

# Traveling Theatre in Kansas: The James A. Lord Chicago Dramatic Company, 1869-1871

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## I. INTRODUCTION: TRAVELING THEATRE

JAMES A. Lord and Louie Lord first appeared on the Kansas scene as traveling theatre during the season of 1869-1870. The conditions which marked their coming indicated a break in theatrical traditions which were crystallizing in the area during the late 1860's. The decade 1858-1868, dominated for the most part by the resident theatre combined with the traveling star system, has been given comparatively detailed historical treatment in an earlier essay. The basis is provided in this manner for differentiating this past mode of operation from the new one, the complete traveling theatrical company of which a typical case is the Lord Chicago Dramatic Company, the subject of this essay.

On their first tour of Kansas the Lord Dramatic Company arrived by rail from Chicago through Quincy, Ill., and St. Joseph, Mo., playing in towns along the road. In Kansas the company filled engagements in four towns: Atchison, December 13-18 (six days), Leavenworth, December 20-28 (seven days), Lawrence, December 30, 1869-January 5, 1870 (six days), Topeka, January 6-19 (11 days and 12 performances), and Lawrence a second time, January 20-22, 1870 (three days). The totals were 35 plays in 33 working days. These places were close together, the most populous towns, and were served by railroads, considerations that were critical in keeping expenses in line with receipts. The prices charged were 50 cents for admission, or 65 cents for reserved seats.

Information about these theatrical events and the Lord Company are dependent solely upon the newspaper files of the towns they visited. Atchison, unfortunately for the historian, has only one surviving file, the *Champion*, filling only one dramatic critic's seat, and he was not theatre-minded. Two of Leavenworth's three daily paper files survive for the first tour and all three for the second

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tour, the *Times and Conservative*, the *Commercial*, and the *Evening Bulletin*. Three, or even two commentators rounded out perspective. At Lawrence and Topeka, two papers each afforded some contrasts, and one of the editors in each case demonstrated a more active interest than his rival. At Lawrence they were the *Kansas Daily Tribune*, and the *Republican Daily Journal*, and at Topeka the *Kansas Daily State Record*, and the *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*.

The nature of the traveling company as a self-contained organization had best be described with due regard to contrasts with the resident theatre. As guest stars were not used, the company was constructed in such a manner as to include, within the regular personnel, pairs of first and second leading players of tragedy and comedy. One pair might emphasize tragedy and the other comedy, but no discussions of the theoretical aspects of player composition of such companies have been encountered. In case of illness of either of the leading actors, that role devolved upon the second. Frequently man-and-wife teams were used, but so often the parties to these pairs were not of equal quality, and one of the team had to be content with minor roles. Always a company must have a comedian,—better, a pair, male and female. The Burts afforded a good example of a man-and-wife team in this category, but more frequently the man who was most successful in the Lord Company was not one of the team. If his quality justified, he might be cast in comedy leading roles. Lord assigned Simon to play "Rip" in "Rip Van Winkle" during the first Kansas tour. A child actor was desirable, although a small woman was used on occasion to play "Eva" or "Mary Morgan" or other child roles. Miss Mann did "Eva" in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in Leavenworth, in August, 1862. Addie Corey was with the Lords on their first tours. Plays employing child characters were peculiarly conspicuous during the 1850's and 1860's.

Other than the classical dramas, most of the plays emphasized youthful characters, and required actors accordingly. A complete company must have, however, members suitable for playing mature or elderly parts, but there was not much opportunity for older people. So strongly was the theatre's accent upon youth, that the historian must constantly ask the question: what became of older actors? Acting careers must have been quite short. Altogether, these specified types, plus a complement of minor players, made up a company of 12 to 15 persons. The fact that this kind of com-

pany traveled, meant that they met new audiences; a solution of the problem of variety which plagued resident companies.

The maintenance of family life in the traveling theatre was virtually impossible. Yet, there were examples of family units in the business. The George Burts changed from the earlier regime to the traveling troupe, and were still on the road during the 1870's. The Plunketts, likewise, were a persistent family, Charles and Carrie, with their three daughters, Annie, Blanche, and Clara.<sup>1</sup> Although a pursuit of the history of such family groups through the second generation would be important historically, such an enterprise is beyond the scope of the present essay.

The earliest examples of the traveling theatre in Kansas were the Gabay Company of 1856 about which little information has been found, and Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe, whose trail has been crossed for some two decades. During the winter of 1859 the Langrishes showed at Atchison, Leavenworth, Junction City, and Topeka, when the only transportation available was the stagecoach.<sup>2</sup> Their demonstration that it could be done only emphasized how unusual it was. During the mid-1860's, the occasional traveling show became more frequent, but not prevalent.

## II. LOUIE LORD: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The personal story of James A. and Louie Lord has been told elsewhere, except for some additional data on Mrs. Lord's early life. The Topeka *Commonwealth*, December 9, 1870, published a biographical sketch, and the only one found thus far. Part of the data given was corroborated by other sources, a fact that tends to encourage confidence in the unverified portions. According to this source she was born November 12, 1847, at LaPorte, Ind., her parents moving to Chicago when she was five:

Her ultimate intention was to become a teacher, and, having prepared herself for that profession, she was about entering on her duties, when fate threw in her path a young soldier, in the shape of J. A. Lord, who had just been sent home from Vicksburg, wounded and dying. Cupid (mischievous boy) thought that there was a fine chance for more game. He took aim, and sent his arrow through two devoted hearts. A marriage was the consequence; it took place on the 18th day of October, 1864, Dr. Patterson, of the Second Presbyterian church of Chicago, officiating. The soldier returned to his profession [theatre] and the girlish wife followed her husband, another candidate for histrionic fame. Her first appearance on the stage was in the part of "Minnie," in the play of *Rip Van Winkle*, in 1865, at the Metropolitan Theater, Indianapolis, Indiana, under the management of W. H. Riley.

1. *Wasego Tribune*, February 18, 1879.

2. *Daily Times*, Leavenworth, December 10, 1859; *Freedom's Champion*, Atchison, December 17, 1859.

If the date 1847 was correct, Louie was married at 17 and made her theatrical debut at 18. Nothing in that chronology appears particularly unusual. This account would have her entering upon a teaching career at 17, and according to another account she was already a school teacher prior to her marriage. As the dates of Lord's discharge from the Union army and the marriage were confirmed by the probate court papers filed in connection with the settlement of his estate, any questioning of her chronology would focus upon the birth date. A 17-year-old school teacher was not impossible, but relatively unusual. But accepting that date tentatively, Mrs. Lord was one month past 22 when she first appeared in Kansas; two months past 37 when Mr. Lord died, and 42 when she made her last recorded tour in Kansas. If she was actually present at Oberlin, Kan., in 1897, she was 50 years of age. This chronology would fix the difference in age between Mr. and Mrs. Lord at 18 years.

