WOMEN IN AMERICAN THEATRE, 1850-1870:
A STUDY IN PROFESSIONAL EQUITY

by
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ABSTRACT

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This study supports the contention that women in the American theatre from 1850 to 1870 experienced a unique degree of professional equity with men in the-atre. The time-frame has been selected for two reasons: (1) actresses active after 1870 have been the subject of several dissertations and scholarly studies, while relatively little research has been completed on women active on the American stage prior to 1870, and (2) prior to 1850 there was limited theatre activity in this country and very few professional actresses.

A general description of mid-nineteenth-century theatre and its social context is provided, including a summary of major developments in theatre in New York and other cities from 1850 to 1870, discussions of the star system, the combination company, and the mid-century audience. Important social influences on the theatre, and on women working in the theatre, include the emer-gence of the Women's Rights movement in 1848, the "Gold

Rush" and consequent westward expansion, and increased immigration. A discussion of the nineteenth-century view of women's role in society and the prescriptive ideal of "belle femme" wife and mother demonstrates that the American actress, successfully employed, constituted a contradiction of society's ideal.

Two indicators of professional equity are discussed: career opportunities and salaries. A description of the careers of four actresses, Mrs. W. G. Jones, Maggie Mitchell, Kate Reignolds, and Mrs. J. R. Vincent, illustrates four differentiated career patterns open to women in mid-century theatre. The management careers of Mrs. John Drew, Laura Keene, and Mrs. John Wood are described to exemplify opportunities open to women as theatre managers. Additional information on twenty-two other actresses active on the American stage from 1850 to 1870 is also presented. Research on wages paid to men and women in mid-century theatre demonstrates the degree to which women's salaries were comparable to men's salaries.

The study concludes that from 1850 to 1870, the American theatre offered women opportunities for stable employment, long and varied careers, success as theatre managers, and a degree of economic equity with male counterparts which exceeded economic equity possible in other occupations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Among the areas in theatre history research which have attracted attention in recent years, two topics are particularly significant for this study. The first is the study of popular theatre in the nineteenth century from a contextual, social-historical point of view.[1] The second is the role of women in the American theatre.[2] However, present scholarship on both the nineteenth-century American theatre and on the women

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[1]Discussions of a social history approach to the study of theatre history appear in Attilio Favorini, "The Uses of Theatrical Past: Recent Theatre History Texts," Educational Theatre Journal 26 (December 1974): 536-44; and in David Grimsted, "An Idea of Theatre History, An Informal Plea," Educational Theatre Journal 26 (December 1974): 425-432; and in Orley I. Holton, "Marking Present the Past: Theatre History," Quarterly Journal of Speech 60 (February 1974): 105-109. See also Harold Clurman, "Actors - The Image of their Era," Tulane Drama Review 4 (March 1960): 38-44.

[2]Chinoy, Helen Krich and Linda Walsh Jenkins, eds. Women in the American Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1981), pp. ix-x. The editors state in the Preface that this publication is the first anthology of essays on the contribution of women to the American theatre.

active in that theatre has been scant. Little attention has been given to the actors and actresses who who worked regularly in the theatre and who maintained success in terms of perennial appeal to audiences. In particular, virtually no information has been compiled on the careers of women who performed in the popular theatre prior to 1870, with the notable exception of frequent references to Charlotte Cushman.[3]

Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920 by Charles McArthur studies the development of acting as a profession during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.[4] McArthur introduces his work with a brief

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[3]Recent bibliographical works which will be useful to researchers who wish to investigate performers' careers are Stephen M. Archer, American Actors and Actresses: A Guide to Information Sources (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1983) and Don B. Wilmeth, The American Stage to World War I: A Guide to Information Sources (Gale Research Company, 1978). See also Don B. Wilmeth, American and English Popular Entertainment: A Guide to Information Sources (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1980). Also useful for obtaining critical comment on performers is Donald Mullin, comp. and ed., Victorian Actors and Actresses in Review: A Dictionary of Contemporary Views of Representative British and American Actors and Actresses, 1837-1901 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983) which contains reviews of stage productions arranged by performers' names.

[4]McArthur, Benjamin. Actors and American Culture: 1880-1920 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984). This book is adapted from McArthur's doctoral dissertation entitled Actors and American Culture (University of Chicago, 1979).

summary of developments prior to 1880, but his overview provides little specific information which differs from that to be found in other standard histories of American theatre. In Glenn Hughes' A History of the American Theatre 1700-1950,[5] Barnard Hewitt's Theatre U.S.A.,[6] and Garff Wilson's Three Hundred Years of American Theatre,[7] the major focus on theatre prior to 1870 is almost exclusively on major male stars, particularly Edwin Forrest and Edwin Booth. The most recent history, Ethan Mordden's The American Theatre,[8] sketches the development of theatre from 1700 to 1900 in twenty-five pages, giving no more than brief mention to nineteenth-century performers, with the exception of Edwin Forrest. Mordden does not mention any women active in nineteenth century theatre. The cumulative result of these histories is an impression that few women worked in

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[5]Hughes, Glenn. A History of The American Theatre 1700-1950 (New York: Samuel French, 1951).

[6]Hewitt, Barnard. Theatre U.S.A. 1665-1957 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959).

[7]Wilson, Garff B. Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre from Ye Bare and Ye Cubb to Hair (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973).

[8]Mordden, Ethan. The American Theatre (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

nineteenth-century theatre, and that their careers were inconsequential.

A recent work which begins to address the need for research on women in nineteenth-century theatre is Claudia Johnson's American Actress, which supports the major contention of this study concerning the opportunities available to women in American theatre during the past century. Johnson's work attempts to survey the entire nineteenth century, summarizing attitudes towards actresses, and presenting information on the careers of seven women whom Johnson describes as "unmistakable events" in theatre history.[9]

Research published in scholarly journals also neglects women in American theatre prior to 1870. I surveyed both the Humanities Index and America: History and Life, which each cite journals in which research on theatre history is published. The Humanities Index includes citations from the following journals: American Studies, The Drama Review, The Historical Journal, Journal of American Culture, Journal of American History, Journal of American Studies, Journal of Popular Culture, Performing Arts Journal, Theatre Journal,

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[9]Johnson, Claudia. American Actress: Perspective on the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1984).

Theatre Notebook, Theatre Research International, Theatre Survey, Victorian Studies, Women's Studies. My examination of the Humanities Index, Volume I (April 1974-March 1975) through Volume II (June 1984-March 1985) disclosed a total of thirty-six articles on nineteenth-century American theatre. Among the journals indexed in America: History and Life are: American Historical Review, American Quarterly, Historian, Journal of Modern History, Journal of Southern History, Missouri Historical Review, New England Quarterly, New York History, and Pacific Historical Review. This index, from initial publication in 1954 through 1985 Supplement cites a total of one hundred ten articles having nineteenth-century American theatre as the primary topic.

Among the combined total of one hundred forty-six articles on nineteenth-century American theatre indexed in the Humanities Index and America: History and Life, forty-two articles dealt with American theatre at mid-century, 1850-1870. Eighteen articles were primarily concerned with women in nineteenth-century American theatre.

Nineteenth Century Theatre Research, a journal not indexed in either index surveyed above, began publication in 1973. I examined all issues of this journal, 1973 through Summer, 1985 issue, and determined that

nineteen articles about nineteenth-century American theatre were included. Sixteen of these articles contained material about American theatre prior to 1870; one article was about a nineteenth-century American actress.

Women in the American Theatre by Helen Krich Chinoy and Linda Walsh Jenkins lists nineteen doctoral dissertations which study the careers of women who performed in the American theatre during the last century. Eight of the subjects were active prior to 1870.[10] My examination of the Comprehensive Dissertation Index and Dissertation Abstracts International identified one additional dissertation on a woman active in American theatre before 1870.[11] My search located twenty dissertations on the acting careers of men who worked in American theatre prior to 1870.[12]

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[10]Those actresses who had active careers prior to 1870 and who are subjects of doctoral dissertations mentioned in Chinoy and Walsh are: Lotta Crabtree, Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. John Drew, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Julia Dean Hayne, Matilda Heron, Olive Logan, and Anna Cora Mowatt.

[11]Taylor, Dorothy Jean. Laura Keene in America 1852-1873. Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University, 1966. This dissertation is not available through inter-library loan and is not on microfilm. Therefore, I could not consult this work for my study.

[12]Actors who were active prior to 1870 and whose

(Footnote Continued)

The literature search described above indicates a need for further research on American theatre prior to 1870 and on the role and importance of women in that theatre. This study is intended to make a contribution to that research need.

My approach to this study has been influenced by the work of Gerda Lerner, who was inspired by Mary Beard's viewpoint that the history of women should not be governed by a central focus on women's oppression in a male-dominated society.[13] Lerner observes that much of the research on the history of women falls into two categories: compensatory history which focuses on the achievement of uniquely accomplished women, and contribution history which describes "women's contribution to, their status in, and the oppression by male-defined

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(Footnote Continued)
acting careers in American Theatre are subjects of doctoral dissertations are: George Becks, Edwin Booth, Junius Brutus Booth, John Wilkes Booth, Dion Boucicault, John Brougham, William E. Burton, William Crisp, E.L. Davenport, John T. Ford, Nat Goodwin, James A. Herne, Joseph Jefferson, Frank Mayo, John E. Owens, Edmund Simpson, Harry Bache Smith, William Warren, Jr., and Thomas Wignell.

[13]Lerna, Gerda. The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women In History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), xxi. Lerner refers to Mary R. Beard, Woman As Force In History (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946).

society."[14] These inquiries, according to Lerner, have provided useful insights into certain aspects of women's experience, but Lerner contends that such approaches imply that women were passive and reactive. Such studies, Lerner finds, tend to minimize an examination of women's proactive choices and accomplishments, except as measured by male-defined indicators of success. Lerner acknowledges the obvious economic and professional subordination of women over time, but she suggests that "The true history of women is the history of their on-going functioning in that male-defined world on their own terms."[15]

The literature survey discussed earlier in this chapter indicates that a substantial amount of the history of women in mid-nineteenth century theatre falls into the two categories defined by Lerner. American Actress by Claudia Johnson and Women in American Theatre by Chinoy and Jenkins are examples of contribution history. Dissertations and biographies on the life and careers of exceptional actresses such as Charlotte Cushman are examples of compensatory history. A number of works describe the life and career of Cushman, who is

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[14]Lerner, p. 146.

[15]Lerner, p. 148.

generally acknowledged to have been this country's first great tragic actress and whose career was truly extraordinary.[16] However, the repeated mention of Cushman, and often Cushman alone reinforces the impression that she was the only American actress to have achieved success on the American stage in the mid-nineteenth century. Implicit in this erroneous conclusion is the judgement that any other women active on the stage at that time were of no significance in talent or accomplishment. Thus, after an encounter with such compensatory research, one might assume that the theatre prior to 1870 afforded little opportunity for success to women other than the uniquely extraordinary, as exemplified by Charlotte Cushman.

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[16]Biographies on Cushman include Lawrence Barrett, Charlotte Cushman (Dunlap society, 1889), Joseph Leach, Bright Particular Star, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), William Price, A Life of Charlotte Cushman (New York: Brentano's, 1894), Emma Stebbins, Charlotte Cushman, Her Life, Letters and Memories (Houghton, Osgood, 1878), James Willis Yeater, Charlotte Cushman, American Actress (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1959). A recent disseration by Lisa Merrill, "Charlotte Cushman: American Actress On the Vanguard of New Roles for Women," New York University, 1985) which studies Cushman as a role model for women in the light of nineteenth-century attitudes toward women. Discussions of Cushman are found in Johnson, pp. 109-119, and in Wilson, A History of American Acting (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966) pp. 47-56.

In my research on min-nineteenth-century theatre, I found that a number of women maintained successful, lengthy careers in the American theatre. While limited extant records make it impossible to identify or enumerate with exactness the total population of American actresses during that time, and while it is equally impossible to identify or locate any research materials on women who desired but did not obtain theatrical careers, one can assemble information on a number of actresses whose careers demonstrate that sustained success in the theatre was not limited to one or two extraordinary women.

A number of questions arise concerning women who became actresses. Johnson's American Actress places heavy emphasis on the social stigma attached to the acting profession, particularly with regard to women. If, as Johnson asserts, the general view of actresses during the nineteenth century was that they were dissolute hoydens, then what kind of woman chose to be an actress? How apparent and forceful were these negative attitudes towards actresses? What rewards did a theatre career offer to offset the disadvantages imposed by social disapproval? In a time when most women had little occupational and economic freedom, how was the actress similar to or different from other women in her professional and economic options? Once employed with

some regularity as an actress, did a woman have the option to demonstrate autonomy in her career? Could the actress make choices about where she would work and how to conduct her career? Were the options for women in the theatre similar to the options for men in theatre? Given similar employment responsibilities, how did women's wages in theatre compare with men's wages in theatre? How did women in theatre fare economically compared to women in other occupations? Could women assume management positions in theatre?

I believe that the answers to these questions can be found in an examination of the careers of women who have not been singled out by historians as "extraordinary" among the community of mid-nineteenth-century actresses. I contend that such women, choosing a career in the theatre and fashioning that career according to choice, are examples of Lerner's concept of "women functioning in a male-defined world on their own terms."

In order to carry out an examination of acting careers, some choice must be exercised in deciding which actresses to study, which to exclude. The availability of research materials set parameters for this study. Within the limitations imposed by extant information on mid-nineteenth-century theatre, my survey identified certain career patterns which are described in Chapter Four. These career patterns exemplify the options open

to both men and women in mid-nineteenth-century theatre. To illustrate each career pattern, I have randomly selected a woman whose career reflects a choice to follow that career pattern. I have selected women whose stage careers are neglected in current research, and whose success seems to have been forgotten. My selections are subject to selection bias and cannot meet any criteria for representativeness, a result of the limited extant information which rules out precise and accurate quantification methods. The methodology employed here is adductive, utilizing traditional documentary analysis to arrive at interpretation.[17] In assembling information about these women as illustrations of specific career types, by addressing the questions posed earlier about the mid-nineteenth-century actress, and by examining the manner and effect of these women's functions in

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[17]For a discussion of adductive reasoning in historical research see David H. Fischer, Historians' Fallacies (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1970), pp. xv-xvi and p. 1 ff. Fisher writes that the logic of historical thought ". . . consists neither in inductive reasoning from the particular to the general, nor in deductive reasoning from the general to the particular. Instead, it is a process of adductive reasoning in the simple sense of adducing answers to specific questions so that a satisfactory explanatory 'fit' is obtained." Also see Mary Ann Yodelis Smith, "The Method of History," Research Methods in Mass Communication, edited by Guido H. Stemple, III, and Bruce H. Westley (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), pp. 314-315.

the theatre, I believe a perspective on the degree of success and the options available to women in mid-nineteenth-century American theatre becomes clear, permitting a more penetrating insight into the context in which the mid-nineteenth-century actress worked.

For purposes of limiting and defining the study, the decades 1850 to 1870 will constitute the time frame for this inquiry. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, the 1850's and 1860's were a time of growth and expansion in American theatre. Census data for these decades indicates a substantial increase in the number of persons employed as performers. The Seventh Census of 1850 indicates that 722 white males were employed as actors, an occupational category which included entertainers of various types (circus performers, acrobats, dancers, singers, etc.).[18] In 1860, the Eighth Census counted total of 1,478 actors.[19] The Eighth Census does not state whether or not women are accounted for in this total. Unlike the previous census, however, women are

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[18]DeBow, J.D.B. Seventh Census 1850; Statistical View, Compendium (Washington, D.C.: Beverly Tucke, Senate Printer, 1854) p. 126.

[19]Kennedy, Joseph C.G. Population of The United States in 1860; Compiled From the Original Returns of The Eighth Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864) pp. 656-657.

clearly included in the table listing population by occupation in such categories as nuns and seamstresses.[20] By 1870, the Ninth Census indicates a total of 2,053 actors, including 1,361 men and 692 women.[21] The ratio of men to women in theatre reflected in these numbers is 2:1. In comparison with the census for all occupations in 1870, in which men outnumber women by approximately 10 to 1, the male majority in the theatre was considerably smaller than in all other occupations combined.[22] There is no evidence to indicate that the theatre was overwhelmed by a male majority prior to 1870, and there is substantial evidence that within this small professional community, a significant number of women were active. This study will provide information on a number of women who managed successful careers in the theatre between 1850 and 1870.

This study will describe the social and theatrical context in which actresses worked from 1850 to 1870 and

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[20]Ibid., p. 668 and p. 672.

[21]Walker, Francis A. Ninth Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872) quoted in American Industry and Manufactures in the 19th Century (Elmsford, N.Y.: Maxwell Reprint Co., 1970), p. 832.

[22]Ibid., p. 808.

discuss two major factors which identify occupational equity: salaries and opportunity for careers.

Since the number of males and number of females required to perform in a stage production is determined by the requirements of the script, hiring practices in theatre have always been tied to the nature of dramatic literature. Generally, plays call for more men than women. The reasons for this tendency throughout history may lie in patriarchal values, viewpoints that males and their stories make for better dramatic fare, or a number of other possibilities such as the predominance of males as playwrights. This study does not intend to pursue these questions. Rather, given the observation that dramatic literature provides more roles for men than for women, this study assumes that equal opportunity hiring assuring an equal number of jobs for male actors and female actresses is seldom possible in theatre. Therefore, in this study the investigation of career opportunity does not address whether there were equal numbers of jobs for men and women in theatre, but whether men and women, once hired with sufficient regularity to rely on acting for a means of support, had similar options to select a type of acting career which satisfied personal needs. To provide details which illustrate the variety and kinds of careers conducted by women, specific careers will be discussed. Four actresses whose careers

are illustrative of particular career patterns will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, Section One. The second section of that chapter will discuss three successful women who were both actresses and managers of theatres. And the third and final section of Chapter Four will summarize the careers of twenty-two other women who maintained active careers as actresses between 1850 and 1870.

The outcome of the study is expected to support the argument that women in the mid-nineteenth century American theatre enjoyed success, career longevity, and differentiated career patterns comparable to those of men in the theatre.

Because this study will repeatedly compare the work of women performers with the work of men performers, I will distinguish the genders by using the traditional terms "actress" for women and "actor" for men. I believe this will avoid confusion for the reader which might result from adherence to recent trends to use the term "actor" to apply to both women and men.

As a final introductory note, I wish to acknowledge the resources and assistance obtained at the libraries and collections where I conducted the research for this study. In the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, the holdings at the Library of Congress provided most of the material for this study. In addition, materials housed

at the Folger Shakespeare Library were helpful, and resources at the public libraries in the District of Columbia and Montgomery County were used. I made frequent use of materials from the McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, and the Montgomery College Library, Rockville, Maryland. Useful information was also found at the Howard University Library in the Channing Pollack Theatre Collection. In New York City, I found important source material at the Lincoln Center Performing Arts Library and in the Rare Book Collection at Columbia University. I also visited the Harvard University Library Theatre Collection, which provided a wealth of primary source material. Visits to the Research Library of the New York Historical Society in New York City, and to the Manuscript Division of the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore provided valuable information. I also obtained useful information by telephone and mail contact with the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEATRICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

In order to understand the mid-nineteenth-century theatre and the significance of the careers managed in that theatre by women, a general description of the theatre and its social environment is necessary. In this chapter I will first provide a summary description of the stock theatre context in America as it developed between 1825 and 1850. Then I will discuss the major theatre developments in New York City theatre during mid-century, 1850-1870, identify other cities with significant mid-century theatre activity, and discuss the major influences on mid-century theatre: the star system, combination company, and mid-century audience.

The second section of this chapter will discuss the social context of mid-century America. I will summarize the major historical events of the time: the beginning of the Women's Rights Movement, the "Gold Rush" and westward expansion, increased immigration. In order to clarify the social attitudes which surrounded issues about women's employment, I will discuss the impact of the "cult of true womanhood," a term which I

will define and attribute in that discussion. Information will be presented about women's employment opportunities in mid-century America, and I will discuss employment opportunities for women in theatre in the mid-nineteenth century in this country.

Section One: The Theatrical Context

During the first half of the nineteenth century theatrical activity increased in several American cities, notably Philadelphia and New York. From 1825 on, the nation's theatrical center was New York, although active companies were thriving in Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston. During the period 1825-1850, theatres in these cities typically hired and maintained a company of several actors who could play a variety of roles. Each of these resident stock companies developed its own repertory of plays, primarily of English and European source, but including many new American plays as well. The plays tended to be either heroic tragedies in verse or sensational melodramas, and the stock company performers had to be capable of playing in styles suited to any of these kinds of plays.

Stock company actors and actresses developed a "line of business," which meant that the performer played certain kinds of roles: the saucy servant, the dashing hero, the elderly mother, etc. A particularly

versatile actor might be considered capable of "major business," which meant he or she was regularly cast in major roles, though not necessarily type-cast in only one kind of major role.

The stock companies played several nights a week to an audience in cities which were relatively small by today's standards.[23] Theatres were able to draw continuing patronage by changing the bill nightly. This required the acting company to prepare a large number of scripts for performance, and within a given week, the actors played several different roles.[24]

New York became the most active theatre city during the nineteenth century. From 1800 to 1825 the Park Theatre was New York's most successful theatre. The Park presented standard drama (as opposed to operas,

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[23]DeBow, Op. Cit., pp. 338-393, provides 1850 Census figures for populations of cities and towns. The following city populations are included: New York - 515,547; Boston - 136,881; Philadelphia - 121,376; New Orleans - 116, 375; St. Louis - 77,860; Charleston - 41,985.

