford Opera House  
Called Back - - Crawford Opera House  
Shadows of Home - - Crawford Opera House  
The Streets of New York - - Crawford Opera House  
Miss Moulton - - Crawford Opera House  
Fanchon the Cricket - - Crawford Opera House  
Ten Nights In a Bar Room - - Crawford Opera House  
Ticket of Leave Man - - Crawford Opera House  
I. W. Baird Minstrels - - Crawford Opera House  
McIntyre and Heath - - Minstrels - - Crawford Opera House  
Little Nugget - - Turner Opera House

Over the Garden Wall - - Mr. and Mrs. George S. Knight  
Two John's Comedy Company  
Ticket of Leave Man - - Little Detective - - Phoenix - - A. R. Wil-  
ber's Lyceum Theatre Company  
Pavements of Paris - - Turner Opera House  
Amorita - - Julia Hunt - - Turner Opera House  
Starr Harris Opera Company - - (1 week)  
Barlow-Wilson-Rankin's Mammoth Minstrels  
Mountain Pink - - The Danities - - Miss Bell Moore  
Wilbur's Madison Square Company  
Fanchon - - Maude Melville  
The Galley Slave  
Romany Rye and East Lynne - - Madison Square Company  
Devil's Auction  
The Two Orphans - - Wilbur Lyceum Company  
Marcelle - - Kate Forsyth - - Turner Opera House  
Bound to Succeed - - Sir Harry Doel Parker and Lottie Blair  
Stranglers of Paris  
Alvin Joslin Comedy Company  
Pygmalion & Galatea  
Romeo & Juliet - - Lady of Lyons - - Adelaide Moore  
Excitement - - Florence Bindley  
Rustic Retreat - - The Museum  
Boston Double Uncle Tom's Cabin Company  
A Cold Day, or the Laplanders - - Fisher and Hasson's Company

1887

Zip & Bob - - Patti Rosa - - Crawford Opera House  
Louie Lord (in repertoire)  
Peck's Bad Boy - - Crawford Opera House  
Irish Aristocracy - - Barry & Fay - - Crawford Opera House  
The Black Flag - - Edwin Thorne - - Crawford Opera House  
Patience - - Lillian Brown - - Lotus Opera Company  
The New Magdalen - - Jennie Lee - - People's Theatre  
Monte Cristo - - Edwin Clifford Dramatic Company - - Garfield Opera  
House  
The Two Orphans - - Kate Claxton and C. A. Stephens - - Crawford  
Opera House  
Virgilius - - Marie Wainwright - - Crawford Opera House  
Creole - - Lillian Lewis (1 week) - - Crawford Opera House  
Georgia Minstrels - - Garfield Opera House  
Girofla Girofla  
Crazy Patch - - Kate Castleton - - Crawford Opera House  
Davy Crockett - - Edwin Clifford Dramatic Company - - Garfield Opera  
House  
Around the World in 80 Days - - W. J. Flemming - - Crawford Opera  
House  
Queen - - Clair Patti Dramatic Company - - Garfield Opera House  
Shamus O'Brien - - Charles Erin Verner - - Crawford Opera House  
Faust - - Bohemian Girl - - Martha - - Linda - - Emma Abbott - - Gar-  
field Opera House

The California Detective - - Solon Shingle - - Garfield Opera House  
Galley Slave - - The Banker's Daughter - - A. R. Wilbur Comedy Com-  
pany - - Crawford Opera House  
Peck's Bad Boy - - Robert Neff - - Wichita Museum  
The Sea of Ice - - Main Street Theatre  
Skipped by the Light of the Moon - - Crawford Opera House  
Unknown - - Nellie Boyd - - Crawford Opera House  
Two Orphans - - Main Street Theatre  
Jacquine - - Mattie Vickers - - Crawford Opera House  
Ingomar - - As You Like It - - Marie Prescott - - Crawford Opera  
House  
Commercial Tourist's Bride - - A Remarkable Woman - - Married Not  
Mated - - Agnes Herndon - - Crawford Opera House  
Under the Gaslight or Life in New York - - Garfield Opera House  
Adelaide Russell & Comic Opera Company - - Garfield Opera House  
J. H. Halladay & Company's Colored Georgia Minstrels - - Crawford  
Opera House  
Erna the Elf - - Katie Putnam - - Crawford Opera House  
Little Barefoot - - Maggie Mitchell - - Crawford Opera House  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Crawford Opera House  
Hamlet - - Othello - - Richard III - - George C. Miln - - Crawford  
Opera House  
Virginius - - Gretchen - - Louis James and Marie Wainwright - -  
Crawford Opera House  
Alone in London or Woman Against the World - - Cora Tanner - - Craw-  
ford Opera House  
Led Astray or Tempted, Tried, and True - - Main Street Theatre  
Minnie's Luck - - Wallace Sisters  
My Geraldine - - Mrs. Dion Boucicault - - Crawford Opera House  
Burr Oaks  
Collars and Cuffs - - A Piece of Pie - - Charles Gilday's Comedy  
Company - - Crawford Opera House  
The Partner - - Garfield Opera House  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Main Street Theatre

1888

The Gypsy Baron - - Crawford Opera House (opening)  
Mountain Pink - - Laura Dainty - - Main Street Theatre  
Theodora - - Lillian Olcott - - Crawford Opera House  
The Banker's Daughter - - Wichita Museum  
Streets of New York - - Crawford Opera House  
Richard III - - Edwin Keene - - Crawford Opera House  
Face to Face - - Edwin Joyce - - Main Street Theatre  
Only a Farmer's Daughter - - Marion Abbott - - Crawford Opera House  
Pawn Ticket No. 10 - - Lotta - - Crawford Opera House  
Busted - - New Crawford Grand  
Sybil - - Frankie Kemble - - New Crawford Grand  
Fantasma - - The Hanlons - - New Crawford Grand  
Monte Cristo - - New Crawford Grand

Patti Rosa - - New Crawford Grand  
Kerry Gow - - J. S. Murray - - New Crawford Grand  
Julius Caesar - - Othello - - Edwin Booth - Lawrence Barrett - -  
New Crawford Grand  
The Rajah - - New Crawford Grand  
The Banker's Daughter - - Main Street Theatre  
Spartacus the Gladiator - - Robert Downing - - New Crawford Grand  
Virginus - - Robert Downing - - New Crawford Grand  
Bob - - Robbins Summer Theatre - - May Smith - - Garfield Opera  
House  
Stricken Blind - - Irene Worrell - - Crawford Grand  
Ireland - - Garfield Opera House  
Ten Nites in a Bar Room - - A. R. Wilbur's New Combination  
J. H. Halladay's Colored Minstrels - - Crawford Opera House  
The Buckeye - - Our Angel - - Lizzie Evans - - Crawford Opera  
House  
Innocent Salt - - Eunice Goodrich and Company - - Crawford Grand  
Skipped by the Light of the Moon - - Fowler and Warmington's Company  
- - Crawford Grand  
Hilarity - - Charles Loder  
Erma the Elf and Old Curiosity Shop - - Katie Putnam - - Crawford  
Grand  
White Slave - - 14th Street Theatre  
Si-Perkins - - Frank Jones - - Crawford Grand  
Ray - - Maggie Mitchell - - Crawford Grand  
Merchant of Venice - - Marie Prescott and R. D. McLean - - Crawford  
Grand  
Queen - - Edith Arnold and Willard Simms - - Crawford Grand

1889

Lynwood - - Clair Patie Company  
Theodora - - Hilforde and Clifton - - Crawford Grand  
Judge Not - - Egypt - - Keepsake - - Effie Ellsler - - Crawford  
Grand  
Corner Grocery - - John D. Griffin - - Crawford Grand  
Pawn Ticket No. 10 - - Musette - - Lotta - - Crawford Grand  
Bon-Ton Theatre Company - - Repertoire of plays (1 week) - - Craw-  
ford Grand  
Our Fritz - - J. K. Emmet - - Crawford Grand  
La Tosca - - Fanny Davenport - - Crawford Grand  
The Octoroon - - Payton Comedy Company (1 week) (change of bill each  
night) - - Crawford Grand  
Goodyear-Cook and Dillon's Refined Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
The Little Sinner - - Cora Van Tassel - - Crawford Grand  
Garry Owen - - Criterion Dramatic Company - - Miss Carrie Radcliffe  
- - Crawford Grand  
From Sire to Son - - Milton & Dollie Noble - - Crawford Grand  
East Lynne - - Jane Eyre - - Hearts Astray - - Charlotte Thompson - -  
Crawford Grand

Davy Crockett - - Frank Maya - - Crawford Grand  
Enoch Arden - - Crawford Grand  
Richard III - - Thomas Keene - - Crawford Grand  
Held by the Enemy - - Crawford Grand  
Around the World in 80 Days - - Crawford Grand

1890

Brigands - - Amorita and Virginia - - Crawford Grand  
Peck's Bad Boy - - Atkinson's Comedy Company  
Daughter of the Regiment - - Isaac Payton Comedy Company - - Crawford  
Grand  
Evangeline - - Crawford Grand  
Pearl of Pekin - - Louis Harrison - - Crawford Grand  
Twelfth Night - - Marie Wainwright - - Crawford Grand  
Fantasma - - Crawford Grand  
Kitty - - Criss-Cross - - Vixie - - Nellie Walters - - Crawford Grand  
Battle of Gettysburg (musical) - - Crawford Grand  
Fra-Diavolo - - Said Pasha - - California Opera Company - - Crawford  
Grand  
The Gypsy Queen - - Crawford Grand  
The Emigrants - - Pete Baker - - Crawford Grand  
McCabe and Young's Operatic Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
John Dillon (repertoire) - - Crawford Grand  
Lilly Clay Gaiety Company - - Crawford Grand  
Newton Beers (repertoire of realistic plays) - - Crawford Grand  
A Child from Naples - - Crawford Grand  
Inherited - - The Creole - - Maude Granger - - Crawford Grand

## CHAPTER II

### THE THEATRES

1891 - 1910

Between the years 1891 and 1910 Wichita witnessed many changes in the field of the theatre. Without doubt, the greatest changes were the increase in the number of theatres and the advent of the motion picture. The Crawford, which had a gala opening in 1888, was still the leading theatre; but it was to have a close rival in the Toler Auditorium. It was in the year 1901 that the famous Toler Auditorium was opened. The auditorium had been built in 1893, and it originally was planned for use as a place for conventions and other similar meetings. However, when in 1901 its owners were unable to make the payment on the mortgage, H. D. Toler and Sons bought the \$10,000 building for \$3,500. After extensive remodeling, it was opened as a theatre which was to make Toler an important name in show business in Wichita. The most famous Toler name, of course, was Sydney Toler, the Charlie Chan of the movies. For a time he was a member of Wichita's local stock company, the Wolfe Stock Company, where he gained experience before he went on to his stage success in the East and to later fame in the movies. The Toler Auditorium was located on what is now the corner of First and St. Francis. It was the scene of many important entertainments. Among them were Madame Melba, Mrs. Fiske, Honey Boy Evans Minstrel Company, and many others. The first indoor circus was held in the Toler under the sponsorship of the Elks Lodge, and many famous politicians also appeared on its stage. It is said that Senator La Follette once held a crowd in the theatre until 1 A.M. One of the first shows to appear at the Toler was A Modern Woodman with a company composed of local actors.

Soon after the Toler was opened, a stock company was formed which played only a season or two. In 1904 it was announced that Manager Toler had secured the Holden Stock Company from the Newcomb Theatre in New Orleans. The company was to present two plays each week. The first play was presented the week of February 29, 1904, and the company remained for the balance of the season. In 1905 the name of the Toler Stock Company, which was later changed to the Wolfe Stock Company, appeared again in the papers. It was announced that it would present The Danities.

The Toler did not confine its entertainments to its local stock company, however. Most of the lyceum numbers appeared there, and many musicals, as well as shows by traveling companies, were presented. The bills ranged from vaudeville and specialty shows to such productions as Caste, Ingomar, and Whang. From the date of its opening, the quality of the shows at the Toler gradually improved. The two productions in particular which proved that the Toler could present entertainments every bit as fine as those to be seen at the Crawford were the appearance in 1902 of Mrs. Brune in Unorma and the appearance in 1906 of Sarah Bernhardt in Camille.

In September, 1907, the Toler Auditorium was leased by J. A. Wolfe of the Wolfe Stock Company, which had performed many times at the Toler. The name was changed to the New Auditorium; and after a period of remodeling, it was opened with The Charity Ball. The theatre boasted an orchestra which played each evening. Good attractions were booked for the coming year and it was announced that the Wolfe Stock Company would play many of the bills.

Although the Toler (the New Auditorium) and the Crawford were the principal theatres, they were not the only theatres in the city. In 1896

the name of the New Lyceum Theatre appeared in the papers. Said the Eagle:

"The New Lyceum Theatre was opened last evening with a crowded house. The show's full orchestra was in attendance, and everything worked out smoothly with the exception of the errors always present upon opening night. These, however, will disappear in due time....considering the time the company has been rehearsing very few and only minor mistakes were noticed in the reading of the cues."

In 1902 a summer theatre was established under the management of Frank Litson. It was located on the north side of Eleventh Street "about three blocks west of the streetcar line loop on the same street." The stage was roofed over but not the seats. Refreshments were served and the entertainment consisted of concerts and vaudeville acts. The admission was 15¢ or, by paying 20¢, a person could ride to the grounds in the streetcars and receive an admission ticket and also a return check.

In 1904 the Lyric Theatre, which presented vaudeville and motion pictures, was opened at 256 North Main Street. According to the records it was the first motion picture theatre in Wichita. There was a great deal of excitement during its initial opening when the motion picture machine caught on fire; but it was soon extinguished, no injuries resulted, and after a short delay the show resumed.

The Crystal Theatre at 310 East Douglas Avenue had its grand opening in March of 1905. It was under the management of Harry Lewis and was devoted to vaudeville. In the fall of 1905 the name was changed to the Bijou Theatre. One of the first shows presented at the Bijou was John L. Sullivan and his sparring partner, Jim McCormick, "supported by an excellent vaudeville bill." Also in the spring of 1905, there was the grand

opening of the Lewis Summer Theatre with the Godley Stock Company. It was located at the corner of South Main and William Streets and presented polite vaudeville, illustrated songs, and motion pictures. It guaranteed a change of program twice a week.

The Eagle announced in 1906 the opening of the Wonderland Park Theatre, which was to be devoted to vaudeville and motion pictures; however, for several summers stock companies were engaged and played the entire season at the Park. Wonderland Park, Wichita's Coney Island, was located on Ackerman's Island between the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers with the main entrance at Second Street. It comprised some twenty acres and included a swimming pool, rides, an open air pavilion, and a theatre. Every night during the summer months Wichitans could see either motion pictures, vaudeville, or plays. The people of the city like to be reminded that Wallace Beery once played a summer engagement at their popular Wonderland Park.