But returning to the opening of her theatrical career, 1865-1869, the *Commonwealth* sketch continued:

Mrs. Lord became a general favorite with the public and her friends; and, possessing the sacred "fire," obstacles melted like ice before the sun's rays. Many of the first "stars" of this country and England admitted that they had never met so young a person endowed with such superior talents in comedy and tragedy, possessing such pleasing vocal abilities. She seems peculiarly fitted by nature to adorn and brighten the profession she has chosen. She is a lady of great accomplishments. Her manners are easy, graceful and engaging, and she makes a fine appearance on the stage. Having appeared in the principal cities with success, she is pronounced by all to be worthy of the plaudits of the most intelligent. One of the most flattering engagements was tendered her, being no less than three hundred nights, to support "Vestvali," in London, England; but previous engagements prevented the acceptance of the offer.

In 1869, upon arriving in Kansas in November, James A. Lord was probably 40 years of age and had behind him 14 years of theatrical experience, less the term of his military service. Louie Lord had four years on the stage to her credit, a young woman just turned 22, and 18 years her husband's junior.

### III. THE FIRST TOUR OF KANSAS, 1869-1870

ATCHISON, DECEMBER 13-18, 1869

In Atchison the troupe was advertised merely as the J. A. Lord Dramatic Company. No background was provided although this was their first appearance in the area. The only introductions to the theatre-going public were the commendations of the St. Joseph, Mo., press, the *Gazette*, and the *Herald*, both of which were en-



thusiastic. Possibly the recommendations of a neighbor were the best of endorsements.

The plays presented at Atchison, in Price's Hall, were "The Hidden Hand," "She Stoops to Conquer," "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," "The Sea of Ice," "Rip Van Winkle," and "Under the Gaslight." Louie Lord took the feminine lead in each: "Capitola," "Kate Hardcastle," "May Edwards," the double role of "Louise De Lascours" and "Ogarita, the Wild Flower of Mexico," "Gretchen," and "Laura Courtland." The male lead was not featured, but was played by Mr. Lord, except in "Rip Van Winkle," when the young comedian, J. A. Simon, was billed to play the name character. Kansas theatre patrons were to hear more of him later as head of his own company for some two decades. The *Champion* pronounced him "the best comedian who has ever visited our place. . . ." After Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," the *Champion* indicated that: "Miss Louie Lord, Mr. Simon, and Mrs. J. A. Lord are especially deserving of praise. . . ." The company is rapidly growing in public favor. It is undoubtedly the best troupe that has visited our city for a long time. . . . In view of the theatre record at Atchison, as already reviewed, that superlative praise might not mean much, but at any rate, it is probably the best the *Champion* could do under the circumstances. After "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" the verdict was that the company was "growing more and more popular." The *Champion* was John A. Martin's paper, but no clue is available about who wrote the dramatic criticism, which was perfunctory. Clearly, the man responsible for it was not a drama enthusiast. If all reporters were as noncommittal comparatively little of historical reality could be recovered.<sup>3</sup>

#### LEAVENWORTH, DECEMBER 20-28, 1869

In the Kansas metropolis, Leavenworth, the *Times and Conservative* exhibited little more enthusiasm for theatre than the Atchison *Champion*, but the *Commercial* dramatic critic was in an exuberant, uninhibited mood and possessed a flamboyant vocabulary. Different also from the *Champion* was the fact that both papers recognized the coming of the Lord Chicago Dramatic Company as a resumption of theatre in Leavenworth after a long absence. The *Times and Conservative* comment was a sober statement of fact: "We are glad that our citizens again have the opportunity of seeing a good dramatic troupe." But the *Commercial* knew not such re-

3. Atchison *Daily Champion and Press*, December 12, 14-19, 1869.

straint, and opened a long Sunday editorial on "The Resurrection of the Drama":

For weary and monotonous months the Opera House has been closed, with all its former life, bustle and animation suspended. To the vitalized portion of Leavenworth, this has been a grievous deprivation, and one which they have loudly lamented. With the advent of Lord's Dramatic Troupe of Chicago, who to-morrow throw open the portals of the long deserted halls of Thession, the revival of the drama will be effected.<sup>4</sup>

Two other aspects of the advent of the Lords were newsworthy; they were completely unknown to the Missouri river elbow region, and they came from Chicago (not St. Louis, New Orleans, or Cincinnati), and by rail. The *Atchison Champion* had commented that the Lords "appeared for the first time before an Atchison audience. . . ." and quoted plaudits from the *St. Joseph Gazette* about their reception at that place. The *Times and Conservator* was no more explicit in saying: "Lord's Dramatic Troupe comes here with high recommendations from all the places they have visited. The proprietor is a gentleman of wealth and education, and his troupe is composed of artists who will give our people a pleasant surprise." But the *Commercial* was more informing. George Chaplin was with a traveling theatrical troupe at this time as a star, having made the transition in part from the resident theatre to the new mode of operation, and was supposed to have played in Leavenworth. Although operating with the newer type of organization, had Chaplin resurrected theatre in Leavenworth, the event would have represented something of a carry-over from the old regime. Under the heading "Dramatic Sensation," the *Commercial* handled the situation this wise:

The *habitués* of the theatre in Leavenworth, although disappointed in the non-fulfillment of Mr. Chaplin's engagement are nevertheless to be favored with choice dramatic entertainments throughout the coming week. On next Monday night [December 20] a company from McVicker's theatre, in Chicago, will open at the Opera House. Both in Quincy [Illinois], St. Joseph and other cities, the troupe have been favored with splendid audiences, and we hope they will be equally favored while here. A lady of fashion and wealth from Chicago, under the stage name of Louise Lord, is the star.

In the editorial "The Resurrection of the Drama" from which the opening paragraph has been quoted, the *Commercial* continued:

Hailing from McVicker's, Chicago, and playing at the intermediate cities, where they have invariably been well received with patronage of the people, and the plaudits of the press, we bespeak for them and their merits a fair reception. We commend them to the attention of our play-goers—not because

4. *Times and Conservator*, Leavenworth, December 18, 1869; *Leavenworth Daily Commercial*, December 19, 1869.

we can "speak by the card," but for the simple reason of their apparent popularity in other places, as on their route hitherward. Mr. Lord, is a gentleman of standing in Chicago, possessed of wealth, and only induced to venture in the uncertain enterprises at present attendant upon the legitimate drama, because of his wife's (Louisa Lord) passion for the same.

Parenthetically, this is not the first time a wife was held responsible for her husband's actions, and in that matter the record of the Lords would indicate that the editor was mistaken. But he should be commended upon another point inasmuch as this was the only instance found in which Louie's first name was spelled correctly—Louisa, not Louise. More important, however, is that in all the public relations of this first tour of the Lords in Kansas, the name of the city of Chicago was conspicuous. No one was permitted to forget that windy city. As early as 1857 Chicago's rise in a decade from a village of 5,000 to a city of almost 100,000 was explained as the result of her citizens' continual talk about Chicago, and railroads. They were still "blowing."

Except that "Rip Van Winkle" was omitted, and "Under the Gaslight" was given twice, the same program of plays was given in Leavenworth as in Atchison. The company was induced to stay on for a benefit to Mrs. Lord on Tuesday, December 28, when "Lady Audley's Secret" and "Rip Van Winkle" were presented as a double bill.