[24]Good discussions of the development of resident theatres appear in Barnard Hewitt, Theatre U.S.A. 1665 to 1975, pp. 103-160; Glenn Hughes, A History of the American Theatre 1700-1951, pp. 90-161; and Garff Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre from Ye Bare and Ye Cubb to Hair, pp. 56-72. Ethan Mordden, The American Theatre, provides scant information. Other relevant sources cited in Footnotes 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 which follow.

spectacles or other entertainments) with a regular stock company. Gradually other theatres opened in New York, many of them capable of seating an audience of 3,000 or more persons. As business flourished, the New York theatres began to operate six nights a week, continuing the tradition of changing the bill frequently.[25]

By 1850 the most prestigious New York theatre was the Broadway, with Burton's Theatre competing for the best audiences. Both the National (formerly known as Chatham's) and the Bowery continued successfully alternating classics with contemporary plays. Barnum's American Museum regularly supplemented its "curiosities" and other entertainments with the presentation of plays, and the Astor Place Opera House produced plays as well as operas. The Olympic closed in 1850, but Brougham's Lyceum opened and became popular. A variety of entertainments ranging from ballets to concerts and including plays were available at Niblo's Gardens and the Castle Garden. During 1850 the large Tripler Music Hall opened, intended primarily for operas. In addition, New York had a number of minstrel halls and other places of entertainment. In 1852 the Lyceum was taken over by James W. Wallack, who opened Wallack's Theatre in

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[25]Hughes, pp. 90-151.

September to begin a thirty-year reign as New York's most consistently fine theatre. The decade of the 1850s began with flourishing theatre activity in New York, and the population of the city and the number of theatres was to continue to grow.

By 1860 the Broadway Theatre had closed and the building was torn down. Laura Keene's Theatre had been built and opened in 1856; later it was to be re-named the Olympic. Burton's Theatre had been remodeled and opened as the Winter Garden, and the New Bowery Theatre had opened. In 1861 Wallack moved his company to a new and well-equipped theatre, and during the 1860s his old theatre was successively managed by Mary Provost and George Wood. The Worrell sisters managed another playhouse, and there were theatres for German and French drama. The Academy of Music also began to feature plays. In 1868 the Pike's Opera House opened, followed in 1869 by Booth's theatre.[26]

Thus, between 1850 and 1870, the New York theatre became firmly established. Growing stock companies in New York, as well as in other cities, offered considerable opportunity for the talented and theatrically

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[26]Hewitt, pp. 161-217; Hughes, pp. 169-205; Wilson, pp. 144-180.

inclined. Garff Wilson states that by 1860 there were "probably more than fifty resident companies operating in the United States."[27] In Boston the Boston Theatre, the Boston Museum, and other stock theatres entertained audiences through the mid-century decades.[28] Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre and Chestnut Street Theatres operated during the 1850s and 1860s.[29] John

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[27]Wilson, p. 146.

[28]Early theatre in Boston is described in W.W. Clapp, Jr., A Record of the Boston Stage (Boston: J. Monroe, 1853. Later Boston theatre is covered in Eugene Tompkins and Quincy Kilby, The History of the Boston Theatre 1854-1901 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908). A detailed history of the Boston Museum from 1841 to 1851 is Claire McGlinchee, The First Decade of the Boston Museum (Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1940). A summary of the Boston Museum from its founding in 1841 to its closing as a stock company house in 1895 is Howard Malcolm Ticknor, "The Passing of the Boston Museum," The New England Magazine, 28:4 (June 1903) :379-396.

[29]See Arthur H. Wilson, A History of the Philadelphia Theatre 1835 to 1855 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935). Also William B. Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage (Philadelphia: H.C. Baird, 1855) written by the co-manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre from 1809 to 1826. See also Francis Courtney Wemyss, Twenty-Six Years in the Life of an Actor and Manager (New York: Burgess, Stringer and Company, 1847) which covers experiences of the actor-manager from 1822 to 1846 in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh theatres. Barnard Hewitt, Theatre U.S.A., p. 488, refers to unpublished manuscript in University of Pennsylvania Library entitled The Philadelphia Stage from the Year 1749 to the Year 1855 by Charles Durang.

Rice managed a popular theatre in Chicago,[30] and further west Ben De Bar maintained a summer season in St. Louis and moved his company to New Orleans for the winters prior to the Civil War.[31] Active stock companies were popular in Providence, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and several other cities.[32] Long after the number of

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[30]See Robert Sherman, Chicago Stage: Its Records and Achievements (Chicago: Robert L. Sherman, 1947) which surveys Chicago theatre 1834-1871.

[31]The most complete history of New Orleans theatre is John S. Kendall, The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1952). See also James H. Dorman, Jr., Theatre in the Ante-Bellum South 1815-1861 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967) which summarizes growth of St. Louis and New Orleans theatres in pre-Civil War years, pp. 223-230. Dorman describes Ben De Bar's rise as the "most important theatre manager in the south" (p. 225). Dorman's sources indicate that theatrical activity in New Orleans continued despite the War. Other studies of theatre in the southern states are James H. Dorman, "Thespis in Dixie: Professional Theatre in Confederate Richmond," Virginia Cavalcade, 28 (Summer 1978) :5-13 which describes the maintenance of three playhouses in the Confederate Capital during the war years. See also Joseph Patrick Roppolo, A History of the English Language Theatre in New Orleans, 1845-1861, unpublished Ph.D. Disseration, Tulane University, 1950.

[32]Theatre in Providence is described in George O. Willard, History of the Providence Stage 1762-1891 (Providence: News Company, 1991). San Francisco theatre events, including a listing of plays, dates, theatres and playwrights represented during the 1850s is found in Joseph Gaer, ed., The Theatre of the Gold Rush Decade in San Francisco (New York: Burt Franklin, 1935. Reprinted in 1970). See also Douglas McDermott, "The Development of Theatre on the American Frontier, 1750-1890," Theatre Survey, 19 (1978) :63-78, for discussion of three-phases

(Footnote Continued)

stock companies had diminished, players who had spent years in such theatres spoke appreciatively of the fine training ground provided by the stock operations.

Two developments were to have a negative impact on the stock company tradition. First the star system, which had its genesis in the visits to America of famous English actors such as George Frederick Cooke in 1810, Edmund Kean in 1820 and 1825, William Charles Macready in 1826 and 1843, and Charles and Fanny Kemble in 1832. Theatre managers discovered that the presentation of a star performer boosted ticket sales considerably, and gradually that star system eroded the stock company organizations. The tendency for American audiences to respond enthusiastically to visiting actors and actresses from England and Europe resulted in part from the "cultural inferiority complex" attributed by many to the

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(Footnote Continued)
of theatrical development in the various frontier regions. Phase one was the strolling players and small family touring groups of 8-10 persons; phase two characterized by larger repertory companies (12-24 persons) touring a circuit of towns; and phase three typified by larger companies in larger urban playhouses with long periods of residence and less touring. See also Constance Rourke, Troupers of the Gold Coast of the Rise of Lotta Crabtree (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1928) which provides descriptions of traveling performers and working conditions in the California mining camps of the 1850s and 1860s. Also Henry Pitt Phelps, Players of a Century: A Record of the Albany Stage (Albany, 1880. Reissued 1972 by Benjamin Blom, Inc.).

populace of the new nation. A strong preference for the "imported" star developed.[33]

The visiting stars typically played several performances in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and other cities. In each city the resident stock acting company played supporting roles to the repertoire of leading roles each visitor brought with him or her. This had three obvious effects: it reduced the prestige of the resident stock actor and actress to a supporting position, the very large salaries demanded by stars affected resident company salaries adversely, and the system required that the plays presented be those which the visitor was prepared to perform. In most cases the plays were classics, often those by Shakespeare.[34] The aura of superiority surrounding the visiting foreigners may have reduced the possibility for many talented American performers to achieve equal degrees of prestige. In fact, during the nineteenth century, most of those Americans who did achieve major celebrity in the theatre did so only after performing in London, where, if they were well-received, their right to stardom was authenticated for American audiences.

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[33]Wilson, p. 60.

[34]Hughes, pp. 97-139.

The two major native-born American stars to emerge prior to 1850 were Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman. Other stars such as Junius Brutus Booth, Mary Ann Duff, and Thomas Abthorpe Cooper were born in England. William B. Wood was born in Canada. James H. Hackett, a contemporary of Forrest, was born in the United States, but his popularity was eclipsed by Forrest.[35]

Forrest first achieved success in England between 1836 and 1845, and perhaps his experience set the precedent for later Americans who found the need to obtain approval from London audiences and critics. Forrest was known mostly for his Shakespearean roles, and during the prime of his popularity a feud developed between himself and English actor Charles Macready. Followers of the two actors disputed the respective merits of each man, and eventually the debate had tragic

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[35]The career of Junius Brutus Booth is summarized in Hewitt, pp. 98-103. Cooper's work is described in Wilson, pp. 32-33, and in Hewitt, pp. 42-43 and pp. 72-76. Mary Ann Duff's success as a tragic actress is discussed in Wilson, pp. 93-94; see also Johnson, American Actress and Garff B. Wilson, A History of American Acting. William B. Wood's career as actor and manager is mentioned in Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre, p. 92. James H. Hackett, a comic actor best known for portrayals of Falstaff and native yankee characters, is described in Hewitt, pp. 123-124, and in Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre, pp. 92-93.

results in the loss of twenty-two lives during the notorious Astor Place riot of 1849.[36]

Charlotte Cushman began as a singer, but her voice failed and she turned to a career in dramatic acting. She was established as a leading lady by 1848, and from 1849 to 1875 she reigned as this country's major tragic actress. Miss Cushman was tall and somewhat masculine in appearance and bearing, a factor in her success, perhaps. Richard Moody speculates that these qualities helped to protect her from the scorn assumed to have accrued to more attractive actresses whose personal morals may have been held suspect.[37] In addition, Cushman's masculinity served her well in the custom of the time to have women play certain male roles (Romeo, Hamlet, and others).

The popularity of stars encouraged tours to cities where audiences filled the theatres to see these famous

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[36] Account of the Terrific and Fatal Riot at the New York Astor Place Opera House (New York: H.M. Ranney, 1849). Also described in Hewitt, pp. 147-152; Hughes, pp. 150-151; Wilson, pp. 85-87; Mordden, pp. 17-18.

[37] Moody, Richard. "American Actors and Acting Before 1900: The Making of a Tradition." The American Theatre: A Sum of Its Parts (New York; Samuel French, Inc., 1971), p. 52. Moody's speculation assumes that attractive actresses were socially spurned. This study will later discuss that attitude as a generalization for which there is not sufficient evidence.

performers. In these towns with established stock companies, the star performer arrived and played with the resident stock actors and actresses. During the 1860s stars began to travel with other performers who played some of the supporting roles while resident stock company members filled the remaining parts. Gradually this arrangement gave way to the "combination company," the term which identified a single production touring from city to city with the same cast.[38] Production costs for the combination company were less than for maintaining a resident repertory company, and the manager who booked a combination company could count on higher profits owing to the public's eagerness for visiting performers. This trend encouraged many performers to tour in plays which provided a starring vehicle for their talents, and a number of actors and

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[38]Poggi, Jack. Theatre in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870-1867 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 4-8. Poggi summarizes the evolution from visiting star to combination company. See also Alfred L. Berheim, The Business of the Theatre: An Economic History of the American Theatre 1750-1932 (New York: First published in twenty consecutive issues of Equity Magazine, July 1930-February 1932. Reissued 1964 by Benjamin Blom, Inc.), pp. 26-27.

actresses committed years to touring again and again in the same production.[39]

The combination company system began to impact negatively on the resident stock company tradition. The numbers of stock companies began to decline, and by 1880 only a few stock theatres were in operation.[40]

Another influence on American theatre in the nineteenth century was, of course, the audience which supported that theatre. Many theatre historians and critics have reflected on the unique social and philosophical characteristics of the American audience of that time. Jacksonian democracy in the first half of the century encouraged theatre for the masses, theatre for the Common Man. David Grimsted (among others) has pointed to the optimistic view of life during the period from 1800 to 1850 as consistent with the moral order found in typical nineteenth-century American melodrama. In those plays the clear-cut distinction between vice

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[39]Joseph Jefferson played Rip Van Winkle in various cities for fifteen years. Maggie Mitchell, whose career is described in Chapter Four, toured thirty-six years in Fanchon, The Cricket and other favorite roles. A later example was James O'Neill, who first performed the leading role in The Count of Monte Cristo in 1883, and then virtually devoted decades to touring in the part.

[40]Poggi, p. 7. Also Berhnheim, pp. 30-31.

and virtue, the protection of home (and symbolic feminine chastity), and content concerning social ills (unfair employment practices, financial scams, child abuse, health problems, etc.) all serve as reflections of the audience's mentality. The tendency to stereotype characters, especially with regard to ethnic types and economic class types, probably mirrors social attitudes common at the time. The parallel between the melodrama and the attitudes and beliefs of the American audience assured that such plays attained general popularity.[41] Revivals of the classics persisted as well and met other audience needs.

Section Two: The Social Context

The nature of the nation in 1850 was defined by its traditions, its important recent history, and its population. Just prior to 1850, two important events occurred which impacted in different ways on the subject of this study.

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[41]Grimsted, David. "Melodrama as Echo of the Historically Voiceless." Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History, edited by Tamara K. Hareven (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), pp. 80-95. Also, a thorough study of the relationship between melodrama and society is David Grimsted, Melodrama Unveiled: American Theatre and Culture 1800-1850 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968).

In 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York, the first women's rights convention, organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, gave formal impetus to slow but eventual reform in legislation favoring equal rights for women. In the same year New York passed the first state law permitting women to control their own real and personal property while married; and by 1860 fifteen of the thirty-five states had passed similar legislation.[42] These events of 1848 heralded a change in laws and attitudes that eased the possibility for women to handle their own money, make their own investments, and manage their own businesses and careers.

The second significant event was the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, California, in 1849, and the

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[42]Discussion of the Seneca Falls Convention and its effects is found in Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Revised Edition, 1975); a more recent interpretation of the women's rights movement in mid-nineteenth century is in Catherine Clinton, The Other Civil War (New York: Hill & Wang, 1984), Chapter 5, pp. 72-91. See also Norma Basch, In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage & Property in Nineteenth Century New York (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1982) for study of ideological conflict surround legislation in New York over property rights for women. Basch discusses parallel legislative developments in other states, provides a summary overview of the historical background of women's property laws, and makes a detailed study of the 1848 New York statute and similar laws passed elsewhere granting women rights to control their property.

resulting "Gold Rush." The rapid flow of hopeful prospectors to the west coast changed population patterns across the continent, accelerated western urban growth and spawned new rural communities and transient mining camps where performers found eager audiences during the 1850s. The discovery of gold in 1849, and subsequent opening of gold and silver mines in various western territories, created an economic boom in the early 1850s which resulted in more affluence in the general population, and the opportunity to tour in western mining areas attracted many actors and actresses.[43]

During the 1850s the westward expansion encouraged continuing improvement of transportation, both by waterways and by railroad. The increased availability of ever-improv- ing transportation throughout the 1850s

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[43]Standard histories of the Gold Rush are Rodman Wilson Paul, Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), and William S. Greever, The Bonanza West: The Story of the Western Mining Rushes, 1848-1900 (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963). A record of plays produced in San Francisco during the Gold Rush is in Joseph Gaer, ed., The Theatre of the Gold Rush Decade in San Francisco. See also Constance Rourke, Troupers of the Gold Coast and Douglas McDermott, "The Development of the Theatre on the Frontier" and explanatory information in Footnote 27. Also Douglas McDermott, "Touring Patterns on California's Theatrical Frontier, 1849-1859," Theatre Survey 15 (May 1974) :18-28.

and 1860s helped performers in their touring patterns. Prior to the Civil War, for instance, the entire company working for Ben De Bar in St. Louis traveled by river boat to its winter season in New Orleans. The gradual improvement in trans-continental transportation made tours in the west easier for performers like Laura Keene who made her home in the east. During the 1860s the combination company, a traveling production which moved from town to town by rail, its complete cast touring together, became feasible due to increased rail service.[44]

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[44]Development of railroads has been the subject of numerous studies. Good general overviews can be found in such standard histories as John M. Blum et al., The National Experience: Part Two, A History of the United States Since 1865 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1981), see Chapter 18, pp. 452-458. Specific railroad history in the context of general developments in national transportation is in George Rogers Taylor, The Transportation Revolution 1815-1860 (New York, Evanston and London: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1951. Reprinted 1968), which surveys expansion of river steamboats in the East, the Mississippi Valley, Great Lakes regions, and the far west (pp. 58-67) and discusses the growth of the national railroads (pp. 74-103) and provides bibliographical resources. For a discussion of the integration of rail lines into a national rail network between 1861 and 1890 see George Rogers Taylor and Irene D. Neu, The American Railroad Network (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956). See also Stewart H. Holbrook, The Story of American Railroads (New York: Bonanza Books, Crown Publisher, 1947), and John F. Stover, The American Railroads (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961). The relationship between expanded rail service and

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Throughout the nineteenth century, continuing streams of immigrants profoundly increased population clusters in the cities. Some immigrants moved west, mostly to try their luck at farming. In the 1850s, German and Scandinavian immigrants tended to move to the upper midwestern part of the country, but the bulk of the newcomers settled in the industrial states in the east. Immigration had important effects between 1850 and 1860. Census data shows that mass immigration hit a peak in numbers in the early 1850s. The Eighth Census (1860) provides a table indicating numbers of alien passengers arriving in the United States in 1844 as 73,615. The same table shows the total number arriving in 1851 as 379,466, and in 1854 a total of 427,833 people arrived. Numbers then began to decrease until 1860, when 153,640 arrivals are recorded.[45] As cities

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theatrical touring is discussed in Bernheim, pp. 19-20; also see Philip C. Lewis, Trouping: How the Show Came to Town (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973) for survey of touring companies & stars from the arrival of the Hallams in Williamsburg, 1750, to touring companies in 1905, with description of railroad travel and hardships in Chapter 6, pp. 106-113.

[45]Statistics of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns and Being the Final Exhibit of the Eighth Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866) p. 520. A number of sources provide interpretations of immigration and its impact. For example, a thorough study is Marcus Lee Hansen, The
(Footnote Continued)

grew in population, absorbing the new immigrants during the early 1850s, the demand for entertainment grew, and of course among the newcomers were actors and actresses seeking work in the expanding American theatre. In 1856, William J. Bromwell published a study of immigration based on data from State Department reports and ship-passenger records. Bromwell's book contains tables summarizing the numbers of male and female immigrants arriving from December 31, 1840, through December 31, 1855, classified by occupation. Bromwell's data indicates that from 1840 to 1855 a total of 329 actors and

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Atlantic Migration 1607-1860 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Brothers, 1940. Reprinted 1961) which discusses motives for migration changing patterns, and details of immigration to U.S. during 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. A study focused on the relationship between migration and urbanization is David Ward, Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). A well-documented summary of nineteenth-century immigration and its positive impact on the national economy is Stanley Lebergott, The Americans: An Economic Record (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984). See also Oscar Handlin, Immigration as a Factor in American History (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1959), and John Higham, Send Them to Me: Immigrants in Urban America, Revised Edition (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984). Essays exploring the cultural impact of mass immigration are collected in Henry Steele Commager, ed., Immigration in American History: Essays in Honor of Theodore C. Blegen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961).

actresses were reported as arriving. The largest influx of actors (73) and actresses (25) arrived in 1850.[46]

Jacksonian democracy of 1850 was characterized by growth, and by tensions born of contradiction. The post-Revolutionary decades had seen development in the young country of attitudes supported by laws that offered the white male portion of the population the right to vote and to hold elected office without the European restrictive requirement of property ownership. North Carolina was the last state to remove property ownership as a requirement for voting, a change which was effected by law in 1856.[47] The move to liberal and progressive legislation for white males was dramatically contrasted by continuing slavery for male and female

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[46]Bromwell, William J. History of Immigration to the United States 1819-1855 (New York: Redfield, 1856. Reprinted 1969 by Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, New York).

[47]For a summary of changes in voting laws see Kirk H. Porter, A History of Suffrage in the United States (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969. Original copyright 1918 University of Chicago), which provides a table on page 110 showing duration of laws in the states which limited voting rights to property-owning, tax-paying male citizens. A more recent study of suffrage laws is Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy 1760-1860 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) which provides detailed study of the evolution from Colonial property-owning requirements for voting to the abolition of such restrictions by the eve of the Civil War.

blacks in the south and by the failure to offer white women the same rights enjoyed by white men.

Another tension existed between the lives of the majority of women and the cultural ideal for women, the "cult of true womanhood," which persisted throughout the nineteenth century. Barbara Welter's classic and often-quoted essay on this ideology describes society's expectations that women display four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.[48] Rooted in old European customs and attitudes, this ideal held that the female, because of assumed innate differences from the male (including numerous limitations in ability, strength, intellect, judgement, and emotional stability), was by her nature intended to occupy a "sphere" separate from the male world of commerce, business, politics and professional pursuits. Many contemporary scholars have discussed the reality of life for women in the nineteenth century, emphasizing that for a vast number of women this "belle femme" role of the weak woman dependent for economic support and social

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[48]Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (Summer 1966) :151-174. Welter studied women's magazines, novels and other publications, and personal diaries, memoirs, and other personal papers, which provided insights into societal views of women and women's expectations for themselves.

position on a stronger male partner/protector was simply not a possibility.[49] Those women who constituted the poor and the working-class portion of the total population of women were ignored in this prescriptive concept. The ideal woman, by necessity, had to be affluent enough to be professionally or occupationally idle. Her chief responsibility was the management of home and children. Since domestic service was one avenue open to women for employment, there were ample numbers of servants available for those who could afford to hire them, so there is some debate as to whether the actual work of a nineteenth-century "lady" running her household was comparable to the work of a contemporary woman doing her own housework.