The year 1907 would have been an important year in the theatre if for nothing more than the number of theatres which opened their doors. Long is the list of theatres opened in this year.

The Elite Amusement Company	409 East Douglas
Have-A-Look	245 North Main
Theatorium	516 East Douglas
Yale	504 East Douglas
Olympic	Corner Main and Douglas
	245 North Main (formerly the Have-A-Look)
Bon-Ton	311 East Douglas
Majestic	410 East Douglas (in 1908 changed to the Cameraphone)
Airdome	William and Emporia

These theatres presented motion pictures and illustrated songs.

In the fall of 1908 the Orpheum Theatre, located at 119-121-123 North Topeka, was opened. Mrs. J. F. Waterbury was the owner and E. G. Oleson was the manager. It's main offering was vaudeville.

In the spring of 1909 there was the first mention of the Princess under the management of L. M. Miller. The Princess was to become the outstanding theatre in Wichita devoted exclusively to vaudeville. It was located on what is now the alley of the Innes Store. In this same year the Marple Theatre was opened, and at the request of the Honorable Victor Murdock, one of the first pictures shown was Robert Browning's Pippa Passes.

Another theatre, also referred to as the Orpheum, was opened in the fall of 1910 by J. A. Wolfe and C. M. Casey. It was "to be known as the home of melodrama, lurid and ripping, the kind that makes you want to leave your seat and help kill the villain and that makes you weep in sympathy with the persecuted heroine." The first show was The Opium Fiend with the Copeland Brothers. The following announcement appeared in the Eagle just prior to the opening of the Orpheum:

"Wichita is to have one of those blood and thunder melodrama houses, one of those kind where they kill them off in the first act in order to use them for another part in the second. It is rumored that this house will close down one day each month in order to get the blood cleaned out of the basement."

The Pastime and the Colonial also opened in 1910. The former presented vaudeville and the latter motion pictures.

The onset of the motion pictures, which were soon to take the place of the stage plays as the most popular form of theatrical entertainment, had begun. Although in 1910 the motion picture industry was still in swaddling clothes, its theatres far outnumbered the theatres devoted to the presentation of plays and were an ominous threat to the legitimate theatre.

## THE ACTORS

1891 - 1910

Actors must have felt that Wichita was a good show town because as one glances at the list of actors appearing in the city, some names appear year after year. Names that had been posted on the billboards in Wichita in the years prior to 1891 appeared again in the succeeding years. Such stars as Sol Smith Russell, Patti Rosa, Effie Ellsler, Katie Emmett, Pete Baker, Eunice Goodrich, Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Louis James, and Charles B. Hanford returned to Wichita again and again. Although reviews indicate that most of the actors were popular, the audience must have been aware of some of their shortcomings as evidenced by the following articles: In regard to Katie Emmett's performance in Killarney in 1892 the Eagle stated: "Miss Emmett is a very attractive artist with many elements of popularity, but out of regard for truth it must be said that she is not the singer or dancer that she is cracked up to be." However, all reviews were not as brutally frank as that. Stated the Eagle concerning Louis James' performance in Spartacus, Romeo and Juliet, and Othello in 1897:

"In the heroic role like Spartacus, Othello, Virginius, and Lear, Mr. James is unexcelled on the American stage today. He has every attribute for greatness in these characters. To a superb physical endowment he combines a rare virility, both mental and artistic, a profound knowledge and grasp of his art, a magnificent voice and a regal presence."

In addition to the old favorites, who could always be depended upon to give the theatre-goers a good performance, there were many new names appearing in the city for the first time. In 1891 the famous Joseph Jefferson appeared with William J. Florence in The Rivals. No records were found which could confirm an earlier engagement of this actor. Robert

Downing came to Wichita in 1892 in The Gladiator. Also included in the long list of new personalities were: Charles Dickson, John Dillon, Jeffreys Lewis, Rosable Morrison, Charles Garner, Fanny Rice, Lillian Russell, William Lang, Katie Putnam, Stuart Robson, Walker Whiteside, John Griffith and a host of others.

The story told concerning the appearance of Richard Mansfield in 1896 is not to the credit of Wichitans. Someone had persuaded Mansfield that for its size Wichita was the greatest theatre town in the world. So he booked Wichita for a two night stand in the play that made him famous, A Parisian Romance. When Mansfield arrived in the city, it was a cold blizzardy night; and Wichitans seemed to be indifferent to his coming. Perhaps their love of the drama was governed by the weather conditions. Nevertheless, Mansfield dressed for his part at the old Carey Hotel, now the Eaton Hotel, and left for the theatre in the howling wind and falling snow. He turned in a brilliant performance but to an empty balcony, partially filled parquet, and a half filled lower floor. The second night the house was even smaller, but Mansfield, extremely angry, gave another equally brilliant performance. People who saw him in later years in the same play said his performance did not equal the one given in Wichita before a partially filled house. The clerks at the Carey said they heard Mansfield storming after the show about his meager audience and declaring that he would never come to "Wicheeta" again and he kept his word.

Without question the biggest name to appear on the billboards between the years 1891-1910 was Sarah Bernhardt. The great Sarah appeared in Wichita at the Toler April 6, 1906, in Camille while on one of her many farewell tours of the United States. The Eagle carried lengthy write-ups

of the occasion, and some of them are worth quoting here. It was stated that 2,000 seats and 100 standing room only tickets were sold. It was the largest attendance of any performance ever held in the city up to that date and, no doubt, the only performance in Wichita in which the leading lady received sixteen curtain calls. Stated the Eagle:

"When the doors of the theatre opened at 7:30, there was a long line of men and women waiting. From then until the act started, carriages were being driven to the entrance of the theatre and Wichita's 'four hundred' were being handed down in twos and fours. Meanwhile St. Francis Avenue was filled with a surging but orderly mass of people, representing all walks of life, who were hoping vainly to catch a glimpse of Sarah Bernhardt, actress. But she avoided any parade before a lot of curiosity seekers by coming to the theatre early in her carriage and approaching by a side street."

After the performance the sixty-one year old actress was interviewed in her dressing room by an Eagle reporter. Said Miss Bernhardt:

"The audience tonight was one of the finest I have been before in weeks, in fact, since I left the extreme South. They appreciated my art, my acting. They came to see me, Bernhardt, but I carried them away from myself. I like to play to such an audience. In the extreme South I speak to people who understand my words. Here I speak only by my actions and they understand me better than the East. It must be that in the East they see so many great actresses and actors and this seems to make them cold-blooded and they will not respond. In the West they see few great artists and they appreciate them more."

Sarah Bernhardt's appearance remains the high point in the theatrical history of Wichita. Were the theatrical history of Wichita a play, divided into three acts, Bernhardt's performance near the end of the second act would be a fitting climax. The appearance of any actress after that time could only have been part of the denouement.

There was another performance a few years preceding the Bernhardt performance that was particularly outstanding. That was the appearance

of Mrs. Brune in 1902 at the Toler in F. Marion Crawford's Unorma. The play had been written especially for Mrs. Brune. Unorma was the stage version of The Witch of Prague, and it was said that F. Marion Crawford had previously refused to allow a dramatization of this novel because he knew of no actress who could play the leading role. When he saw Mrs. Brune acting in Theodora, he changed his mind and wrote Unorma. The play tells of the development of a high priestess of the temple of Goolah in Delhi, India, from a child of nature into a matured suffering woman. Many critics believed that Crawford in writing Unorma wrote a love story second only to Romeo and Juliet in the analysis of the divine passion. Wichitans were flattered that this actress, termed the American Sarah Bernhardt in her day but now forgotten, had chosen to appear in their city in the famous play.

There were other highlights in the list of actors and actresses during these years. In 1905 Florence Gale came to Wichita in As You Like It. Some said her nationwide tour equalled that of Julia Marlowe when she played the same role of Rosalind.

Then there was the appearance in the early part of '91 of Frederick Warde and Mrs. D. P. Bowers, leading actors of the time, in Henry VIII. Frederick Warde came to Wichita again in '99 in Virginus, The Lion's Mouth, and Romeo and Juliet. In '91 the talented actress, Kate Claxton, starred in The Two Orphans.

These are only a few of the outstanding personalities appearing in the years between 1891 and 1910. A glance at the names included at the end of Chapter II will complete the list.

Of course, there were many stock companies during these years which

appeared without the name of a star attached to their company; nevertheless, many of them gave very commendable performances. The length of the engagements varied from one night to a week and sometimes even several weeks. It is interesting to note, however, that rarely did a company appear for only one performance. The usual length of the run was two to four performances. We have already mentioned the local stock companies, the most popular of which was the Wolfe Stock Company, which performed for several seasons at the Toler and later the New Auditorium. The most popular of the traveling stock companies, as judged by the number of engagements, were: the Lewis James Company, Isaac Payton Company, Eunice Goodrich Company, Boston Comic Opera Company, Morey Stock Company, Copeland Stock Company, and the ever favorite minstrel companies, the Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels and the Richard and Pringles' Famous Georgia Minstrels.

It is said that the local companies and some of the longer run companies often proved a threat to the peace and stability of many a Wichita home. Some local personalities became entangled in the amours of a leading actor or actress, and the stories and scandals that resulted from these affairs rivaled anything appearing on the front page of our newspapers today and would be interesting but inadvisable to relate here.

These were the years of the "famous little somebodies" - child actors who received acclaim for a short time. Among those appearing in Wichita were: Cecil Spooner, who performed with the Spooner Company; Gracie Beebe, billed as the "child wonder of the dramatic world;" and La Petite Freddy, another child wonder who appeared in Si Plunkard.

The preceding names of actors and actresses who performed before Wichita audiences between the years 1891 and 1910 are only a few of the

many who appeared during that time. They are mentioned only because they help illustrate several factors concerning those theatrical years: that Wichita was theatrically minded enough to support local stock companies; that an actor or actress appearing once in the city usually returned at some time in his or her career; and that the greatest of stars were aware of the quality of Wichita audiences.

## THE PLAYS

1891 - 1910

Material concerning the actors was limited during this period, and we have little more than names to go by. However, concerning the plays we are more fortunate. The drama critic for the Eagle furnished much better reviews than in the preceding years, and we can learn a great deal more about the plays presented. As we glance over the list of plays for these years, the first thing that comes to our attention is the fact that "spectacle" is the big name in show business. The type of plays that had been presented back in the 80's, such plays as Burr Oaks and The Streets of New York, was climaxed during this period with such productions as The Fast Mail and Ben Hur.

The question that arises in discussing these plays pertains to the effectiveness of the staging. Today, with all the stage mechanism found in a well-equipped theatre, producers would hesitate to stage such scenes as seemed to be found in the most common play as presented by the less than average stock company. Oh, to have been at the Crawford in '91 when The Firemen's Ward was presented with its "great fire scene, and mammoth tank containing 37,000 gallons of water, also the beautiful full rig sail yacht." Such a play as I Remember Mama would have seemed to this company a very simple problem in staging.

A bit of humor is introduced into the discussion of plays when the author includes a few of the advertisements appearing in the Eagle concerning these "spectacular" dramas. In 1891 Aiden Benedicts' Fabio Romani was presented at the Crawford. Said the Eagle: "thrilling and interesting earthquake effect, simultaneous with an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius,

illumination of the Bay of Naples forming the most magnificent spectacular tableau ever attempted on any stage."

Concerning Uncle Josh Spruceby presented in 1892, the Eagle stated that the audience would see "a sawmill at work, showing machinery room with large stationary sawmill in full operation and the great safe blowing scene in which Kid Kelly and Brockey Jordan blow a real safe."

The advertisement announcing the production of The Tornado read: "see the awful tornado, the great rigging scene, the collision of two ocean liners, dissecting room of a medical college, and Chicago harbor at night."

The review of Lincoln Carter's Fast Mail tops all:

"The incidents are made doubly thrilling by the mechanical and scenic effects that are employed. There is the rattle and clatter of a patrol wagon as it comes down the street, the whistles, bells, etc. of a Mississippi steamboat leaving her wharf, moonlight effects on the river, the glowing furnaces of the boat, and the explosion and breaking up of the steamer. A gigantic piece of real water scenery is presented in the Niagara Falls scene, where the enormous cataract is represented with the roar of the water, the seething foam and the rising mist. A freight train of fourteen cars is run across the stage. The caboose is lighted and the engine carries the engineer and firemen. It is everywhere acknowledged to be an unsurpassed achievement in railroad scenic effect."

There seemed to be no limit to the possibilities of the stage mechanics.

As late as 1906 scenic effects were being greatly stressed. The advertisements of W. B. Gray's The Volunteer Organist read: "The church scene startling in its naturalness. The snow scene is the acme of modern stagecraft. A moral told in dramatic. Endorsed by pulpit, press, and public."

Again in 1917 Lincoln Carter's Fast Mail was presented; it hadn't

been mentioned for some time. The theatre-goers were urged to see "the great steamboat explosion, the two largest trains ever seen on any stage, and Niagara Falls at night."

In regard to the presentation of Ben Hur in 1908 the Eagle stated that there would be "300 in the production and 8 horses in the thrilling chariot race in Act V." When this production appeared again in 1914, the Eagle printed a lengthy story of the mechanical workings of such a production which is restated here in part:

"....chariots and horses spin on elaborate machinery. The horses stand on treadmills and the chariots are poised on posts fastened to the treadmill platforms. The amphitheatre is a belt of scenery - an endless belt moved by shafting. The shafting goes through the stage to a drive wheel, and the drive wheel is run by a belt from an electric motor. The platforms upon which the treadmills run are wheeled vehicles and these vehicles upon which the racers themselves run are movable. During the race Ben Hur racing to the utmost speed of his steed cannot lose because his whole vehicle, horses and chariot alike, is pulled forward across the stage, pulled by a force independent of horses, independent of Ben Hur's exhortations."

In every age men have been attracted by the "spectacular," and the appearance of these spectacle plays was merely another example of people being attracted by that which was sensational. There was nothing unusual about these plays except that for a few years there seemed to be an increasingly large number of them. Many of our movies today are an example of the spectacle drama.

We have mentioned melodramas, which were so popular in the preceding period. We discussed these plays with an air of amusement because we were aware of the improbable plots, the trite situations, and the exaggerated acting. In those days, however, they were extremely popular and were taken very seriously. The old favorites, Si Plunkard, The Banker's

Daughter, Ten Nights in a Bar Room, and East Lynne, were presented again and again. In the years which we are now discussing they were still welcomed by Wichita audiences and the street parade, which had been used in advertising this type of play in the preceding period, became even more popular.

