Theatre in Kansas, 1858-1868: Background
For the Coming of the Lord Dramatic Company to Kansas, 1869—Concluded

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VIII. ATCHISON THEATRE

For the years prior to 1869 Atchison’s theatrical history was remarkably simple and brief. During the 1850’s and early 1860’s halls were available for small gatherings, Holthaus Hall being the principal one. On September 22, 1860, the Freedom’s Champion welcomed the near completion of Pomeroy’s Hall on the corner of Kansas avenue and Fourth street. “We have long needed such a Hall in Atchison. . . .” The specifications given were 45 by 86 feet with an 18-foot ceiling, and fitted with a stage. The Turnverein’s new Turner Hall at the corner of Kansas avenue and Sixth streets was opened in December, 1867. It was a brick structure 40 by 70 feet, two stories. The gymnasium in the rear was 40 by 40 feet, with a 19-foot ceiling, and front, facing the avenue, two club rooms, 30 by 20 feet and 22 and 20 feet. The main entrance was from Kansas avenue to the public hall on the second floor, 40 by 70 by 16 feet, which was not completed until the spring of 1868.42

The major focus of Atchison’s theatrical history was Price Hall, and about that structure tradition became much confused. In 1859 John M. Price, lawyer, began construction on a three-story brick building on the corner of Fourth and Main streets. The ground floor was designed for stores, the second floor for professional offices, and the third floor for a public hall with an 18-foot ceiling. The dimensions of the building were given as 45 by 100 feet. It was begun in June, 1859, as a two-story structure but March 3, 1860, the Champion reported the three-story building nearly completed. Periodically, a similar report appeared about imminent completion, but not until October 6, 1860, did the Champion record that Price had moved his law office into his own building. On December 1 the ground floor was reported occupied. The reason for the delay in completion appeared in the Champion, July 28, 1860, when the builders were said no longer to fear that it would collapse. When war came in

42. Atchison Daily Champion, December 19, 1867.

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April, 1861, and Atchison was training its first volunteer regiment, two companies were assigned to Price’s Hall for drill—Companies A and C.43

Contrary to Atchison’s traditions, no evidence has been found that the Price Hall was finished as a theatre.44 Structural weakness did persist and the building was virtually torn down, the reconstruction being completed in May, 1865, celebrated by a concert and grand ball, May 16. In its new form the Price building was 70 by 100 feet, two stories, except the original portion, 45 by 100 feet, which was three stories, the third story again being a public hall with a stage 20 by 45 feet, two green rooms, and a balcony 10 by 45 feet. But the public hall was not equipped for theatrical performances. That the floor was level and the seats movable was emphasized by the announcement for the opening festivities. After the concert by Paddy Walsh, vocalist, with patriotic and sentimental songs and dances, the floor was cleared for the ball.45

The conversion of the Price Hall for theatrical production took place in 1866. On January 31, the Champion reported that:

...... Price ...... is now engaged in fitting up his splendid hall with scenery, drop curtain, &c., preparatory to the advent here of one of the finest theatrical companies in the West. He has leased his Hall to an experienced manager, and as soon as it can be prepared, a Theatre will be opened in our city, and kept up permanently. This news will be received with satisfaction by our people. ......

The theatrical company in question was that of C. H. Irving, then of St. Joseph. He was in Atchison to inspect the preparations the second week in February, and in addition to the scenery already constructed, he would bring “a large supply with him.” The work was being done by James C. Breslaw of his company, a scenic artist who had “already completed two elegantly designed and finely finished drop curtains, and is now engaged in painting the wings, side scenes, etc.” The carpenter work was being done by a local workman.

On February 14, 1866, the big day arrived:

We are glad to announce that the theatrical company, under the management of C. H. Irving, for which Price’s Hall has been fitted up, has arrived and will inaugurate the season by a performance to-night. The company is not a second-class traveling troupe, but a large combination of talent and ability, which has been playing with great success during the fall and winter at St. Joseph, Mo., where none but first class merit can attain the position which has been .... awarded them.