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[49]An excellent overview of recent works related to women's work, the "private sphere and public sphere" concepts is Recent United States Scholarship On The History of Women by Barbara Sicherman, E. William Monter, Joan Wallach Scott and Kathryn Kish Sklar (American Historical Association, 1980). This publication summarizes recent research in Women's History and provides an excellent annotated bibliography. Other specific works which are helpful include Barbara J. Harris, Beyond Her Sphere: Women and the Professions in American History (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978); Susan Estabrook Kennedy, If All We Did Was to Weep at Home: A History of White Working-Class Women in America (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1979); Nancy Woloch, Women and the American Experience (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

Since this study deals with women employed in the theatre, and since many of the actresses whose careers will be described were married women, societal attitudes towards both employment for women and marriage must be mentioned. The "cult of true womanhood" dictated that if a woman was employed, this was to be temporary until she could be properly married and taken care of by a man. In many cases, women with promising beginnings to their careers gave up employment when they married; undoubtedly many had to give up working to avoid "embarrassment" for their husbands. The pattern for actresses seem to be different. Biographical materials researched for this study indicate that many of the women active in nineteenth-century American theatre were married. Many of them were widowed and married again. Many of them divorced and married again. Some had multiple divorces. Anne Hartley Gilbert's autobiography (published in 1901) states in the context of discussing the first production of Caste in 1867: "By the way, the modern talk about marriage interfering with an actress' popularity does not seem to apply to those old days. All of us in this cast were married women, and no one valued our work the

less."[50] In mid-nineteenth-century America divorce was another contradiction of the ideal. The change in laws permitting married women to control and actually own their own monies and real estate simplified divorce and made possible the termination of an unhappy marriage for a woman who could earn her own living. Actresses, like other women, did obtain divorces. But because journalistic practices were different in the 1850s and 1860s than they are today, there was little publicity given to personal scandal. An exception in the theatrical world was the coverage given to the divorce case of Edwin Forrest and Catherine Sinclair. Forrest was the major American male stage star at the time he and his wife began divorce proceedings, each filing suits against the other. The trial began in December, 1851, and the Forrests charged each other with adultery, which captured the interest of the press and the public. Subsequently, Forrest appealed the judgement, which favored his wife, and the appeal proceedings lasted for sixteen years. Less flamboyant divorce proceedings among theatre people attracted little attention.

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[50]Gilbert, Anne Hartley, Edited by Charlotte M. Martin. The Stage Reminiscences of Mrs. Gilbert (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1901) p. 96.

Employment for women was another contradiction of the ideal, and during the 1850s and 1860s, and in the later decades of the last century, many women worked for a living. As mentioned earlier, domestic service was a traditional type of employment available for lower-class women. Service in a home was regarded as acceptable within the vision of the ideal since the employed woman directly supported the mission of the "lady" who managed the household. In reality, domestic service was simply the only means for earning money open to many unskilled and uneducated women, and homework, laundering, cooking and child care provided many young immigrants a way to make a living.

In urban areas, other limited forms of employment were available to women. Seamstresses were in demand, along with milliners and other garment workers. Many women worked in their homes, and others sewed in mid-century garment factories. The growth of the cotton industry in the south expanded the milling industries in the north, and factory girls grew in numbers in New England and Atlantic states where textiles were produced.[51]

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[51]A good discussion of working-class women's occupational opportunities is in Barbara Mayer
(Footnote Continued)

In 1845, the New York Tribune ran a series of articles on working women urging that women be permitted to work as sales clerks, an occupation almost exclusively limited to men. Gradually sales-clerk positions were given to women in the 1850s, increasing in the 1860s.

During the 1860s the effect of the Civil War opened new avenues of employment to women. War needs increased opportunities for nurses, and a few individual women established careers as doctors. Women were needed as bookkeepers, and women were hired as office clerks in federal agencies. This began the growth of stenography and office work as a woman's occupation.

Emma Willard's academy for teachers, founded in 1821 and the model for more than two hundred similar schools to be established during the nineteenth century, was the initial institution for training women as elementary and secondary school teachers. Women continued to find employment as teachers in growing numbers

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Wertheimer, We Were There: The Story of Working Women in America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), which also provides an annotated bibliography. A work focused on women at mid-nineteenth century is Catherine Clinton, The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century.

through the 1850s and 1860s so that by 1870 more than half the classroom teachers in the country were women.[52]

The rapid increase in periodical literature in the ante-bellum years provided literate women the opportunity to write. Catherine Clinton notes that the ideal woman concept encouraged the development of magazines which published articles to enlighten and refine the "lady." Some women turned their energies to novels, short stories, and plays, while others became journalists.[53] The opportunities for women writers were limited, and many fine writers were ignored by critics who assumed, as Nathanael Hawthorne quipped, that these were only "scribbling women."[54]

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[52]Clinton, p. 46.

[53]Accounts of women's careers in nineteenth-century journalism can be found in Marion Marzolf, Up From the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1977); also Ishbel Ross, Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women in Journalism by an Insider (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1936). See also Maurine H. Beasley, "Pens and Petticoats: Early Women Washington Correspondents," Journalism History, 1:4 (Winter 1974-75) :112-115; and Maurine H. Beasley and Sheila Silver, Women in Media: A Documentary Sourcebook (Washington, D.C.: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 1977).

[54]Hawthorne used this phrase in a letter to his publisher, William D. Ticknor, in January, 1855. Hawthorne was writing about his plans to continue in his office as Consul in Liverpool, England, and he wrote:

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A very small number of talented women became artists, but this avenue was usually open only to the fortunate who could obtain training through connections provided by a male relative in the arts.[55]

In the success of mid-nineteenth-century actresses lies a dual illustration of the tension between the cultural ideal and reality. First, the actress then, as now, carried with her the onus of social suspicion which dates back to medieval Europe and the vagabond troupes of prostitutes and thieves who performed in feudal castles and townships. Prohibited from performing on the English stage up to and through the reign of Elizabeth I, women first appeared in the English theatre after 1660 when theatres reopened after the Puritan suppression. A dichotomy of attitude attended the success of Restoration actresses in England. Some people believed that the introduction of women to the

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"Besides, America is now wholly given over to a d----d mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash - and should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed." The letter in which this statement appears is in Caroline Ticknor, Hawthorne and His Publisher (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1969. Original copyright 1913 by Caroline Ticknor), p. 141.

[55]Nochlin, Linda, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?", Art News, January 1971, p. 23; see also Clinton, pp. 46-50.

stage improved the morality of the theatre. Others continued to suspect that actresses were morally decadent. But, despite objections, once women began to appear on the English stage, they were thereafter demanded by the audience. Post-Renaissance English audiences and their later American counterparts were not willing to watch a young boy portray the great dramatic heroines.[56] Therefore the theatre needed the services of women, so the fact of gender could work in favor of a talented actress in contrast to the problem gender presented for women in other occupations where the same job could be carried out by a preferred male. Also, for a time during the mid-nineteenth century, American audiences enjoyed the trend of seeing women perform men's roles, such as Hamlet and Romeo.[57] This widespread practice gave women opportunities not available

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[56]See Rosamund Gilder, Enter the Actress: The First Women in the Theatre (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971. Originally published 1931). Gilder traces the history of actresses from Ancient Greece to the career of Madame Vestris in nineteenth-century England.

[57]Discussions of women in men's roles is found in Hewitt, p. 133-134, and in Johnson, p. 59-63. Specific instances of women playing men's roles are found in biographical materials on Charlotte Cushman, Adah Isaacs Menken, Mrs. John Drew, and others. See also Yvonne Shafer, "Women in Male Roles: Charlotte Cushman and Other," in Women in American Theatre edited by Chinoy and Jenkins, pp. 74-81.

to men, for there was no comparable trend to have men play women's roles.

The wish of the American audience to see women playing women's roles insured the second contradiction of the ideal. The actress had to be employed by a theatre in order to play the women's roles, and therefore the employment of women in the theatre was both demanded and accepted by the public.

The nature of the contradiction of the ideal is more complex in view of the fact that a stage career by its very nature provides self control for a woman, rather than dependence on a male. The decision to act on a stage is a decision to publicly display self, which was contrary to the "belle femme" ideal's insistence on reticence and modesty. Furthermore, the woman onstage controls that self-display. The work of a performer is work that is largely self-reliant. One's performance is inescapably and primarily dependent upon one's self.

The women who worked in mid-nineteenth-century theatre did not have the services of casting agents or personal managers, a category of occupations which developed after 1870. Therefore, in order to conduct a career in mid-nineteenth-century American theatre, a woman had to be assertive, self-reliant, and ambitious, characteristics which were quite opposite from the ideal.

Biographical information surveyed for this study indicates that many of the women who worked in the theatre in the 1850s and 1860s came from poor families or were members of theatrical families, or both. Thus, employment in the theatre was consistent with some other patterns of employment for women during the mid-century. There were exceptions in the case of some women, such as Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie, a middle-class woman who turned to the theatre after her husband suffered irreversible economic failure. Many of the actresses who established careers in the 1850s and 1860s were English born and had their first stage exposure in England.[58] Apparently these women believed that there was economic and occupational opportunity in the young American theatre which exceeded possibilities in their native English theatre, and for this reason a number of performers immigrated. Census data indicates that between 1820 and 1860 a total of 588 actors (including women) immigrated to the United States, the larger portion arriving between 1841 and 1850.[59]

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[58]Examples whose careers are described later in this study include Mrs. John Drew, Clara Fisher, Laura Keene, Jean Davenport Lander, and Mrs. J. R. Vincent.

[59]Kennedy, Joseph C.Y. Preliminary Report on The Eighth Census, 1860 (Washington: Government Printing

(Footnote Continued)

Many of the actresses married men who worked in the theatre, and many of these women used their married names as their stage names. For instance, Mrs. J. W. Wallack, Mrs. George P. Farren, Mrs. W. G. Jones, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Mrs. John Wood, and many others, were known by their husband's names. This custom, which was a carry-over from British tradition, gives the impression that at mid-century the women's roles were simply assigned to "an actor's wife." In actuality, these women often maintained their careers independent of their husband's fortunes. Some of them carried through decades the name of a husband who had died, such as Mrs. W. G. Jones, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Mrs. John Drew, and Mrs. J. R. Vincent. Some women established theatre careers which exceeded the success of their actor husbands, such as Madame Elizabeth Ponisi, Maggie Mitchell, and Agnes Booth.

Claudia Johnson's book American Actress summarizes the long disapproval, if not absolute hostility, expressed by American clergy for the theatre during the

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Office, 1862), p. 17. The table citing numbers of aliens ariving in the United States does not specify the number of females and males, only a total number of persons.

nineteenth century.[60] Certainly the attitudes of the church affected the attitudes of many Americans, yet the theatre prospered. Unquestionably, both men and women who worked in the theatre met with social ostracization by some whose social choices were governed by clerical dictum. On the other hand, since most persons who worked in theatres were not born to middle-class families, much less to the country's social aristocracy, I think it is doubtful that these people would have been absorbed into "society" no matter what their occupation. In a time when all employed women were viewed as socially inferior to the "belle femme" wife, the disdain shown to the actress may or may not have differed in degree from the social contempt directed at seamstresses, domestic servants, milliners, or sales clerks. Because an actress was publicly visible, whatever disapproval may have existed could be more visible also.

There is evidence that actresses in the nineteenth-century American theatre were not uniformly excluded from society. Some women, like Mrs. John Hoey and Kate Reignolds, married men from prominent families. Jean Davenport became the wife of a renowned Army General, and after her retirement she occupied a

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[60]Johnson, pp. 3-35.

"conspicuous place in society" in Washington, D.C.[61] In some cases marriage to a non-theatre husband meant retirement from the stage, but many women continued their careers and maintained a non-theatre marriage as well.

During the decades under consideration, 1850-1870, some changes occurred in public attitudes toward the theatre. William Clapp wrote in 1853, "We are happy to record that the profession in America, so far as the respectability of its members in private life is concerned, never stood higher..."[62] Anna Cora Mowatt comments in her Autobiography:

> I cannot close these remarks upon the drama and the stage without a few words on the true position of actors. On this subject very erroneous impressions exist in the minds of those who do not frequent theatres. They are apt to look upon the actor as belonging to a distinct portion of the community, dwelling on the outer side of a certain conventional pale of society, which he is allowed to enter only by courtesy, unless it is broken through by the majesty of transcendent talents.[63]

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[61]Obituary notice, Washington Star, August 3, 1903, 2:4.

[62]Clapp, A Record of the Boston Stage, p. 296-7.

[63]Mowatt, Anna Cora. Autobiography of An Actress; or, Eight Years on the Stage (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1853). Johnson manipulates this quotation to support her contention that the theatre community was a subculture by eliminating the first two sentences and a part of the third sentence. Johnson writes, "The actor,

(Footnote Continued)

In 1869, a letter from an actress who chose to remain anonymous appeared in the New York Times in response to the publication by that newspaper of criticisms of the theatrical profession by Olive Logan. The letter questioned Logan's motives for attacking a profession, suggesting that Logan's limited success as an actress and resulting jealousy may have generated her negative attitudes. In her defense of her profession, this actress gives emphatic evidence of her pride in her profession:

> ...for the stage ... has numbered in its ranks not only the finest female minds, but the most womanly characters united to the highest virtues; in private life, even on thrones, and in lesser history celebrated women have been the exception; on the stage the rule. The theatrical profession is the only one in which our sex have had a chance to immortalize themselves, consequently dramatic annals glitter with the names of dramatic actresses, whose brief hour of glory done have passed from the brilliant footlights to enjoy the quieter light of the peaceful fireside. And that the highest social honors have been bestowed on them can be proved by an English book entitled "Lives of Ennobled Actresses."
>
> Trusting that you will insert this letter in justice to the class of people to which I belong, I remain, very truly yours, AN AMERICAN ACTRESS, Ohio, May 23, 1869.[64]

(Footnote Continued)
she wrote, dwells, 'on the outer side of a certain conventional pale of society... transcendent talents.'", p. 11.

[64] New York Times, May 30, 1869, 5:1.

Fame, celebrity, "transcendent talents," all contributed to the social success of some performers. Joseph Jefferson noted that Charlotte Cushman was socially sought after, and that "the most cultivated society of England and America delighted to entertain her."[65] Anna Cora Mowatt observed in 1853 that:

> The stage, at this moment, is graced by members of the profession who have been the honored guests of nobles, and whom the magnates of more than one land have been proud to welcome at their firesides. The odium which has attached itself to some whose talents were as a brilliant setting which lacked the centre gem of paramount value can cast no more real blemish upon those who have not merited the same reproach than the despotism of one king can darken the reign of his successors.[66]

Kate Ryan recalls in her memoirs of her career as an actress with the Boston Museum that the acting company chose not to mingle with the public. Ryan states:

> Familiarity between players and the public was not tolerated... Our actors avoided publicity. The leading members of the Company were conscious of having won a degree of position in the life of the city, and realized that much of their magnetism depended on maintaining a certain glamour around their personality, which would fade with intimacy. They never attempted to gain any social prominence. They bore

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[65]Jefferson, Joseph, "Rip Van Winkle": The Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson (London: Reinhardt & Evans, Ltd., 1949 originally published 1890), p. 316.

[66]Mowatt, p. 447.

> themselves with dignity and were not indifferent in their bearing toward the public.[67]

Another consideration when attempting to speculate over the degree to which performers may or may not have experienced social ostracism is the working schedule of the actor. Performers in the nineteenth century, as now, worked at night during the hours other workers reserved for leisure and socializing. Certainly the work schedule of performers has always interfered with usual social mingling which constitutes the social life of most of the population. Therefore any attempt to define the causes of an observed social isolation of women and men of the theatre from the mass society of women and men is difficult. Lack of evidence forces speculation over whether the social stigma attached to performers was primarily a cause or a result of the occasions of social detachment of theatre personnel from the larger society. Unanswerable questions emerge in any attempt to determine the degree to which social censure created operational problems for performers, the degree to which theatre persons perceived the stigma, and whether the censure was perceived as damaging. While ample documentation of hostile attitudes toward

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[67]Ryan, Kate. Old Boston Museum Days (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1915) p. 242.

the theatre and its personnel exist, especially in clergical attacks,[68] I found no evidence other than that cited earlier in this chapter to enlighten us about the nineteenth-century performer's perception of and response to such negative attitudes.

The third chapter of this study will provide information on the careers of several actresses and the esteem with which they were held. These women, who are examples of working actresses in the mid-nineteenth century, were respected by their peers, and in most cases conducted their private lives above reproach. There is no evidence that they suffered any meaningful loss of social position because they were actresses. Those actresses who wrote their memoirs do not comment on suffering as outcasts because of their profession. Rather, the truth is evident in the material which follows that the mid-nineteenth-century actress was financially and professionally capable of great success,

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[68]Johnson discusses the censure directed at theatre by American clergy during the nineteenth century, pp. 5-10. A publication which is an example of negative attitudes toward the theatre is William Everts, "The Theatre," in Problems of the City (Chicago: Church and Goodman Publishers, 1866. Examples of statements by clergy include Phineas D. Gurley, The Voice of the Rod (Washington, D.C.: W. Ballantyne, 1865), and Robert H. Hatfield, The Theatre (Chicago: The Methodist Book Depository, 1866).

and she apparently enjoyed self-esteem to a much larger degree than has been commonly acknowledged.

CHAPTER THREE

SALARIES

Information on salaries paid to performers between 1850 and 1870 is extremely limited. I examined the theatre payroll records located in the Rare Books Division of Columbia University Library, the Harvard Theatre Collection, and the Manuscripts Division of the Maryland Historical Society. No other payroll accounts or similar records were located for this study.

The correspondence of actresses which was examined for this study did not contain references to wages or contract arrangements, and the various autobiographies of both men and women performers which were consulted also failed to yield significant salary information.

The data available for this study are summarized chronologically in this chapter. Despite the limited sources extant, the data indicate that salaries for both men and women performers increased between 1850 and 1870, and that the women earned on the average from 50 percent to 95 percent of the men's wages. The overall average for women's wages appears to have been approximately 79 percent of men's wages as actors.

In order to provide a means of comparison between women's salaries and men's salaries, samples representative of the typical weekly payrolls are averaged, comparing the combined women's average wage with the combined men's average wage. The results are not entirely accurate, since at least one theatre paid married couples one wage with no indication of proration between husband and wife. Possibly other theatres followed this practice but did not indicate this in payroll records.

Also, the paucity of data means that this information is at best a basis for speculation. However, the similarity of relative average wages paid to women and to men at different times in different settings supports the inference that women in the theatre fared well economically compared to women in other occupations.

As stated in Chapter One, this study acknowledges that theatre, governed by the dramatic literature it produces, has generally provided more employment for male performers than for female performers because the majority of plays provide more roles for men than for women. Also, dramatic literature provides more principal roles for men than for women, so opportunities for women to be hired in major roles is not equal to opportunities for men to be hired in major roles. Therefore, this study does not assume that equal employment

opportunity existed in nineteenth-century theatre in the sense of equal number of jobs for men and women or equal number of principal roles for men and women. The argument advanced here is based on the observation of wages as tied to degree of job responsibility, or importance of the performer, as reflected in lines of business. The use of the mode to compare the number of men versus the number of women at the upper and lower ends of the wage scales would indicate whether equal number of men and women were hired for the most important lines of business and for the least important lines of business. However, as already acknowledged above, the numbers of women and men hired for the various lines of business depends upon script requirements, and generally plays require more men than women in the major lines of business, which are generally the better-paid positions. The mode would shed little light on whether or not women were paid comparably to men in the same lines of business. Therefore, in the material which follows, the mean will be used as the measure of central tendency in order to compare average women's wages with average men's wages.

I am indebted to Professor John J. McCusker of the History Department, University of Maryland, for providing me with a formula for converting dollar figures representing mid-nineteenth-century salaries into the

approximate 1985 dollar equivalent. Professor McCusker's figures are based on statistics furnished by the United States Department of Labor, specifically the Commodity Price Index for All Urban Consumers for July, 1985. Professor McCusker's data will appear in an article which he is preparing for future publication entitled An Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of Early America. In this chapter, I have included the approximate 1985 equivalent dollar figure for selected salaries. The 1985 figures appear in parentheses beside the original nineteenth-century salary figures.