The *Times and Conservative* report on "The Hidden Hand" performance was perfunctory and colorless: "This company made their debut to a good house last evening, and the lively sensation of the Hidden Hand was brought out creditably." In contrast, the *Commercial* was extravagant:

The Lord Dramatic Troupe gave an initial performance at the Opera House last evening, and were received with great *eclat* by a large and stylish audience. As they came unheralded their unmistakable success can only be regarded as a testimonial to their merits. The "Hidden Hand," dramatized from Mrs. Southworth, constituted the bill of the evening, prefaced by "Captain Jinks" in character, by little Addie Corey, who was most enthusiastically received and encored. The little lady's songs will certainly render themselves popular with all ages. The Star, Miss Louie Lord, may safely felicitate herself on her triumphant *debut*. She is a beautiful blonde, possessing fine stage presence, a melodious and effective voice and unmistakable dramatic abilities of high order. To the sparkling and dashing role of "Capitola" she imparted all of the abandon and *espièglerie* that pertains to it, and was deservedly the recipient of much applause and call before the curtain. As she is certain to prove a favorite while she remains with us, we counsel the public to be in attendance to-night to see her in a congenial character—that of "Kate Hardcastle," in "She Stoops to Conquer."

Mr. Simon, as "Wool," divided the honors fairly, and created much mirthfulness. He introduced several hits at the times, which were readily recognized and applauded by the audience. Mr. Lord was a successful "Old Hurricane."

While the *Times* and *Conservative*, December 22 and 23, gave one sentence each to the plays of the preceding night and used the identical phrase "in fine style" for each, the *Commercial* man cumulated his estimates of three nights in superlatives, if not rhapsody:

Those of our citizens who have been in attendance at the Opera House during the past week, have no cause to regret the patronage they have thus extended to a very talented and meritorious dramatic company. Strangers to this community, and our theatre goers, they won much regard on their first appearance, which has steadily increased on each subsequent performance. The "fair one" with the golden locks, Louie Lord, on her *debut* fairly established herself as a favorite in her successful assumption of "Capitola," which she surpassed as "Kate Hardcastle;" and still farther perfected in the "Ticket-of-Leave Man," last evening, as "Mag Edwards."

As acceptable as the previous performances had proven, the accomplishment arrived at in the "Ticket-of-Leave-Man" far transcended the precedent plays, and fully demonstrated the talent and capacity of the company, all of whom are worthy of unqualified commendation. Louie Lord as "May Edwards," was subdued, affectionate, and natural, playing the character feelingly and effectively, and with entire satisfaction to the numerous auditory. By and by, the display of blonde hair which she afforded in "Jenny Lind" should be more frequently seen, as its beauty would greatly delight the boys, and arouse the ire of the chignon headed ladies. It almost rivaled Godiva's "rippled ringlets to her knee," or the description of Miles O'Reilly:

"It was brown with a golden gloss, Jeanette,  
It was finer than the silk of the floss, my pet;  
"Twas a beautiful mist falling down to your waist,  
"Twas a thing to be braided, and jeweled, and kissed;  
"Twas the loveliest thing in the world, my pet."

Mr. Lord, as "Bob Brerly" rendered the Yorkshire lad, with peculiar force and effect, and, together with his wife, were honored with a call before the curtain. Mr. Simon, as "Melter Moss" the jeer, surpassed all of his previous assumptions. The other ladies and gentlemen of the company are entitled to their need of praise for the painstaking evinced.

The *Commercial* was so deeply impressed by "The Sea of Ice" that the writer regretted that "they did not produce it on their opening night." Again Louie Lord received a curtain call: "She realized all of the tender, truthful and affectionate, that pertains to the character" of "Ogarita." Again: "Last night the wealth of her golden hair was exhibited to the delighted audience. Like the fair 'Rosamond' she surpasses her mates, and deserves the strongest support from her sisterhood."

On Christmas Eve the play was "Under the Gaslight":

It was finely executed by the Chicago Company last evening, Louie Lord surpassing herself in her quiet, natural effectiveness, a distinguishing qualification, immeasurably superior to the demonstrative style so much in vogue. As in "Ogarita," she as "Laura Courtland," charmed each and every one in the audience. It is in roles of this description that she accomplishes her finest effects, and as they are precisely those calculated to minister to the educated taste of Leavenworth, we counsel her persistence in them to the neglect of all "Lotta" imitations.

The littlest star of that Christmas Eve was the child actress of the company, Addie Corey:

Little "Peach blossom" created a sensation, carrying a great part of the applause in her favor. "Addie Coren" is a little wee thing, but immense in her assumption of the character. We know nothing that will so interest the children, as to let them see her in her antics tonight. [The play was being repeated.] Her singing of the "Merriest Girl that's Out," was loudly applauded and encored. She is really a prodigy. . . . Go and see them to-night—take the children.

That would have been, as the article was headed, "Gala Christmas Night," and closed the regular engagement of the company at Leavenworth, but "the *furore*" created by "this versatile and fascinating *artiste* [Louie Lord]" brought a proposal to the manager to stay over "and allow our citizens to testify to their appreciation of his Company's excellencies in a testimonial to his wife." A double-bill for Tuesday night, after two days of rest, was the result, and next day the report ran:

All the town was out last evening to testify of their appreciation of the stage gifts and graces of the accomplished *artiste* Miss Louie Lord. . . . The house was literally packed, surpassing any audience in number since Lotta entranced the town. As Lady Audley, the bewildering *blonde*, unscrupulous as lovely—she surpassed herself, and added one more laurel to her Leavenworth renown. She was equally successful in her assumption of "Gretchen," in Rip Van Winkle. . . .

Thus did theatre return to Leavenworth, though only for a memorable Christmas week, to be followed by a fairly long void.<sup>5</sup>

#### LAWRENCE, DECEMBER 30-JANUARY 5, 1870

At Lawrence the formal advertisements again announced "Lord's Chicago Dramatic Company" to the public. The list of plays presented December 30, 1869, to January 4, 1870, six nights, included the first four on the Atchison and Leavenworth lists, but introduced two others: "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." The first play came Thursday night, and the *Tribune* noted that it was the company's first appearance in Lawrence, quoting Leaven-

5. *Daily Times and Conservative*, Leavenworth, December 17-19, 21-25, 29, 1869; *Leavenworth Daily Commercial*, December 17-19, 21-25, 28, 29, 1869.

worth's appreciation. Of the first performance, the *Tribune* reported: ". . . Frazer's Hall was filled with a large and appreciative audience—much larger, in fact, than we had anticipated, for the company are almost entire strangers to us."

The editor admitted that they compared favorably with older companies in Eastern cities: "We cannot but admire Miss Louie Lord. She is perfectly natural, and combines ease with a pleasant vivacity. Her singing was not what it might have been, for she was suffering from a severe cold." The editor then proceeded to put the Leavenworth papers in their places: "Miss Lord has been on the stage for six or seven years, and is not as the Leavenworth papers made her out, a *debutante*." The New Year's Eve audience suffered from social competition. The third night, the *Tribune* concluded, was the best performance to date. Mr. Simon, the comedian, was given more space than the star. After commending generally the performance of "The-Ticket-of-Leave Man" the *Tribune* turned to "Uncle Tom's Cabin":

Last night the comedy entitled Uncle Tom's Cabin was given with equal success. After having seen Miss Louie Lord as Capitola in *The Hidden Hand*, and as May Edwards in the *Ticket-of-Leave-Man*, we are not a little surprised to see with what perfection she effected so total a transformation from one character to another. The role of Topsy is a difficult one to take, but was perfectly rendered last night. Little Addie Corey as Eva, performed her part well. The death scene was very affecting, and we saw more than one handkerchief raised to wipe away a tear.