43. Freedom’s Champion, Atchison, June 11, October 8, 1859, March 3, April 28, July 28, August 4, October 6, December 1, 1860, May 11, 15, 1861.
44. Atchison Daily Champion, September 27, 1883, editorial and description of Price’s New Opera House; Daily Globe, July 16, 1894.
45. Atchison Daily Champion, April 14, May 12, 14, 1865.
Note should be taken of the slighting reference made to traveling troupes—in other words, the innovation which the conventional tradition about theatre condemned as inferior to the resident theatre, the established standard by which excellence was supposed to be measured. The first bill was Tobin’s “great drama,” “The Honey Moon,” and the comedy, “The Spectre Bridegroom.” But the vicissitudes of travel intervened, a telegram announced that on account of stormy weather train connections had been missed and the show would be given the next night, sure. This was Thursday, and the plays for the remainder of the week were “Lucretia Borgia,” and “Camille.” The following week the plays were “The Ticket-of-Leave Man,” “Othello,” “Ireland as It Is,” “Love’s Sacrifice,” “Marco, the Marble Heart,” and “Macbeth.” The leading players were Francis I. Frayne, and Mrs. J. C. (Melissa) Breslaw. The season closed with the show of March 10. On March 8, the night of Frayne’s benefit, the play was “Romeo and Juliet,” Melissa Breslaw appearing as Juliet to Frayne’s Romeo. The audience was reported to have been the largest of the season, over 600 persons.46

The Irving Company’s season of three weeks and three days was not exactly permanent theatre. Apparently the company broke up then or soon afterwards, but was reorganized with some new talent during the following month, under Frayne and Breslaw. The announcement of the new venture appeared in the Champion, March 20, saying that part of the actors had been engaged, and Frayne was going to St. Louis to obtain others. The opening of “The Atchison Theatre,” first announced for Tuesday, April 10, occurred April 11, 1866. The roster of the company, nearly complete and containing 17 names, was published in the theatre advertisement for April 10, amended later. The leading parts were still in the hands of Frayne and Melissa Breslaw. George and Agnes Burt were present for comedy, and, but not least in importance, there was Eliza Logan Burt at the ripe age of five. Another acquaintance of Leavenworth days was Charles F. Walters, but, of course, without Clara.

The management promised to study the tastes of the people of Atchison and to be governed accordingly in the selection of plays—they hoped “to instruct, amuse and entertain. . . .” The bills were the same as those offered by the preceding company and by the Leavenworth Theatre. C. W. Cockland and Eliza starred for one week, April 23-28. The season closed June 1. Still, the thinking about theatre was in the accepted terms—a home institution

46. Ibid., January 31, February 8, 11, 14, to March 10, 1866.
. . . firmly established." Atchison did not know it, but all that
was passed and already a new order was imminent.

But whatever the fate of the institutional forms, the personal
equation was still present. The Champion summarized the first
three performances of April 11-13, 1866, at one sitting, reporting
for the first "a large and appreciative audience." The players
named were given perfunctory approval, except one who really
touched a responsive chord in the reporter: "Geo. Burt . . .
convulsed the audience with laughter, and won from it loud and
enthusiastic applause. Burt is an old Kansas favorite, and will be
one wherever he goes. . . . Altogether the performance was a
brilliant success." The second play, "The Stranger," was passed over
briefly, and the third, "Othello," likewise, except for notice of "The
first appearance of the Infant Actress and Vocalist, Eliza Logan
Burt, Only Five Years Old, in her great Comic Song in character,
'Get Out of Mexico.'"

On April 30, 1866, came "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and "for the first
time in this city." This seems almost incredible—such isolation of
Atchison from Uncle Tomism! Afterwards, the Champion reported
"the largest and most appreciative audience ever assembled in this
city." Accordingly, the show was repeated May 1, but only to "a
very fair audience." Was Atchison's Uncle Tomism exhausted in
one evening? Probably the answer lies in another direction, and
that enthusiasm could be satisfied to even better advantage with
plays of more general interest. Mrs. Burt, as Topsy, won approval:
"But what shall we say of that child-wonder, little Eliza Logan
Burt, in her character of Eva? She is truly an infant prodigy. Her
song exhibited fine musical genius and her acting would have done
credit to anyone of thrice her age and experience. For a child of
five years she is truly wonderful, and will some day make a star in
the profession." So much for her "Eva" performance. The point
was that she had her place on the bill quite regularly for a song,
and apparently her appearance meant an ovation, whatever the
song. The young-unattached-male dominated audience (wishfully
dreaming) could not resist such baby-girl charms.