In the United States in the 1850s and 1860s, women's wages generally were half of wages paid to men for similar work. Most women who were employed during those decades worked at menial jobs which paid very little. In 1845, the New York Tribune printed a series of articles on working women in New York City, estimating the total number of employed women at 50,000. Half of this number were seamstresses, while others worked as bookfolders, factory workers, etc., earning an average wage of $2.00 per week (1985 = $28.30). By 1863, the average women's wage in the country remained at $2.00 per week (1985 = $17.06), and living costs had risen. Women's wages increased by 1870 to an average between $3.00 (1985 = $24.60) and $8.00 (1985 = $65.60) per

week, but again the cost of living was higher. A comparison of women's wages with men's wages in office work is reflected in the 1866 annual salary of $900.00 (1985 = $6,066.00) for women government clerks as compared with twice that amount for male government clerks.[69] The large majority of women working in various occupations in the mid-nineteenth century were earning wages in the lowest wage category, while only a percentage of the male working population fell into the lowest wage category.[70]

Claudia Johnson cites research done by Dr. William Sanger in 1858 which states that women in domestic service at that time earned $5.00 (1985 = $65.05) or less per month.[71] Ten years later, in 1868, an article

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[69]For discussion of women's wages during these decades see Helen Laura Sumner Woodbury, History of Women in Industry in the United States (New York: Arno Press, Inc. Originally published 1910, Washington, Government Printing Office. Reprint Edition 1974), pp. 23-24, pp. 238-239.

[70]Abbott, Edith. Women in Industry, A Study in American Economic History (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1910); pp. 289-304.

[71]Sanger, William, The History of Prostitution: Its Extent, Causes and Effect throughout the World (New York: 1859), pp. 452-73, 527-29. Quoted in Johnson, p. 54. Sanger's study is also discussed in Barbara Wertheimer, We Were There: The Story of Working Women in America. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pp. 102, 103.

in Harper's Magazine reported that milliners were earning $4.00 (1985 = $30.00) to $7.00 (1985 = $52.50) per week.[72] An article in the New York Times in 1869 quotes comparable wages for needle-women who averaged $6.00 (1985 = $47.10) per week, with some women earning up to $10.00 (1985 = $78.50) per week.[73]

Woodbury provides tables of sewing women's wages in Philadelphia in 1863 showing estimated weekly earnings ranging from $2.10 (1985 = $17.85) for those who sewed capes to $4.00 (1985 = $34.00) for dressmakers. Tables for similarly employed women in New York in 1863 show a weekly wage ranging from $2.50 (1985 = $21.25) for vest makers to $8.00 (1985 = $68.00) for the best-paid dressmakers. In 1868 the lowest wage for New York needlewomen was $3.00 (1985 = $22.50) paid to buttonhole makers, while the highest pay went to the best dressmakers who earned $10.00 (1985 = $75.00).[74]

During the mid-nineteenth century the occupation of sales clerk began to become more available to women,

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[72]"Women's Work and Wages," Harper's Magazine, December 1868, p. 667. Quoted in Johnson, p. 54.

[73]New York Times, October 14, 1869, 4:2.

[74]Woodbury, p. 262.

however the hours were long, and again the pay was small. Woodbury provides the following information:

> The Philadelphia Saturday Night asserted in 1866 that in almost every retail establishment in that city it was the custom to procure the services of a young girl six months for nothing under the pressure of teaching her the business - though she was a useful hand at the end of one month - then give her $2 a week for six months and $3 a week the second year, and discharge her the third year to make room for newcomers who cost nothing. It was said $5 a week was the highest rate paid the oldest and best hands in the majority of stores.[75]

Salaries for saleswomen in Boston in 1869 were from $5.00 (1985 = $39.25) to $7.00 (1985 = $54.95) a week, and wages for similar services in New York ranged from $6.00 (1985 = $47.10) to $10.00 (1985 = $78.50) per week for women.[76] Woodbury estimates that the cost of board alone for women living with family members averaged $5.00 (1985 = $39.25) per week, so these wages left workers with little pocket money.[77]

Salaries paid to women in the profession of teaching were also low, considering that educational preparation was necessary for the job. Johnson quotes an article in The Nation, 1867, which states that women

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[75]Woodbury, p. 237. The 1985 equivalents to the wages quoted are: $2 = $13.48, $3 = $20.22, $5 = $33.70.

[76]Woodbury, p. 237.

[77]Idem.

teachers seldom earned over $600.00 (1985 = $4,320.00) per year.[78]

Woodbury's study indicates that women were paid far less than men in the areas of bookkeeping and accounting, and as telegraph operators. For instance, a woman bookkeeper in New York was paid $500.00 per year, while the male who preceded her had been paid $1,800.00 per annum. Wages for women bookkeepers in New York by 1870 were $16.00 (1985 = $131.20) to $20.00 (1985 = $164.00) per week, while men similarly employed received $25.00 (1985 =$205.00) to $40.00 (1985 = $328.00) per week.[79] In the late 1860s, women were hired as telegraph operators with salaries ranging from $30.00 to $50.00 per month; men telegraph operators at the time earned $75.00 per month on the average, with some males earning over $100.00 per month.[80]

Clearly the general trend during the 1850s and 1860s was that women in most trades earned very low salaries, and their wages were much lower than the wages paid to men in similar jobs.

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[78]"A Working Women's Statement," The Nation, 21 February 1867, p. 155. Quoted in Johnson, p. 55.

[79]Woodbury, pp. 240-241.

[80]Idem. Using 1868 as representative of the late
(Footnote Continued)

Data which follow in this chapter show that salary patterns for women who worked in the American theatre during the 1850s and 1860s tended to follow the pattern of wages in general in that women usually were paid less than men, given the same status and line of business in a stock company. However, women in the theatre were often paid more than the minimal working-women's wage, and some women who were able, through talent, industry, and good luck, to achieve renown and popularity with audiences earned wages comparable to those of men of similar achievement.

During the time period under discussion, the wage range for women in the theatre extended from $2.00 per week for a ballet girl or walk-on woman to well over $100.00 per week for a popular performer in a major line of business. Wages for men were similar in range. Additional income was earned by both men and women who were leading performers. Two systems of profit sharing with theatre managers were practiced in the mid-nineteenth century. The shares system operated by a split between visiting star and theatre manager of any excess of revenue over operating expenses. A benefit system

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(Footnote Continued)
1860s, the 1985 equivalents for these wages are: $30.00 = $225.00; $50.00 = $375.00; $75.00 = $562.50; $100.00 = $750.00.

calculated a portion of the gross receipts to be paid to the visiting star. In many cases, benefits and shares were part of the contract between men and women playing leading roles as regular members of a stock company.[81]

The following examples provide evidence that wages in the western, mid-western and southern stock companies were lower for both men and women than wages in the New York and Boston stock companies. Mrs. Gilbert recalls in her memoirs that she and her husband each earned $8.00 (1985 - $109.60) per week in Milwaukee in 1850.[82]

Traveling stock actor Charles A. Krone mentions wages of $10.00 (1985 = $126.40) and $12.00 (1985 = $151.68) per week in 1857-58 at theatres in Dubuque, Peoria, St. Louis and New Orleans. By 1863, Krone earned $20.00 per week (1985 = $170.00) at Ben De Bar's theatre in St. Louis as a supporting player.[83]

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[81]Penny, Virginia. The Employments of Women, How Women Can Make Money, etc., 1870, p. 49.

[82]Gilbert, p. 18. In Autobiographical Sketch of Mrs. John Drew (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1899), Mrs. Drew recalls that in 1833 she and her mother together earned $16.00 per week at the Warren Theatre, Boston. By 1839, as leading lady at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Mrs. Drew (as Louisa Lane) received $20.00 per week, which she recalls as the highest salary known there at the time. Ludlow and Smith paid her $35.00 per week in New Orleans in the mid-1840s.

[83]Krone, Charles. "Recollections of an Old
(Footnote Continued)

The following salary list for the National Theatre, Boston, for the week ending January 5, 1850, provides specific wages paid to both men and women. Two of the men and their wives were paid a joint salary. The 1985 equivalents appear in parentheses.

Men		
J. Vincent & Wife	$ 30.00	($ 411.00)
J. B. Booth, Mr.	20.00	(247.00)
J. Barry	40.00	(548.00)
L. D. Johnson	20.00	(274.00)
L. Johnson	18.00	(246.60)
J. B. Wright	15.00	(205.50)
L. Ring & Wife	13.00	(178.10)
J. Keach	13.00	(178.10)
J. Munroe	9.00	(123.30)
F. A. Murran	9.00	(123.30)
E. Lanford	8.00	(109.60)
E. B. Williams	8.00	(109.60)
H. F. Stone	7.00	(95.90)
J. Flood	5.00	(68.50)
Total	$215.00	($2,945.50)
Women		
Miss Mestayer	$25.00	($342.50)
Miss Woodward	16.00	(219.20)
Miss Western	9.00	(123.50)
Miss Mace	8.00	(109.60)
Miss Mack	4.00	(54.80)
Miss Prott	4.00	(54.80)
Miss Miller	3.00	(41.10)
Total	$69.00	($943.30)

In order to compare women's earnings with men's earnings as shown in the records above for January 4, 1850, and

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(Footnote Continued)
Actor," Missouri Historical Collections, 3:172, 276; 4:212.

in other computations which follow, the joint wages paid to married couples will be omitted from the total salaries and average salaries. This is necessary since there is no way to determine how much of the married couples' combined wages remunerated the women and how much represented wages paid to the men. After this adjustment, the above figures represent earnings of the remaining fourteen men and seven women, with the following total and average wages:

Total Men's Wages:	$172.00	(1985 = $2,356.40)
Average Men's Wages:	$ 12.28	(1985 = $ 168.24)
Total Women's Wages:	$ 69.00	(1985 = $ 945.30)
Average Women's Wages:	$ 9.86	(1985 = $ 135.08)

This demonstrates that the women's average salary was equal to 80 percent of the men's average salary.

By the end of the summer of 1850, the women at the National Theatre experienced an improvement in wages in comparison to men's average wages. The payroll records at the National Theatre for the week ending August 31, 1850, appear below:

Men

T. Barry	$ 40.00	(1985 = $548.00)
J. Prior	30.00	(1985 = 411.00)
G. Spear	25.00	(1985 = 342.50)
J.B. Booth, Jr.	20.00	(1985 = 274.00)
S.D. Johnson	20.00	(1985 = 274.00)
J.B. Wright	15.00	(1985 = 205.50)
J. Ring & Wife	14.00	(1985 = 191.80)
Joseph Pawlin	14.00	(1985 = 191.80)
L. Lake & Wife	14.00	(1985 = 191.80)
G.L. Lee	12.00	(1985 = 164.40)
E.B. Williams	10.00	(1985 = 137.00)
J. Munroe	10.00	(1985 = 137.00)
F.A. Munroe	9.00	(1985 = 123.30)
E. Lanford	9.00	(1985 = 123.30)
R. Mune	7.00	(1985 = 95.90)
J. Flood	6.00	(1985 = 82.20)
W. Foster	3.00	(1985 = 41.10)
Total	$258.00	(1985=$3,534.60)

Women

Miss C. Pope	$ 30.00	(1985 = $411.00)
Mrs. Cruise	25.00	(1985 = 342.50)
Mrs. Reed	16.00	(1985 = 219.20)
Mrs. Vincent	14.00	(1985 = 191.80)
Mrs. Howland	8.00	(1985 = 109.60)
Miss Parker	8.00	(1985 = 109.60)
Miss Mack	4.00	(1985 = 54.80)
Miss Howard	4.00	(1985 = 54.80)
Total	$109.00	(1985=$1,493.30)

These figures provide the following comparisons (excluding married couples Ring and Lake):

Total Men's Wages:	$230.00	(1985 = $3,151.00)
Average Men's Wages:	15.33	(1985 = 210.02)
Total Women's Wages:	$109.00	(1985 = $1,493,30)
Average Women's Wages:	13.62	(1985 = 186.59)

At this time the women's average wage was 89 percent of the men's average wage.

In early 1851 some members of the National Theatre

company received reductions in their pay. The reasons for this are not indicated in the payroll records. The salary records during January 1851, through February 22, 1851, show the following wages:

Men

J. Barry	$ 30.00	(1985 = $420.00)
J. Prior	25.00	(1985 = 350.00)
G. Spear	25.00	(1985 = 350.00)
J.B. Booth	20.00	(1985 = 280.00)
S.D. Johnson	20.00	(1985 = 280.00)
J.B. Wright	15.00	(1985 = 210.00)
J. Ring & Wife	14.00	(1985 = 196.00)
Jos. Pawlin	14.00	(1985 = 196.00)
L. Lake & Wife	14.00	(1985 = 196.00)
G.L. Lee	12.00	(1985 = 168.00)
E.B. Williams	9.00	(1985 = 126.00)
J. Munroe	10.00	(1985 = 140.00)
F.A. Munroe	9.00	(1985 = 126.00)
E. Lanford	9.00	(1985 = 126.00)
R. Mune	7.00	(1985 = 98.00)
J. Flood	6.00	(1985 = 84.00)
Harkins	3.00	(1985 = 42.00)
Total	$242.00	(1985=$3,388.00)

Women

Miss C. Pope	$ 30.00	(1985 = $420.00)
Miss Cruise	20.00	(1985 = 280.00)
Miss Reed	16.00	(1985 = 224.00)
Mrs. Vincent	14.00	(1985 = 196.00)
Miss Howland	8.00	(1985 = 112.00)
Miss Parker	8.00	(1985 = 112.00)
Miss Mack	4.00	(1985 = 56.00)
Total	$100.00	(1985=$1,400.00)

Excluding the married couples, the fifteen remaining men and seven women in the company earned the following:

Total Men's Wages:	$214.00	(1985 = $2,996.00)
Average Men's Wages:	14.26	(1985 = 199.64)
Total Women's Wages:	$100.00	(1985 = $1,400.00)
Average Women's Wages:	14.28	(1985 = 199.92)

Thus, in the period from January 1850, to the end of February 1851, the women in the National Theatre, Boston, experienced an improvement from 80 percent of men's average wages to a few cents above equal average wages as shown above.[84]

Another source of limited information is the Daily Cash Book of Barnum's Museum, Philadelphia, for 1851. Many entries do not carry titles or first names to distinguish the men from the women, and in several cases the entries indicate two persons with the same surname, but it is not possible to determine if these are married couples or relatives. There is an indication that Miss Fisher (her title is included) was paid $40.00 (1985 = $560.00) per week from Monday, January 20, 1851, through the date of last entry, Monday, April 28, 1851. The second highest salary was paid to Mueller, perhaps a man, although no title is included, who earned $38.00 (1985 = $532.00) during the period recorded. Barnum's company was a large one, and Miss Fisher and Mueller were paid far above the company average. On January 20, 1851, the total payroll was $78.82 (1985 = $1,103.48)

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[84]The Salary Book for the National Theatre, Boston, is in the Manuscripts Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The first entry is dated April 4, 1849, and the last entry is dated March 1, 1851.

for fifty-five persons, for an average of $10.52 (1985 = $147.28). The total payroll on April 28, 1851, was $631.82 (1985 = $8,845.48) for fifty-eight persons, for an average of $10.89 (1985 = $152.46).[85]

Some information on wages paid to women and men in Baltimore theatres is found in the correspondence of John Thompson Ford, who managed the Holliday Street Theatre and other theatres during the 1850s and 1860s. In his letters to John B. Wright, who apparently functioned as an agent arranging contracts between Thompson and performers, salaries for actors and actresses are mentioned.[86] In an undated letter, Thompson asks Wright to verify whether Mrs. Bowers will accept "two thousand dollars for ten weeks [work] in Baltimore and Washington." He adds that he plans to invest in advertising to promote Mrs. Bowers, and he hopes that she will become "a favorite" whom he can pay more. In a letter dated June 6, 1859, Thompson writes, "...Secure Miss Skerritt

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[85]The Daily Cash Book for Barnum's Museum, Philadelphia, is in the Manuscripts Collection, Harvard Theatre Collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[86]Correspondence of John Thompson Ford is in the Research Library of The New York Historical Society, 77th Street and Central Park West, New York City. Ten letters are in the file, apparently written from 1858 to 1867.

by all means even at her terms but first endeavor to do so for $200 [1985 = $2,576.00] and one one-third benefit." On April 11, 1867, Thompson asked Wright to offer the Worrell sisters" 20 percent + one-half benefit ... which will pay them from 5 to 700 dollars [1985 = $3,600 to $5,040] per week." The letter continues indicating that Thompson can pay the Worrell's more if they demand it, and he also says, "... I can take them with or without Mr. Donnelly - rather have them without him if agreeable."

In contrast to these offers to Mrs. Bowers, Miss Skerritt, and the Worrell sisters, averaging $200-$250 per person per week, Thompson's mention in this correspondence of salaries for men indicates that men were not necessarily earning as much as some women in the theatre. In a letter dated July 21, 1858, Thompson states that he will pay Mr. Davidge "... fifty [1985 = $65.05] and *no* benefit" for four weeks work. A letter dated July 15, no year indicated, mentions hiring Mr. Clark, "... an excellent utility man," for eight dollars a week. In the same letter is a reference to considering hiring Mr. Harrison and his wife, Miss Parrington, for $35 per week for both. The letter also discussed the drinking problem of an actor named Perry, whom Thompson was considering for $25 per week with a one-third clear benefit.

The Thompson correspondence supports the contention that lines of business determined salaries, and that some women in major lines of business earned substantial salaries.

Odell's chronicles provide bits of information on salaries paid to members of New York stock companies during the 1850s and 1860s. For instance, the salary record for the 1857-58 season at Wallack's was:[87]

Lester Wallack	-	$100.00 (1985 = $1,267.00) + two benefits, one clear half and one third
Blake	-	$80.00 (1985 = $1,011.20) + two-third benefits
George Holland	-	$40.00 (1985 = $505.60) + two-third benefits
H.B. Phillips	-	$25.00 (1985 = $316.00) + one-third benefit
Mrs. Hoey	-	$55.00 (1985 = $695.20) + two clear third benefits
Mary Gannon	-	$35.00 (1985 = $434.00) + one clear third benefit

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[87]Odell, George. Annals of the New York Stage (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 7: 19. Odell cites his source as the salary book of Wallack's Theatre, which had been "in possession of Charles Burnham."

The remaining members of the company, who were supporting players, earned the following salaries:

2 men	-	$30.00 (1985 = $379.20)
1 woman	-	$30.00 (1985 = $379.20)
2 men	-	$25.00 (1985 = $316.00)
1 woman	-	$20.00 (1985 = $252.80)
1 man	-	$10.00 (1985 = $126.40)
3 women	-	$10.00 (1985 = $126.40)
3 men	-	$ 8.00 (1985 = $101.12)
1 woman	-	$ 8.00 (1985 = $101.12)
1 man	-	$ 7.00 (1985 = $ 88.48)
2 women	-	$ 6.00 (1985 = $ 75.84)

Lester Wallack's salary includes remuneration for management duties, which accounts for the high figure in comparison with the rest of the company. Blake, the leading man, was paid much more than Mrs. Hoey, the leading lady. However, when the salaries of the entire company, excluding Lester Wallack's, are averaged, the resulting weekly average for men is $23.71 (1985 = $299.69) per week and the average for women is $18.10 (1985 = $228.78) per week. The women in this company were earning approximately 76 percent of the amount earned by men.

The account book of Werner Shipley, property man at the Holliday Street Theatre in Baltimore, lists

salary information from 1865 to 1868.[88] These records indicate that throughout the period there were more men than women employed at the Holliday Theatre as regular members of the stock company. The women's salaries averaged from 74 percent to 88 percent of the men's salaries. Visiting stars, whether male or female, were paid more than the highest paid resident actors and actresses. However, the wages of male and female resident members of this stock company who played major lines of business were comparable. For instance, the payroll for the week ending March 11, 1865, shows visiting star Mr. McCollom received $75.00 (1985 = $492.75) for the week, while the highest wage paid to a woman (Miss Alice Grey) was $45.00 (1985 = $295.65). The second-highest wages that week were $40.00 (1985 = $262.80) to Mr. Bishop and $35.00 (1985 = $229.95) to Miss Thompson. During the week ending March 25, 1865, McCollom was paid $87.50 (1985 = $574.87) and the next two highest salaries of $50.00 (1985 = $328.50) each were paid to Mrs. Wilkens and Mr. T. A. Hale. By April 8, 1865, McCollom had left the company, and Mrs. Wilkens and Mr. Hale were each paid $50.00 (1985 = $328.50), the

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[88]Shipley's Account Book is in the Manuscript Division of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

highest salaries for that week. Shipley's accounts also indicate that visiting women stars were paid more than male and female stock company members. In 1858, Charlotte Cushman received $200.00 (1985 = $2602.00) per week for her engagement as visiting star.[89]

Another indication of comparability between the salaries of men and women in the theatre is found in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, February 4, 1868:

> Mr. Joseph Jefferson has the reputation of being one of the most financially successful members of the theatrical profession. A large proportion of his wealth was acquired years since in Australia and California. His profits at present average two thousand dollars a week; his "season" is about thirty weeks.
>
> Edwin Booth has the reputation of being the wealthiest member, however, of the American theatrical corps. His season is also about thirty weeks. His average is three thousand dollars a week. His new theatre will not be finished until December. In the interval it is rumored that he will fill an engagement at Pike's Opera House, in this city.
>
> Among other actors who are earning good incomes are Mr. J. E. Owens, whose receipts are $1,000 a night; Mr. Barney Williams, who has already amassed a handsome fortune, and who averages $500 a week, with Mrs. Barney Williams as much more in the season; John Brougham who makes about $800 a week; Mrs. Lander, the same. J. E. Mitchell, who is always, and has been from

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[89]Shipley's Account Book is in the Manuscript Division of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland. Shipley's Book lists various receipts and expenditures during 1858, including the notation of Cushman's salary from April 27 to May 8. More complete salary records are included for the period 1865-1868.