Likewise the *Journal* pronounced "Uncle Tom's Cabin" rendered "in a very happy manner. Topsy kept the house in an uproar, and little Eva (Addie Corey) drew tears from many eyes as she affectingly played her part. This is a play which requires much of the ridiculous, and contains much that is affecting, and last evening it was well rendered. . . ."

The fifth play was "the great spectacular drama, 'The Sea of Ice.' . . . This piece is one of the specialties of the troupe, and every effort has been made to have it a success. Scenery for this play, in particular, has been brought here, and we can assure our readers that it will be put upon the stage in better shape than anything ever played here before." Afterwards, the same paper related that: "The play . . . was one requiring special and costly scenery, and we heard predictions during the day, that it would be impossible to present it in an acceptable manner, on that account. But . . . when the magnificent scene in which appears the rugged ocean of ice, opened to view, all doubts were

dispelled, and the audience, with one accord, pronounced it perfect."

The *Journal* elaborated, emphasizing first that "universal sentiment" pronounced the troupe "good actors." Second, it admitted that "Heretofore, theatrical performances have been but poorly patronized here. . . ." Having made that confession, however, the writer turned it into a compliment to the Lord company: "the people of Lawrence have no lack of appreciation of the dramatic art, as has been seen by the full houses which have greeted this troupe. The fact is, this is the first time we have ever had a company of true artists in the city." The *Tribune* confirmed the *Journal's* enthusiasm for the scenic success: It "was produced with a precision, exactness and effect which we had hardly hoped to realize. There was nothing wanting. The scene of the breaking up of the ice, the most touching and at the same time the most important part of the play, was perfect. . . ."

In announcing "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" the *Tribune* explained that: "In this piece the horrid and baleful effects of the vice of intemperance are fully pictured and brought out. It will serve as a temperance lecture, but the lessons in morals it teaches will create a deeper impression than the most talented lecturer could hope to achieve." Afterwards the only comment was to the effect that the performance was a success: "The play was brought out in the force which it requires. . . ."

The *Journal's* advance notice of the play asserted: "It has been said that this play is one of the most effective temperance arguments ever presented to the public." Afterwards—"to say that it was good, would be rendering faint praise for acting so nearly perfect. Mr. Lord as 'Joe Morgan,' drew tears from many eyes, by his life pictures of the miseries of drunkenness; and J. A. Simon, as 'Sample Switchell,' kept the house convulsed with merriment while upon the stage."

If the press reports were an accurate guide, Simon and his laughter producing qualities were really the major features of the week's theatre. Of course, the whole company was praised, but more even than the star, Simon was given personal attention. The *Journal* expressed what it deemed the general wish: "that they favor us with another visit this winter." Singular also was another Lawrence reaction; a stir among the young gentlemen to organize a Lawrence Dramatic Association. All interest were invited to address a note in care of the *Tribune* office.<sup>6</sup> Could it be possible that the young

6. *Kansas Daily Tribune*, Lawrence, December 29-31, 1869, January 1, 1870; *Republican Daily Journal*, Lawrence, December 30, 31, 1869, January 1, 3-8, 1870.

gentlemen of Lawrence did not recognize the existence and necessity of young women? If so, then Lawrence was indeed the strangest place in Kansas. The form of the announcement was significant nevertheless of the extent to which 1870 was, according to the male mind most everywhere, a man's world, and all therein belonged to the male of the species. At any rate he would have the world think so and take him at his own evaluation.

TOPEKA, JANUARY 6-19, 1870

The westernmost stop by the Lord company was Topeka. Chicago was again advertised to Kansas people, the advertisements in the *Record* reading "Lord's Dramatic Co. of Chicago," and in the *Commonwealth*, "Lord's Chicago Dramatic Company,"—"with the young and versatile actress, Louie Lord. . . ."

In Topeka an 11-day season brought 12 performances. All the plays used at Atchison, Leavenworth, and Lawrence were represented, plus "Don Caesar de Bezan" and "The Lady of Lyons." Furthermore, "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" was offered twice, once at a matinee for women and children. The appearance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" only once, while "Ten Nights" was demanded a second time for the matinee, may provide food for thought.

When "Rip Van Winkle" was performed, with Simon in the name part, the *Commonwealth's* verdict was that this is "undoubtedly his character." The writer emphasized his own qualifications for dramatic criticism in this case: he had seen Joseph Jefferson in the role, and Simon's "Rip . . ." could not have been better portrayed." One concession was made: "the only disadvantage the troupe labors under is the lack of scenery, which cannot be remedied here at the present time." Also the *Record* reported favorably on Simon and paid its compliments to the "Gretchen" of the piece: "We have never seen Mrs. Lord to better advantage than as the sorely-tried and loud-voiced wife of poor, foolish 'Rip.'"

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" came fourth in the series and without special fan fare, the *Record* merely closing its comment on the performance of "The-Ticket-of-Leave Man" to a "fair" audience, with the bare announcement: "The company promise a rare treat next Monday night, when they will bring out 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'" Afterwards the same paper reported:

The "popular drama," as it is generally called, . . . proved very popular last night. Union Hall was packed, every seat was filled, and many persons



stood up during the performance. Among the audience was a large number of children, who enjoyed the entertainment hugely. . . . Miss Louie Lord was a very amusing "Topsy," throwing a world of "nigger" into the delineation. Mr. Simon's "Marks," with his everlasting "Shake!" was well done, as is customary with Mr. Simon.

The *Commonwealth's* short comment awarded special praise to Addie Corey's "Eva" and as for the company—"Seldom have we seen acting better appreciated. . . ."

The sixth play on the list was "The excellent play of 'Ten Nights in a Bar Room'" when "little Addie sang the well known ballad, 'Father, come home,' with a pathetic tenderness and sweetness we have never heard equalled. She was loudly applauded at the close of each verse. The play from first to last gave unalloyed satisfaction." The *Commonwealth* was more restrained: "This very popular play was well rendered. . . . The house was, as usual since Lord came, full. Again Addie Corey is deserving of praise. The other characters all did well." Nothing in these comments would seem to prepare the reader for what came three days later when a matinee performance was arranged. That story belongs here to round out the theme, and to call attention by contrast with the neglect of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

In announcing the Saturday afternoon matinee, the *Record* stated that it was done by the Lord troupe "to accommodate ladies and children who cannot always conveniently attend night performances. . . . To accommodate the little folks, the admission fee will be fixed at twenty cents, and it is worth many times that to any human being, big or little, to hear Addie Corey sing 'Father Come Home.'" The *Commonwealth* was brief and to the point: "It is for the benefit of the children especially, though 'children of larger growth' will find it worth while to be present." This performance of Saturday afternoon, January 15, 1870, was noteworthy on another account. The village of Topeka was showing signs of "growing up," or emerging as a city—supposedly, this was the first matinee ever given there, and that unique fact was duly noted, by the *Commonwealth*:

The first matinee ever given in Topeka, was very fully attended yesterday. "Ten Nights in a Barroom" was even better delivered than a few evenings since. Before the last act, Mr. Lord came before the audience. His remarks were chiefly to the children. He said that he had presented the piece to thousands of people, but never to a better behaved, more appreciative audience than the one then before him. He warned the children that just as sure as they followed the practice of using intoxicating liquor, just so sure would such scenes as they had seen portrayed, be the result.