On May 29, 1866, just prior to the close of the season, George
Burt, stage manager of the Atchison Theatre, had a benefit, the
play, "the fine moral drama of 'Ten Nights in a Bar Room.' . . .
Mr. Burt is deservedly popular as a versatile, talented and correct
actor. . . . As a comedian he has few equals in the Western

47. Ibid., March 20, April 5, 10, to June 1, 1866.
country." The newspaper commentary continued: "The play . . . is justly regarded as one of the best moral dramas of the time. Its characters are lifelike, and as a lesson to the young, it is without parallel." 48

The next theatrical season, 1866-1867, Price's Hall did not have a resident theatre, or a pretense of one, but was used by a varied succession of entertainers. In May Burt and Johnson's (or Johnson and Burt) Theatrical Company engaged the hall for two weeks, coming from Lawrence, Kansas City, and other places. They missed connections to play Monday, May 6, but met their engagement the following night in "The Little Barefoot." Eliza Logan Burt took part in both the feature and the after piece and sang her favorite song: "I'm Ninety-Five." Clara Burt sang a popular ballad. The Champion summed up: "Burt and his family are well known to our people as talented and versatile performers. . . ." On Saturday night, May 11, "the wonderful child-actress, Eliza Logan Burt, has a benefit, and the splendid sensational drama of the 'Rag Picker of Paris' will be produced. . . ." This was to have been the final performance, but response to the wishes of Atchison people induced them to stay an extra day, Monday, as a benefit for Nellie Grover, the leading lady. The plays were "The Taming of the Shrew," and the "Little Sentinel"—"This is the most attractive bill ever presented to the theatre goers of Atchison. . . ."

But the Champion gave the impression that the theatre-going public would not be satisfied. On Tuesday the company consented to present "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Of course, "The child actress, Eliza Logan Burt, appears as Eva, in which character she stands unrivaled." The company was so short handed that both Burt and Johnson played dual roles, and little Clara Burt was cast as Eliza Harris. Clara must have been somewhat older than Eliza Logan, but no clue to her exact age has been found. Wednesday night, May 15, the solicitation of the citizens again prevailed, and the play was "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." The winter of 1868-1869 was similarly irregular, but in March, 1869, Melissa Breslaw and a theatrical company played there several nights. The transition from the attempt of 1866 at a resident theatre as a permanent institution to the complete traveling troupe was in the making. In a sense, of course, it had already arrived, but such companies as presented themselves were few and far between. Varied types of entertainment were available, theatre was only occasional.

48. Ibid., May 29, 1866.
IX. LAWRENCE AND TOPEKA THEATRE

Early Lawrence had a succession of halls available for public gatherings, but no place that could properly be called a theatre. Prior to the Quantrill raid, of August 21, 1863, Miller Hall, over a business building, had been the principal meeting place. Miller rebuilt during the winter of 1863-1864, the hall being pressed into service even before the structure was finished.49 Frazer’s Hall succeeded it for public entertainments, and was located on Massachusetts street next door to the Eldridge Hotel which occupied the southwest corner of Massachusetts and Seventh (Winthrop) streets. The hall was the third floor of a business building. An Alexander Gardner photograph of Massachusetts street looking south from this intersection, taken in 1867 and reproduced in The Kansas Historical Quarterly, Summer, 1954, shows this building. The name “Frazer Hall” appeared clearly in the original photograph but lost out in the reproduction. The Lord Dramatic Company played in this hall in December, 1869, and January, 1870, but on the occasion of the second of these visits Lawrence was celebrating the dedication of a new public meeting place, Liberty Hall, in Poole’s building over a pork-packing establishment and retail butcher shop, basement and first floor, at the northeast corner of Massachusetts and Seventh streets, or diagonally across from the Eldridge Hotel.50 The apparent affinity of a place of public entertainment and a saloon may be easier to explain than association of such gathering places with pork packing. Leavenworth’s old Stockton building had had a pork-packing firm in the basement, and a saloon on the ground floor, the theatre occupying the second floor. In Lawrence, the pork business, but not the saloon business, was in the same building under the principal public hall. To be sure, Lawrence had a generous supply of saloons, the distinction being made here pertained merely to location. In 1859 three brewers and 14 saloon keepers were on the list of registered voters in Lawrence, then a town of 1,600 population, while in 1870 there were 25 saloons in a town of 8,000.51