> the first, very successful, makes about $1,500 a week; Lotta, the next most successful actress, a spritely little bit of 'quicksilver,' who has risen into celebrity only within the last two years, makes about $900 a week; J. S. Clarke, about the same, or possibly about $1,000; Mrs. D. P. Bowers, $500; E. L. Davenport, $500; J. W. Wallack, $500; Mr. F. S. Chanfrau, $500; Edwin Adams, $500; J. H. Hackett, $500; Miss Lucille Western, $500; Mr. and Mrs. Florence, $500.[90]

Using the conversion formula to compute the 1985 equivalent to the salary figures above, the following results are obtained:

$3,000	=	$22,590.
$2,000	=	15,060.
$1,500	=	11,295.
$1,000	=	7,530.
$ 900	=	6,777.
$ 800	=	6,024.
$ 500	=	3,765.

Salary records for the early years of Daly's Theatre in New York reveal an interesting increase in the relative wages of women as compared to men's salaries. The payroll book housed in Manuscripts Collection at Columbia University shows the following salaries paid to members of Daly's company on August 21, 1869 (1985 equivalents appear in parentheses):

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[90] Brooklyn Daily Eagle, February 4, 1868, p. 4.

Men		
W. Davenport	$200.00	($1,570.00)
Clarke	100.00	(785.00)
Harkins	60.00	(471.00)
Polk	55.00	(431.75)
Davidge	70.00	(549.50)
Lewis	75.00	(588.75)
Holland	45.00	(353.25)
Rynar	30.00	(235.50)
Jordan	20.00	(157.00)
Beckman	15.00	(117.75)
Chapman	15.00	(117.75)
Egbert	25.00	(196.25)
Stewart	18.00	(141.30)
Peck	12.00	(94.20)
Pierce	8.00	(62.80)
Total	$748.00	($5,871.80)
Women		
Mrs. Jennings	$100.00	($ 785.00)
Gilbert	55.00	(431.75)
Wilkins	30.00	(235.50)
Kiehle	20.00	(157.00)
Andrews	10.00	(78.50)
Norwood & child	10.00	(78.50)
Miss Ethel	50.00	(392.50)
Davenport	50.00	(392.50)
Longmore	50.00	(392.50)
Ames	20.00	(157.00)
Lewis	15.00	(117.75)
Tyson & sister	15.00	(117.75)
Finchette	10.00	(78.50)
L. Edwin	20.00	(157.00)
Alury	8.00	(62.80)
Rowland	8.00	(62.80)
Page	6.00	(47.10)
Mehan	6.00	(47.10)
Donaldson	6.00	(47.10)
Total	$499.00	($3,917.15)

The average men's salary was $49.87 (1985 = $391.47), and the average women's salary was $24.95 (1985 = $195.85), or 50 percent of the men's average wage. The above record is unusual because it shows more women than

men employed at Daly's at that particular time. No play titles or other information appears to explain this departure from the usual employment of more men than women in acting companies. During the following months women gained in salary at Daly's Theatre. From the week ending November 27, 1869, through the week ending January 1, 1870, guest star Mrs. Chanfrau was paid $150.00 (1985 = $1,177.25) per week. By June, 1870, both Agnes Ethel and Miss Davenport were receiving $65.00 (1985 = $533.00) each. At the beginning of Daly's second season, Mrs. Gilbert's salary was increased to $65.00 (1985 = $533.00) per week, Agnes Ethel was paid $125.00 (1985 = $1,025.00) per week, and James Lewis was the highest-paid man at $100.00 (1985 = $820.00) per week.

The payroll at Daly's Theatre for the week ending September 19, 1870, records these salaries (1985 equivalents appear in parentheses):

Men		
Lewis	$100.00	($ 820.00)
Harkins	75.00	(615.00)
Davidge	70.00	(574.00)
Polk	65.00	(533.00)
Mortimer	30.00	(246.00)
Parker	45.00	(369.00)
Holland	45.00	(369.00)
DeVere	40.00	(328.00)
Bascomb	30.00	(246.00)
Mathison	25.00	(205.00)
Browne	25.00	(205.00)
Chapman	16.00	(131.20)
Beekman	16.00	(131.20)
Burnett	15.00	(123.00)
Pierce	10.00	(82.00)
Benieux	25.00	(205.00)
Roberts	55.00	(451.00)
Bowditch	30.00	(246.00)
Appleton	20.00	(164.00)
Total	$737.00	($6,043.40)
Women		
Miss Ethel	$125.00	($1,025.00)
Morant	110.00	(902.00)
Davenport	75.00	(615.00)
Mrs. Gilbert	65.00	(533.00)
Miss Morris	40.00	(328.00)
Deitz	20.00	(164.00)
Newton	60.00	(492.00)
Burke	50.00	(410.00)
Winter	40.00	(328.00)
DeVere	25.00	(205.00)
deLesdernier	25.00	(205.00)
Ames	20.00	(164.00)
Norwood	15.00	(123.00)
Claxton	12.00	(98.40)
Kellogg	10.00	(82.00)
Vollmer	10.00	(82.00)
Finchette	15.00	(123.00)
Sloepel	40.00	(328.00)
Mary Ellen	10.00	(82.00)
Becky	3.00	(24.60)
Lizzie	6.00	(49.20)
Total	$776.00	($6,363.20)

These figures yield an average wage for men of $38.79 (1985 = $318.07) and an average wage for women of $36.95 (1985 = $302.99), or 95 percent of the average for men. Thus, in one year at Daly's Theatre, the women in the company doubled their combined average in comparison to men's combined average wage.

Comparing these figures for 1870 with the salary records discussed earlier for the National Theatre, Boston, for 1850, another apparent aspect of growth in women's salaries appears. The figures quoted earlier in this chapter indicate the women's average wage at the National during the first week of January, 1850, was $9.86 (1985 = $135.08). Twenty years later, the women at Daly's Theatre were earning approximately 267 percent more than earlier actresses in Boston.[91] A comparison of the wages paid to men in the same situations shows a different degree of change. The men at the National Theatre in January 1850, earned an average of $12.28 (1985 - $168.24), and the men at Daly's Theatre in 1870 earned an average of $38.79 (1985 = $318.07) for an improvement of approximately 32 percent.

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[91]This percentage is based on a comparison of the actual nineteenth-century dollar wages. The percentage comparison does not account for changes in dollar value between 1850 and 1870. However, when comparing the 1985

(Footnote Continued)

Actress Olive Logan wrote about her experiences in the mid-nineteenth century theatre, and she included many observations about other performers and their careers. The following statement by Logan supports the contention that men and women in similar lines of business were paid within the same wage range:

> The salary of a leading actor or actress ranges from $40.00 to $60.00 a week. But I know one leading actress in New York who gets $100.00 a week, and two who get $75.00 each. These, however, are peculiar cases; all three being actresses specially attractive for youth, beauty and talent. "Walking gentlemen" or lady will get $20 to $35 a week; "old man" or "old woman" from $25 to $40; while other players of a lower grade of talent than these will get all the way from $25 to $10 a week.[92]

Logan does not state in what year she knew these salaries to be paid. However, assuming that the figures she quotes may have been accurate for 1870, the 1985 equivalents to the figures Logan mentions appear below:

(Footnote Continued)
equivalent figures for these wages, the 1985 equivalent for the 1870 average wage is approximately 227 percent more than the 1985 equivalent for the 1850 average wage.

[92]Quoted from The Mimic World, and Public Exhibitions. Their History, Their Morals, and Effects (Philadelphia: New World Publishing Company, 1871), p. 87.

$100.00	=	$820.00
75.00	=	615.00
60.00	=	492.00
40.00	=	328.00
35.00	=	287.00
25.00	=	205.00
20.00	=	164.00
10.00	=	82.00

The records examined for this study confirm the assumption that stars were paid far more than the average stock company player. For instance, at the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, women stars prior to the Civil War earned the following amounts.[93]

Julia Dean earned $3,613 (1985 = $46,065.75) for two weeks in January, 1854, and $3,924 for an engagement in 1855 (1985 = $48,579.12)

Mrs. Farren received $983.75 for two weeks in November, 1855 (1985 = $12,178.83)

Charlotte Cushman was paid $5,310 for a two-week appearance, 1858 (1985 = $69,983.10)

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[93]These salary figures for women and men are in John S. Kendall, The Golden Age of New Orleans Theatre (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), pp. 297-315. Kendall does not cite sources for the information. Salary figures appear for the St. Charles Theatre, but not for other New Orleans theatres discussed in the book.

Avonia Jones, a young new star, earned $953.75 for two

weeks in January, 1859 (1985 = $12,284.30). The salary figures for male stars appearing at the same theatre during the same years is comparable:

Peter Richings earned $289.42 for one week in December, 1854 (1985 = $3,690.11)

James E. Murdoch was paid $1,124.37 for two weeks in February, 1855 (1985 = $13,919.72)

Edwin Booth, then a very young actor, received 710.62 for ten days' work in 1856 (1985 = $8,953.81)

Henry Placide was paid $1,000 for a two-week engagement in 1857 (1985 = $12,270.00).

Stars on tour in western states also earned high salaries. Olive Logan stated that she made $1000 per week touring prior to 1871.[94] An article about Adah Isaacs Menken in the Boston Globe, November 30, 1890, describes Menken's career and includes that statement that Menken netted $30,000.00 (1985 = $255,000.00) touring in Mazeppa in California coal mining camps in 1863. According to this article, Menken earned an average of $500.00 (1985 = $4,250.00) per performance.

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[94]Logan, p. 88.

An interesting insight into the kinds of salary disputes which occurred during the period under study is provided by records and correspondence housed in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, concerning a lawsuit filed by actress Lucy Cutler against Mrs. Garrettson, the lessee and manager of the Walnut Street Theatre.[95] Cutler had been hired to appear at the theatre in October, 1864, apparently as a replacement for a woman who was ill. After the first few performances, Cutler was asked what salary she would require to continue. The records do not clearly indicate how long Cutler actually continued to work at the Walnut Street Theatre. However, she apparently was not employed there for the remainder of the season. Cutler's claim against Garretson was for $500.00 (1985 = $3,400.00) in wages not paid, and the testimony indicates that Cutler had assumed she would be employed at $25.00 (1985 = $170.00) per week for more weeks than she actually was employed. Since there was no written contract, the case rested on testimony about the verbal

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[95] The Lucy Cutler Papers, Society Collection, Manuscripts Division, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA. Photocopies of the 27 items, including correspondence, court depositions, receipts, playbills, were sent to me by the Historical Society Manuscripts Division Librarian.

agreement between Cutler and Garretson. A letter from Cutler to her attorney in November, 1865, mentions a collection of funds made by the lawyer on Cutler's behalf. So apparently Cutler won her lawsuit.

Although the information on salaries paid to men and women in the theatre from 1850 to 1870 is scant, the available data are consistent. Women in mid-nineteenth century theatre in the United States enjoyed considerably more economic equity with men than their female counterparts in other occupations. In some cases, as discussed earlier, when a woman achieved star status, her earnings were comparable to male stars' earnings. Therefore, all matters of talent and opportunity being equal, women in the theatre had better chances for economic equity as actresses than were possible in other employment.

Salary scales in contemporary theatre vary considerably due to many factors, including the number of audience seats available, whether a theatre has not-for-profit status or not, and special considerations such as Off-Broadway location, dinner theatre format, or resident theatre designation. Therefore it is difficult to make accurate comparisons between Nineteenth Century performers' salaries and the wages earned by today's actors and actresses. However, some general comparability exists between the salary scales during the 1850's

and 1860's as demonstrated by the foregoing information in this chapter and the current salaries paid to performers in League of Resident Theatres (LORT Contract with Actors' Equity Association) which are the contemporary theatres which most closely resemble nineteenth-century stock theatres in size and method of operation. The current LORT contract which expires in September, 1988, requires base pay to actors ranging from $321.00 per week to $401.00 per week.[96] The range depends on the size of the audience seating. This base pay figure can be compared with information previously discussed in this chapter for the National Theatre in Boston in 1850 where the leading actress, Miss Mestayer, received a salary equivalent to $342.50 in 1985 dollars, and leading actor J.B. Booth's salary equaled $548.00 in 1985 dollars. The remainder of that company earned salaries which fell somewhat below the 1985 equivalent to current LORT scales.

By the end of the two-decade period under study, 1850-1870, performers salaries had risen, according to information presented earlier in this chapter. Comparing the salary records for Daly's Theatre in 1869, there

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[96]This information was mailed to me by Actors' Equity Association and appears on a photocopy sheet with no title.

is again comparability among the salaries paid to the actors and actresses in major roles with current LORT salaries. Referring to the salary chart on page 64 male actors from Davenport down the list to Holland received salaries comparable in 1985 dollars to current LORT wages, and among the women, Mrs. Jennings and Mrs. Gilbert, Miss Ethel, Miss Davenport and Miss Longmore all earned the equivalent of a current LORT base wage. Other performers in the company, however, earned wages below current LORT scale.

These comparisons are further limited by the exclusion from Nineteenth Century remuneration of insurance and pension benefits, which are part of the current professional contract between performers and professional theatres. Therefore, although no absolute accuracy can be maintained in comparing salaries from 1850 to 1870 with contemporary performers' wages, there does seem to be some degree of comparability which can be a basis for speculation about the degree to which performers remuneration has remained somewhat unchanged over more than a century.

CHAPTER FOUR

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THEATRE, 1850-1870

Occupational opportunity in the theatre has always differed from opportunity in many other kinds of employment since the skills necessary for performance cannot necessarily be taught to or learned equally well by all aspirants, regardless of effort. Clearly, the successful performer must possess, to some degree, the innate talent essential for performance. Therefore, the chance for employment in the theatre cannot be exactly compared to the chance for employment as an unskilled laborer, or as a sales clerk, domestic servant, or sewing person. Biographical information researched for this study indicates that many of those who entered the theatre to earn a living during the first half of the nineteenth century, both in England and in the United States, were persons whose parents were actors. Often these performers began their stage careers as children, learning their craft on the job with little formal instruction or other training.

The actual numbers of people earning a living as actors in the United States during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century were small. As an occupational group, actors composed less than .01% of the workforce in United States in 1850. By 1870, the number of actors and actresses had grown to a total of 2,053, or .016% of the workforce.[97]

Like many other occupations at the time, the status of the occupation of acting was undefined in relation to any concept of professionalism. The last twenty years of the nineteenth century were to see professionalism as an ideal and an identifying prescriptor for occupational behaviors and self-image. Charles McArthur's book Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920 discusses the growth of professionalism in the American theatre, as identified by the formation of networking organizations, standards of professional behavior, and agreements on a theoretical basis for performance. The

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[97]The total number of workers is from Table D75-84 in Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970), p. 134; the number of actors in 1850 from DeBow, Op. Cit., p. 126; the number of actors in 1870 from Walker, Op. Cit., p. 832.

theatre at mid-Century, however, was not yet perceived by its audiences nor by those working as performers, as a profession, in the contemporary sense of the word. Acting was an occupation, a way to make a living.

The decades between 1850 and 1870 saw growth in the numbers of persons who were able to earn a living as performers and who achieved a comfortable degree of success, maintaining employment in the theatre over a period of many years. Many of these people were women. The American theatre from 1850 to 1870 offered both men and women various ways in which to conduct a career. Four specific career patterns emerge from a study of various successful theatre careers maintained by women during this time period: (1) the New York City stock company actress, (2) the actress in residence at one urban stock company, (3) the traveling stock actress, and (4) the actress touring in a star role. Men also followed these four career patterns in the theatre. For example, men who performed primarily in New York stock companies during the period 1850 to 1870 include Lawrence Barrett, F.S. Chanfrau, Charles W. Couldock, Edward Eddy, George L. Fox, George Holland, James E. Murdoch, Henry Placide, James H. Stoddart, and during the 1850s George Vandenhoff. Less common were performers in residence at one urban stock company, however, Lewis Morrison spent nine years at the Walnut Street

Theatre in Philadelphia after the Civil War, and William Warren, Jr., conducted a thirty-six year residence at the Boston Museum. Many men followed the third pattern, traveling from one stock company to another for varying periods of residency; examples include Frank E. Aiken, Frank C. Bangs, George C. Boniface, E.L. Davenport, Owen Fawcett, Frank Mayo, William J. LeMoyne, F.F. Mackay, Benjamin T. Ringgold, Stuart Robson, and John B. Studley. The fourth pattern of the touring performer appearing in particular starring roles is evident in the career of Denman Thompson who repeatedly performed as Joshua Whitcomb during mid-century decades. After 1865, Joseph Jefferson toured successfully as Rip van Winkle, and throughout the 1850s and 1860s Barney Williams toured in favorite roles with his equally popular wife, Maria Pray Williams.[98] Another career category was that

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[98]Biographical information about the careers of Frank E. Aiken, Frank C. Bangs, George C. Boniface, Owen Fawcett, Lewis Morrison, Stuart Robson and Barney Williams is in John Bouve Clapp and Edwin Francis Edgett, Players of the Present (New York: Burt Franklin, Lenox Hill Publishing and Distributing Company. Originally published 1901. Reprinted 1970), and in T. Allston Brown, History of the American Stage (New York-London: Benjamin Blom, Inc. First published 1870. Reissued 1969). Clapp and Edgett also describe the careers of James H. Stoddart, William J. LeMoyne, F.F. Mackay, Benjamin T. Ringgold, and Denman Thompson. Brief career summaries appear in Brown for F.S. Chanfrau, Edward Eddy, George Holland, Henry Placide,

(Footnote Continued)

of the actor/actress-manager who performed and managed a

(Footnote Continued)
George Vandenhoff and John B. Studley. See Montrose J. Moses, Famous Actor-Families in America (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc. First published 1906. Reissued 1968) for information on George Holland, E.L. Davenport, and Joseph Jefferson. Also see Odell for records of New York appearances by many of these actors. Memoirs by actors include James E. Murdoch, The Stage or Recollections of Actors and Acting (Philadelphia: J.M. Stoddart and Company, 1880. Reissued 1969 by Benjamin Blom, Inc., New York), George Vandenhoff, Leaves from an Actor's Notebook (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1860), and Joseph Jefferson, "Rip Van Winkle": The Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson (London: Reinhardt & Evans, Ltd., 1949. Originally published 1890). See also Edwin Francis Edgett, editor, Edwin Loomis Davenport (Ne York: Dunlap Society, n.s., no. 14, 1901). Dissertations on actors include Norman Mackenzie Reid, "Edward Loomis Davenport" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1941), Duane Joseph Fike, "Frank Mayo: Actor, Playwright, and Manager" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebrasksa, 1980), Edward Joseph Golden, "Funny Man And The Snake Shop. The Art of William Warren, Jr., Leading Actor At The Boston Museum" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, 1973), and Douglas Charles McKenzie, "The Acting of Joseph Jefferson, III" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1973). See also Laurence Senelik, "George L. Fox and Bowery Pantomime" in American Popular Entertainment: Papers and Proceedings of the Conference on the History of American Popular Entertainment, edited by Myron Matlaw (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), also D.L. Rinear, "F.S. Chanfrau's Mose: The Rise and Fall of an Urban Folk-Hero," Theatre Journal 33 (May 1981) 199-212. See Hewitt for information about George L. Fox, pp. 206-208, and F.S. Chanfrau, pp. 146-147. Additional informantion on George L. Fox is in Lawrence Hutton, Curiosities of the American Stage (New York: Harper & Brother, 1891). Information about Lawrence Barrett, Henry Placide, Joseph Jefferson, Charles W. Couldock, James Murdoch, George Vandenhoff, William Warren, Jr., and E. L. Davenport is in Wilson, A History of American Acting, and in Moody, "American Actors and Acting Before 1900: The Making of a tradition," in The American Theatre: A Sum of Its Parts.

theatre company simultaneously. Most theatre managers from 1850 to 1870 were men, such as actor-managers Lester Wallack, J.W. Wallack, Jr., John Brougham in New York, William H. Crisp in the south, James H. McVicker in Chicago, Ben De Bar in St. Louis and New Orleans, and John T. Ford in Baltimore and other cities.[99] There were also a number of women who were successful managers.

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[99]The careers of Lester Wallack and his brother J.W. Wallack, Jr., are described in Moses, pp. 195-224. See also Lester Wallack Memories of Fifty Years (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1889) and William Winter, Brief Chronicles (New York: The Dunlap Society, 1889. Reprinted 1970, Burt Franklin, New York). Information on John Brougham is in R.M. Plotnicki, "John Brougham: The Aristophanes of American Burlesque," Journal of Popular Culture 12 (Winter 1978) 422-431, David Stewart Hawes, "John Brougham As American Playwright and Man of the Theatre" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1954). See Jim Gayle Lewis, "The Southern Career of William H. Crisp: Actor/Manager, 1844-1874" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1981). For information on James H. McVicker's management career see Jay F. Ludwig, "James H. McVicker and His Theatre," Quarterly Journal of Speech 46 (February 1960) 14-25; also James H. McVicker, The Theatre: Its Early Days in Chicago (Chicago: Knight & Leonard, 1884). Ben De Bar's management of theatres in St. Louis and New Orleans is discussed in Kendall; see also Winter, Brief Chronicles, pp. 76-78. Both John Brougham and Ben De Bar are discussed in Catherine Mary Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors (Boston: Cupples and Company, 1887). John T. Ford's career is described in a dissertation by his nephew John Ford, "The Theatrical Career of John T. Ford," (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1962).