The *Record's* report likewise emphasized that:

The audience which filled Union Hall . . . was composed of the youngest lot of play-goers and theatrical critics we ever remember to have seen assembled.

The request "down in front," was quite unnecessary, for the front seats were filled with little chaps not over three feet high to begin with. The play, "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," interested the children immensely. The house was deathly still during the solemn scenes, and perfectly uproarious when anything comical was on the stage. Before the curtain rose for the last scene, Mr. Lord made a neat little speech, thanking the children for their appreciation of the play, and explaining its moral. Mr. L., as a temperance lecturer to children, was an unqualified success.

Another play in the series at Topeka warrants a short notice. "The Sea of Ice," according to the *Record* was "a decided hit." It required scenery that could not be expected to be found in the conventional assortment of stage equipment. Shipment of much of such properties was prohibitive, in spite of the recorded three railroad cars required by "The Black Crook." When Burt had launched the Union Theatre in Leavenworth, in 1858, he doubled or rather tripled as manager, actor, and scene painter. In the Addis regime in 1862, after Burt was dismissed by Templeton, O'Neil doubled as scene painter. When "The Sea of Ice" was presented for the first time in Leavenworth in October, 1866, no mention was made of how the special scenery and mechanical devices were produced. The Lord Company had been presenting "The Sea of Ice" on this tour, but only at Lawrence had the practical question of scenery been mentioned—"Scenery for the play, in particular, has been brought here. . . ."

At Topeka the newspapers presented a different story. According to the *Record*: "The scenic effects introduced were far beyond our expectations, and what makes the matter more wonderful, the scenes were painted, and the whole stage machinery gotten up here. The first scene representing the deck of the good ship Urania, was excellent. The great scene of the play, the breaking up of the ice, was infinitely better than we supposed it could possibly be made in Topeka."<sup>7</sup> The *Commonwealth* agreed in part, but limited the extent of the local production: "The scenery was excellent—the scene in the last act of the chamber was painted in this city by Harry Gray and was magnificently done."

The *Commonwealth* admitted that: "We feared that the company . . . would not sustain its reputation . . . but after

7. There was no explanation whether in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" the escape of Eliza over the breaking ice utilized the same or similar devices.

visiting the play, we must say we never saw it better performed. J. A. Simon played his part well. We admired the splendid posing of Louie Lord. That is everything in the presentation of pieces of this cast. She fil[li]ed the ear with her words, while she charmed the eye by her actions." The *Record* emphasized that: "She played throughout with great spirit and force. Her final exposure of and triumph over the villain, Del Monte, was a fine piece of acting. It is in characters like these requiring great physical and mental force; in portraying the stormier passions of the heart, that Mrs. Lord has appeared while here, to the best advantage."

The benefit for Louie Lord was set for Saturday night, January 15, and the play—"that old, yet always new and interesting play, the 'Lady of Lyons.' . . . She has appeared in almost every variety of character, and in none of them has she slighted her part. . . ." On account of an Editorial Association Ball Monday night, January 17, there was no show, but the season was to close Tuesday night with "Under the Gaslight." The public was assured that: "The celebrated 'Railroad Scene' will be produced, also the 'Pier Scene.'"

After the event the *Record* said the hall "was crammed" and that: "The audience was the largest which has attended any of the performances." The *Commonwealth* insisted that the company had kept this play back and had "presented their best, as the closing play, in this city. It is a piece most difficult to faithfully enact; yet each character was, (we might almost say), perfectly represented. We were very anxious about their success in running the engine upon the stage, but they succeeded admirably. Other troupes whom we have seen in this play have made a fizzle with the engine. . . ."

But this proved not to be their closing show. As in Lawrence they stayed over another day and revealed "Lady Audley's Secret."—"Louie Lord was a perfect success . . . as she is in all her parts." Mr. Lord made a curtain speech complimenting the town and expressing the hope of visiting Topeka again the next season. His generosity in yielding the hall to the Editorial Association Ball paid off well in public relations as the press made amply clear. After commending Lord, the *Commonwealth* entered into the record a moral verdict: "in no play that he has presented here, has there been the least thing that could offend the taste of the most fastidious of hearers." The *Record* volunteered that: "no company has ever been in Topeka that gave such universal satisfaction. The

whole company are gentlemanly and ladylike, and they try their best to instruct and amuse, and do so.<sup>8</sup>

LAWRENCE, SECOND VISIT, JANUARY 20-22, 1870

When the Lord Company returned to Lawrence January 20-22, 1870, for a second visit the same winter, both papers greeted them cordially; this time on the basis of the favorable impressions in December. The three plays featured were "Lady Audley's Secret," "Under the Gaslight," and "The Lady of Lyons." The *Tribune* had asked for "Rip Van Winkle," but that request was not honored. Notwithstanding the fact that on their opening night Lawrence was celebrating the dedication and naming of "Liberty Hall" in the Poole building, a good audience turned out.

On account of an instance of mistaken identity, the Lord Company very nearly suffered a depletion of its ranks that would have stopped their Lawrence appearances:

It seems that a house on Pennsylvania street kept as a mansion of pleasure . . . was entered in broad daylight . . . by two men and robbed. . . . A colored woman who has been doing duty as a servant in the house, saw the parties making off with the plunder, and at once sent for her husband, who was at work near by. They overtook the burglars, and recovered the property. . . . A few minutes afterwards two members of the dramatic company, who had just arrived on the Topeka train, came out of the hotel, and were at once pointed out by the colored man as the thieves. They were accordingly arrested and brought before Judge Banks for examination. . . . Meanwhile the whole troupe, and the janitor at Frazer's Hall, united in testifying that they had been constantly on duty since their arrival, at the hall, in preparing for the [evening] play. Of course they were at once discharged but not until so late an hour as almost to prevent the performance. . . .

The play "Under the Gaslight" was staged "with a force and skill which we were not prepared to see," because the effect depended so largely upon the scenery. Besides this verdict, the *Tribune* said Louie Lord "was splendid," and Mr. Simon "could hardly be surpassed." In fact, "He was decidedly the favorite of the evening." The next night the critic agreed that the presentation "placed a crown on the already brilliant achievements of the troupe. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

So far as Kansas showings were concerned, the Lord Company's excursion into Kansas appears to have been a success. Evidently the troupe was carrying the minimum number of players, if not

8. *Daily Kansas State Record*, Topeka, January 4, 7-9, 11, 16, 19, 20, 1870; *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, Topeka, January 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 16, 19, 20, 1870.

9. *Lawrence Daily Tribune*, January 20-23, 1870; *Republican Daily Journal*, Lawrence, January 18, 20, 22, 1870.

actually shorthanded. If the newspaper commentary meant anything in the way of independent audience judgment upon the merits of particular members, Mrs. Lord was easily the favorite, but Simon would seem to have rated a close rival for Mr. Lord for second place, and possibly he should be granted that distinction. Jennie Woltz was unquestionably the next in line, although her singing rather than her acting was the basis of the praise accorded her. The commentary upon other members of the troupe was too vague to indicate who could have substituted for Mrs. Lord had an emergency occurred. Depending upon the role required, the chance might have fallen to Miss Woltz, or to Mrs. Graham. The important point, however, was the fact that Mrs. Lord did not miss a night, and no performance was cancelled or even a different play substituted at the last minute on account of illness of a key member of the cast.