Lawrence had no resident dramatic company. Its population in 1870 was only a few more than Leavenworth’s in 1860. Topeka’s mushroom growth from a village of less than 800 in 1860 to a town of nearly 6,000 in 1870 had not yet provided it with a theatre build-

49. Kansas Daily Tribune, Lawrence, January 17, 1864.
50. Lawrence Daily Tribune, January 21, 1870; Republican Daily Journal, Lawrence, December 31, 1869, January 16, 19, 30, 1870.
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...ing or a resident dramatic company. Even the largest river cities of the area, Kansas City, St. Joseph, and Leavenworth, were only partially successful in their resident theatrical enterprises. The occasional references to Leavenworth, St. Joseph, and Kansas City theatre companies playing in Lawrence and Topeka represent only short excursions into the interior, the provincial towns, according to the outlook of the river cities. In 1859 Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe made a tour of the interior, giving theatrical entertainment in Topeka and Junction City, but this appears to be an isolated instance for so early a venture. The Langrishes had been closely identified with St. Joseph theatre and made the transition from resident to traveling theatre proving their durability through the 1860's and 1870's. The Burts had given theatrical and other entertainment to the soldiers in Lawrence, Topeka, and Fort Riley in April and May, 1862. Mrs. Walters had taken her People's Theatre Company to Lawrence in May, 1863. The Leavenworth Theatre played in Frazer Hall, March 18-24, 1867, presenting "Honey Moon," "The Lady of Lyons," "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," "Richard III," "Ingomar," and "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Chaplin and Mrs. Pennoyer played the leads in "Ingomar," while J. Z. Little played "Richard III," with Burt for a change in the dignified role of Lord Mayor. In their traditional character of fun makers, however, Mr. and Mrs. Burt portrayed "Toodles." The Burt children did their turn also. On the first night little Eliza sang "I'm Nineteen," and "was rapturously encored," and on Thursday night "the wonderful little Eliza—fairly brought down the house with her Josiah and his Sally." Entertainment at Lawrence, except for the occasional theatrical performance, was generally similar to other towns, and included such family groups as the Peak Family (Swiss Bell Ringers), and the Hutchinson Family (temperance), but with a greater accent possibly upon lectures and music. At this point a word may not be out of place about lectures and lecturers who toured the West. They represented all the "isms" that plagued that era elsewhere. Difficulty is encountered in differentiating legitimate lecturers providing information and inspiration from misguided enthusiasts of various descriptions, and charlatans exploiting "magic" and pseudopsychic phenomena. A study of this problem in relation to public

52. Daily Times, Leavenworth, December 1, 13, 1859.
53. Lawrence Republican, April 10, 17, 24, 1862; Smoky Hill and Republican Union, Junction City, May 1, 8, 1862; Leavenworth Daily Times, April 12, May 7, 1862. Addis had carried his photographic business with him.
54. Leavenworth Daily Conservatice, June 2, 1863. Lawrence newspapers for this period are not available.
gullibility would be well worth while. The emotional tensions of the day, especially those associated with the sense of insecurity, engendered by the conflict about science and religion, and the disillusionments, the bereavements, and the tragedies occasioned by the border troubles and the American Civil War, afforded opportunities for the unscrupulous which they did not ignore. Pending a fuller study of the problem, the present writer would suggest tentatively that probably Lawrence was peculiarly victimized in this respect.