The reviewer of the Eagle, who during this period seems extremely competent, felt as though the melodramas were becoming a bit tiresome and had lost their original attraction. When a melodrama of merit appeared, he gave it credit. Said the reviewer in 1902:

"JSD is a melodrama considerably above the average. There is nothing about it that is noisy and little that is preposterous. Although the average play-goer has come to view the melodrama with a bit of sneer, it has been shown that there are some performances of that species which are well worth seeing and JSD is one of them. The plot is not hackneyed for one thing. The play is in competent hands for another."

Melodramas continued to be presented, but they were received with a light spirit rather than with the seriousness of the preceding period.

Before we leave the subject of the melodrama, we must mention Uncle Tom's Cabin once more. It was still the favorite and with a few exceptions was presented each year from 1891-1910, and each production seemed to boast a new feature. Said the Eagle in 1897 in regard to a performance of Uncle Tom starring the Cook Twin Sisters:

"Some twenty ponies and burros, a large number of colored plantation jubilee singers, a pack of Siberian bloodhounds, and an unusually gorgeous transformation scene, necessitating the utilizing in its nine distinct drop scenes, will be some of the features that will greet the eye tonight."

The list of the plays presented during this time tells us that more of the "better" plays were being presented. In the preceding period such plays as Othello, Macbeth, Virginus, and Richard III were given; but

these plays were more the exception than the rule. In the present period, however, every season offered many plays of the highest type.

It is interesting to glance through the list of plays and operas for these years and pick out the most outstanding productions of each season. In 1891 one would include Frederick Warde and Mrs. Bowers in Henry VIII and Joseph Jefferson in The Rivals. For 1892 one would choose The Gladiator and Il Trovatore and for 1893 Julius Caesar and Faust. To continue on down the list:

1894: The Mikado, Lady Windemere's Fan, Charley's Aunt, Romeo and Juliet

1895: Faust, As You Like It

1896-97: Cleopatra, Spartacus, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Julius Caesar

1898-99: Under the Red Robe, Oliver Twist, Rip Van Winkle

(A review in the Eagle tells us that Under the Red Robe, a Frohman production, was "....a romantic play similar to Cyrano de Bergerac." However, the reviewer thought Cyrano was far inferior in regard to romanticism. The hero in Under the Red Robe was a cavalier of the time of Louis XIII and Richelieu whose qualities and virtues were far superior to Cyrano's.)

1900: Oliver Goldsmith, The Little Minister, Under the Red Robe, Quo Vadis, and Prisoner of Zenda

1901: Carmen, The Mikado, Martha, Heart and Sword, The Little Minister, Hamlet, Spartacus, Il Trovatore, The Taming of the Shrew, and Vanity Fair

1902: Quo Vadis, Fra Diavolo, Carmen, Camille, Unorma, Taming of

the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing, David Harum, Comedy of Errors, and A Doll's House

1903: Rip Van Winkle, Are You a Mason?, Merchant of Venice, Richard III, and Twelfth Night

1904: Faust, The Rivals, The Crisis, David Garrick, Fabio Romani, Othello, David Harum, and Macbeth

1905: The Sign of the Cross, As You Like It, Camille, Zaza, and Virginius

(The Eagle had this to say about Florence Gale in As You Like It:

"After an almost sickening surfeit of comic opera, real and alleged, it was a genuine delight to witness the Florence Gale production of As You Like It.... Genuine comedy, clean, fresh, and wholesome, supplanted clownish buffoonery, the rollicking melody of olden times was substituted for ragtime ditties; and, instead of the tum-tum-tum and 'go away-we-go' of chorus girls, there were characters natural and lifelike. In this day and age when every little Cock Robin story with Dresden China effects finds a publisher who is foolish enough to print it, and the rubbish is afterwards served up to the public in dramatized form, it is a pleasing innovation to occasionally witness a play of strength and virility such as As You Like It.... The contrast between these hash-house productions and the old standard comedies in which our forefathers delighted is almost pitiful.")

1906: Ingomar, David Harum, Camille, Mary Stuart, or Macbeth, Monsieur Beaucaire, Parsifal, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Cymbeline, Julius Caesar, Richard III

(Said the reviewer concerning Parsifal, "...highest class audiences that ever filled the house." Then he went on to explain the play:

"In the Holy Temple with its noble knights, are seen the grandieuse and beauty of that state of human mind and thought that is acceptable to God. Only the knights who have reached this standard are admitted within the walls of the temple.... When uncovered, the Grail sheds its lustrous gifts on all present. Without this divine sustenance, life within the Holy Temple is unbearable. Faith without works of charity does not find favor in his presence.")

1907: The Clansman, A Doll's House

1908: Prisoner of Zenda, Comedy of Errors, Merchant of Venice, Anthony and Cleopatra, The Burgomaster, Madam Butterfly, Il Trovatore, Rig-  
oletto, Faust, Jane Eyre, Carmen, The Red Mill

1910: Brewster's Millions, A Servant in the House

It was stated that little would be said about the movies except as they were directly related to the drama. Little has been said of them up to now, but in the period under discussion motion pictures emerged as a popular form of entertainment; therefore, special mention should be given to them at this time. In the period between 1891 and 1910 the first motion pictures were presented, and for a few years they were of little competition to the stage. Before long, however, the number of movies had increased to a point where it was apparent that a new industry had arisen which was to be a threat to stage drama and particularly to the traveling stock company. Of course, the first movies could not compare with what was offered in the form of stage drama, but they were a novelty and were cheap; hence, they were patronized.

According to available information, Wichitans were first introduced to motion pictures around 1904. It was stated previously that the Lyric Theatre, located at 256 North Main Street, was the first home of motion pictures in Wichita. It also presented vaudeville. One of the first pictures shown at the Lyric was The Lost Child, advertised as the greatest motion picture ever produced. In forty-six years the motion picture industry has changed its type of advertising very little.

The best in movies at this time was Lyman H. Howe's Exhibition of America's Greatest Motion Pictures. It was brought to Wichita almost every year.

Later, other theatres were opened to motion pictures and the very popular illustrated songs. Among them were the Elite, Theatorium, Marple, Majestic, Have-A-Look, Yale, Olympic, Novelty, Bon-Ton. Most of the early theatres combined vaudeville and motion pictures and the price of admission was usually 5¢. The early pictures were short, running from twenty to thirty minutes and often even a shorter length of time. A typical bill at the Elite read something like this:

Take Good Care of the Baby  
Casenir's Night Out  
Lone Highwayman  
Indian Customs

Another bill read:

The Village Gossip (tragic feature)  
The Base Ball Fan (comic feature)  
The Improvised Statue  
The Masque Ball  
Illustrated Songs

Even at the very beginning of the growth of the motion picture industry there was a foreshadowing of the type of publicity which would be used. In 1909, in order to advertise the Dalton Raid being shown at the Marple, the management engaged Emmett Dalton, one of the famed Dalton boys, to take tickets during the showing of the picture.

There had been vaudeville prior to 1900, but around that date its popularity increased. When the new motion picture theatres opened their doors, they featured vaudeville acts along with the regular shows. Gradually, however, the two became separated. In 1909 vaudeville reached its all time high in Wichita when the Princess theatre, devoted exclusively to vaudeville, was opened. A great deal of research could be done on this type of entertainment. It is briefly mentioned here because it was a popular form of theatrical entertainment.

One would be safe in saying that almost everything was included in the vaudeville shows. The following is a bill appearing at the Bijou in 1906:

Rings and Williams  
Will Have a New Line of Funny Songs and Sayings

J. O. Wise  
The Rapid Fellow Who Draws Funny Cartoons With Both Hands  
at the Same Time

Neoda  
One of the Jugglers Who Knows How to Juggle

Ethel Maybelle  
Will Sing the Popular Ballad "In the Valley of Kentucky"

Bijougraph  
Sensation and Comedy

One will notice as he glances at the list of plays for these years that minstrels were more numerous than in other years. They were at their height of popularity, and Wichita had its favorite companies which appeared year after year.

During this time there appeared to be more comedies than farces. In the preceding years, farce had been a popular type of play, but more straight comedies were now being offered. In the review of At the French Ball with Fanny Rice, popular comedienne of her time, we have an example of the type of comedy being presented. "It is a simple touching story of a woman's discontent with her lot, and the manner in which she is reconciled to it 'midst laughter, song and tears,' by witnessing the hidden thorns neath the roses of others she had believed so much more fortunate than herself." Said the Eagle: "....comedy, dialogue witty, and pathetic ....full of songs and dances."

It was mentioned in the chapter on the preceding period that the

audiences were often concerned with the vulgarity of some of the shows. Certain reviews indicate that the situation had not changed. Said the reviewer concerning the appearance of Donovan and Lee at the Bijou Theatre: "The acting is of the most chaste nature, nothing vulgar or seemingly vulgar being permitted."

In an Eagle of 1910, is a story illustrating the interest of Wichitans in the theatre, and the author believes it would not be out of place to quote from it. Said the Eagle:

"There is a drug store on Douglas Avenue where you can find out anything in the world about the show business. There you will find critics that put Alan Dald and some of those fellows to flight. They will tell you if a certain show is good or bad or if a certain act is a frost or a scream. A certain sandy-haired little fellow seems to be the best of the critics and is looked upon as having a great future before him as a dramatic critic. Most any evening or Sunday afternoon you will find the gang assembled talking over some great star or some vaudeville performer, and the sandy-haired one is always the master of the occasion. Anyway, if you desire to learn anything about a show or an act, drop around sometime to Gean's 'headquarters for critics'."

Drama in the years between 1891 and 1910 could be summarized by saying: Wichitans were seeing better plays than in the preceding period; the spectacle was at its height; polite vaudeville and the motion pictures were new forms of entertainment; the melodrama waned a little in popularity; but the minstrel shows were still popular.

Although the citizens, no doubt, were unaware of it, between 1891 and 1910 drama had reached its peak; and the succeeding years were, for a time, to see a waning in the popularity of the drama, the number of theatres, and the quality of the plays.

LIST OF ACTORS, ACTRESSES, AND PLAYS APPEARING IN WICHITA BETWEEN THE YEARS 1891 AND 1910. THE THEATRES IN WHICH THE PLAYS WERE PRESENTED ARE ALSO GIVEN, IF KNOWN.

1891

The Fireman's Ward - - Charles P. Morrison & Ollie Redpath - - Crawford Grand  
Jim, The Penman - - A. M. Palmer's Company - - Crawford Grand  
Sparking - - Bijou Comedy Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Poor Relation - - Sol Smith Russell - - Crawford Grand  
The London Gaiety Girls - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Crawford Grand  
The Two Johns - - Crawford Grand  
Henry VIII - - Mrs. D. P. Bowers and Frederick Warde - - Crawford Grand  
The Rivals - - Joseph Jefferson and Wm. J. Florence Comedy Company  
Sam T. Jack's Creole Burlesque Company - - Crawford Grand  
Fabio Romani - - Crawford Grand  
A Social Session - - Sprague's Comedians - - Crawford Grand  
Below Zero - - Renfrow's Jolly Pathfinder's - - Crawford Grand  
The Governess - - Effie Ellsler - - Crawford Grand  
Bunice Goodrich in a repertoire of plays  
The Iron Will - - Robert Neff - - Crawford Grand  
The Waifs of New York - - Katie Emmett - - Crawford Grand  
W. S. Cleveland Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
The Shadows of Old Orchard Farm - - Little Gracie Beebe and Edwin Barbour Company - - Crawford Grand  
Imp - - Patti Rosa - - Crawford Grand  
Turner's English Gaiety Girls - - Crawford Grand  
A Royal Pass - - George C. Staley - - Crawford Grand  
Two Orphans - - Kate Claxton - - Crawford Grand  
Kajanka (opera) - - Crawford Grand  
Tom's Vacation - - Ray Royce - - Crawford Grand  
The Irish Corporal - - F. Gordon Meade - - Crawford Grand  
The Emigrant - - Pete Baker - - Crawford Grand  
Camille and Inherited - - Maude Granger - - Crawford Grand  
Isaac Payton Comedy Company - - Mattie Keere - - Crawford Grand  
Alvin Joslin - - Charles Davis' Comedy Company  
The Clemenceau Case - - Sybil Johnstone  
Below Zero - - Renfrow's Comedians  
Tom Sawyer - - Will E. Burton  
Uncle Hiram - - Aaron H. Woodhull  
Georgia Minstrels - - Billy Kersands

1892

Wanted the Earth - - John Dillon  
The Bells - - Charles Ellis - - The Lyceum  
An Irishman's Love  
Federal Captain - - Charles Ellis - - The Lyceum  
Pirates of Penzance - - Crawford Grand  
Captain Karl - - Charles Gardner - - Crawford Grand

Review of Donovan and Lee - - Bijou Theatre  
Kepler's Fortunes - - Gus Williams - - The New Bijou Theatre  
Avenged - - Orson Clifford - - Crawford Grand  
Poor Jonathan - - Conried's Comic Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Hazel Kirke - - Effie Ellsler - - Crawford Grand  
The Rivals - - Mrs. General Tom Thumb and the Liliputians - -  
Crawford Grand  
The Witch - - Marie Hubert Frohman - - Crawford Grand  
The Gladiator - - Robert Downing  
A Royal Pass - - George C. Staley - - Crawford Grand  
Pearl of Savoy - - My Partner - - Damon and Pythias - - English  
Dramatic Company - - W. W. Heathcote - - Crawford Grand  
Crumbaugh and Mallory Brothers Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
The Ensign - - Crawford Grand  
Dolly Varden - - Patti Rosa - - Crawford Grand  
Pirates of Penzance - - Charles E. Schillings - - Crawford Grand  
Our Irish Visitors - - Sam J. Ryan and Lottie Gilson - - Crawford  
Grand  
Humpty Dumpty - - Eunice Goodrich - - Crawford Grand  
Killarney - - Katie Emmett - - Crawford Grand  
The Midnight Alarm - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Josh Spruceby  
Esther's Guardian - - Spooner Company - - Edna May - - Crawford Grand  
Chris and Lena - - Pete Baker  
Skipped by the Light of the Moon - - Fowler and Warmington Company  
Josephine - - Rhea  
Il Trovatore  
Ben Hur  
James McCann and Lizzie Kendall in a repertoire of plays  
Georgia Minstrels