#### IV. INTERIM REPORT ON THEATRE, 1870; BETWEEN SEASONS

Too narrow a focus upon the Lord Dramatic Company would rob the story of perspective that could only distort the representative character of that organization, and thereby do a disservice alike to the Lords and to theatrical history in general. As Leavenworth was the only Kansas town possessing a substantial theatrical history, it must serve again as a sample of what was being done in the older river cities of the Missouri river elbow region. Following the visit of the Lords there during Christmas week, 1869, the next newspaper-advertised entertainment in the Opera House was the Skiff and Gaylord Minstrels, January 25-27, 1870. On January 29 there was an expose of the Davenport Brothers' Spiritualist frauds, followed by the Fakir of Ava in Laing Hall—legerdemain and necromancy.

The first theatre in the new year was Felix Rogers and Jenny Willmore, February 11, 12, followed by a return visit of the Skiff and Gaylor Minstrels. A vocal quartet, The Original Bakers, came February 22, and The Alleghanians, Swiss Bell Ringers, March 10, The Peep O'Day Boys, songs and dances, March 25, and Blind Tom, April 14-16. The only series of real theatre performance came between April 25 and July 2, or late spring and early summer. The Emerson Minstrels appeared August 5 and 6, the Duprey and Benedict Minstrels, September 26-28, Leavenworth's local amateur minstrels, October 4, the burnt-cork monotony being broken only by the Peak Family, Swiss Bell Ringers, October 6 and 7. But the town was not long spared another burnt-cork invasion, Johnny

Allen's Sensation Minstrels, October 17 and 18. For more than a month the Opera House was closed, then the Lord company arrived in Leavenworth, November 21, for a prolonged tour of Kansas.

The late spring and early summer interval within this miscellany had a significance all its own. The season of the year ran against the current of the new dispensation when traveling theatre returned to home bases. The heat of summer, the seasonal occupation of a predominantly agricultural area, and the preferences for outdoor recreation were not favorable for theatre. Even Leavenworth, Kansas City, and St. Joseph were not yet large enough to support year round theatre. The summer theatre was in some respects a carryover from the transition of river transportation when navigation was closed during the winter months. But the railroads made summer vacation time for the more pretentious forms of commercial entertainment. If any was offered, it was of the lighter sort.

The National Theatre was a relatively new organization which had been put together, if not for the first time, certainly in its 1870 version, at Fort Scott where it operated at McDonald Hall, January 17 to March 3, as a resident theatre without benefit of traveling stars.

The girl who emerged there as its star was May Preston who was still present when the Nationals opened in Leavenworth, April 25. She played during the first four nights. The replacement of May Preston, Friday, April 29, by Nellie Johnson, and the arrival of another new girl, Imogin Kent, both from Cincinnati theatres, just about completed an entire change of personnel after the Fort Scott run. A two-week engagement was completed at Leavenworth May 7. On the occasion of its last day but one in the city, the *Commercial* pronounced the Nationals "the best dramatic entertainment . . . for a long time past. . . . As a travelling company, the Nationals are not to be excelled. We are given to understand that Mr. Bancroft will shortly return here, he having engaged the services of Mr. G. D. Chaplin, an old time favorite of Leavenworth and one who as a Tragedian is almost unequalled."

Next, Kate Denin, a familiar name to Leavenworth theatre goers, came for two weeks, May 9-21, "with a carefully selected, full, complete and powerful DRAMATIC COMPANY." This was the Mills Dramatic Company, traveling theatre, and Kate Denin traveling star, associated only for a short engagement. The Collins Dramatic Company followed for five days, May 23-27; Satsuma's Royal Japanese Troupe came Saturday May 28, remaining through June 2, the Mills Dramatic Company filling in the last two days of the week, June 3 and 4. This time the Mills Company was without Kate

Denin or other traveling star. It was advertised as a "full" company: "The best in the West." The local critic indulged in superlatives: "[the] Troupe is the best which has ever performed in Leavenworth." Its Annie Ward was pronounced the next day as "bewitching as usual." On Saturday night a benefit was tendered her, but "that charming little actress" was taken ill during the afternoon and could not perform. Nevertheless, the public was assured the company would be back soon. Legitimate theatre was interrupted at that point for three days of Arlington's Minstrels of Chicago.

The next theatre was Leavenworth's old friends, C. W. Couldock and his daughter Eliza, supported by none other than the Mills Dramatic Company, June 20-25. The plays were the old Couldock bill of fare—"Willow Copse," "Chimney Corner," "Louis XI," "The Jew of Frankfort," "The Porter's Knot," and a second showing of "Chimney Corner." The climax of the summer season, however, was the last: Post and Rogers' Dramatic "Star" Combination, with G. D. Chaplin and Louise Sylvester, supported by "a full and efficient Company from De Bar's Opera House, St. Louis." The coming of Leavenworth's theatrical hero whom many had come to appreciate fully only after he was gone, had been announced by the *Commercial*, June 3:

George D. Chaplin, a man who has done more for the legitimate drama in Leavenworth than any other man who ever honored us with a long or short stay, is positively to appear at the Opera House, on the 27th inst., remaining one week. He will receive an ovation that will convince the people who allowed the drama to leave us, that they in so doing lost more than they appreciated. Chaplin will have a warm welcome from his host of friends.

This was the third announcement found which assured the public that Chaplin would visit Leavenworth. On April 29, the *Times and Conservative* had reported his movements:

George Chaplin is about closing his engagement with DeBar, at St. Louis, and is going to Boston to take the management of Selwyn's Theatre. He is now playing a star engagement at Chicago. He will be at liberty, the last of May, to come here. He has hosts of friends here who are more the less true because he had bad luck here. We should be greatly pleased to see George Chaplin once more on the Leavenworth boards.

The above story is not easy to follow or unravel except that Chaplin would be at liberty to come to Leavenworth the last of May. It was about a week later that Bancroft, manager of the Nationals had given assurance that Chaplin would appear as star with his organization. Now on June 3 he was announced again, without the sup-

porting company being named, but when the time came, June 27, he was with the Post & Rogers Company.

Again, on the day before Chaplin would open, the *Commercial* paid tribute:

As an artist of the first class, he is well known to the society and the public of this place who have been delighted before by his dramatic talent. Leavenworth owes much to Chaplin, who has given his time in by gone years to feeding the taste for the higher order of true art. Let Chaplin on this occasion, call forth the fashion and sensibility of the city.

After the first performance the *Commercial* reported upon the "old time favorite" in "Enoch Arden"—"he achieved the success which his talent always commands . . .," supported by Louise Sylvester, "one of the most charming of actresses." In spite of Monday's heat maximum of 96°, "a fashionable audience . . . gave these artists a worthy greeting. . . ." Again the writer acknowledged Leavenworth's debt to Chaplin and for a reversal of audience response insisted that: "Owing to the continued warm weather and the presence of Mr. Chaplin at the Opera House," La Rue's Minstrels at Laing's Hall had a smaller attendance than on the preceding Saturday.