X. Social Role of Theatre

In the history of the human race, theatre has served several functions, and with time and change in social structure the cultural role of that institution is modified. All individuals are not affected equally and some not at all. In Leavenworth the Times, June 20, 1862, suggested two possible reasons why the theatre was patronized liberally: because of prosperity when people felt they had money to spend, and of depression when they sought forgetfulness from their troubles. That was an oversimplification, certainly, but nevertheless it contained an element of truth. Some, no doubt, used theatre merely to kill time, but for others it meant something else. Each individual finds release from tensions in a different manner, even going on a drunk, but for many the theatre offered a temporary escape, relaxation without unfavorable side-effects. Theatre served for them as a sanatory psychological experience which contributed to mental health. In this context there was a place for George and Agnes Burt in their hilarious rendition of “Toodles,” and for Couldock and Chaplin in the tragedies “Hamlet,” “Othello,” and “King Lear.”

XI. The Years 1866-1869, Local and National

The years following immediately upon the American Civil War constitute a period of unique political crises in the United States which included controversies about reconstruction of the national government and of the South in accordance with the military victory of nationalism on the battlefield. All of these controversies, besides being political, had economic and social consequences in a comprehensive sense; the impeachment and trial of the President of the United States, the post-war deflation of a fantastic wartime price structure, national debt policies, greenbacks in relation to monetary standards, and a national banking system—these and many others besides were all transpiring in the midst of phenomenal mechanization of society and economic boom associated with a new technologi-
theatrical system based upon coal, petroleum, iron, steel, and steam, railroad building, and corresponding redistributions of population and power through urbanization, and the occupation of areas hitherto less developed or wholly undeveloped in terms of these new technologies.

In such a period of dislocations and reconstitutions of society, individual fortunes were highly unstable; they might be made or lost, not once only but several times in succession in the most unpredictable fashion, or fortune might always elude the grasp of others, which gave a peculiar fascination to a favorite question for debate in lyceums and schools: Which affords the greater satisfaction, pursuit or possession? There was no post-war panic or general depression comparable to those inaugurated by the years 1837 and 1837, in the midst of phenomenal expansion of the economic plant of the nation there was no general prosperity characterized by a sense of either economic or social well being—rather the prevailing attitudes were those of stress and tension.

Still more fundamental to the state of society were the impacts of the new deference to scientific method and to science as they were related to philosophy, theology, and ethics. The scientific method of the "higher criticism" applied to religious records, and the implications of the physical and biological sciences for reinterpreting human culture challenged prevailing ideas about philosophy, religion, ethics, and human destiny. Could there be any basis of certainty established between the traditional absolutes and the new absolute of a complete relativism derived from Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and Thomas H. Huxley? Sooner or later, more and more people, in the years after the American Civil War, had to find some answer to these disturbing challenges as affecting their private lives, and their hope of a future life. If life did not have meaning, What then? 56

Kansas was being settled and resettled by populations new to the area, peoples to whom the grassland West was a strange environment. The pre-Civil War occupants remaining were overwhelmed by the numbers of this influx of new people, the most of whom did not remain long in any one place or even in Kansas. Yet, institutions in the western Missouri and the eastern Kansas area, the Missouri river elbow region, maintained a remarkable continuity of development in their own right and in relation to the changing national scene. Although continuity of development may quite

56. These aspects of the Kansas scene will be treated at length in another local case study centering upon Fort Scott.
properly be stressed, it was in fact a transformation, or a series of successive transformations not only in the local area in question, but in American society as a whole—a process of interrelations among the localities as foundations and the nation being newly reconstructed.

On the western bank of the Missouri river, Leavenworth was a city most developed and most nearly representative in reflection of that national transformation. But at the same time it contributed to the aggregate which made up the national whole its local variant in a unique setting. As a local case study it puts in comprehensible terms particulars which were the underpinnings of the larger national transition. Atchison, Lawrence, Topeka, Emporia, and Junction City, each in its own way as newer and lesser towns, contributed their unique behavior to the sum total. It is only out of such local foundations, assembled from the several parts of the United States, that the historian can reconstruct accurately an over-all national history.