1893

Erminie - - Pauline Hall  
Bill Nye - - humorist  
Uncle Hiram - - Aaron Woodhull and Troja Griswold  
Barlow Brothers Mammoth Minstrels  
Al G. Field - - Minstrels  
Julius Caesar - - Booth and Barrett  
Wanted, a Husband - - Eunice Goodrich  
Si Plunkard - - Farmer J. C. Lewis  
Fatherland - - Karl Gardner  
Said Pasha - - Boston Comic Opera Company  
A Model Husband - - John Dillon  
Dr. Cupid - - Frank Daniels  
May Davenport City Sports Burlesque Company  
Hazel Kirke - - Effie Ellsler  
Isaac Payton Comedy Company  
Only a Fireman - - Crawford Grand  
777 - - A. W. Fremont - - Crawford Grand  
Only a Farmer's Daughter - - Isaac Payton Comedy Company - Mattie  
Keene

My Colleen (musical) - - Tony Farrell  
Barlow Brothers Mammoth Minstrels  
A Turkish Bath - - Marie Heath  
Miss Dixie - - Pattie Rosa  
The Fast Mail  
The Spooner's - - Edna May and Cecil - - The Spooner Comedy Company  
in repertoire  
Faust  
Mahara's Mammoth Colored Operatic Minstrels

1894

Si Perkins - - Sam J. Burton and Lillie Coleman  
Incog - - Charles Dickson  
The Burglar  
Al G. Field Minstrels  
A Pair of Kids  
Black Crook (musical)  
Starr's Big Comedy Company in a repertoire of plays  
A Model Husband - - John Dillon - - Crawford Grand  
The Mikado  
Shattered Idols - - Jeffreys Lewis  
My Aunt Bridget - - George W. Monroe - - musical comedy  
Uncle Tom's Cabin  
That Girl in Gray - - Wanted a Husband - - The Hangman - - Eunice  
Goodrich Company  
Lady Windermere's Fan - - under direction of Gustave Frohman - -  
Crawford Grand  
Mr. Barnes of New York - - Emily Rigl  
The Merry Milkmaids (light opera)  
Devil's Auction  
Charley's Aunt - - Charles Frohman production  
A Cold Day and A Chip Off the Old Block  
Romeo and Juliet and Bleak House - - Jane Coombs  
Jane - - The Great Mogul (one act) - - Gustave Frohman production  
A German Soldier - - James A. Reilly  
Maudie Phelps in a repertoire of original comedies and dances  
Incog - - Charles Dickson  
The Fast Mail - - Lincoln and Carter's Grand Scenic Production  
The Dazzler - - Cosgrove and Grants' Comedians

1895

The Girl I Left Behind Me - - Charles Frohman production - - Craw-  
ford Grand  
Aunt Sally - - William Gray - - Crawford Grand  
Fritz in a Madhouse - - (musical comedy) - - J. K. Emmett - - Craw-  
ford Grand  
Colorado  
Faust - - Rosabel Morrison - - Crawford Grand  
The Black Crook - - Crawford Grand  
In Old Tennessee - - Crawford Grand

The Gold Cure - - Americus Farce Comedy Company - - Crawford Grand  
Amorita - - Calhoun Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Globe Trotter - - William Hoey - - Crawford Grand  
Side-Tracked - - Jule Walter's Comedy Production - - Crawford Grand  
The Prize Winner - - Charles Gardner - - Crawford Grand  
The Dazzler - - Cosgrove's and Grant's Comedians - - Crawford Grand  
Gracie - - Imogene Clayton - - The New Lyceum Theatre  
A Green Goods Man - - Frank Jackson and Barry Maxwell - - Crawford  
Grand  
Sinbad - - American Extravaganza Company - - Crawford Grand  
As You Like It - - Effie Ellsler - - Crawford Grand

1896 - October of 1897

The Limited Mail - - Crawford Grand  
Trilby - - A. M. Palmer's Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Fast Mail Train - - Crawford Grand  
Si Plunkard - - J. C. Lewis - - Crawford Grand  
Cleopatra - - Lillian Lewis - - Crawford Grand  
The Tornado - - Lincoln J. Carter's Production - - Crawford Grand  
Al G. Field's Refined Negro Minstrels  
Carrie Russell and her Voltair Operatic Company  
The Defaulter - - Lincoln J. Carter Production - - Crawford Grand  
Sinbad - - American Extravaganza Company  
A Breezy Time - - Fitz and Webster  
An Every Day Man - - Mr. Valentine's Christmas (one-act play)  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Crawford Grand  
The Lost Paradise and In Old Kentucky - - Sharpley's Lyceum Theatre  
Company - - Crawford Grand  
Spartacus - - Romeo and Juliet - - Othello - - Louis James Company  
- - Crawford Grand  
The Mikado - - Pinafore - - Andrews Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Beach and Bower's Minstrels Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Old Homestead - - The Golden Giant Mine - - Ray Eldridge Players  
- - Auditorium  
After the Ball - - Midnight Call - - Sharpley Theatre Company - -  
Crawford Grand  
Old Homestead - - Ford's Players - - Crawford Grand  
At the French Ball - - Fanny Rice - - Crawford Grand  
Martha - - Pinafore - - Pirates of Penzance - - Andrews Opera Company  
- - Crawford Grand  
Fabio Romani - - Aiden Benedict's Company - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Cook Twin Sisters - - Crawford Grand  
Julius Caesar - - Louis James - - Crawford Grand  
Reuber Glue - - East Lynne - - Little Red Riding Hood - - Crawford  
Grand  
The Wages of Sin - - The Paiges - - Crawford Grand  
Milk White Flag - - Crawford Grand

October of 1897 - March of 1899

The Iron Master and Alabama - - The Long Company - - Crawford Grand

Palmer Cox's Brownies - - Spectacle and variety acts - - C. B. Jefferson, Klaw, and Erlanger's Production - - Crawford Grand  
A Trip to China-town - - Musical Specialities - - Crawford Grand  
Beach and Bower's Minstrel Show - - Crawford Grand  
The White Slave - - Holden Comedy Company - - Crawford Grand  
Si Plunkard - - J. C. Lewis and Company - - Crawford Grand  
Streets of New York - - Lawrence Holmes Company - - Crawford Grand  
Harry W. Semon's Extravaganza Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Breezy Time - - Fitz and Webster's - - Crawford Grand  
Under the Red Robe - - Frohman Production - - Crawford Grand  
A Contented Woman - - Crawford Grand  
Pulse of Greater New York - - William Lang - - Crawford Grand  
An Irish American Cousin - - Stater's Dramatic and Vaudeville Company - - Crawford Grand  
Beach and Bower's Minstrel Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Romance of Coon Hollow - - C. E. Callahan's Tennessee Comedy - - Crawford Grand  
At Gay Coney Island - - Crawford Grand  
Dorothy Morton Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Under the Dome - - Lincoln J. Carter Production - - Crawford Grand  
The Pay Train - - Crawford Grand  
A Boy Wanted - - Crawford Grand  
Barlow Minstrel - - Crawford Grand  
Forrest's Uncle Tom's Cabin Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Southern Gentleman - - Clay Clement Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Devil's Auction - - Crawford Grand  
Ross Kain's - - Graham-Earle Company - - Crawford Grand

April of 1899 - December 31, 1899

Oliver Twist - - Graham-Earle Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Peaceful Valley - - Edwin L. Barker - - Crawford Grand  
His Father's Boy - - Crawford Grand  
Shadows of a Great City and Lights of London - - Kliment-Hearn Company - - Crawford Grand  
Arnold Wolford's Big Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Black Crook - - Crawford Grand  
Grimes Cellar Door - - James B. Mackie - - Crawford Grand  
Cumming's Jubilee Singers and Comedy Company - - Auditorium  
The Lawyer's Wedding - - Allie Spooner with the Spooner Dramatic Company - - Crawford Grand  
Rigoletto - - Lambardi Italian Grand Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Town Topics - - The Broadway Comedians - - Crawford Grand  
777 - A. W. Fremont - - Crawford Grand  
A Texas Steer - - A Hoyt Production - - Katie Putnam - - Crawford Grand  
Myles McCarthy (comedian and balladist) - - Crawford Grand  
Chattanooga - - Crawford Grand  
Richard Pringle's Famous Georgia Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Joshua Simpkins - - Crawford Grand

Virginus - - Romeo and Juliet - - The Lion's Mouth - - Frederick  
Warde - - Crawford Grand  
McCarthy's Mishaps - - Barney Ferguson - - Crawford Grand  
The Three Musketeers and The Rage of the Hour - - Paul Gilmore - -  
Crawford Grand  
Faust - - Lewis Morrison's - - Crawford Grand  
A Black Sheep - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Crawford Grand  
Two Married Men - - Crawford Grand  
Under the Dome - - Lincoln J. Carter Production - - Crawford Grand  
Two Married Men - - Crawford Grand  
Ragtime Opera and Minstrel - - Crawford Grand  
The Widow Wiggles - - Miss Street George Hussey - - Crawford Grand  
The Nominee - - Walter Walker - - Crawford Grand  
Rip Van Winkle - - Jefferson Comedy Company - - Crawford Grand  
Faust - - William Richards - - Walter McCullough - - Augusta True - -  
Crawford Grand  
A Much Married Man - - Hunt Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
Why Smith Left Home - - A Royal Slave - - Faust - - Cinderella - -  
Morey Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Stranger in New York - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand

1900

Bleak House - - Jane Combs - - Crawford Grand  
Sweeney and Alvido's Model Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Too Much Money - - Crawford Grand  
What Happened to Jones - - Manhattan Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
Darkest Russia - - Crawford Grand  
My Jim - - Ferris' Comedians - - Crawford Grand  
Oliver Goldsmith - - Stuart Robson - - Crawford Grand  
Duke's Jester - - Frederick Warde - - Crawford Grand  
The Girl from Chili (Musical Comedy Farce) - - Crawford Grand  
The Little Minister - - Frohman Production - - Crawford Grand  
Under the Robe - - Crawford Grand  
Midnite in Chinatown - - Crawford Grand  
The Burglar - - Crawford Grand  
Clara Mathe's Big Comedy Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Poor Relation - - Sol Smith Russell - - Crawford Grand  
The Nominee - - Walter Walker - - Crawford Grand  
Quo Vadis - - Crawford Grand  
La Fiesta de San Xavier - - Crawford Grand  
Barlow Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
A Hot Old Time - - Crawford Grand  
Empire Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Black Sheep - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
A Man of Mystery - - Crawford Grand  
Ivy Leaf - - Crawford Grand  
A Texas Steer - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
The Southern Stock Company - - Ella Wilson in repertoire - - Crawford  
Grand  
Irish Rough Riders - - Crawford Grand

Si Perkins - - Lillie Coleman - - Crawford Grand  
The Belle of New York - - Crawford Grand  
Private John Allen - - Crawford Grand  
Two Married Women - - Billy Rice - - Crawford Grand  
Quo Vadis - - Crawford Grand  
Prisoner of Zenda - - Frohman Production - - Crawford Grand  
A Brass Monkey - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Becky Sharp - - Mrs. Fiske - - Crawford Grand

1901

Side Tracked - - Jule Walters and Louise Llewellyn - - Crawford Grand  
My Friend From India - - Myron B. Rice Company - - Crawford Grand  
Heart and Sword - - Walker Whiteside and Lelia Wolstan - - Carmen  
- - The Mikado - - Martha - - Andrews Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Milk White Flag - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Faust - - Lewis Morrison's Production - - Crawford Grand  
Shenandoah - - Crawford Grand  
A Modern Woodman - - Charles Ellis - - Crawford Grand  
My Daughter's Husband - - Dan Sherman - - Crawford Grand  
Si Plunkard - - J. C. Lewis - - Crawford Grand  
Arizona - - Crawford Grand  
The Little Minister - - Frohman Production - - Crawford Grand  
Madison Square Theatre Company in a repertoire of plays - - Crawford Grand  
A Hole in the Ground - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Romance of Coon Hollow  
Aubrey Stock Company with Lillian Boyer  
Faust - - Hubert Labadies' - - Toler  
Andrews Opera Company  
A Modern Woodman - - Charles Ellis - - Toler Auditorium  
Hamlet - - Edwin Rostell - - Crawford Grand  
The Telephone - - Musical Comedy - - Crawford Grand  
Si Plunkard - - J. C. Lewis - - Crawford Grand  
Arizona - - Crawford Grand  
A Hot Old Time - - Crawford Grand  
Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jekyll - - Auditorium Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Spartacus - - John Griffith and Kathryn Purnell - - Crawford Grand  
A Hole in the Ground - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Knobs O' Tennessee - - Crawford Grand  
Faust - - Mary Van Tromp - - Crawford Grand  
Jossery Stock Company in repertoire - - Crawford Grand  
Slayton Jubilee Singers - - Toler Auditorium  
Il Trovatore and The Mikado - - Andrews Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Phoenix - - Toler Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Peters Comedy Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Bells - - Toler Auditorium  
The Wrong Mr. Wright - - Crawford Grand

A Jolly American Tramp - - Crawford Grand  
Caste - - Toler Auditorium  
A Runaway Girl - - Augustin Daly Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Parisian Princess  
On the Eastern Shore - - Toler Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium  
For Her Sake - - Crawford Grand  
A Waif of Fortune - - D'Ormond-Fuller Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Three Muskateers - - Toler Auditorium  
A Royal Slave - - Morey Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
A Bunch of Keys - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Richard Carver - - Andrew Robson & Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Minister's Son - - W. B. Patton - - Crawford Grand  
Alvin Joslin - - Crawford Grand  
The Taming of the Shrew - - Charles B. Hanford and Helen Grantly - -  
Crawford Grand  
Daughter of the Diamond King - - Crawford Grand  
Vaudeville and Specialty Bill - - Toler Auditorium  
Ingomar - - Toler Auditorium  
A Homespun Heart - - Crawford Grand  
My Friend From Arkansas - - Robert Sherman and Company - - Crawford  
Grand  
Whang - - Two Orphans - - Grau Comic Opera Company - - Toler Audi-  
torium  
Secret Service - - Crawford Grand  
Vanity Fair - - Gertrude Coghlan - - Crawford Grand  
Richard & Pringle's Georgia Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
A Merry Chase - - Lyman Twins - - Crawford Grand  
Sylvia's Romance - - Warner Comedy Company - - Toler Auditorium

1902

On the Quiet - - William Collier - - Crawford Grand  
Way Down East - - Crawford Grand  
The Eleventh Hour - - Charles Gardner - - Crawford Grand  
The Cowboy and the Lady - - S. Miller Kent - - Knickerbocker Theater  
Production - - Crawford Grand  
Cherry Sisters in original repertoire - - Toler Auditorium  
Quo Vadis  
A Nutmeg Match - - Lillian Mortimer - - Crawford Grand  
A Thoroughbred Tramp - - Crawford Grand  
The Missouri Girl - - Sadie Raymond and Fred Raymond - - Crawford  
Grand  
Grand Orpheum Attraction of recognized Vaudeville - - Toler Audi-  
torium  
Somnolency - - Anna Eva Ray - - Crawford Grand  
Black Patti Troubadours - - Crawford Grand  
Grand Duchess - - Fra Diavalo - - Wilbur-Kirwin Opera Company - -  
Crawford Grand  
Hunker's P. O. (one-act) - - Toler Auditorium  
Uncle Josh Spruceby - - Dave B. Lewis' Production - - Crawford Grand