The next section of this Chapter is a study of the careers of four actresses who are examples of the four acting career patterns; the second section of this Chapter summarizes the work of three actress-managers. In the third section of this Chapter are brief summaries of the careers of twenty-two other women active in the theatre during, and in most cases well beyond, the 1850-1870 time period. As discussed in Chapter One, the women selected as subjects of this study were chosen at random with two considerations: (1) available information, and (2) a career pattern which reflects choice among options. The activity of these women in the American theatre, their longevity in the theatre, and the career options open to them illustrates occupational opportunity for women in mid-nineteenth century American theatre.

Section One: The Actresses

Each of the four careers described in this section is preceded by a general Brief Biography of the actress to provide a sense of the life context in which each career occurred.

All four women were married more than once; three re-married after being widowed. Three of the four women (all but Mrs. Vincent) were mothers. Only one woman was a native-born American (Maggie Mitchell). The other

three women immigrated as adolescents or young women from England. Jones and Reignolds were the children of English actors; Mitchell and Vincent began to act in childhood and adolescence, respectively, and neither had family in the theatre.

All four of these women worked for most of their adult lives and with considerable success. Jones and Vincent continued working until the last illnesses of their lives.

As the information which follows indicates, these women did not have difficulty in finding or maintaining steady employment in the theatre. They each garnered respect and affection from the public, and there is no indication that they perceived themselves as victims of social censure because they were actresses.

MRS. W. G. JONES

Brief Biography

In Chatham, England, on April 15, 1829, Julia Wagstaff was born, the daughter of a bandmaster in the British army. Julia was one of six children in the family, and within a year or two of her birth, the Wagstaffs were transferred to Bermuda. Wagstaff was unhappy in Bermuda, and he applied for permission to retire. When his request was refused, he packed his family and belongings in an open boat in 1832 and successfully sailed to Philadelphia. There he was able

to secure employment as the orchestra leader at the Walnut Street Theatre, and young Julia, age four years, was hired to play the flageolet in the orchestra. Julia's siblings also played various instruments, and as the family grew up, they played concerts at the Walnut Street Theatre under the leadership of their father.

The exact date of Julia Wagstaff's stage debut is uncertain. Some sources indicate that she played children's roles at the Walnut Street Theatre, while others identify specific performances in 1845 as her first acting assignment.[100]

At age sixteen, Miss Wagstaff married actor W. G. Jones who was popular in sailor roles. Mr. and Mrs. Jones continued to perform at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia for several seasons, then they went to Boston and appeared at the National Theatre. In 1850, Mr. W. G. Jones performed at the American Theatre in New Orleans, and in the same year both Mr. and Mrs. Jones appeared at the Charles Street Theatre in that city. In 1852 the couple joined the National Theatre stock

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[100]Clapp, John Bouve and Edwin Francis Edgett, p. 188; The New York Dramatic Mirror, June 22, 1907, 13:3, states that she played the Duke of York to Junius Brutus Booth's Richard III as her first role. In T. Allston Brown, History of the American Stage, p. 197, her first role is identified as Constance in Animal Magnetism.

company in New York. Both Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Jones were regular members of Purdy's company at the National until Mr. Jones' death in 1853.

About a year later, Mrs. W. G. Jones was married again to an actor who specialized in equestrian acts, J. M. Cooke, who was killed in a fall in the theatre. In 1862, Mrs. Jones married her third husband, Benjamin F. Dean, who was the orchestra leader at the Old Bowery Theatre. Despite her remarriages, the actress chose to maintain "Mrs. W. G. Jones" as her stage name throughout her long career. She was widowed a third time by the death of Mr. Dean in 1877.

Mrs. Jones was mother to four children. A son, Ben Dean, became an actor, and he died a few months before his mother. Mrs. Jones was survived by two other sons and one daughter. At the time of her death, she had resided for thirty years in her own home at 214 West Thirty-Seventh Street in New York.

On June 13, 1907, Mrs. Jones died after a few month's illness. Her funeral on June 16, 1907, was attended by a thousand persons, including many notable figures in the theatre.[101]

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[101]Biographical information found in Clapp and Edgett, Op. Cit.; The New York Dramatic Mirror, June 22, (Footnote Continued)

Stage Career

According to George Odell's Annals of the New York Stage and T. Allston Brown's A History of the New York Stage, Mrs. W. G. Jones performed more than 330 roles on the New York stage between 1852 and 1901. Other sources indicate that Mrs. Jones continued to perform from 1901 until a few months prior to her death in 1907. A review of the roles played by Mrs. Jones and the nature of the theatres in which she performed reveal four phases in her career:

1852-1875: Mrs. Jones was a regular member of resident stock companies at the National Theatre (1852-1859), the New Bowery Theatre (1859-1866), and the Old Bowery Theatre (1867-1875). These East Side theatres in New York specialized in presenting popular melodramas, often short plays which were presented on a double or triple-bill with a frequent change of bill each week.

1879-1882: Mrs. Jones was in residence for significantly shorter periods of time and appeared in fewer productions at the Olympic Theatre (September and October 1879), Aberle's Theatre (December 1879, to April

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(Footnote Continued)
1907, 13:3; The New York Times, June 14, 1907, 7:5; Joseph Patrick Roppolo, "A History of the English Language Theatre in New Orleans, 1845-1861" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1950), p. 943.

1880), and the Windsor Theatre (1880-1882). During this time productions usually ran two weeks or longer.

1883-1885: Mrs. Jones toured in New York City in The Romany Rye appearing at the Novelty Theatre (1883), at the Third Avenue Theatre (1884), and at Harry C. Miner's People's Theatre (1885).

1886-1904: Mrs. Jones performed in a few productions in supporting roles. During the seasons of 1901-02 and 1902-03, she was a member of the Empire Theatre Stock Company under the management of Charles Frohman. During 1904, Mrs. Jones traveled with a national touring production of The Pretty Sister of Jose starring Maude Adams.

This study is concerned with the first two decades of Mrs. Jones' first career phase, during which time she was a resident stock actress for several years each at three of the popular New York Theatres, the National, the New Bowery and the Old Bowery. Plays in which she appeared a number of times in the 1850s and 1860s include: An Object of Interest, Guy Mannering, Mazeppa, Stella Delorme (or The Comanche Chief), Jack Sheppard, The Poor of New York, and Cherry and Fair Star. In accord with practice at the time, Mrs. Jones did not always repeat the same role in every production of a given play. For instance, she played Cherry in Cherry and Fair Star at the National in 1858, and in 1862 at

the New Bowery she played Fair Star. Mrs. Jones' stage history is also notable for her several appearances in various productions of Uncle Tom's Cabin. She first performed the role of Crazy Mag in the 1852 production of the play at the National. Subsequently, from July to October of 1853, she played Eliza in the successful long-run production, also at the National. In June 1854, Mrs. Jones played Topsy in a revival of Uncle Tom's Cabin at the National, and she later repeated the role of Eliza in both 1859 and 1865 at the New Bowery.

In some cases, Mrs. Jones did repeat the same role in many productions of the same play. She portrayed Lady Macbeth in eight productions between 1847 and 1870, she repeated the role of Ada McAlpine in Stella Delorme in 1859 and 1860, and she played Zoe in productions of The Octoroon in 1860 and 1965.[102]

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[102]Odell, 6: 238; 7: 142, 238-239, 241, 312-313, 406; 3: 41. Allston Brown records a performance of Lady Macbeth at the Park Theatre in 1847, 1: 67. Alvin F. Harlow in Old Bowery Days: The Chronicles of a Famous Street (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1931), p. 323, states that Mrs. Jones played Lady Macbeth to the Macbeth of Macready at the season opening of the Astor Place Opera House, September 4, 1848. The remaining six portrayals are recorded by Odell as follows: 1860 at the New Bowery, 7: 245; 1866 at the New Bowery, 8: 43; 1866 at the Old Bowery in May, 8: 173; at the Old Bowery in July 1866, 8: 174; in 1869 at the Old Bowery, 8: 466; and 1870 at the Old Bowery, 9: 46.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the stock companies of the nineteenth century played several nights a week to an audience in cities which were relatively small by today's standards; they were able to draw continuing patronage by changing the bill nightly. This required the acting company to prepare a large number of scripts for performance, and within a given week the actors played several different roles. The effect of this working condition, along with the very large theatre auditoriums in New York at that time, and the growth of theatre as a business enterprise created demands on the performers. In order to work in a New York theatre during Mrs. Jones' time, the performer had to:

1 - be capable of acting a variety of styles

2 - be physically and vocally able to perform in a very large hall

3 - be able to perform a variety of roles within a given week

4 - be able to fill a "line of business" (play certain types of roles as needed)

5 - achieve and sustain popularity with the audience

These were the skills which Mrs. W. G. Jones must have possessed in order to achieve her record of success on the New York stage.

As a resident stock actress, Mrs. Jones had frequent opportunity to perform with various stars. One source states that at age sixteen she played with Charlotte Cushman in Guy Mannering. Other records state that when Cushman lost her singing voice, Mrs. Jones sang the lullaby usually sung by Cushman's character in Guy Mannering. Other stars with whom Mrs. Jones performed during the 1850s and 1860s were Junius Brutus Booth, J. W. Wallack, Edward Eddy, Fanny Wallack, G. C. Boniface, and E. L. Davenport.[103]

An assessment of Mrs. W. G. Jones' importance in the American theatre must include a summary of the critical response to her work. During her most active period, from 1850 to 1880, little criticism of popular

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[103]Odell records that Mrs. Jones played Cordelia to the Lear of J. B. Booth in 1848, 1: 67; Odell records appearances with J. W. Wallack at the National in 1858 7: 141-142, and at the New Bowery in 1860, 7: 244, and in 1861 when Mrs. Jones play Desdemona to Wallack's Iago 7: 405. In this latter production, Othello was played by E. L. Davenport. Mrs. Jones appeared many times with Edward Eddy at the New Bowery. Odell records productions with Mrs. Jones and Eddy in 1860, 7: 245, and 330, in 1861 7: 404, in 1862 7: 408, in 1863, 7: 498-499, in 1864, 7: 571-572, in 1865, 7: 662, and at the Old Bowery in 1868, 8: 301. Mrs. Jones played Oliver to the Nancy of Fanny Wallack in an 1852 production of Oliver Twist according to Brown, 1: 301. Appearances with Boniface include a production at the National in 1858, Odell, 7: 141, in 1864, Odell, 7: 572) and as Lady Macbeth to Boniface's Macbeth in 1866, Odell, 8: 43.

production in the East Side theatres was published. However, theatre chroniclers of the time indicate that Mrs. Jones' work was admired and respected. For instance, Mrs. Jones' career is described by T. Allston Brown as follows:

> For eight years she was the leading lady - 1867 to 1875 - of the Old Bowery Theatre, and was considered one of the most reliable and conscientious actresses ever seen in New York . . . . Mrs. Jones is gifted with a commanding person, a voice powerful and melodious, and with all the charms, both of mind and body, that are calculated to make an impression on mankind. Her great natural talents have been perfected by diligent study, and she not only knows but comprehends all the parts she undertakes. A more versatile actress has never been seen on the stage.[104]

Another admirer of Mrs. Jones' work was George Odell, who included a number of statements of praise for Mrs. Jones in his Annals of the New York Stage. For example, in his discussion of the season of 1859-1860 at the New Bowery Theatre, Odell stated, "Mrs. W. G. Jones had been enticed from the Old Bowery; henceforth she graced the new stage through the season, a pleasing presence and an excellent actress."[105] In a later volume of his work, Odell refers to Mrs. Jones' return to the Old Bowery and her long and successful residence

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[104]Brown, p. 309.

[105]Odell, 7: 239.

there with this observation: "Perhaps Mrs. Jones retained her place for so many years because she never had physical beauty to lose; her chief hold therefore was in the excellence of art, which one usually does not lose."[106]

Additional evidence of Mrs. Jones' contribution to the professional theatre by the end of the nineteenth century is provided by John Bouve Clapp and Edwin Francis Edgett in their essay concerning Mrs. Jones which is part of their collection of biographical sketches of well-known theatrical personages, Players of the Present. Clapp and Edgett express admiration for the large number of roles played by Mrs. Jones, the many principal parts she played, and her continuing energy and vitality.[107]

Confirmation of Mrs. Jones' longevity as an actress is evident in newspaper reviews and critical commentary about New York productions in the late 1800s. In 1899, Mrs. Jones received excellent notices in both New York and Boston for her portrayal of the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet starring Maude Adams. One of the most

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[106]Odell, 9: 567.

[107]Clapp and Edgett, pp. 190-191.

respected and literate critics, William Winter, praised Mrs. Jones' performance in this way:

> The best performance of the night was that of the Nurse, by Mrs. W. G. Jones, an actress of the old time, who knows how to act, and who presented a true human being, with the foibles, the time-service, the sophistry, the garrulity, and the worldliness appertaining to the Nurse's nature and station, and who was an element of vitality and force in every situation into which she entered.[108]

In The Boston Evening Transcript the reviewer who attended the same production of Romeo and Juliet when it played in Boston stated: "To our mind out and out the best thing of the evening was Mrs. Jones' Nurse; . . . surely we have never before seen the part done with such unctuous perfection."[109]

In 1904, Mrs. Jones celebrated her seventy-fifth birthday in St. Louis while on tour with Maude Adams in The Pretty Sister of Jose. The St. Louis Globe Democrat review of the play was complimentary, and the following excerpt indicates that Mrs. Jones' work was admired:

> There are three persons in support of Miss Adams who could scarcely be improved upon . . . Mrs. W. G. Jones, approaching "the lonely summit of fourscore," yet strong and sweet of voice, and a truly enthusiastic actress. There were quaint touches of self-consciousness in her work last night - as if she were in fancy drawing the

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[108] The New York Tribune, May 9, 1899, 8:6.

[109] The Boston Evening Transcript, May 23, 1899, 7:3.

> mantle of her years about her. One may only wish that Miss Adams, too, may continue to be young and strong so long a time.[110]

An indication of the esteem with which Mrs. Jones was regarded by her professional peers was her inclusion in the cast of the 1888 production of Hamlet starring Edwin Booth which was mounted as a special benefit to retiring Lester Wallack. The single performance of the play featured major stars in the speaking roles and other stage celebrities in supernumerary parts. Mrs. Jones appeared as an extra in the court scenes, and according to The New York Times she was among those recognized and applauded by the audience. Odell also mentioned this event in Annals of the New York Stage and listed Mrs. Jones among "the most famous group of 'supers' I ever heard of."[111]

In addition to praise for her work, Mrs. Jones received compliments of a more personal nature. In 1897, The New York Times published a tribute to Mrs. Jones for her long years in the theatre.[112] At the time of Mrs.

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[110] The St. Louis Globe Democrat, April 12, 1904, 5:1.

[111] The New York Times, May 22, 1888, 1:7; Odell, VIII, p. 508.

[112] The New York Times, July 11, 1897, Magazine, p. 2.

Jones' seventy-fifth birthday, The New York Dramatic Mirror printed a sentimental summary of Mrs. Jones' career which included the following:

> ... as the leading lady at the Old Bowery she won by her grace and charm of personality the highest admiration of the public, and now that she is in the autumn of her days, there is that in her face which makes every good man fancy that he sees in her a resemblance to his mother.[113]

An article about the Old Bowery Theatre written by J. J. McCloskey in 1896 makes this statement:

> Before closing this article I desire to pay a merited tribute of respect to the genius, character, and virtue of one whose loveliness, affability, and artistic grace stamp her as best beloved of her time. I allude to Mrs. W. G. Jones. Whether viewed as wife, mother, or actress, she was ever true to the duties of each sphere. She was beloved by her associates, honored by her friends, and adored even by the street urchins, whose "Hello, Mrs. Jones!" was ever repaid with a smile and a coin. When the old stock companies were abandoned she was eagerly sought after, and her fame as an actress is as great today as when she played as a child-actress, until she reached the position of leading lady for thirty years in the "Old Bowery."[114]

On the day following Mrs. Jones' death in 1907, The New York Times published a column several paragraphs in length in tribute to her. A long article and

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[113] The New York Dramatic Mirror, April 23, 1904, p. 16.

[114] The New York Dramatic Mirror, Christmas Issue, 1896, p. 52.

photograph of Mrs. Jones appeared in The New York Dramatic Mirror in the issue following her death.[115] These publications noted Mrs. Jones' station in the theatrical community, her family life, and her concern for the welfare of needy actors for whom she managed a charity fund. In addition, mention is made in these articles of Mrs. Jones' participation in professional organizations such as the Professional Women's League, the Actors' Church Alliance, and the Actors' Fund. More than a thousand persons attended her funeral service, which provides further evidence that Mrs. W. G. Jones was admired both professionally and personally.

Mrs. W. G. Jones' contribution to the American theatre is worthy of attention. She appeared in hundreds of productions, achieved popularity with audiences of her day, and was praised by critics and chroniclers of the time. Her career illustrates the variety of working situations, ranging from long periods of residence in New York stock companies which presented many different plays each week to weeks and months of touring in a single production in New York area theatres and across the country. An English-born actress who began

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[115] The New York Dramatic Mirror, June 22, 1907, p. 13; The New York Times, June 24, 1907, 7:5.

to perform in childhood, apparently to supplement family income, Mrs. W. G. Jones' career of more than sixty years is an example of the longevity on the American stage achieved by some women. Other examples follow in this study.

MAGGIE MITCHELL

Brief Biography

A native American citizen, Margaret Julia Mitchell was born to Scotch-English immigrant parents in New York in 1832. Little is recorded of Miss Mitchell's childhood, other than that she attended New York public schools in her early years. She grew up with two half-sisters, both of whom were actresses. Emma Mitchell performed as a child actress and then retired into private life, and Mary Mitchell pursued an active stage career for a number of years and was married to actor-manager John Albaugh. Some sources indicate that young Maggie performed children's roles at the Bowery theatre under the management of Hamblin, while others contend that her acting career began with a debut in 1851 at age nineteen.[116]

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[116]Holden, Luther, "Maggie Mitchell" in Famous Actors of Today, edited by Frederic E. McKay and Charles
(Footnote Continued)

In the early 1850s, Maggie Mitchell was briefly married and soon divorced. A son born of this marriage and known as Julian Mitchell later performed with his mother.[117] The name of Miss Mitchell's first husband is not mentioned in any of the sources. In 1868, Maggie Mitchell was married to Henry T. Paddock, variously identified as a Cleveland businessman and a native of Chicago.[118]

This marriage followed a courtship of fourteen years, and Mr. Paddock was Miss Mitchell's manager for several years. Two children were born to Miss Mitchell and Mr. Paddock, a daughter, Fanchon, and a son, Henry M. Paddock. Eventually this marriage disintegrated, and Miss Mitchell sued for divorce in 1888.

(Footnote Continued)
E. L. Wingate (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1896). See also Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James and Paul S. Boyer, editors, Notable American Women 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 551; see also Bouve and Clapp, p. 251; see also The New York Times, June 24, 1907, 7:5, and March 23, 1918, 13:3; also Brown, p. 249, which includes biographical notes on Emma Mitchell and Mary Mitchell.

[117]James, p. 552.

[118]James, p. 522; Clapp and Edgett identify Paddock as a Chicagoan (p. 254); Paddock is identified as from Cleveland in Brown (p. 249), and in The New York Times, June 24, 1907, 7:5; see also Alfred Trumble, "Maggie Mitchell," Great Artists of the American Stage (New York: Richard K. Fox Publisher, 1882), p. 56.

In 1889, Maggie Mitchell married her third husband, actor Charles Abbott who was performing with her as her leading man. Abbott, a man twenty years younger than Miss Mitchell, was described as handsome and athletic, and he remained her husband until her death in 1918.[119]

Apparently Maggie Mitchell was a good manager of money. Several sources mention her thrift and skill in investing. By the time she retired from the stage in 1891, Mitchell was regarded as a wealthy woman. Olive Logan stated in 1871 that Maggie Mitchell was "worth a hundred thousand dollars," and Michael Leavitt recorded her real estate holdings as "immense." When she died, she owned two homes, a Manhattan residence, and a summer house in Elberon, New Jersey.[120]

All sources which refer to Maggie Mitchell's wealth speak of the wealth as hers alone, earned through her years as a successful actress. At the time that Mitchell was contemplating divorce from Henry Paddock,

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[119]James, p. 552; see also William C. Young, Famous Actors and Actresses of the American Stage: Documents of American Theatre History (New York and London: R. R. Bowker Company, 1975), II, p. 800.