XII. RAILROAD COMMUNICATION AND REORIENTATION OF THE MISSOURI RIVER TOWNS AND KANSAS

During the decades of the 1850's and the 1860's the fact is conspicuous that the Missouri river and water communication influenced, if they did not actually dominate, not only the orientation of theatre and other entertainment, but most aspects of the outlook and activities of the inhabitants of the Missouri valley. Until well along in the 1860's most travel necessary to entertainment was dependent upon the river almost as literally as showboats. Whatever the theatrical organization and practices in the East and its large cities, in order to provide continuity and variety along the Missouri river, the resident dramatic company associated with the star system was almost a necessity. Such a combination required the least possible dependence upon mobility, especially during the winter months when the river was closed to navigation. Incidentally, theatre was peculiarly a summer institution outside of the largest cities. The orientation upon New Orleans by way of Cincinnati or by way of St. Louis was based upon long practice interwoven with the multitude of familiar connections and personal relations attendant upon a going concern.

Recruitment of actors for the resident companies at Leavenworth was from St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, or New Orleans, but especially Cincinnati—the Leonards, George Pardey, Frank Roche, Arnold, J. H. Rogers. When the Union Theatre broke up in Jan-
uary, 1864, Chaplin, Mrs. Walters, and other members of the company went to Ben DeBar's St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans. A study of the New Orleans Theatre of the 1850's and 1860's, both before and after the American Civil War, reveals the major role of that city in relation to the interior river cities, extending to the Missouri river elbow region including Leavenworth. Ben DeBar (1812-1878) came to the United States and New Orleans by way of New York in 1835. Between that date and 1853 when he took over the management of the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans he had been in both New York and New Orleans. In 1855 he bought a theatre in St. Louis to which he gave his own name. Except for the Civil War period, when the St. Charles was closed, he kept both going, adding in 1873 the Wakefield Opera House to his holdings in St. Louis.

Many, if not most, of the stars who played in the Leavenworth Theatre as related in this essay, played at the St. Charles and DeBar Theatres in New Orleans and in St. Louis, and others. Some of them should be named in order to make the point concrete: McKeen Buchanan and Virginia, Blanche DeBar (her mother, Clementine DeBar had married one of the Booth family), C. W. Cockroft and daughter Eliza, Lotta Crabtree, Julia Dean, Kate and Susan Denin, Mrs. Mary Gladstane, Eliza Logan, the Maddern Sisters, Emma and Lizzie (Lizzie was the mother of Minnie Maddern Fiske), and Cecile Rush. In the St. Charles stock company at times were George D. Chaplin, Clara Walters, and Mrs. Pennoyer. And the plays presented on the stage were mostly the same at New Orleans, St. Louis, and Leavenworth, so far as conditions permitted. After the Civil War interruption at the St. Charles (DeBar remained in St. Louis and operated throughout the war) the old system was continued substantially as prior to hostilities. Except for the physical equipment and size of the house, a theatregoer might not be able to distinguish which of the three cities he was in: New Orleans, St. Louis, or Leavenworth.

57. John S. Kendall, The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1932), pp. 286-321, 495-533. The portion of the book cited reviews the main features of DeBar's career. Kendall spelled C. W. Cockroft's name Cockroft. Cf. Dictionary of American Biography, v. 4, pp. 468-467; The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, v. 2, p. 346. Kendall misidentified Mrs. Walters, or the indexer did, as all references to her are collected under the name Mary Walters. Evidently her career was not known to Kendall. In other respects the index is quite inadequate. Other books of some importance to commercial public entertainment, in some cases only because they are the only ones on the particular subject available, are listed here: Philip Graham, Showboats: The History of an American Institution (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1931); Philip D. Jordan, Singing Yankees: The Story of the Cruising Hutchinson Family (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1946); Edward Mammen, The Old Stock Company School of Acting: A Study of the Boston Museum (Boston, Published by the Trustees of the Public Library, 1945); Carl F. Wirth, Tambo and Bones: A History of the American Minstrel Stage (Durham, N. C., Duke University Press, 1930).
Even prior to the Civil War the railroads were changing all this, but slowly, because of the momentum of the “going concern,” and the reluctance to abandon old and accustomed connections for new and uncertain methods and personalities. Ben DeBar and his enterprises in both St. Louis and New Orleans, continuing after the war as before, were telling examples of persistence of old associations long after railroads had superceded the water navigation which had originally made the cities and his theatrical enterprises in the Mississippi valley possible.