Faust - - Lewis Morrison Production - - Crawford Grand  
Two Vagabonds - - Wilbur-Kirwin Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Carmen - - Hortense Neilsen - - Crawford Grand  
A Doll's House - - Clara Thropp - - Crawford Grand  
Noble Dramatic Company (week's engagement) - - Crawford Grand  
When Reuben Comes to Town - - Morris & Hall Comedy Company - -  
Crawford Grand  
The Christian - - Edward Morgan - - Lieber & Company Production - -  
Crawford Grand  
Flies in the Web - - Noble Dramatic Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Telephone Girl - - Crawford Grand  
Stater's Madison Square Theatre Company - - Toler Auditorium  
The Silver Dagger - - Crawford Grand  
Thelma - - Crawford Grand  
Her Lord and Master - - Helen Grantly - - Crawford Grand  
A Bunch of Keys - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Diamond King - - Edwin Southers - - Crawford Grand  
Camille - - Miss Cournenay Morgan - - Toler Auditorium  
The Princess Chic - - Kirk La Shell's Opera Company - - Toler Audi-  
torium  
A Thoroughbred Tramp - - Crawford Grand  
Down by the Sea - - Fanny Curtis - - Crawford Grand  
Mabelle Crawford Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Unorma - - Mrs. Brune - - Toler Auditorium  
The Flints - - Crawford Grand  
The Man Outside - - Ferris Comedians - - Crawford Grand  
Comedy of Errors - - Stuart Robson - - Toler Auditorium  
Harry Ward's Magnificent Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
The Henrietta - - Stuart Robson - - Toler Auditorium  
The Taming of the Shrew - - Much Ado About Nothing - - Charles B.  
Hanford - - Crawford Grand  
Alice of Old Vincenniss - - Gertrude Coghlan - - Crawford Grand  
Broadway Burlesquers Extravaganza Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Whose Baby Are You - - Crawford Grand  
The Power Behind the Throne - - Katherine Willard - - Crawford  
Grand  
Two Married Men - - Crawford Grand  
David Harum - - Julius Cahn - - Crawford Grand  
For Love's Sake - - Crawford Grand  
Peck's Bad Boy - - Crawford Grand  
The Game of Life - - Morey Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
Stater's Comedians in a repertoire of modern comedy-drama - - Toler  
Auditorium  
Way Down East - - Crawford Grand  
For Her Sake - - Crawford Grand

1903

The Show Girl - - comic opera - - Toler Auditorium  
The Game Keeper - - Thomas J. Smith - - Crawford Grand  
The Lion's Mouth - - Othello - - Charles D. Herman - - Crawford  
Grand

Rip Van Winkle - - J. A. Simon - - Crawford Grand  
Are You a Mason? - - Crawford Grand  
The Missouri Girl - - Fred Raymond - - Crawford Grand  
Yon Yonson - - Toler Auditorium  
A Little Outcast - - Carpenter's Company - - Crawford Grand  
In Arkansaw - - Robert Downing - - Crawford Grand  
The Galley Slave - - Vessie Farrell - - Toler Auditorium  
The Tyranny of Tears - - Paul Gilmore - - Crawford Grand  
The Blue Grass Girl - - Vessie Farrell & Company - - Toler Auditorium  
A Wise Woman - - Marie La Mour - - Toler Auditorium  
The Princess of Pathes - - Lillian Mortimer Company - - Crawford Grand  
When Knighthood Was in Flower - - Effie Ellsler - - Toler Auditorium  
Unorma - - Mrs. Brune - - Toler Auditorium  
A Millionaire Tramp - - Crawford Grand  
The White Slave - - Crawford Grand  
Said Pasha and Boccaccio - - Olympia Opera Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Famous Georgia Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Brother John - - Madison Square Theatre Company - - Toler Auditorium  
The Sleeping City - - Pulse of Greater New York - - East Lynne - -  
My Uncle from New York - - O. C. Thurston Stock Company - -  
Crawford Grand  
A Trip to Chinatown - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Human Hearts - - Crawford Grand  
The Denver Express - - Crawford Grand  
Where Magnolias Bloom - - Vessie Farrell - - Toler Auditorium  
The Sword of the King - - Henrietta Crosman - - Crawford Grand  
Ten Nights in a Bar Room - - Don C. Hall Company - - Crawford Grand  
Micky Finn - - Rube Welch-Kitty Francis & Company - - Crawford Grand  
No'th Ca'lina Folks - - Bonnair Price and Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Two Little Waifs - - Crawford Grand  
The Land O' Cotton - - Crawford Grand  
Sin & Sorrow - - Bonnair Price Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Romance of a Gypsy Queen - - Morey Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
Her Only Sin - - Lincoln J. Carter Production - - Crawford Grand  
The Vinegar Buyer - - Ezra Kendall - - Crawford Grand  
The Iron Mask - - Earl Doty - - Crawford Grand  
For Mother's Sake - - Marie Heath - - Crawford Grand  
Mme. Melba - - Toler Auditorium  
Chimes of Normandy - - Columbia Opera Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Ten Nights in a Bar Room - - Metropolitan Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium  
In Convict Stripes - - Crawford Grand  
A Texas Steer - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Arizona - - Crawford Grand  
When Johnny Comes Marching Home - - Whitney Opera Company - - Crawford Grand

The Missouri Girl - - Crawford Grand  
The Two Orphans - - Crawford Grand  
A Bunch of Keys - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand  
Ten Nights in a Bar Room - - Toler Auditorium  
In Old Kentucky - - Bessie Barriscale - - Crawford Grand  
Dorothy - - Columbia Opera Company - - Toler Auditorium  
In a Woman's Power - - Crawford Grand  
Merchant of Venice and Richard III - - Charles B. Hanford - - Crawford Grand  
Twelfth Night - - Marie Wainwright - - Crawford Grand  
Mahara's Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Mr. Jolly of Joliet - - Edward Garvie - - Crawford Grand  
Birds of a Feather - - Edward Andrews - - Crawford Grand  
Two Merry Tramps - - Wood and Ward - - Toler Auditorium  
In the Palace of the King - - Helen Grantly - - Crawford Grand  
East Lynne - - Inez Forman and John Dillon - - Toler Auditorium

1904

Vaudeville - - Novelty Theatre  
Georgia Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Down by the Sea - - Fannie Curtis - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Crawford Grand  
Caprice - - Metrolopitan Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Power Behind the Throne - - Katherine Willard - - Crawford Grand  
The Wizard of the Nile - - Frank Daniels - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Josh Spruceby - - Crawford Grand  
Black Patti Troubadours - - Crawford Grand  
Peck's Bad Boy - - Crawford Grand  
Faust - - Lewis Morrison - - Crawford Grand  
For Baby's Sake - - Marie Fountain Theatre Company - - Crawford Grand  
Vaudeville - - Novelty Theatre  
The Rivals - - Joseph Jefferson, Jr., and William J. Jefferson - - Crawford Grand  
David Harum - - Crawford Grand  
Spotless Town - - Leila Shaw and Leslie Morosco - - Toler Auditorium  
Resurrection - - Blanche Walsh - - Crawford Grand  
Way Down East - - Crawford Grand  
Ted E. Faust Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
The Crisis - - Isabel Irving - - Crawford Grand  
Macbeth - - John Griffith - - Crawford Grand  
Si Plunkard - - J. C. Lewis - - Crawford Grand  
David Garrick - - Erwin Blunkall - - Crawford Grand  
Vaudeville - - Lyric Theatre  
Down on the Farm - - Marie Dale and Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Virginia Rosebud - - Belcher's Comedians - - Toler Auditorium  
Nebraska - - Charles Breckenridge and Company - - Crawford Grand  
The Eternal City - - Edward Morgan - - Crawford Grand  
Salambo - - Frederick Warde and Kathryn Kidder - - Crawford Grand  
For Mother's Sake - - Marie Heath - - Crawford Grand  
Devil's Auction - - Toler Auditorium

Over Niagara Falls - - Rowland and Clifford's Production - - Crawford Grand

Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Stetson's Company - - Crawford Grand

Looney Dreamland - - Black Patti Troubadours - - Crawford Grand

Fabio Romani - - Crawford Grand

Why Women Sin - - M. W. Taylor Amusement Company - - Crawford Grand

An Orphan's Prayer - - Crawford Grand

Othello - - Charles Hanford - - Crawford Grand

The Lost Child (moving picture) - - Lyric Theatre

Was She To Blame - - East Lynne - - Toler Auditorium

Dora Thorne - - Crawford Grand

Wizard of Oz - - Crawford Grand

A Bunch of Keys - - Hoyt Production - - Crawford Grand

1905

Her Only Sin - - Julia Gray - - Crawford Grand

The Sign of the Cross - - Crawford Grand

Babes in Toyland - - Crawford Grand

Sergeant Kitty - - Crawford Grand

For Her Sake - - Crawford Grand

Her Lord and Master - - Helen Grantly - - Crawford Grand

Arizona - - Crawford Grand

Shore Acres - - Crawford Grand

Vaudeville and Moving Pictures - - Lyric Theatre

The Holy City - - Crawford Grand

Vaudeville Troupe - - Toler Auditorium

As You Like It - - Florence Gale - - Crawford Grand

The Miser's Daughter - - The Children Stealers (moving pictures) - -  
Lyric Theatre

Camille and other plays - - H. D. Rucker's Famous Korak Wonder Company  
- - Toler Auditorium

Big Jubilee Minstrels - - Crawford Grand

Scenes from Faust and Il Trovatore - - Mme. Mantelli - - Crawford  
Grand

Vaudeville and moving pictures - - Lyric Theatre

The Flints - - Crawford Grand

Lyman H. Howe with America's Greatest Exhibition of Moving Pictures  
- - C. G. Toler Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium

No'th Ca'lina Folks and Edith's Burglar (home stock company) - -  
Lyric Theatre

Vaudeville - - Crystal Theatre

The Danities - - Toler Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium

A Vagabond's Honor - - McDonald Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium

Vaudeville - - Bijou Theatre

A Little Outcast - - Crawford Grand

Morey Stock Company - - Crawford Grand

Under Southern Skies - - Crawford Grand

Ramona - - Virginia Calhoun - - Crawford Grand

Lyman H. Howe moving picture exhibition - - Crawford Grand

Camille - - Warde Company - - Toler Auditorium

Virginius - - Louis James - - Crawford Grand  
Dan Pasquale - - Alice Neilson and Company - - Toler Auditorium  
Si Plunkard - - J. C. Lewis - - Crawford Grand  
Babes in Toyland - - Crawford Grand  
As Told in the Hills - - Emily Gale - - Crawford Grand  
John L. Sullivan and Jim McCormick in vaudeville - - Bijou Theatre  
Big Jubilee Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Because I Love You - - Copeland Brothers Stock Company - - Toler Auditorium

1906

Ingomar - - Charles B. Hanford and Marie Drofna - - Crawford Grand  
Shadows of a Great City - - Crawford Grand  
Old Arkansaw - - Toler Auditorium  
Land of Nod - - Crawford Grand  
Wizard of Oz - - Crawford Grand  
A Poor Relation - - Sol Smith Russell - - Crawford Grand  
When Women Love - - Crawford Grand  
Mary Stuart or Macbeth - - Mme. Helena Modjeska - - Crawford Grand  
David Harum - - Harry Brown - - Crawford Grand  
Monsieur Beaucaire - - Creston Clarke - - Crawford Grand  
Camille - - Sarah Bernhardt - - Toler Auditorium  
A Quaker Tragedy - - Myrtle-Harder Stock Company - - Crawford Grand  
Lew Dockstader and his own great minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Vaudeville - - Bijou Theatre  
Vaudeville - - Lyric Theatre  
I O U - - Kolb and Dill - - Crawford Grand  
Melville R. Raymond Cartoon Comedy Production - - Crawford Grand  
Moving Pictures - - Crawford Grand  
Ikey and Abey - - Crawford Grand  
Under Southern Skies - - Crawford Grand  
A Woman of the People - - Acme Comedy Company - - Toler Auditorium  
A Woman of Mystery - - Courtenary Morgan (English actress) - - Crawford Grand  
The Shoo-Fly Regiment - - Cole and Johnson (musical comedy) - - Crawford Grand  
The Volunteer Organist - - Crawford Grand  
Patti Rosa and Her Daisy Girls with the Lyman Twins - - Crawford Grand  
Parsifal - - Crawford Grand  
A Bunch of Keys - - Crawford Grand  
Charles H. Yale's Devil's Auction - - Crawford Grand  
Fires of St. John - - Ethel Filler - - Crawford Grand  
Madam Schumann - - Toler Auditorium  
The Little Duchess - - Countess Olga Van Hatzfeldt - - Crawford Grand  
The Merry Wives of Windsor - - Louis James - - Crawford Grand  
Raffles - - Crawford Grand  
The Clansman - - Crawford Grand  
The Illusion of Beatrice - - Maude Fealy - - Crawford Grand  
Painting the Town - - Charles H. Yale Amusement Company - - Crawford Grand

Cymbeline - - Julius Caesar - - Charles B. Hanford - - Crawford  
Grand

King Richard the III - - John Griffith - - Crawford Grand

1907

Alice in Wonderland - - Crawford Grand

Ole Olson - - John Cumpson - - Crawford Grand

Gans-Nelson prize fight pictures - - Bijou Theatre

Moving Pictures - - Theatorium

The One Woman - - Crawford Grand

Isle of Spice - - Gertrude Vaughn - - Crawford Grand

Illustrated Songs and Moving Pictures - - Have-a-Look Theatre

Susan in Search of a Husband - - Marie Wainwright - - Crawford  
Grand

The Fast Mail - - Lincoln J. Carter Production - - Crawford Grand

Moving Pictures - - Yale Theatre

Illustrated Songs and Moving Pictures - - Novelty Theatre

The New Magdalen - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Wonderland Park Theatre

Illustrated Songs and Moving Pictures - - Bon-Ton Theatre

The Charity Ball - - New Auditorium

Northern Lights - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium

Just Out of College (musical play) - - Crawford Grand

Strongheart - - Ralph Stuart - - Crawford Grand

The Man From Mexico - - New Auditorium

At the Old Cross Roads - - East Lynne - - Arthur C. Aiston's Company  
- - Crawford Grand

Zira - - Florence Roberts - - Crawford Grand

Captain Swift - - New Auditorium

Leah Klaschna - - Mrs. Fiske and the Manhattan Company - - New Audi-  
torium

The Clansman - - Crawford Grand

Charles H. Yales' Devil's Auction - - Crawford Grand

Men and Women - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium

The Christian - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere (moving picture) - - Yale Theatre