[120]Logan, p. 443; also Michael Leavitt, Fifty Years in Theatrical Management (New York: Broadway Publishing Company, 1912), p. 704; The New York Times, June 24, 1907, 7:5.

she was interviewed by the Boston Sunday Herald, which published her comments on March 3, 1889. In that interview, Mitchell revealed that Paddock had claimed $25,000.00 from her in order to permit an uncontested divorce. Mitchell commented that she regarded this sum as too large, and she intended to negotiate with Paddock. Despite the fact that she had grounds for divorce based on Paddock's infidelity, to which Mitchell had proof in the form of a lover's letter to Paddock which discussed their adulterous relationship, Mitchell was making no financial claim against Paddock. The family wealth was hers. The same newspaper interview mentions that Mitchell had recently concluded the sale of a tract of land on One Hundred Twenty-Fourth Street near Seventh Avenue for more than $100,000.00. The article continues to discuss Mitchell's wealth, citing her holding of stocks and bonds "to the tune of five figures, and additional real estate."[121]

Miss Mitchell was a hard worker. Her professional record of years of touring at a time when travel was difficult and uncomfortable attests to her endurance and

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[121]The Sunday Herald (Boston), March 3, 1889, 10:4.

energy. She viewed her profession as strenuous and described her career in these terms:

> It is a lottery, this profession of ours, in which even the prizes are, after all, not very considerable. My own days, spent most of them far from my children and the comforts and delights of my home, are full of exhausting labor. Rehearsals and other business occupy me from early morning to the hour of performance, with brief intervals for rest and food and a little sleep. In the best hotels my time is so invaded that I can scarcely live comfortably, much less luxuriously. At the worst, existence becomes a torment and a burden. I am the eager, yet weary, slave of my profession, and the best it can do for me - who am fortunate enough to be included among its successful members - is to barely palliate the suffering of a forty weeks' exile from my own house and my family. . .[122]

On March 23, 1918, at age eighty-five, Maggie Mitchell died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Her obituary indicates that her husband, Charles Abbott, and her daughter and son from her marriage to Henry Paddock, were at her bedside. She was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Stage Career

On June 2, 1851, Maggie Mitchell performed the role of Julia in The Soldier's Daughter at Burton's Theatre in New York. She was apparently successful, for

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[122]Mitchell, Maggie. "Success on the Stage," North American Review 135 (December 1882): 598-599.

she was hired at a salary of four dollars per week (1985 equivalent = $56.00) to act at the Bowery during the 1851-52 season. She thus began her theatre career, playing many boys' roles, singing and dancing, and attracting notice for her portrayal of Oliver in Oliver Twist with Fanny Wallack as Nancy Sikes. A disagreement with management terminated Miss Mitchell's engagement at the Bowery and she entered into the first of several years as a touring actress.

Working for various managers, and sometimes accompanied by her mother, the young actress performed in Baltimore and other Eastern cities, with a repertory of roles featuring male characters, including the leading roles of Claude Melnotte in The Lady of Lyons and Young Norval in Douglas, and, surprisingly, the title role in Richard III. After two seasons on the road, Mitchell returned to New York and briefly appeared with James Hall Robinson's company, which was not successful. In the autumn of 1853, Robinson moved his company to Boston to the Eagle Theatre, and after playing in Boston, Mitchell went to Cleveland for an engagement. She achieved notable popularity in Cleveland, to the extent that a "Maggie Mitchell craze" resulted in young men

wearing hats, scarves and other items of apparel similar to those displayed by Miss Mitchell onstage.[123]

This early momentum in Miss Mitchell's career led to her first tour as an acknowledged star. Her repertory of roles included Margery in A Rough Diamond, Gertrude in The Loan of a Lover, Paul in The Pet of the Petticoats, Harry Halcyon in A Middy Ashore, the Countess in The Wild Irish Girl and Dot in The Cricket on the Hearth. In addition, at the opening of her tour in Pittsburgh, Mitchell first performed the lead role in Our Maggie, which had been written expressly for her.

Continuing to tour in 1854, Miss Mitchell made her first appearance in Philadelphia on March 20, 1854, as Constance in The Love Chase. The following year (1855) her travels extended to Albany and other northeastern cities with a repertory which was to continue for several more years: Katy O'Shiel, Satan in Paris, and The French Spy. By this time, Mitchell was specializing in soubrette and comic roles, and her hey-day in young male roles was in decline. She also returned to the

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[123] Brown, p. 249; Clapp and Edgett, pp. 251-252; Holden, pp. 312-313; James, p. 515; Odell, 6: 26.

mid-west in 1855, appearing in February at Rice's Chicago Theatre.[124]

In the late 1850s, Maggie Mitchell continued her touring career, playing Providence in January 1856, and then New Orleans at the St. Charles Theatre in December 1856. An appearance at Rice's Theatre in Chicago is recorded during February 1857. Later in 1857, returning from Cleveland (where she had cared for one of her sisters who was ill) Mitchell again appeared at Burton's Theatre in New York during August. Again in Chicago, Mitchell performed at North's National Theatre from September 28 to October 10, 1857. An appearance in 1859 at McVicker's Theatre in Chicago is recorded, and in 1860 Mitchell performed again at McVicker's Theatre in August.[125] At various times during these years Mitchell returned to other cities in the East, for Leavitt notes that she was a favorite with Providence audiences for forty years. In his History of the Providence Stage, George Willard states that Mitchell made more appearances in Providence than any other star.[126]

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[124]Sherman, Robert L., Chicago Stage: Its Records and Achievements, p. 271.

[125]Willard, p. 154; see also Odell, 6: 529; Roppolo, p. 947; Sherman, p. 312, pp. 433-434, p. 465.

[126]Leavitt, p. 165; Willard, p. 154.

Clearly popular in a number of cities and highly successful as a touring actresses, Maggie Mitchell was nonetheless to eclipse her prior record with a stunning success in New Orleans. She traveled south in 1860 to join Ben De Bar's company at the St. Charles Theatre. While there, she attracted the attention of the orchestra leader, Augustus Waldauer, who believed that with the right stage vehicle Miss Mitchell could achieve even greater success. Waldauer adapted the George Sand story "La Petite Fadette" from a German translation to an English script, and on January 29, 1861, Maggie Mitchell performed the leading role in the play, now entitled Fanchon the Cricket. This premiere of the play in New Orleans was politely received by the New Orleans press, and Mitchell must have sensed the play's potential for her. Following the run in New Orleans, Mitchell took the play to Boston where it opened on June 10, 1861, at the Boston Museum with many of the principal players of that company in the cast. Then the star appeared at the Howard Athaneum and at the Boston Theatre in subsequent productions, indicating that Boston audiences were extremely enthusiastic.[127]

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[127]Kendall, p. 318; also James, pp. 551-552; also mentioned in Clapp and Edgett, p. 253; Holden, p. 315.
(Footnote Continued)

Leasing Laura Keene's Theatre in New York, Maggie Mitchell opened Fanchon the Cricket on June 9, 1862, and the success of her performance ensured her stardom in the leading role for two decades to come. This New York run of six weeks was a turning point in Mitchell's career. Returning to touring, Mitchell performed Fanchon at McVicker's Theatre in Chicago in November 1862. Subsequently she developed a repertoire around Fanchon, keeping that star role as her sure success, but also achieving popularity starring in Little Barefoot, The Pearl of Savoy, and Jane Eyre.

During the 1860s, Maggie Mitchell continued her pattern of touring, performing Fanchon and her other favorite roles. She extended her travels as far west as St. Louis and Louisville, and western actor Charles A. Krone mentions in his memoirs that Mitchell played "several weeks"
to "continual packed houses" in St. Louis in 1863. Krone also notes that Mitchell objected to the actor originally slated to play the leading male roles opposite her, and that she requested Krone as a

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(Footnote Continued)
Mrs. Vincent, discussed later in this study, performed in the Boston Museum production of Fanchon.

replacement.[128] Although the decade of the 1850s found Mitchell primarily on tour outside New York, the 1860s included numerous return engagements in New York, an indication of her star status. She performed Fanchon at the Winter Garden in 1862 and at Niblo's Gardens in 1864, maintained a run of more than two months at Niblo's Gardens in the spring and early summer of 1865 in three favorites (Fanchon, Little Barefoot, and The Pearl of Savoy), played at the Broadway Theatre for a month in October 1866, and enjoyed another month's run at Niblo's Gardens in the spring of 1866. Odell records her appearances at the Winter Garden during the 1866-67 season and further observes:

> Stars were beginning to bring with them, if not whole companies, at least one or two leading players. Maggie Mitchell, we know, was almost invariably accompanied by J. W. Collier. This practice was perhaps the entering wedge for the destruction of the stock system.[129]

In 1867 Mitchell appeared again at the Broadway Theatre in April, and in 1868 she performed at Wood's Museum during August and September.

Mary Mitchell, the sister who had continued her acting career, was hired along with her husband, John

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[128]Krone, 4:212-213.

[129]Odell, 7: 27, 396, 646-647; 8: 145, 157.

Albaugh, for the 1870-71 season at De Bar's St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans. Maggie Mitchell was persuaded to return to New Orleans to join her sister and to appear again at the site of her first success with Fanchon. Her revival of the play a decade later in New Orleans was again a success, and she reaped financial as well as critical rewards.

Maggie Mitchell continued her stage career through the 1870s and 1880s, still charming audiences with her portrayal of Fanchon and the other pixie roles she had popularized. She maintained an active career, combining tours with New York appearances until 1892, when, at the age of sixty, she retired from the stage.

In later years, looking back at her choice to maintain a career as a touring actress, Maggie Mitchell commented on the fine training provided in the old stock companies where she had begun. She thought the touring combination companies were "good for the public but bad for the young people in the profession." When asked how she felt about the many repeated performances in her famous Fanchon role, the actress said:

> No matter what else you do or how well you do it, there is always a generation that has grown up on the belief that the one thing you can do best is the one that it first saw you do. This idea is often hard upon the actors and actresses, obliging them to keep playing roles of which they have become extremely weary. Now I, fortunately, do not lose the spirit of 'Fanchon' when I once get upon the stage, but before I

> begin, the day on which I am going to play it is often a painful one. I feel sometimes as if I would give anything to escape the ordeal.[130]

> Throughout the years of her active stage career, Maggie Mitchell was held in high esteem by her public. Luther Holden said of her: Her vivid portrayal of childhood's sorrows and joys, of its bitter trials and noble triumphs, was the very perfection of dramatic art, and yet something beyond the mere achievements of the clever actress. It was the art which made a pure and ennobling stage creation all the more impressive by reason of the soul behind it all. . . Good actors there are, and always will be; but there can never be one who will exert a purer and better influence upon the American stage than the genial and winsome comedienne whose genius these few pages seek to commemorate.[131]

Another example of the praise typically accorded to Mitchell is this statement:

> No actress on the American stage is more widely known than Maggie Mitchell, and none on any stage is more deservedly respected. An artist of rare power and a woman of irreproachable character and noble womanly traits, she does honor alike to the art she helps render illustrious and the sex she adorns.[132]

In 1889, when Mitchell divorced Henry Paddock, newspaper accounts of the proceedings and charges focused on Paddock's alleged infidelity and financial irresponsibility. Miss Mitchell was portrayed as the "wounded

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[130]Interview with Maggie Mitchell in The New York Daily Tribune, April 1, 1888, 13:5.

[131]Holden, p. 320.

[132]Trumble, p. 54.

cricket" by The New York Times, and a very lengthy article in the Boston Sunday Herald described her as a betrayed mother concerned for her children.[133] Both the press and the public were loyal to their beloved Maggie.

When Maggie Mitchell died, some twenty-seven years after her retirement, her forty-year career was reviewed in obituary notices of some length. The memories of her repeated stage success and homage to her financial prowess overshadowed any lingering hint of personal scandal connected with her divorce and subsequent remarriage. Clearly, Maggie Mitchell's professional achievement earned her a lasting respect.

Although many of the women discussed in this study were English-born and turned to acting out of economic necessity, Maggie Mitchell is representative of those native American women who began a career by choice, and pursued success through ambition.

KATE REIGNOLDS

Brief Biography

Born May 16, 1836, near London, Catherine Mary Reignolds was the granddaughter of an English soldier

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[133] The New York Times, March 4, 1889, 5:6; The Sunday Herald, Boston, March 3, 1889, 10:4.

among the first killed at the Battle of Waterloo.[134] Her father died young leaving his widow with three daughters to raise, Catherine Mary being the eldest. In 1850, Mrs. Reignolds and her daughters left England and travelled to the United States where Mrs. Reignolds found employment with theatre manager John Rice in Chicago. Catherine Mary, who became known as Kate Reignolds, and her two sisters and mother were employed as performers after this time in Chicago, and by 1855, Kate Reignolds had moved to New York to continue her career.

By 1857, Miss Reignolds had joined a stock company which performed in both St. Louis and New Orleans. Members of the company included Henry Farren, who became Miss Reignolds' husband in December 1857. On January 8, 1860, Henry Farren died, leaving Kate Reignolds a widow at the age of twenty-four.

The following year Miss Reignolds moved to Boston to join the Boston Museum stock company, and on June 23, 1861, she was married to Erving Winslow, a young Boston

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[134]Reignolds-Winslow, Catherine Mary. Yesterdays with Actors, p. vii. The author refers to references which erroneously stated that it was her father who was killed at Waterloo, and this error is found in T. Allston Brown's History of the American Stage, p. 309, and in John S. Kendall's The Golden Age of New Orleans Theatre, p. 310.

businessman of an old New England family. Their son, Charles-Edward Amory Winslow, was born February 4, 1877, and was to become a professor of Public Health at Yale University and a translator of European plays. One source states that Miss Reignolds "quietly withdrew to private life" after the birth of her son, while another report states that her son's ill health forced her to retire from the stage.[135]

During a severe New England heat wave, Catherine Mary Reignolds-Winslow died of heat prostration on July 11, 1911, at her summer home in Concord, Massachusetts. She is buried in the Springfield Cemetery.[136]

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[135] An obituary for Henry Farren in The Missouri Republican, January 9, 1860, states that Farren left a "young wife and a child." This is the only indication that Kate Reignolds had a child from her first marriage. Her withdrawal from the stage in the early 1870s is attributed in some sources to a son's ill-health. Since the only child resulting from her second marriage to Erving Winslow was born in 1877, the ill child may have been Farren's son. There is no other mention of additional children born to Reignolds and Winslow, so there is no explanation for the sixteen years which elapsed from the time of their marriage to the birth of their son. The Winslow son survived his mother and father.

[136] James, pp. 133-134; Reignolds-Winslow, p. 30; The Boston Evening Transcript, July 11, 1911, 4:7; The Boston Globe, July 14, 1911, 9:5; The Boston Herald, July 12, 1911, 7:1.

Stage Career

Kate Reignolds' stage debut occurred on February 24, 1851, when she played a small part in Cinderella at Tremont Hall in Chicago, her mother having been hired by John Rice to appear in that production as well. Soon afterward, Kate Reignolds performed in Rob Roy, but details of subsequent performances are not available.

Reignolds' memoirs suggest that these were very difficult years, and that as a young adolescent she carried much of the burden of support for her mother, her sisters and herself. By 1855 she had moved to New York, and she reports in Yesterdays with Actors that she arranged to meet with American star Edwin Forrest to beg for an audition. The great actor met her, gave her a chance to perform her audition, and hired her to play the ingenue Virginia to his Virginius, one of his most famous roles. In Annals of the New York Stage, George Odell records April 7, 1855, as the date on which Kate Reignolds made her New York debut at the Broadway Theatre performing in Virginius with Edwin Forrest. This fortuitous event was the beginning of fifteen years of almost uninterrupted employment on the stage for Kate Reignolds.

Odell's records show Kate Reignolds' appearing on May 29, 1855, at the Academy of Music in New York in a testimonial performance of Monsieur Jacques given in

honor of J. W. Wallack. From September through most of December in 1855, Miss Reignolds performed at Burton's Theatre, and at the end of December, 1855, she joined Laura Keene's company at the Metropolitan Theatre. Odell records sixteen productions in which Kate Reignolds appeared with Laura Keene's Varieties between December 1855 and June 16, 1866.[137]

In Yesterdays with Actors, a chapter is devoted to Laura Keene and her theatre company. Miss Keene was highly respected by young Miss Reignolds for both discipline and charm. Although Laura Keene lost her lease on the Metropolitan Theatre and was forced to close on June 21, 1856, Kate Reignolds was to re-join Miss Keene within a few months.

The next theatre at which Kate Reignolds appeared was the Bowery under the management of John Brougham, to whom she devotes a chapter in her memoirs. At the Bowery, Reignolds appeared first as a Witch in Macbeth and as Mrs. Trictrac in The Married Rake, the double bill performed on June 30, 1856. She continued in Brougham's company through the summer and fall of 1856, appearing in at least twenty-six productions. Among these was King John, which opened on December 29, 1856,

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[137]Odell, 6: 347, 396, 431-435, 451-455.

with Kate Reignolds playing Arthur, a role which demanded that she feign a fall from the "castle wall," a feat she describes in detail in her memoirs.

Laura Keene reopened her company in a new location in November 1856, and Kate Reignolds returned to replace Miss Keene in the role of Rose Elsworth in Love in '76 in March 1857. Odell's records indicate that Reignolds stayed with Laura Keene's company through the spring of 1857, but her name is not mentioned in the summary of productions presented during the summer of 1857.[138]

In the fall of 1857, Kate Reignolds joined Ben De Bar's company for its autumn season in St. Louis at the Opera House. De Bar's organization regularly moved to the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans for the winter months where the company was regarded as excellent. De Bar maintained a regular stock company which provided support to visiting stars in both St. Louis and New Orleans. John S. Kendall in his book The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre refers to Kate Reignolds as "the most picturesque figure in the organization," who later

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[138]Odell, 7: 461-462, 543-545, 549-552; James, p. 133; Reignolds-Winslow, p. 52.

would be regarded as a star in western and southern cities.[139]

While a member of De Bar's company, Reignolds performed with many actors and actresses of national renown. In February 1858, at the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, Reignolds performed Juliet to the Romeo of Charlotte Cushman. Recalling the great Cushman in her memoirs, Reignolds praised the older actress' patience and willingness to coach others in their roles. Other stars with whom Reignolds appeared at this time were Matilda Heron, Mrs. John Wood, James E. Murdoch, and James Hackett, all of whom, along with Ben De Bar, are described in Yesterdays with Actors.

In 1860, after the death of her husband, Kate Reignolds returned to New York where she appeared at the Winter Garden in July in the role of Anne Chute in Dion Boucicault's The Colleen Bawn. Starring in the production was Agnes Robertson, for whom this was a farewell performance. Reignolds and Robertson had worked together in Laura Keene's company, and in her memoirs Reignolds praises Robertson's work and indicates that

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[139]Kendall, pp. 298-299 and pp. 309-310; also Roppolo, pp. 612-613, p. 616, pp. 627-628, lists specific roles played by Reignolds.

the two actresses were to maintain their friendship for several decades.[140]

At this time, in 1860, Reignolds refused an offer from Barry Sullivan to be the leading lady in a tour of "The English-speaking world." Instead, she moved to Boston and joined the Boston Museum company, where she remained for five years. When she joined the Boston Museum, Kate Reignolds was regarded as the youngest leading lady on the American stage. The Boston Museum company rivaled the prestigious Wallack company in New York, and Wallack himself traveled to Boston to see a performance of Rosedale at the Boston Museum, a play then showing at his own New York theatre. He reportedly stated that his male actors surpassed the Museum men, but that nowhere had he seen a more superior group of women.[141]

Reignolds' memoirs contain many anecdotes about her experiences at the Boston Museum and the people with whom she worked. In Players of the Present, the following roles are listed as performed by Kate Reignolds at the Boston Museum: Desdemona, Juliet, Lydia Languish,

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[140] Reignolds-Winslow, pp. 64-67.

[141] The New York Dramatic Mirror, July 19, 1911, 10:1.

Laetitia Hardy in The Belle's Strategem, Lady Gay Spanker, Emile Lesparre in The Corsican Brother, Peg Woffington, Eily O'Connor. Critic Henry Austin Clapp described Kate Reignolds as "a very brilliant player" in his memories of the Boston Museum.[142]

Visiting performers joined the Boston Museum company for some productions, and while Kate Reignolds was there she performed with a memorable visitor, John Wilkes Booth. Recalling the notorious Booth years later, Reignolds characterizes him as uncontrolled and violent on stage, frightening her on Desdemona's death-bed, and leaving her as Juliet in a torn costume. She also reports that some of her hair was tangled on the buttons of his jacket and torn out of her scalp.[143]

In June 1865, Kate Reignolds made her farewell performance at the Boston Museum. Announcing the event in advance, the Boston Evening Transcript stated, "As far as labor goes, very few servants of the public have deserved better at its hands. Any person acquainted with dramatic affairs knows that she has filled the

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[142]Clapp, Henry Austin, Reminiscences of a Dramatic Critic (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902), p. 52.

[143]Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors, pp. 140-141.

requirements of an arduous position very satisfactorily."[144]

During the late 1860s, Reignolds toured in the United States in a repertoire which included Shakespeare, old English comedies, and popular contemporary plays. Sources indicate that between 1865 and 1869, she appeared a number of times in both New York and Boston. Odell records Reignolds' appearance in July 1865 at a benefit for fire victims held at Barnum's Museum in New York. In May 1866, she played Pocahantas at the Olympic Theatre, and in November and December 1866, she appeared in plays at the Broadway Theatre. In Robert Sherman's Chicago Stage, performances during May and June 1866 are noted. Playing three roles in Nobody's Daughter, Kate Reignolds appeared at the Worrell Sisters' New York Theatre in July 1867. In the fall of 1867, Reignolds returned to Boston between her New York engagements to appear with Edmund Falconer in Innisfallen at the Boston

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[144] The Boston Evening Transcript, January 7, 1865, 2:5.

Theatre.[145] In December 1867, she performed Nobody's Daughter at the Brooklyn Theatre.[146]

Odell records that Reignolds made a "star visit" to the Worrell Sisters' theatre to repeat Nobody's Daughter during February and March 1868. She then returned to the Boston Theatre, appearing in February 1869, in Peg Woffington, The Shadow of a Crime, Two Can Play at That Game, and Richelieu at Sixteen. In March 1869, she appeared at the Broadway Theatre in productions of Shadow of a Crime, Richelieu at Sixteen, and Camille.[147]

Having established her reputation in this country, Reignolds was among the first Americans to travel to England to perform. More significantly, she was one of the first American actresses to win approval in England, a "rite of passage" through which many American actors and actresses tried to pass during the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1868, Reignolds appeared in London at the Princess Theatre, then toured in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Weymouth and Exeter. While

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[145] The Boston Herald, July 12, 1911, 7:1. Also Eugene Tompkins and Quincy Kilby, The History of the Boston Theatre 1854-1901, p. 152.