As was so frequently the case, the *Bulletin* provided a variant in response:

We shall never forgive Tennyson for his concluding plot in the great epic of "Enoch Arden." The idea of Enoch returning . . . only to find his beautiful wife and his children gobbled by Philip Ray, and to go dead over the sight, is too sad. The whole-souled reality which G. E. [D.] Chaplin threw into the character of "Enoch Arden" last evening will not soon be forgotten. . . . The applause was so great at the conclusion, that he was called back to the stage, where he made an impromptu address, which was cheered like that of [Patrick] Henry before the Virginia delegates.

This was Louise Sylvester's first appearance before a Leavenworth audience, but she did so well the *Bulletin* critic concluded her success was assured. Also, in the afterpiece, she played the title role: "Nan, the Good-for-Nothing," which did something to the dramatic critic: "Miss Sylvester . . . leaves nothing more to be imagined or desired."

On Tuesday night, in the "Lorelie," the *Commercial* reported the audience of "a very fashionable description," which was evidently a euphemism for a disappointingly small house: "George Chaplin seldom appeared to a better advantage. . . . Miss Sylvester is also a charming performer, who wins the hearts of her audience by her natural grace and cultivated talent." Wednesday night Chaplin played his favorite role "Elliott Gray" in "Rosedale," and in spite



of the heat "pleased" his friends, while Miss Sylvester, "acquitted herself admirably . . . but they should have had a larger audience." The *Bulletin* was more outspoken: Chaplin's "broad nobility of conduct instructs everyone, because he goes right to every heart. His imposing stature, with head thrown back, is the envy of such as have an eye for form." And no one could justly argue that the *Bulletin's* critic was lacking in "an eye for form," but the form was feminine:

She is not only about the comeliest daughter of Eve whom we have ever clapped eyes upon, but is likewise one of the most gifted.—Young, brilliant and ambitious, may her star rise very high. Her features are finely cut, showing a swift thinker and a piercing observer. Like Absalom in the king's gate, she steals the hearts of all who approach. Rarely does nature endow one with such a union of physical and mental qualities. Every feature is full, and the head is moulded with queenly beauty—hinting a possible foundation for that "cube of human faculty" of which Hugo has written! The stage can nowhere show a finer ornament. May the hemlock never spring in the furrows of her life. Such a queenly one has a mission which, if cut off, leaves all dark.

Right—the *Bulletin* boy was in a bad way, and Louise Sylvester had appeared only three nights, halfway through the week. Thursday night the play was "Michael Erle, or the Maniac's Oath," which was greeted by "a good audience, . . ." Some scenes were said to have been enacted with good effect: "Let every one see Chaplin before he goes. They may not see such another actor for a long time." The thermometers in the city had varied from 102° to 106° during the day. On Friday, the play was "Our American Cousin," and the burlesque "Pocahontas." In the title role of the latter Louise Sylvester was the focus of the *Bulletin's* attention: Her fine, original sense of love's ludicrous phases was well given. Her singing, dancing, and loving were polished with the choicest burlesque. She drew enough applause to keep her heart beating for a month. Admiration followed the actress everywhere, like the eyes of a servant upon his master.

On Saturday night came Louise Sylvester's benefit, with the largest audience of the week. But prior to the event, the *Bulletin* rhapsodized again (and Webster's *Dictionary* defines rhapsody as: "A disconnected series of sentences or statements composed under excitement," "confused," or "an estatic or highly emotional utterance. . . ."):

It is courtesy which people owe the fairest of their kind; for what is life, if it is not sometimes cheered with similes which fulfill the ideality of every mind? The stage may not, indeed, be the best sphere for such youthful endowments as Louise's. Yet it throws some ray on every life-path; while many of the daughters of fashion, who live in endless plenty, give no blessing on life's reality and paint no model for its fulfillment.

The critic of the *Bulletin* had an eye only for Louise: "The smartest, prettiest, and most 'killing' gal of the west is Lousie [sic]." According to him, her benefit drew the largest audience of the season. The *Times* had been most forthright in recording small audiences. The ovation predicted for Chaplin did not materialize. If anything, the response was the reverse. No doubt there were still many people in Leavenworth who had known and admired him when he had been playing at the old Union Theatre. But he had left Leavenworth three years before, the turnover of population had been extensive, and Chaplin was history. As of the summer of 1870, more were absorbed in the living present, especially such as the *Bulletin's* dramatic critic when the live present was embodied in the form of Louise Sylvester. He continued to follow her through press reports to Topeka and elsewhere: "Louise Sylvester is receiving the most flattering comments ever before given to any woman by the Kansas press."

Who was this woman? The Topeka *Commonwealth* secured the material for a biographical sketch, according to which she was born in Albany, N. Y., March 29, 1851, her professional career beginning in Pittsburgh in 1864 as a child actress in such roles as "Eva" in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Mary Morgan" in "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." From these roles she found a place in the ballet and finally her chance came on two occasions to take leading roles in emergencies. From Pittsburgh, her path led to Albany, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and then during the summer of 1869, Topeka, followed by a winter in Chicago until Christmas and then De Bar's Theatre in St. Louis from which she came to Kansas again.

Notably, she had never played in New York, and she entered the Mississippi Valley by way of New Orleans, her season at Chicago being only a brief side trip in the otherwise familiar pattern which led from New Orleans along the river towns to Kansas through the St. Louis gateway. Thus, if the birth date assigned her was real, not a publicity date, she was 19 years of age with a professional career since she was "knee high to a trundle bed."<sup>10</sup> This is the Louise Sylvester whom Frank Montgomery had remembered along with Louie Lord, so vividly in 1903.

Several important conclusions are evident from this interim report on Leavenworth theatre during 1870. The prevailing form of commercial entertainment in Leavenworth's principal playhouse

10. The Chaplin-Sylvester episode is covered by the Leavenworth *Daily Commercial*, June 3, 17, 26, 28, 30, July 1, 3, 1870; *Daily Bulletin*, June 16, 28, 30, July 2, 5, 13 1870; *Times and Conservative* April 29, June 26, 28-30, July 1, 2, 1870. *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, Topeka, July 9, 1870.

was Negro (burnt-cork) Minstrels; and similar shows occupied Laing's Hall, the second place of amusement. The miscellany of other entertainment was not impressive in quality. The legitimate theatre was still closely allied with the forms and traditions of the past era of resident theatre and river navigation with its river and Southern connections.

The transition to traveling theatre was slow indeed in being completed, although railroads had already displaced steamboats for most passenger travel. Summer theatre was only one evidence of this fact. The replacements in the National Theatre were from Cincinnati. Kate Denin, Couldock, Chaplin, were all of the resident theatre—star tradition associated with Leavenworth history in that old form.

These traveling stars were dependent no longer upon resident theatres of the several cities visited for support, but associated themselves with traveling companies. In each of these cases just cited, the stars were evidently not integral members of the companies with whom they were playing, but appeared essentially as guest stars of traveling companies. The advertisements read: "supported by a full and complete company," or a variant of such wording. That significant separateness was emphasized in the cases of Kate Denin, Couldock, and Chaplin. The Mills Company had visited Leavenworth May 9-14 with Kate Denin as star, June 3 and 4 as a full traveling company, without a star, but returned June 20 in association with Couldock and daughter as stars. Chaplin had been referred to in April as having been engaged by the National Theatre, but came with the Post & Rogers "Star" combination supported by "a full and efficient Company from De Bar's Opera House, St. Louis."