In Old Kentucky - - Crawford Grand

A Doll's House - - Jan Corcoran - - Crawford Grand

Du Barry - - New Auditorium

Movies and Illustrated Songs - - Elite

Isle of Spice - - Crawford Grand

Uncle Tom's Cabin - - George B. Stetson Production - - Crawford  
Grand

1908

Prisoner of Zenda - - New Auditorium

The Comedy of Errors - - Louis James - - Crawford Grand

Merchant of Venice and Anthony and Cleopatra - - Charles B. Hanford  
- - Crawford Grand

Under Southern Skies - - Lottie Blair - - Crawford Grand

The Burgomaster - - George Weinberg and Ruth White - - Crawford  
Grand

Young Mrs. Winthrop - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium

The Girl That Looks Like Me - - Kathryn Osterman - - Crawford Grand  
Madam Butterfly - - English Grand Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Il Trovatore - - Rigoletto - - Italian Grand Opera Company - - Crawford Grand  
Way Down East - - Crawford Grand  
Movies - - Elite  
Al G. Fields' Greater Minstrels - - Crawford Grand  
Vaudeville - - Yale Theatre  
Wildfire - - Lillian Russell - - Crawford Grand  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Crawford Grand  
Du Barry - - Leslie Carter - - Crawford Grand  
Faust - - Wilson R. Todd - - New Auditorium  
Moving Pictures - - Elite  
Marie Dale and Morey Stock Company in repertoire and vaudeville - -  
New Crawford  
The Gluck of Gluckland - - Hutchinson Musical Comedy Company - -  
Wonderland Park Theatre  
In the Bishop's Carriage - - New Auditorium  
Vaudeville - - Orpheum Theatre  
Samson and Delilah (movies) - - Elite  
Hello Bill - - New Auditorium  
Jane Eyre - - Rowland and Clifford Company with Dorothy Turner - -  
New Crawford  
Carmen - - New Auditorium  
Coming Thro' the Rye - - New Crawford  
Raffles - - New Auditorium  
Myles McCarthy and Company (vaudeville) - - Orpheum Theatre  
Geisha - - Stewart Opera Company - - New Crawford  
Ben Hur - - Klaw and Erlanger's Production - - New Crawford  
Polite Vaudeville and Moving Pictures - - Yale Theatre  
Much Ado About Nothing - - The Winter's Tale - - Charles B. Hanford  
- - New Crawford  
Under Southern Skies - - New Crawford  
Vaudeville - - Orpheum Theatre  
Brewster's Millions - - Robert Ober - - New Crawford  
Honey Moon Trail - - New Crawford  
The Burgomaster - - Ruth White and Harry Hermsen - - New Crawford  
The Mikado (movie) - - Cmeraphone  
The Eternal City - - New Auditorium  
Faust - - Olga Verne - - New Auditorium  
The Merry Widow - - New Crawford  
Lena Rivers - - New Crawford  
Isle of Spice - - New Crawford  
Vaudeville and Moving Pictures - - Yale Theatre  
The Red Mill - - New Auditorium  
The Servant in the House - - New Crawford  
The Boys of Company B - - Paul Gilmore - - New Crawford

1909

Bellows, Temple, and Allen Company (vaudeville) - - Orpheum Theatre  
The Right of Way - - Guy Standing and Theodore Roberts - - New Crawford  
ford

In Old Heidelberg - - New Auditorium  
At the Risk of His Life - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium  
The Traitor - - New Crawford  
Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - New Crawford  
The Clansman - - New Crawford  
Walls of Jericho - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium  
Lion and the Mouse - - New Crawford  
Old Arkansaw - - New Crawford  
Vaudeville - - Princess Theatre  
Quo Vadis - - New Auditorium  
The Girl from Up There - - Wonderland Park Theatre  
The Girl with the Green Eyes - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium  
The Wolf - - New Crawford  
The Woman in the Case - - New Auditorium  
The Red Mill - - New Auditorium  
Sham - - Henrietta Crosman - - Crawford  
La Traviata - - International Grand Opera Company - - Mme. Norelli  
- - New Crawford  
Mlle. Mischief - - Corrine - - New Crawford  
Pippa Passes (movie) - - Marple Theatre  
The Girls From Rectors - - New Auditorium  
Stubborn Cinderella - - Harry Stone - - New Crawford  
An American Widow - - New Crawford  
The Idler - - Wichita Stock Company - - New Crawford  
The Blue Mouse - - New Crawford  
The American Lord - - The Taming of the Shrew - - Charles Hanford - -  
New Crawford  
Henry the Eighth - - Louis James - - New Auditorium  
The Masqueraders - - New Auditorium

1910

Happy Frank and His Dog Circus - - Elite  
Mascotte - - Fra Diavolo - - Ideal Opera Company - - Orpheum Theatre  
Variety Isle - - Raymond Teale Musical Comedy Company - - New Crawford  
Brewster's Millions - - New Auditorium  
A Servant in the House - - New Auditorium  
The Old Homestead - - Rip Van Winkle - - New Auditorium  
Rose of the Rancho - - Salomy Jane - - New Auditorium  
The Great Divide - - Henry Miller's Company - - New Auditorium  
Gracie Emmett and Company - - Princess Theatre  
Wildfire - - New Crawford  
The Heart of the Hills - - Orpheum Theatre  
Isle of Spice - - New Crawford  
George Evans and His Honey Boy Minstrels with James J. Corbett as  
interlocutor - - New Auditorium  
Richard and Pringle's Famous Georgia Minstrels - - New Crawford  
The Royal Family - - Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium  
Il Trovatore and Second Act of Martha - - LeBrun Grand Opera Company  
- - New Crawford  
My Southern Rose - - Copeland Stock - - Orpheum Theatre  
The Good Ship Nancy Lee - - Princess Theatre

## CHAPTER III

### THE THEATRES

1911 - 1920

That which is different, unique, old, or time-honored often seems more fascinating than that which is familiar. Perhaps this is the reason why that which can be told concerning the theatres between 1911 and 1920 does not seem as interesting to us as what can be said about the theatres of the preceding periods. No theatre could boast the stories told about it as were told of the Toler or Turner's Hall, and no theatre was as unique as the famous old Eagle Hall. The theatres opened and closed their doors, welcomed celebrities, and presented the latest in plays. In regard to architecture and furnishings, however, they were much the same as our theatres of today.

At the beginning of the period between 1911 and 1920 there were three theatres presenting legitimate drama. They were the New Crawford, the New Auditorium, formerly the Toler, and the old Crawford, which was now referred to as the Lyceum. In 1912 the Empress changed from motion pictures and vaudeville to drama. Although in 1912 these four theatres were presenting legitimate drama, by 1918 only two of them remained - the New Crawford and the Empress.

The years between 1913 and 1918 saw the disappearance of the two most popular theatres of the preceding period, the Toler Auditorium and the Crawford. An article in an Eagle of 1916 told of the use that was then being made of the old Toler Auditorium:

"Although the old Toler Auditorium has not been used for the presentation of theatricals for several years, residents in the vicinity of the second block on North St. Francis Avenue state that an unbilled show is being presented nightly. The recent

cold weather has caused numerous idlers and nonemployed of the city to seek shelter from the cold blasts within the confines of the old structure. Nightly serenades to Morpheus are given by men sleeping wrapped up in pieces of scenery canvas lying on the stage, in the ledges and on the chairs. Snores of all descriptions from a 'barber shop tenor' to a 'graveyard bass' resound throughout the building as the actors of the unsilent drama render the 'Sawlog' overture from 'Slumberland.' The temporary cots in the building give mute evidence of the number of men who use this for a place of repose nightly."

In 1918 the old Toler Auditorium was torn down. It was the last of the old theatres and seemed to mark an end to an era of the drama. Said the Eagle:

"Tearing down the old Toler Auditorium brings up memories of pretty Jane Morgan and her pleasing opposite, Walter P. Richardson, Wichita never has had a more popular lady than Jane. Herbert Dobbins, the heavy of the same company, was also very popular. The Wolfe Stock Company was the last word in theatricals in this town for many years. Romances among that company were frequent and startling, often local people being concerned in them. Those were the days when stock came into its own."

Today, this popular Jane Morgan appears on the "Our Miss Brooks" radio program in the role of Mrs. Davis, the housekeeper.

On March 31, 1913, the old Crawford echoed the applause of the last curtain call. By the end of the following day, April 1, the theatre which "had seen most of the famous actors and actresses of America, lay a heap of brick and tangled debris," and a famous chapter of Wichita theatrical history had been concluded. The fire supposedly had been caused by defective wiring. At the time, the Wolfe Stock Company was playing an engagement of The Greyhound with Jane Morgan. Heavy losses were sustained by the company. The leading lady estimated she had lost gowns and costumes valued at \$2,000; and T. Ashton Magrabe, another actor with the company, lost \$300 worth of wigs and a wardrobe valued at \$9,000. The scenery, not insured, was estimated at \$13,000.

With the disappearance of these theatres two important names had been erased from the billboards of Wichita. The New Crawford was the most prominent of the two theatres remaining. It was located just south of the site of the old Crawford on the corner of William and Topeka. It had opened September 4, 1911, with the play, Wildfire, given by the North Brothers Stock Company. The New Crawford had been built at a cost of \$100,000 and at the time was the finest in Kansas and Oklahoma. It was the only fireproof theatre in the state and boasted a seating capacity of 1,194.

The other theatre, the Empress, was originally the Pastime. It was opened in 1912, and presented vaudeville and motion pictures. It never entirely gave up the two. However, it was not long before it engaged stock companies and for a time even boasted a stock company of its own. Around 1918 the name of the Empress was changed to the Liberty Theatre. It still continued to present plays as its main offering.

The theatres cited in the above discussion were the theatres devoted to the presentation of plays. Other theatres presented either vaudeville or motion pictures. A few, from time to time, would engage a stock company, which would play for a short time. The leading motion picture houses were: Pastime, Colonial, Elite, Marple, Yale, Novelty, Star, Holland, Palace, Regent, and Wichita. Almost all of these theatres included vaudeville shows in their entertainment offerings.

The leading vaudeville theatre was the Princess, which had been opened in 1909 under the management of L. M. Miller. The Princess was one of a chain of "Princess" theatres over the country and was known for its fine vaudeville acts. It was said that Manager Miller, upon witnessing a bad

number in his show, had often run only four acts that week rather than present a bad one. While discussing the Princess and L. M. Miller, one must not fail to mention the fact that in 1912 theatre managers throughout the Midwest, having booked their vaudeville shows from various sources, were unable to get the desired talent. A meeting was held in St. Louis, and it was decided that they would form an association of their own and book their own shows. They organized under the name of the Western Mutual Vaudeville Association with L. M. Miller of the Wichita Princess as their first president. Through this organization it was made possible to present the highest type of vaudeville shows.

It would be most negligent to omit any mention of the opening of the Forum which, in a few short years, was to become, rather unfortunately, the building in which Wichitans were to see everything from ballet to livestock shows and from Helen Hayes to Barnum and Bailey. It was opened in 1911. The grand opening included four attractions which were presented over a period of a week. The price of admission was three to five dollars, and box seats seating ten people could be purchased for fifty dollars. Included in the opening program were: a chorus of local people singing "The Children's Crusade," the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra with Leopold Stokowski conducting, the Imperial Russian Ballet and Orchestra with Anna Pavlova, and Walker Whiteside in The Melting Pot. For a few years operas and other musical programs were to be the main attractions at the Forum.

In the winter of 1918-1919 at the time of the flu epidemic, theatres were closed for several weeks. When they were allowed to reopen, a strict public health ordinance was issued. No theatres could operate more than three hours at a time, and then they were to be vacated and aired before

another performance could be given. The theatre owners objected saying that they could not operate under those conditions. Many lawsuits resulted from this ban. Motion pictures, churches, and schools were fighting the city administration. Managers of the motion picture houses felt as though the health board was discriminating against their theatres. Fortunately, most of the lawsuits were dropped, and the epidemic subsided before anything serious resulted from the suits.

Thus, we come to the end of our final discussion concerning the theatres of Wichita. Perhaps the Wichita theatres differed little from those of Des Moines, Omaha, Tulsa, or any other Midwestern city. However, the names of Eagle Hall, Garfield Hall, Turner's Hall, Toler Auditorium, the Lyceum, the Crawford, and even the old Museum belonged strictly to Wichita. These theatres, the stories in which they figured, and the information which could be found concerning them have helped to give a more complete picture of the theatrical history of Wichita.

## THE ACTORS

1911 - 1920

In the foregoing discussion the fact was stressed that by the end of 1920 the growth of the drama had been retarded. To say it had been retarded, however, is not enough; drama had actually entered a state of retrogression. By emphasizing this fact, the author does not mean to say that the years between 1911 and 1920 were unimportant years in the theatre because this would be untrue. There were many outstanding names and many outstanding productions during this time. It was still a time of stock companies, and no actor will deny the great part played by these groups in the developing and "polishing" of young actors and actresses. Many famous and to-be-famous names appeared with the stock companies.

In Wichita the theatrical picture was the same as in most towns of similar size all over the country. There were still some theatres that engaged stock companies; a few even boasted local companies; and a few engaged the stars of the day as guest performers. In regard to the stock companies, we know that the popular Wolfe Company appeared for a time, and then its name disappeared from the show ads. In its place were the North Brothers Stock Company, Keyes Stock Company, Copeland Stock Company, Alcine Players, Lewin Players, and the Select Players. Many of these groups were local companies which played throughout a season. They had taken the place of the popular Isaac Payton Comedy Company, Eunice Goodrich Company, Louis James Company, and Toler Stock Company of the years between 1891 and 1910 and the Kendalls, the Lords, the Simon Comedy Company, the Clifford Dramatic Company, and Clair Pattie Company of the years between 1872 and 1890.

The majority of the stock companies of this period were resident

companies. For the audience this meant the opportunity of seeing a new play each week, the never-ending curiosity in the private lives of the actors and actresses, and a means of escape from the routine of daily living. To the actors it meant cheap hotels and poor fare, a new show each week, a day full of rehearsals with a performance at night, and eight to ten or sometimes even fourteen shows a week; but as Gladys Hurlbut states in her book, Next Week - East Lynne, it was a chance to "shake the scenery" for the enthralled spectators "out front." It meant memories and experiences with which few would be willing to part.

Concerning the companies in Wichita during the years between 1911 and 1920, we know that the North Brothers Stock Company, not to be confused with the Ted North Players of a later date, played throughout Kansas. Most of their engagements in Wichita were at the Lyceum. In 1911 Orville Spurrer was the leading man and Genevieve Russell, Mrs. Sport North, the leading lady. The company was a popular theatrical group for several years.