In all lines of business the intervention of the railroad, and the new orientations it provided were not overlooked. In Atchison the dry goods firm of A. S. Parker ran a two-column advertisement in the spring of 1860 announcing that its stock of spring and summer goods had arrived by railroad. About the same time the Western Stage Company, mail contractors, announced that because of the Atchison and St. Joseph railway, connecting with Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad opened in 1859, nearly 12 hours had been gained in mail arrivals. A new stage service for mail and passengers was announced from Leavenworth to Topeka and Lawrence making possible travel from St. Joseph to either of those points in the interior in one day. The river cities were served by railroad packets which began operations with the breaking of the ice. The first task was to distribute among the river towns the goods that had accumulated by rail for river points, or for rail shipment east.58

The Civil War in Missouri in 1861 interrupted river and rail communication. By February, 1862, railroad connections were re-established to Chicago by way of Palmyra, Mo., and Quincy, Ill., and stages afforded connections with railroad terminals along the Missouri river.59 With the opening of navigation on the river in 1864 and 1865 traffic moved in a similar pattern, with the aid of a steamboat plying between Weston and Kansas City.60 The Union Pacific, Eastern division, finished its line from Kansas City to Lawrence late in 1864, and to Fort Riley in December, 1866. The Leavenworth-Lawrence branch was completed in May, 1866. On the Kansas side of the Missouri river, Kansas City was connected with Leavenworth by the Missouri River railroad in July, 1866, and Atchison, September, 1869. On the Missouri side, the Missouri Valley railroad from Kansas City to St. Joseph was completed in December, 1868, but it had served between St. Joseph and Weston

58. Atchison Freedom's Champion, February 24, March 10, 17, 1860.
59. Leavenworth Daily Conservative, February 1, 1862.
60. Ibid., February 16, 1864; Daily Times, February 18, 1865.
since early 1864. The Pacific railroad from St. Louis reached Kansas City in September, 1865, providing the second rail line between the Mississippi river and the Missouri river towns of eastern Kansas. The first bridge across the Missouri river was the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad bridge serving Kansas City, completed in July, 1869. The river was bridged at Leavenworth in 1872, and at Atchison in 1875. By the end of 1869 the Mississippi river was bridged at Quincy, Ill., as well as the Missouri at Kansas City, affording through rail traffic between Kansas City and Chicago without ferries, and Leavenworth was tied into this route by the Missouri River railroad—24 hours to Chicago.61

In 1856 Gabay's Dramatic Troupe, a complete theatrical company traveling from town to town was a rare thing in the West. By 1870 a revolution had occurred that was made possible by railroads. The traveling dramatic troupe had gained during the late 1860's while resident theatre had declined or had been eliminated. In Leavenworth the coming of the James A. Lord Dramatic Company in December, 1869, not only provided the first legitimate theatrical entertainment in that city for a long time, but it was a sign of the completion in large measure of the reorientation of the area upon Chicago by means of rails.62

61. Leavenworth Daily Commercial, October 17, 1869 fl., adv.; Times and Conserva-
tives, February 25, 1870; Evening Bulletin, January 29, 1870.

62. For a study of Kansas City in this perspective, see James C. Malin, Grassland
Historical Studies: Natural Resources Utilization in a Background of Science and Tech-
nology, v. 1, Geology and Geography (Lawrence, the author, 1930), Ch. 22, "After the Civil
War," especially pp. 824-835.