The traveling company was still referred to slightly by the *Commercial*: "As a traveling company, the Nationals are not to be excelled." The full acceptance of the traveling company, a self-contained organization, as possessing status and complete professional respectability had not yet been achieved in 1870. Possibly, in a sense, it might be said that such a condition was never realized because the velocity of change introduced too soon successive innovations that perpetuated its doubtful position. But in the course of transitions, the resident theatre and the star systems were eliminated altogether in favor of something different; not a single new form but several innovations.

## V. THE SECOND TOUR OF KANSAS, 1870-1871

## INTRODUCTION: ITINERARY, PLAYS PRESENTED AND FREQUENCY

The Lord Dramatic Company made its second excursion into Kansas during the winter of 1870-1871, beginning at Leavenworth, November 21, and ending at Atchison, February 25, a few days in excess of three months of continuous performances, or 80 show days with 81 shows performed. This was much longer than the preceding season of 33 show days, and included six towns instead of four, Emporia and Junction City being added to the circuit. A route sheet for the season would appear thus:

Leavenworth, November 21-26, 1870	6 days
Lawrence, November 28-December 3	6 days
Topeka, December 5-7, 9, 10	5 days
Atchison, December 12-17, 19, 20, 22-24	11 days
Leavenworth, December 26-January 7, 1871	12 days
Topeka, January 9-21	12 days
Emporia, January 23-28	6 days
Junction City, January 31-February 4	5 days
Topeka, February 6-11	6 days
Lawrence, February 13-16, 18	5 days
Leavenworth, February 20-22	3 days
Atchison, February 23-25	3 days

Leavenworth and Topeka, the largest cities, were visited three times each, Atchison and Lawrence, twice each, and Emporia and Junction City, once each. Ranked in the number of shows performed, the order was: Topeka 24, Leavenworth 21, Atchison 14, Lawrence 11, Emporia 6, and Junction City 5.

In the 1870-1871 season, 21 different plays were presented not counting the after pieces, while in the preceding season only 11 were used. Of the plays on the second season's schedule, 15 were new to their Kansas production, six having been given the preceding year. For the two seasons together, a total of 26 different major plays were staged.

The plays produced for the two seasons appear in alphabetical order in the following tables, followed by their frequency numbers. Emporia and Junction City are omitted from the enumerations because of incompleteness of data. Thus frequency numbers represent the same four large towns for both seasons.

## PLAYS PRESENTED 1869-70

## Frequency

Don Caesar de Bezan	1
The Hidden Hand	4
Lady Audley's Secret	3
The Lady of Lyons	2
Rip Van Winkle	3

## PLAYS PRESENTED 1869-70—Continued

	<i>Frequency</i>
The Sea of Ice.....	4
She Stoops to Conquer.....	4
Ten Nights in a Bar Room.....	3
The Ticket-of-Leave Man.....	4
Uncle Tom's Cabin.....	2
Under the Gaslight.....	5

35 performances in 53 days

PLAYS PRESENTED 1870-1871 (OMITTING EMPORIA AND JUNCTION CITY),  
EXCLUDING THOSE REPEATED FROM PRECEDING SEASON

	<i>Frequency</i>
The Child Stealer.....	2
Dora.....	6
Fanchion, the Cricket.....	3
Frou Frou.....	5
The Hunchback.....	4
Ingomar.....	4
Ireland as It Is.....	4
Marco, the Marble Heart.....	3
The Mormons.....	5
The Octoroon.....	4
Oliver Twist.....	4
Othello.....	1
Our American Cousin.....	4
Richard III.....	4
The Serious Family.....	3

PLAYS PRESENTED 1870-1871 (OMITTING EMPORIA AND JUNCTION CITY),  
REPEATED FROM THE PRECEDING SEASON

	<i>Frequency</i>
Don Caesar de Bezan.....	1
The Sea of Ice.....	2
Ten Nights in a Bar Room.....	3
The Ticket-of-Leave Man.....	1
Uncle Tom's Cabin.....	3
Under the Gaslight.....	4

For the first season, the plays, "Under the Gaslight," and for the second season, "Dora," "Frou Frou," and "The Mormons" were leaders in frequency of production. That this criterion is not necessarily an accurate index of the impact of a play upon the public would seem evident from the review already presented of the first season. The press reactions to the several plays during the second season would seem to confirm that conclusion. For the first season, the impression given by the press reports would indicate "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" was at least an equal to, if not entitled to priority over, "Under the Gaslight." As will be seen later, opinion on the second season was more widely divided. The score of four for so many plays both seasons reflected little more than the fact that these were the company's choice of the fare for each season and these plays were staged unless there were

special local factors that suggested a variation. The Leavenworth *Bulletin*, November 21, 1870, noted particularly the change the second season and made the introduction of new plays a point of special commendation.

During the first time around the circuit of four major Kansas towns, the four plays presented in all places were "Dora," "Richard III," "Frou Frou," and "The Mormons." "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and "Our American Cousin" made up the remainder of the week's bill of six plays which inaugurated the Kansas tour. At Lawrence, "Ireland as It Is" was substituted for "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Why in Lawrence, with its antislavery-abolition tradition, an Irish piece was substituted for the old Negro classic was not explained, nor commented upon, but Mr. Lord usually had sound reasons for his planning. At Topeka the Lawrence bill was continued except "Our American Cousin" was dropped out because of a five-night week. The Atchison engagement was a two-week run, the first week using the Topeka five and "The Serious Family." "Uncle Tom's Cabin" found its place in the second week's bill.

Topeka saw "Uncle Tom's Cabin" on the second round of the circuit. "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," which had been quite popular apparently the previous year, was not introduced until the third round (second for Lawrence and Atchison) when the basic bill had been "Ingomar," "The Hunchback," and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." Because Topeka and Lawrence had six-day runs, three other pieces were added to this solid core of three. Thus it was the second round, or second week, in the case of Atchison, where the greatest variability of offerings occurred. Lord was wary of repeat performances, even on different rounds of the circuit, usually declining even when urged by his patrons. The few times he relented, the house was small. The theatre-going public was apparently not large enough to draw a second full house of new listeners, and two few second-nighters actually attended. A new play would draw good houses.

Upon first appearance in Kansas, during the season 1869-1870, the press had recognized the untried character of the company—they must be taken upon recommendation until they had proved themselves. This second the Lord company of some 15 persons, some old and some new, was greeted in the four towns of their previous visit as old friends.<sup>11</sup>

11. Leavenworth *Daily Times*, November 20; Leavenworth *Daily Commerce*, November 20; Leavenworth *Bulletin*, November 21, 1870; Lawrence *Republican Daily Journal*, November 26; Kansas *Daily Tribune*, November 26, 1870; Topeka *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*, December 6; *Daily Kansas State Record*, December 6, 1870; Atchison *Daily Champion & Press*, December 10, 1870.

(Part Two, the Final Installment of This Article, Will Appear in the Winter, 1957, Issue.)