In 1913 the name of the Keyes Stock Company appeared in the theatre ads. It was a permanent company which appeared at the Empress for several seasons. Sometime in the year 1917 the Lewin Company became the permanent stock company of the Empress. Its opening bill was the melodrama, Yankee Doodle Boy. This company had previously been associated with the Crawford. Other companies associated with the Crawford about this time were the Copeland Brothers Stock Company and the Alcine Players.

In 1917 the Select Players became the permanent stock company of the Liberty Theatre, the theatre which had formerly been known as the Empress. Then in 1918 the name of the stock company was changed to the Liberty Players.

There is an incident concerning the Liberty Players which old timers like to recount. During the winter of 1918-19, at the time of the flu epidemic when few shows were being presented, the manager of the Liberty Players, Howard F. McDonald, paid some of his actresses with checks and then stopped payment on the checks. The actresses accosted McDonald on the street and called a policeman to whom they showed their checks; thus McDonald was hauled into police court and made to pay the salary due the actresses. The complaints had been made by actresses whom he had dismissed from the company.

Most of the plays presented by the stock companies were fairly good, if we can believe the reviews, and all the companies seemed to be popular.

Thur far, only stock companies have been mentioned. What about the actors during this period? Were there any Bernhardts, Booths, Barretts, Whitesides, Hanfords, or Jameses? A few of these names, including Walker Whiteside and Charles B. Hanford, appeared again. In addition there were such stars as Forbes Robertson, May Robson, Maude Adams, E. H. Sothern, Julia Marlowe, Otis Skinner, Tyrone Power, Raymond Hitchcock, and Anna Held. The first of these, Forbes Robertson, came to Wichita in 1912 in The Passing of the Third Floor Back. May Robson, at that time one of America's greatest comediennes, was billed at the New Crawford that same season in A Night Out. Also in 1912 the old favorite, Charles B. Hanford, starred in Othello with R. D. McLean, Odette Taylor, and Marie Drofna.

The famous Peter Pan with the inimitable Maude Adams was welcomed by Wichitans in the year 1913. This year also saw the performance of the comedian, Raymond Hitchcock, in The Red Widow. Hitchcock had appeared earlier in 1911 in George M. Cohan's The Man Who Owns Broadway. The year

1913 seemed to be a particularly good season for big names because in that year, in addition to those already mentioned, there were Walker Whiteside in The Typhoon and Anna Held, the famous Ziegfield girl, in an "all star variety jubilee."

1914 was ushered in theatrically with the unrivaled E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe in Hamlet. Julia Marlow had lived two years in Kansas when a child, and Wichitans had not forgotten. Her sister had married Mr. Burster, manager of the old Stewart Iron Works of Wichita. During the Sothern production of Hamlet, twenty-three Fairmount College students were privileged to assist as the scene crew and to appear as lords and ladies in waiting. It was the first time that either Sothern or his wife had performed in Wichita. They were enthusiastically received and many people had to be turned away. Sothern, of course, played the melancholy prince and Julia Marlowe played Ophelia. In that same year Wichitans got their first glimpse of Otis Skinner when he appeared at the Crawford in Kismet.

Between the years 1915 and 1920, the war cast its gloomy shadow over the theatre; and, as compared with other years, the list of famous personalities was small. In 1915 Maude Adams appeared in Quality Street and Walker Whiteside appeared in The Melting Pot. 1916 saw the farewell performance of Forbes Robertson in Hamlet and The Light That Failed. 1917 welcomed back Charles B. Hanford in Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, and Macbeth with Georgiana Wilson and John E. Kellard. Also welcomed back in this year was Otis Skinner in Mister Antonio. Harry Lauder came to Wichita in 1918 on one of his many farewell tours of the United States. A Little Bit Old Fashioned starred May Robson in 1918. The fall of 1918

found few big names in the city. The end of the war was near, and hundreds of people were stricken with the flu. The only popular star was Raymond Hitchcock in Hitchy-Koo - 1918.

One wishes that more were known concerning the performances of some of the leading actors who appeared in Wichita at this time; but again, as in the preceding periods, this information was limited. The drama critic of the Eagle was prone to announce the appearance of an actor and then neglect the write-up concerning the performance.

One thing is apparent, however, and that is that the list of personalities appearing between 1911 and 1920 is not as long as the list of the preceding period. There were two reasons for this. First, of course, was the war; and, second, the movies were already beginning to attract many of the stage personalities. In addition, the movies were capturing a large part of the new talent. In contrast with the small list of stars appearing in those years, we cite the following names appearing in the movies during that time: Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Constance Talmadge, Douglas Fairbanks, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, John Barrymore, Norma Talmadge, Pauline Fredrick, Theda Bara, Lenore Ulrich, Hazel Dawn, Harold Lloyd, to quote only a few.

Because of the increased rivalry with the motion pictures, the American stage had retrogressed. It was never again, at least within the present era, to attain the greatness which it had achieved in the 90's and early 1900's.

## THE PLAYS

1911 - 1920

Back in 1911-1920 which plays were the most popular with the lovers of the art of Thespis? It is very difficult to say that during this period one type of play or theatrical was more popular than another. Melodramas were popular but not as much so as in the preceding period, and minstrels had lost very little of the appeal they had had through the years. The "better" plays of the day made their way to Wichita. Such plays as The Melting Pot, The Crisis, David Garrick, Her Great Match, Passing of the Third Floor Back, Mrs. Danes Defense, Kismet, Girl of the Golden West, Peg O'My Heart, and many others were all presented during this time. Actually the plays presented during this time were of somewhat higher type than in both preceding periods.

The extravaganza, except for those of Belasco, had disappeared; and there was now a definite trend toward musical revues, light operas, and musical comedies. This was the beginning of the era of Hammerstein, Dillingham, and Victor Herbert; and Wichitans saw such popular light operas of the day as Maytime, The Red Mill, The Chocolate Soldier, The Bohemian Girl, and Princess Pat; also the favorite musical comedies of the day - Chin-Chin, Oh, Daddy, Going Up, My Honolulu Girl, The Rainbow Girl, and many others. This was also the era of the Ziegfield Follies, and musical revues were more popular than at any time in the history of show business.

As in preceding years, every year or two saw a Shakespearian production; and in the years just before and after the war, Charles Hanford was the most popular exponent of Shakespeare.

In glancing over the long list of plays for this period, one notices the names of melodramas which had been popular back in the 80's and 90's.

They still had not completely lost their audience appeal. One wonders how many times an audience at Turner's Hall, the Crawford, or the Toler Auditorium had witnessed productions of Ten Nights in a Bar Room, The Old Homestead, The Two Orphans, East Lynne, and Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Vaudeville, which had begun in the preceding period, was making vast strides; and the people of Wichita saw some of the best in the business. Vaudeville was at its height. Many names that were later to become famous appeared in Wichita. Such names as Ben Bernie, Jack Benny, and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy were among the names appearing on the Wichita vaudeville bills. It was at the Princess that the greatest vaudeville acts were seen. In an interview with L. M. Miller, manager of the old Princess Theatre, he stated that he considered the greatest act to appear at his theatre to be the late Will Rogers; but there were also others such as Wallace Beery, Ina Claire, Charlotte Greenwood, and Marilyn Miller. Mr. Miller stated that Marilyn Miller was still a child when she appeared with her father, mother, and two sisters in an act billed as the Five Columbians. After an hour's visit with such a man as L. M. Miller, one is quite sure that "there is no business like show-business."

A few old vaudeville bills are quoted here:

Charters and Holliday Co.  
in a miniature musical  
"An Alaskan Honeymoon"  
in 3 scenes with a cast of 7

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Charles Klass and Ben Bernie - violin and accordion  
"The Fiddle Up Boys"  
Frank Ellmore - - jokes and songs  
Ballernini's Dogs

Vaudeville included everything from trained seals and one-act plays

to acrobats and sleight of hand, and Wichitans could see it as part of every week's theatrical offering.

Motion pictures had gained a stronger footing by this time and were fast becoming America's most popular form of entertainment. Some of the stars of the early motion pictures have already been mentioned. This favorite of theatrical entertainment had improved considerably over the preceding period, and it was possible to see some very excellent productions. The serial, however, had not lost its popularity; and the advertisements of those films make amusing reading. The following was quoted to the Eagle readers in 1914 concerning all that had gone before in Million Dollar Mystery:

"'In the Path of the Fast Express' - After their escape from the tramp freighter, Florence and Norton, feeling safe at last, board a train for New York. But they have reckoned without taking into account the almost diabolical cleverness and cunning of Braine. He has anticipated their every move, and on board this same train they see the Countess Olga Vroon and several other members of the Black Hundred. Norton and Florence are still hoping for a chance to escape, ignorant as they are of the Black Hundred's determination to keep Florence away from Jones at all costs, when there is a terrific crash and then oblivion. The conspirators have wrecked the fast express. Vroon is uninjured; he picks up the unconscious Florence, puts her in a buggy which he secures and takes her away to a cabin in the woods - a prisoner again. Norton finds the Countess, assists her to a farm house, and learns of Florence's recapture. He first wires Jones to send out a rescue party and then sets out to hunt Florence."

With those important facts, that which followed would be made clear. Perhaps the only difference between those serials and today's is that in those days even adults followed the serials while today the youngsters make up most of the audience.

If one stops to consider the entertainment offerings of this era, he soon realizes that the people were extremely fortunate. When at any

other time in the history of show business could a person living in the Midwest have the opportunity of seeing drama, vaudeville, musical comedy, and motion pictures as a regular part of every week's entertainment offering?

The season of 1918-1919 saw a great slump in show business because of the war and the flu epidemic. It is interesting to note that on November 11, when the Eagle's headlines screamed with "Germans Shorn of All Power," "We Have Won All We Fought For," "Fighting Ends on All Fronts," the Wichitans who were able to take in a show as part of their celebration saw only motion pictures and vaudeville. No plays were being presented in the city at that time.

The following is the show bill for November 11, 1918:

D. W. Griffith's Hearts of the World - - Crawford  
5 big vaudeville acts - - Princess  
Douglas Fairbanks in The Matrimaniac - - Novelty  
Lina Cavalieri in A Woman of Impulse and Pearl White  
in House of Hate - - Palace

Not a very big offering for such a show town, but by spring Wichita show business was on its feet once more and going where? To make Wichita known as a theatrical center or just another city with the usual number of theatres presenting the usual run of shows? Perhaps that question, even in the present day, has yet to be completely answered.

LIST OF ACTORS, ACTRESSES, AND PLAYS APPEARING IN WICHITA BETWEEN THE YEARS 1911 AND 1920. THE THEATRES IN WHICH THE PLAYS WERE PRESENTED ARE ALSO GIVEN, IF KNOWN.

1911

Mrs. Dane's Defense - - New Auditorium  
The Sign of the Cross - - Doris Hardy and Walter Richardson - -  
Wolfe Stock Company - - New Auditorium  
The Great Divide - - New Auditorium  
Hoity Toity - - Pastime  
Madame X - - New Crawford  
The Sky Pilot - - Copeland Brothers - - Orpheum Theatre  
The Two Orphans - - New Auditorium  
Ben Hur - - Forum  
The Man Who Owns Broadway - - Raymond Hitchcock - - New Crawford  
Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - New Crawford  
Lena Rivers - - Orpheum Theatre  
Ten Nights in a Bar Room - - Camille - - Orpheum Theatre  
Nell Gwynn - - Lorena Tolson - - Orpheum Theatre  
Mary Jane's Pa - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Auditorium  
Dante's Inferno - - Pastime (photo play)  
David Harum - - Sport - - North Brothers Stock Company - - Lyceum  
Theatre  
Dante's Inferno - - New Crawford  
The Crisis - - Sapho - - North Brothers Stock Company - - Lyceum  
Theatre  
Gentleman From Mississippi - - Barriers Burned Away - - Wolfe Stock  
Company  
Vaudeville - - Princess Theatre  
Honey Boy Minstrels - - New Crawford  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - The Red Rose - - Al W. Martin's - - New  
Crawford  
David Garrick - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Auditorium  
The Melting Pot - - North Brothers Stock Company - - Lyceum  
Call of the North - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Auditorium  
Her Great Match - - The Servant in the House - - Auditorium

1912

Madame Sherry - - New Crawford  
The Chocolate Soldier - - New Crawford  
The Girl, The Man and The Game - - Billy Clifford - - New Crawford  
An American Hustler - - North Brothers Stock Company - - Lyceum  
Jane Eyre - - Auditorium  
The Girl of the Golden West - - English Grand Opera Company - -  
Forum  
Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm - - New Crawford  
The Midnight Express - - Margy South Stock Company  
Miss Nobody From Starland - - New Crawford  
The Passing of the Third Floor Back - - Forbes Robertson - - New  
Crawford  
Top O' the World - - Hazel Rice - - New Crawford

Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - New Crawford  
Her Own Way - - Auditorium  
The Typhoon - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Lyceum  
The Common Way - - New Crawford  
The Silver Girl - - Lyceum  
Vaudeville and Motion Pictures - - Yale Theatre  
The Girl of the Golden West - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Lyceum  
Alias Jimmy Valentine - - Liebur Company - - New Crawford  
Nathan Hale - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Lyceum  
The Fourth Estate - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Lyceum  
The Girl Who Has Everything - - Jane Morgan and Walter Richardson - -  
Wolfe Stock Company - - Lyceum  
The Fortune Hunter - - New Crawford  
Shore Acres - - Lyceum  
A Night Out - - May Robson - - New Crawford  
The Woman - - New Crawford  
The Little Minister - - Lyceum  
Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch - - Wolfe Stock Company - - Lyceum  
Mutt and Jeff - - New Crawford  
Louisiana Lou - - La Salle Opera House Company - - New Crawford

1913

Green Stockings - - Margaret Anglin - - New Crawford  
The Interstate Amusement Company in five acts of vaudeville - -  
Empress  
Spring Maid - - New Crawford  
Othello - - with Charles B. Hanford, R. D. McLean, Odette Tyler, and  
Marie Drofna - - New Crawford  
The Old Homestead - - New Crawford  
The Bohemian Girl - - New Crawford  
Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - New Crawford  
Naughty Marietta - - Florence Webber - - Hammerstein Comic Opera  
Company - - New Crawford  
Peter Pan - - Maude Adams (Charles Frohman Production) - - New  
Crawford  
Lucia - - Tetrazzina - - Chicago Grand Opera Company - - Forum  
The Red Widow - - Raymond Hitchcock - - New Crawford  
The Typhoon - - Walker Whiteside - - New Crawford  
Anna Held in an all-star variety Jubilee - - New Crawford  
Wyoming - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
A Trip to Paris (musical farce) - - Princess Theatre  
Neil O'Brien Minstrel Company - - New Crawford  
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde - - Empress Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Robin Hood - - De Koven Opera Company - - New Crawford  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Fine Feathers - - New Crawford  
The Girl and the Prince - - Keyes Stock Company - - Princess  
Ten Nights in a Bar Room - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Old Soldiers Fiddlers - - Col. Pattee and Company - - Princess

1914

Hamlet - - E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe - - New Crawford  
In the Toils of the Devil (photo drama) - - Marple  
A Romance of Arkansas - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
What Happened to Mary - - New Crawford  
Lena Rivers - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Ben Hur - - Forum  
For Her Sake - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Little Women and Peg O' My Heart - - New Crawford  
The Adventures of Kathlyn (picture serial) - - Star  
Lavender and Old Lace - - Sarah Padden - - New Crawford  
Tennessee's Pardner - - Empress  
Kismet - - Otis Skinner - - Crawford  
Freckles (musical drama) - - Crawford  
Al G. Field Greater Minstrels - - Crawford  
East Lynne - - Elizabeth Merrill Stock Company - - Empress  
Les Miserables - - Crawford  
Jane Eyre - - Empress  
Soldiers of Fortune - - Evangeline - - Crawford  
A Good Little Devil - - Mary Pickford - - Crawford  
New England Romance - - Keyes Sisters - - Crawford  
My Official Wife - - Clara Kimball Young - - Vitagraph  
Production - - Holland Theatre  
The Trey O'Hearts (motion picture serial) - - Marple  
Million Dollar Mystery - - Princess  
5 acts of vaudeville - - 2 reels of pictures - - Empress  
The Girl From Home - - Grace Baird Company - - Empress  
San Carlo Company will present Grand Opera 3 nites - - Forum  
A Thief in the Nite - - Grace Baird - - Empress  
Vaudeville and movies - - Princess  
Lyman Howe's Travel Festival (movies) - - Crawford  
The Perils of Pauline (movie) - - Star  
The Parish Priest - - Keyes Stock Company - - Crawford  
Little Boy Blue - - Crawford  
A Gentleman From Missouri - - Tom Wise - - Holland  
Ham Tree - - Thomas Heath and James McIntyre - - Crawford  
Charles Richmond, Theodore Roberts, and Tyrone Power - - Crawford  
The Prince of Pilsen - - Edna Luke - - Crawford  
Ishmael - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Peg O' My Heart - - Crawford

1915

The Shepherd of the Hills - - Crawford  
The Calling of Dan Matthews - - Crawford  
The Morals of Marcus - - Marie Doro - - Holland  
Rip Van Winkle - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
A Gilded Fool - - Colonial Theatre  
The Girl of Eagle Ranch - - Keyes Stock Company - - Empress  
Mistress Nell (movie) - - Mary Pickford - - Holland  
The Ingrate - - North Brothers Stock Company - - Empress

Jerry - - Billie Burke - - Crawford  
The Way of the World - - Empress  
Sunnyside of Broadway - - Max Bloom - - Princess  
Quality Street - - Maude Adams - - Crawford  
The Melting Pot - - Walker Whiteside - - Empress  
Richard and Pringle Minstrels - - Crawford  
The Bohemian Girl - - Boston English Opera Company - - Crawford  
7 Keys to Baldpate - - Crawford  
Vanity Fair - - Mrs. Fiske - - Crawford  
It Pays to Advertise - - Crawford  
Daddy Long Legs - - Crawford  
Mack Hilliard Company - - Empress

1916

Just Plain Polly - - Mark Hilliard Stock Company - - Empress  
San Carlo Grand Opera - - Forum  
Hamlet and The Light That Failed - - Forbes Robertson - - Crawford  
A Little Girl in a Big City - - Crawford  
Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - Crawford  
Twin Beds - - Crawford  
The Call of the Heart - - Alcine Players - - Crawford  
Vaudeville and movies - - Princess  
Martha - - Crawford  
The Penalty - - Alcine Players - - Crawford  
Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm - - Alcine Players - - Crawford  
The Only Girl - - Crawford  
Uncle Tom's Cabin - - Alcine Players - - Crawford  
Hit the Trail Holliday - - Crawford  
The Price of Honor - - Lewin Players - - Crawford  
The Bird of Paradise - - Crawford  
Hobson's Choice - - Viola Roach - - Crawford  
Girl of His Dreams - - Lena Rivers - - Lewin Players - - Crawford  
Katinka (musical success) - - Crawford  
Princess Pat - - Crawford  
The Garden of Allah - - Liebler Company - - Crawford  
This Is the Life - - Lewin Players - - Empress

1917

Hamlet - - Merchant of Venice - - Macbeth - - John E. Kellard,  
Charles B. Hanford and Georgiana Wilson - - Crawford  
The Girl of the Underworld - - Lewin Players - - Empress  
Il Trovatore - - Boston English Opera Company - - Crawford  
Daddy Long Legs - - Crawford  
Ramona - - Crawford  
Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - Crawford  
Mister Antonio - - Charles Frohman Production - - Otis Skinner - -  
Crawford  
Grumpy - - Cyril Maude - - Crawford  
It Pays to Advertise - - Crawford  
Why Lindy Ran Away - - Lewin Players - - Empress  
Why Girls Go Wrong - - Lewin Players - - Empress

Experience - - Crawford  
Never Born - - Lewin Players - - Empress  
This Is the Life - - Gwyne & Gossett Players - - Crawford  
The Flame - - Crawford  
Dr. Joy's Sanitarium (vaudeville) - - Princess  
Turn to the Right - - Crawford  
The Select Players (permanent stock) - - Liberty  
The Misleading Lady - - The Select Players - - Liberty  
My Soldier Girl (musical) - - Crawford  
A Pair of Sixes - - Otis Oliver Players - - Crawford  
Polly of the Circus - - Otis Oliver Players - - Crawford  
7 Keys to Baldpate - - Liberty  
Graustark - - Liberty  
The Virginian - - Liberty  
Elevating a Husband - - Otis Oliver Players - - Crawford

1918

Baby Mine - - Elwin Strong Company - - Liberty  
The Wolf - - Liberty  
The Rosary - - Liberty  
Harry Lauder (farewell tour) - - Crawford  
Bird of Paradise - - Crawford  
Neil O'Brien Minstrels - - Crawford  
The Shepherd of the Hills - - Elwin Strong Company - - Liberty  
A Little Bit Old Fashioned - - May Robson - - Crawford  
The House of a Thousand Candles - - Elwin Strong Company - -  
Liberty  
Mister Antonio - - Otis Skinner - - Crawford  
The Call of the West - - Elwin Strong Company - - Liberty  
McAbe in Paris - - Honey Girls Musical Revue (permanent stock) - -  
Liberty  
Al G. Fields Greater Minstrels - - Crawford  
The Wanderer - - Crawford  
Hearts of the World - - Crawford  
The Sign of the Hun - - Liberty Players - - Liberty  
Thelma - - Liberty Players - - Liberty

1919

Diane's Atonement - - Liberty  
Way Down East - - Liberty Players - - Liberty  
Hitchy Koo - 1918 - - Raymond Hitchcock - - Crawford  
Lord and Lady Algy - - William Faversham and Maxine Elliott - -  
Crawford  
Have a Heart (musical comedy) - - Crawford  
Harvey's Greater Minstrels - - Crawford  
Freckles - - Crawford  
Bird of Paradise - - Crawford  
I'm So Happy - - Fred Bowers - - Crawford  
Uncle Sammy's Minstrels - - Crawford  
Billeted - - Margaret Anglin - - Crawford  
Sanford Players (summer stock) - - Crawford

Chin-Chin (musical comedy) - - Crawford  
Tish - - May Robson - - Crawford  
Gus Hill's Minstrels - - Crawford  
Oh, Daddy (musical comedy) - - Crawford  
Going Up (musical comedy) - - Crawford  
My Honolulu Girl (musical comedy) - - Crawford  
Oh, Lady, Lady - - Crawford  
Tea for 3 - - Crawford  
Bird of Paradise - - Crawford  
The Play That Bares a Woman's Soul - - Crawford  
Hitchey Koo - - Crawford  
Tiger Rose - - Crawford

1920

Maytime - - Crawford  
The Masquerader - - Guy Bates Post - - Crawford  
7 Days Leave - - Crawford  
Somebody's Sweetheart - - Crawford  
Washburn's Colored Minstrels - - Crawford  
Robin Hood - - Crawford  
Woman of Bronze - - Margaret Anglin - - Crawford  
The Rainbow Girl (musical comedy) - - Crawford  
A Daughter of the Sun - - Crawford  
Up in Mabel's Room - - Crawford  
O'Brien Minstrels - - Crawford  
Scandal - - Emma Bunting - - Crawford  
Madam Butterfly - - Forum  
Peck's Bad Boy  
The Chocolate Soldier - - Crawford  
Rotary Minstrels - - Crawford  
Al G. Fields Minstrels - - Crawford  
The York and King Company and The Beauty Parade - - Crawford

## SUMMARY

The years which have been discussed in this thesis represent a distinct era of the American theatre, as well as of the theatre in Wichita. For after the town had been established and travel had been made easier, the story which could have been told concerning the theatres of Wichita was a story that could have been recounted of the towns and cities of similar size throughout the country.

Because there were few kinds of entertainment other than the theatre, there was a constant stream of traveling companies coming into the town. They brought everything from cheap variety shows to the best plays excellently acted and staged. Farces, a few spectacle dramas, and melodramas such as The Banker's Daughter and East Lynne were popular during the early decades of the city's history. Some of the early touring companies played a few engagements and left; some remained for several weeks; and some played throughout the season. During the years between 1872 and 1891 there were some companies such as the Clifford Dramatic Company and the Democratic Burlesque Company which were of questionable merit; however, as there was little competition from other forms of entertainment, they were popular. During these years theatre and entertainment were almost synonymous words.

Between 1891 and 1910, because of the merit of the plays and actors presented and the great increase in the number of performances, Wichitans witnessed their greatest entertainment era. This was the period which saw the advent of the motion picture, which was soon to become a rival of the stage drama. Vaudeville appeared along with the motion picture, and the number of theatres greatly increased. During this period the

spectacle drama, exemplified in Ben Hur and The Fast Mail, was the most popular type of play. The stock companies of this period, such as the Louis James Company, the Copeland Company, and the Wolfe Stock Company, were a definite improvement over the companies of the preceding period.

Between 1910 and 1920 Americans were introduced to the radio and the automobile and the popularity of the motion pictures increased. As a result, audiences were drawn away from the theatre. The theatrical picture was the same in Wichita as in other sections of the country. At this time, a few melodramas and many comedies were presented. Vaudeville was at its height; and there was a definite trend toward operettas, musical revues, and musical comedies. This was the period of the resident stock company and there were several local companies of considerable merit. The two considered to be the most competent were the North Brothers Stock Company and the Wolfe Stock Company.

In Wichita's theatrical history three dates were especially significant. In February of 1888 the Crawford Grand was opened marking the beginning of "good theatre" in Wichita. April 6, 1906, Sarah Bernhardt appeared at the Toler Auditorium. This was a fitting climax to the greatest period of the Wichita theatres. When the old Crawford burned April 1, 1913, the downhill trend of the theatre as the most important form of dramatic entertainment had begun.

At the present time it would appear that we have briefly outlined in this thesis the last great era of the American theatre. It is too early, however, to make such a statement. The theatre has fallen upon both poor and prosperous times in the past; it has faced many rivals; and at times it has become healthy and strong. It is within reason to prophesy that

Wichita may some day repeat something of the period of the 90's and early 1900's when that "fabulous invalid," the theatre, will again thrive in her midst.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

DATE OF EDITIONS OF THE WICHITA EAGLE RECORDED ON MICROFILM. EACH  
TWO DATES LISTED REPRESENTS ONE ROLL OF MICROFILM

April 12, 1872	-	April 22, 1875
April 29, 1875	-	August 15, 1878
August 22, 1878	-	September 15, 1881
September 22, 1881	-	October 29, 1885
May 20, 1884	-	December 17, 1884
December 4, 1885	-	July 6, 1888
December 18, 1884	-	July 17, 1885
July 18, 1885	-	February 10, 1886
February 11, 1886	-	July 20, 1886
July 21, 1886	-	October 26, 1886
October 27, 1886	-	January 28, 1887
January 29, 1887	-	April 26, 1887
April 27, 1887	-	July 16, 1887
July 17, 1887	-	October 5, 1887
October 6, 1887	-	January 7, 1888
January 8, 1888	-	April 9, 1888
April 10, 1888	-	June 30, 1888
July 1, 1888	-	September 24, 1888
September 25, 1888	-	December 24, 1888
December 25, 1888	-	March 27, 1889
March 28, 1889	-	June 24, 1889
June 25, 1889	-	September 19, 1889
September 20, 1889	-	December 16, 1889
December 17, 1889	-	March 14, 1890
March 15, 1890	-	June 9, 1890
June 10, 1890	-	August 28, 1890
August 29, 1890	-	November 24, 1890
November 25, 1890	-	February 23, 1891
February 24, 1891	-	May 26, 1891
May 27, 1891	-	August 27, 1891
August 28, 1891	-	November 30, 1891
December 1, 1891	-	March 5, 1892
March 6, 1892	-	June 6, 1892
June 7, 1892	-	September 9, 1892
September 10, 1892	-	December 1, 1892
December 2, 1892	-	March 6, 1893
March 7, 1893	-	June 5, 1893
June 6, 1893	-	September 7, 1893
September 8, 1893	-	December 11, 1893
December 12, 1893	-	March 16, 1894

March 16, 1894	-	June 14, 1894	
June 15, 1894	-	September 18, 1894	
September 19, 1894	-	December 24, 1894	
December 25, 1894	-	March 29, 1895	
March 30, 1895	-	July 3, 1895	
July 4, 1895	-	October 5, 1895	
October 6, 1895	-	January 7, 1896	
January 8, 1896	-	April 10, 1896	
April 3, 1896	-	October 15, 1897)	) Weeklies
October 22, 1897	-	May 19, 1892	
December 28, 1898	-	March 27, 1899	
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December 10, 1904	-	February 9, 1905	
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December 16, 1905	-	February 16, 1906	

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October 16, 1906	-	December 14, 1908
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November 28, 1911	-	January 15, 1912
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December 24, 1912	-	February 14, 1913
February 15, 1913	-	March 31, 1913
April 1, 1913	-	May 17, 1913

October 17, 1913	-	December 6, 1913
December 7, 1913	-	January 31, 1914
February 1, 1914	-	March 28, 1914
March 29, 1914	-	May 20, 1914
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March 28, 1920	-	May 6, 1920