[146] Odell, 7: 680; 8: 158-159, 186, 380-381.

[147] Odell, 8: 305-306, 449; Tompkins, 152.

appearing in Nobody's Daughter in Exeter, Reignolds injured her back in a fall on stage. The remainder of the tour was cancelled, and she returned home after convalescing with relatives in England. In Yesterdays with Actors, Reignolds tells of receiving letters from people in England chastising her for her wicked profession and proclaiming her accident a judgement upon her "mode of life." She does not mention any similar response from the public in the United States.

After 1870, Kate Reignolds quietly withdrew into private life. Some sources suggest that the birth of her son in 1877, or that son's chronic ill-health, kept Miss Reignolds from returning to an active stage career.[148]

By 1886, however, Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow, as she came to be known in the later years, was noted for her dramatic readings to benefit a Boston charity. In 1889 she appeared in matinees at the Columbia Theatre in Boston in The Pillars of Society and other Ibsen plays, but it is not clear whether these were dramatic readings

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[148]The Boston Herald, July 12, 1911, 7:1; The Boston Evening Transcript, July 11, 1911, 1:4; Clapp and Edgett, p. 197; James, p. 134; The Boston Globe, July 12, 1911, 9:5.

or full productions.[149] In March 1889, Odell records that Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow presented readings at the Berkeley Lyceum on Forty-Fourth Street in New York City. In 1890, she presented readings at the Hotel Brunswick in New York, and then on April 1, 1890, she appeared in her program of readings at Madison Square Garden.[150] Returning to London at about this time, she had success with a reading of An Enemy of the People at the Haymarket Theatre.[151]

A number of unidentified clippings in the Harvard Theatre Collection contain favorable reviews of Mrs. Winslow's readings. The following is an example which includes a tribute to the stock company training received by the actress in the 1850s and 1860s:

> In the part of the two women, Auriana and Bizzarre, the vocal control was even more marked, for it called for greater variety. To depict the vagaries of a woman who masquerades in many roles in order to bring a man to her feet, feigning a complex and delicate kind of rudeness even, taxes an impersonator to the utmost, and it was in this that Mrs. Winslow showed the finest resources of her art. The natural gradations in her stage laugh alone

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[149] The Boston Evening Transcript, July 11, 1911, 4:7; The Boston Globe, July 12, 1911, 9:5, The Boston Herald, July 12, 1911, 7:2.

[150] Odell, 14: 150, 229.

[151] Clapp and Edgett, P. 297; The Boston Evening Transcript, July 11, 1911, 4:7; The Boston Herald, July 12, 1911, 7:2.

> might convey valuable lessons to dramatic aspirants. Need it be said that at the end that there was not in voice or gesture an indication of fatigue on the part of the reader?
>
> Whatever else may be said of the old school it must be admitted that it had training qualities all too uncommon in the new; and that no better exponent of the old school is among us today than Mrs. Winslow.[152]

Following her retirement from her active stage career, Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow taught elocution to young women interested in acting. One of her students was to achieve notable success in the American theatre, Josephine Hull. In an unidentified and undated clipping in the Harvard Theatre Collection, an interview with Mrs. Winslow, the former actress speaks with pride of her acting students and her five years of teaching. Another article about Mrs. Winslow states that by 1903, more than twenty of her pupils were active in the theatre as a profession, and that others had become successful platform readers.[153] In her memoirs, Reignolds states her belief that the theatre offers an education in "punctuality, industry, self-control, endurance, concentration, self-reliance, silence,

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[152]Unidentified review of a platform reading of Farquhar's The Inconstant presented by Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow at Pierce Hall, Boston. The clipping is in the Harvard Theatre Collection.

[153]The New York Dramatic Mirror, June 20, 1903.

patience, obedience and charity." Probably her instruction to her students included training in these disciplines.

The memoirs frequently referred to in this study were originally articles published in the Boston Herald, and later compiled in book form as Yesterdays with Actors. In her writing, Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow employs an enjoyable, fluent style to relate many anecdotes about her career. She devotes chapters to many of the famous persons who helped her, including Charlotte Cushman, Edwin Forrest, John Brougham and Laura Keene. She provides descriptions of numbers of performers with whom she worked. Throughout, she stresses the professional attitudes and capabilities of these people along with their personal integrity and kindness. In addition to providing interesting information about the theatre during Reignolds-Winslow's career, the book makes a strong statement about the worthiness of theatre people, a topic which she also wrote about in The New York Dramatic Mirror.[154]

In another literary venture, Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow edited a two-volume work entitled Readings from Old English Dramatists which combines interpretive

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[154]The New York Dramatic Mirror, July 25, 1903.

essays by the editor with illustrative excerpts from medieval miracle plays, Renaissance masques, Elizabethan, Restoration and eighteenth century English plays. In this work, Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow demonstrates an impressive command of English stage history and an ability to provide interesting commentary.[155]

During 1903, a series of articles entitled "Before and Behind the Curtain" by Mrs. Reignolds-Winslow appeared in The New York Dramatic Mirror. And another example of her writing is an article of several columns length in tribute to Edwin Forrest, published in the Boston Evening Transcript of March 19, 1906, the centennial anniversary of Edwin Forrest's birth.[156]

At the time of Catherine Mary Reignolds-Winslow's death, forty years after her retirement from her active stage career, she was of sufficient prominence that her passing was reported on page one of the Boston Evening Transcript. Notice of her death appeared in The New

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[155]Winslow, Catherine Mary. Readings from Old English Dramatists (Boston: Lee and Shepherd, 1895).

[156]Reignolds-Winslow, Catherine Mary, "Edwin Forrest: The Actor, The Man and The Influence," The Boston Evening Transcript, March 10, 1906, Part Two, 4:5-6.

York Dramatic Mirror, and even in the Concord, New Hampshire, Evening Monitor.[157]

Another of the English-born actresses who began to perform as a child out of economic necessity, Kate Reignolds' career brought her celebrity and public admiration. She retired from the stage as a wife of a socially prominent gentleman. Her continuing interest in the theatre, her activity as a reader of plays, a teacher, an author, and her years as a successful pioneer actress in this country constitute an exceptional achievement.

MRS. J. R. VINCENT

Brief Biography

Mary Ann Farlow, later to become known as Mrs. J. R. Vincent of the Boston Museum Theatre, was born in Portsmouth, England, on September 18, 1818. Her father was a member of an English naval regiment. His death when Mary Ann was two years old and her mother's death when she was four years old left the young girl in the guardianship of her grandmother. A former servant of the grandmother operated a boarding house which had a

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[157]Concord Evening Monitor, July 12, 1911, 8:4; The Boston Evening Transcript, July 11, 1911, 1:1; The New York Dramatic Mirror, July 19, 1911.

number of actors among its clientele, and young Mary Ann made acquaintance with some of these stage professionals who encouraged her interest in entering the acting profession. She made her stage debut at the age of sixteen, and a week before her seventeenth birthday, in August 1835, she married actor J. R. Vincent. The couple toured Britain together for ten years, accepting acting jobs in England, Scotland and Ireland. One source indicates that the couple often traveled without conveyance, walking from one city of employment to the next.[158]

In 1846 Mr. and Mrs. Vincent undertook another long journey in order to accept an offer from the National Theatre in Boston. The transatlantic voyage of seventeen days began on October 21, 1846; the ship arrived in Boston on November 7. Four days later, on November 11, 1846, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent made their debut at the National Theatre on Portland Street in Boston. They continued as members of the National Theatre

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[158]Richardson, James B., Mrs. James R. Vincent: A Memorial Address Delivered at a Meeting of the Managers of the Vincent Memorial Hospital, April 11, 1911 (Boston: The Vincent Club, 1911). Other summaries of Mrs. Vincent's early years can be found in James, p. 522, and in obituary notices in The Boston Evening Transcript, September 6, 1887, 4:1-2; The Boston Herald, September 5, 1887, 5:6-7. See also Kate Ryan, Old Boston Museum Days, p. 45.

Company until J. R. Vincent's suicide on June 10, 1850. Newspaper accounts of this event indicate that Vincent left Boston on the previous afternoon for unknown reasons, and while returning on a train he seated himself on the train's rear platform and shot himself. A coroner's jury determined that he was insane at the time of suicide.[159] At the time of his death, J. R. Vincent was forty years old; his widow was thirty years old.

Mary Ann Vincent continued as a member of the National Theatre after her husband's death, and for the rest of her professional life she used "Mrs. J. R. Vincent" as her stage name.

In 1852 Mrs. Vincent joined the Boston Museum company where she was to remain for thirty-five years. In 1854 she married John Wilson, described as a "walking man" eleven years her junior.[160] Sources indicate that this was an unhappy marriage, and John Wilson deserted his wife in 1866. At the urging of friends, Mrs.

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[159]Accounts of the suicide appear in The Boston Evening Transcript, June 11, 1850, 2:3, and in The Boston Post, June 12, 1850, 2:1.

[160]James, p. 522. A clipping in the Harvard Theatre Collection from an unidentified newspaper is a letter to the editor dated December 14, 1911, signed by J. B. Clapp, in which the date of Mrs. Vincent's marriage to Wilson is stated as December 16, 1854.

Vincent obtained a divorce from Wilson in 1880, and he died a year later.[161] Mrs. Vincent had no children by either marriage, and at the time of her death her only living relatives were her dead brother's children who lived in England.

Mrs. Vincent was professionally active from age sixteen until a matter of days before her death. From 1852 until 1887 she appeared regularly at the Boston Museum. Her last performance was a matinee on Wednesday, August 31, 1887. She collapsed that evening, sustained a series of strokes during the next few days and died on Sunday, September 5, 1887. Her funeral, attended by hundreds of mourners, was held at St. Paul's Church in Boston, and she was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery beside the remains of her first husband, J. R. Vincent.[162]

Like Mrs. W. G. Jones and Kate Reignolds, Mary Ann Vincent was English-born, and apparently began to

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[161]Richardson, p. 17. An undated clipping from The Clipper in the Harvard Theatre Collection refers to Wilson as having gone to California Kate Denin in May 1866. As a result, Denin was replaced in the Boston Museum company as leading lady by Annie Clarke, who was Mrs. Vincent's god-daughter.

[162]Richardson, pp. 29-32; Ryan, p. 61; The Boston Evening Transcript, September 6, 1887, 4:1-2; The Boston Herald, September 5, 1887, p: 6-7.

perform out of a combination of personal interest and economic necessity. Certainly her status as an orphan required that she become independent early in life. In the following pages, Mrs. Vincent's remarkable and long career are described. Hers is representative of the extensive acting career possible for a women in mid-nineteenth century American theatre.

Stage Career

Sources agree that Mary Ann Farlow made her stage debut at the theatre in Cowes, England, on April 25, 1835, in the role of Lucy, the chambermaid in a farce entitled The Review, or The Wags of Windsor. She was successful enough to be subsequently cast as Volante in The Honeymoon, a comedy, and then, owing to the sudden illness of the original actress, Mary Ann played the lead role in Lucy Fairlove. She remained a member of the company of the Cowes theatre until the end of that season.

After her marriage to comedian J. R. Vincent in August 1835, the young actress accompanied her husband to Rochdale, England, where they appeared together in Charles the Twelfth. Following this engagement, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent traveled widely performing in Preston, England, and at the Queen Theatre in Manchester, England; other engagements took them to the Amphitheatre in Liverpool, the Royal Theatre in London, and twice

they journeyed to Ireland, performing in Cork, Dublin, Waterford and Limerick.

In 1843, Mrs. Vincent and her husband went to Scotland to perform, but they suffered a financial disaster there. They planned to return by ship from Leith, Scotland, to Liverpool, but at the last minute they cancelled their passage because of the illness of Mrs. Vincent's dog. The ship sailed without them and was wrecked in a heavy storm, and most passengers were lost.

Returning to England by some unspecified route, the Vincents found work in various theatres, mostly in Liverpool. In 1845 the couple was again in Ireland at the Queen's Theatre in Dublin. Mr. Vincent left this theatre first and went to Liverpool; Mrs. Vincent continued at the Dublin theatre until the end of the season. She then joined her husband in Liverpool, probably in the spring of 1846.

While Mr. and Mrs. Vincent were performing in Liverpool, William Pelby, manager of the National Theatre in Boston, saw them on stage. He offered them positions in his Boston theatre, and they accepted.

On November 11, 1846, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Vincent made their debut in the United States at the National Theatre, Boston, in a farce entitled Popping the Question. Continuing as members of the National Theatre

company for four seasons, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent appeared in many plays, among which were Lend Me Five Shillings, How Do You Manage?, Pool Pillicoddy, and Box and Cox.

As previously stated, Mr. Vincent died in 1850, and his widow continued at the National until it was burned in 1852. Mrs. J. R. Vincent's final performance at the National Theatre was as Lady Sneerwell in School for Scandal, a role she was to repeat many times during her career.[163]

The week following the close of the National Theatre, Mrs. Vincent made her first appearance at the Boston Museum where she was to spend the rest of her career with only a few months' exception.

The Boston Museum opened in June, 1841, as an exhibition hall and gallery where various entertainments and programs were presented. Because of the Puritan tradition in Boston, theatres were still frowned upon in the mid-nineteenth century, and it was not until 1843, after the Boston Museum had established itself as an acceptable cultural institution, that full productions

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[163]Richardson, pp. 3-9; Ryan, pp. 45-46. See also The New York Mirror Annual Directory of the Theatrical Profession for 1888, Harrison Grey Fiske, editor (New York: The New York Mirror, 1888), pp. 129-130; The Boston Evening Transcript, September 6, 1887, 4:1-2; The Boston Herald, September 5, 1887, 5:6-7.

of plays were presented in its "Portrait Gallery." The formation of a resident stock company was consistent with standard theatrical practice at the time, and the Boston Museum was to become one of the few theatres in the country to maintain a stock company throughout the 1800s. By 1860, the Boston Museum was among the more than fifty resident stock companies in the United States. By 1880, only a few of these companies remained, including the Boston Museum, which continued its operation until 1903.

After 1860, the rapid increase in the number of road companies touring with a production of a single play diminished the success of the resident stock companies. Also the emergence of stars who toured to various cities and performed major roles with the support of resident actors had a negative impact on stock companies. Although the Boston Museum survived, changes in the production schedules over the years reflect the influence of touring companies and star visits. The number of plays produced each season declined considerably from 1850 to 1875 as long-run shows grew in popularity. In 1851-52, one hundred forty

different plays were produced at the Boston Museum. By 1876, a season of forty to sixty plays was typical.[164]

During her thirty-five years with the Boston Museum, Mrs. Vincent appeared in at least four hundred forty-four plays. After her death, an obituary notice in the Boston Herald included the following table listing the number of roles Mrs. Vincent had played each season at the Boston Museum.[165]

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[164]Wilson, p. 147.

[165]The Boston Herald, September 5, 1887, 5:6-7.

Season of-	Parts	Season of-	Parts
1851-52	21	1870-71	5
1852-53	54	1871-72	10
1853-54	32	1872-73	5
1854-55	40	1873-74	3
1855-56	27	1874-75	4
1856-57	26	1875-76	7
1857-58	23	1876-77	9
1858-59	10	1877-78	4
1859-60	30	1878-79	3
1860-61	33	1879-80	7
1861-62	0	1880-81	2
1862-63	18	1881-82	2
1863-64	8	1882-83	6
1864-65	12	1883-84	2
1865-66	8	1884-85	2
1866-67	8	1885-86	7
1867-68	3	1886-87	5
1868-69	13		
1869-70	8		

The large number of roles played by Mrs. Vincent between 1850 and 1870 demanded both versatility and an ability to memorize a large amount of material. On the occasion of Mrs. Vincent's fiftieth anniversary as an actress, the Boston Sunday Herald, April 19, 1885, published a list of the new roles she played each season

at the Boston Museum. A memorial address delivered in 1911 by James B. Richardson mentions that Mrs. Vincent played the following roles during her long tenure at the Boston Museum:

> Mrs. Hardcastle in 'She Stoops to Conquer'; Dame Ashfield in 'Speed the Plow'; Widow Green in 'The Love Chase'; Mrs. Wiley in 'Rural Felicity'; Cassy in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'; Countess Pompion in 'Old Heads and Young Hearts'; the Nurse in 'Romeo and Juliet'; Widow Melnotte in 'Lady of Lyons'; Duchess of York in 'Richard III'; Dolly Mayflower in 'Black-eyed Susan'; Mrs. Squeers in 'Nicholas Nickleby'; Mrs. Pillicoddy in 'Poor Pillicoddy'; Actea in 'Ingomar'; Mrs. McCandish and Flora in 'Guy Mannering'; Nelly in 'No Song, No Supper'; Nancy Sykes in 'Oliver Twist'; Mrs. Bouncer in 'Box and Cox'; Hannah Partridge in 'The Silver Spoon'; Portia in the 'Merchant of Venice'; Lady Dubely in 'Heirs at Law'; Mrs. O'Kelly in 'The Shaughran'; Maria in 'Twelfth Night'; Mrs. Stenhold in 'Still Waters Run Deep'; Mantelina in 'Nicholas Nickleby'; Betsey Trotwood in 'Little Em'ly'; Mrs. Treplit in 'Peg Woffington'; and Mrs. Malaprop in 'The Rivals'.[166]

The New York Mirror Annual of 1888 published a summary of Mrs. Vincent's career stating that she had played "almost every line of business, from soubrettes to old women."[167] On the occasion of her fiftieth anniversary with the Boston Museum, Mrs. Vincent performed Mrs. Hardcastle in a matinee of She Stoops to Conquer, and in the evening she appeared as Mrs. Malaprop in The Rivals,

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[166] Richardson, pp. 11-12.

[167] The New York Mirror Annual, p. 130.

which sources indicate were her most popular roles at that time (1885).[168]

As a young actress Mrs. Vincent had gained a reputation for her ability to learn lines quickly. Richardson's memorial address mentions that this skill enabled Mrs. Vincent to memorize the dialogue of an elderly actor playing opposite her in Charles the Twelfth so that she could deliver both his lines and her own.

During her professional life spanning fifty-two years, Mrs. Vincent demonstrated a remarkable capacity for work. The early years touring England, Scotland and Ireland must have involved personal hardship. In Boston Mrs. Vincent chose the security of season-to-season employment at the Boston Museum over the vagabond existence of both stars and supporting players who, after the decline of the resident stock companies, were forced by necessity to travel from theatre to theatre in order to work.

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[168] Accounts of the event are in The Boston Herald, April 26, 1885, 4:6-7; The Boston Evening Transcript, April 27, 1885, 4:6. Also see Richardson, pp. 26-27, and George P. Baker, "Mrs. Vincent," in Famous Actors of Today, edited by Charles E. Wingate and F.E. McKay (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1896) pp. 194-203.

Mrs. Vincent did leave the Boston Museum for one season, 1861-62. She moved first to the Howard Athaneum, another Boston stock company, where she appeared as Sarah Blunt in Poor Pillicoddy and other roles identified as chambermaids and "pert juvenile roles." The effects of the Civil War on the economy resulted in a short season at the Howard, and after the company disbanded, Mrs. Vincent traveled to Baltimore to join the company newly formed by Lucille Western, who had also been a member of the Howard Athaneum's resident cast. In Baltimore Mrs. Vincent was the original Corney Carlyle in East Lynne. In the spring of 1862, Mrs. Vincent appeared in Washington, D.C., playing Widow Melnotte with Edwin Forrest in Lady of Lyons. A number of sources report that Forrest was so impressed with Mrs. Vincent's performance that he insisted she take a bow with him after the act. After Forrest's engagement ended, Mrs. Vincent remained at Ford's Theatre and performed Corney Carlyle in East Lynne with John McCullough. In May 1862, Mrs. Vincent was still at Ford's Theatre playing Mistress Quickly to the Henry IV of John Hackett. Sources mention that Mrs. Vincent

performed when President Lincoln attended the theatre, but no specific date or production is identified.[169]

After these appearances in Baltimore and Washington, Mrs. Vincent returned to Boston and rejoined the Boston Museum company. As a member of that group, Mrs. Vincent performed on tours through New England which are described by actress Kate Ryan in her memoirs. Ryan states that tours were of short duration, generally took place in the spring, and constituted a holiday for the acting company.[170]

Despite the security of steady employment at the Boston Museum, sources mention that Mrs. Vincent had to supplement her income in order to meet the responsibilities of expenses for the house she bought in 1868 on Chambers Street. She took in boarders, and she also provided costume rental services for private amateur theatricals ventures such as the Harvard University "Hasty Pudding Club." She lived in the Chambers Street house for thirteen years, after which she sold the house

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[169]The Boston Herald, September 5, 1887, 5:6-7; Ryan, p. 61; The Evening Star, May 3, 1862, 3:1, and May 12, 1862, 3:1. See also Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors, p. 145; James, p. 522; Richardson, p. 15.

[170]Ryan, pp. 49-51.

and moved to an apartment on Charles Street, where she lived until her death.[171]

Because limited extant reviews of theatrical productions at the Boston Museum are available, one must rely on inference to judge the quality of a performer's work. In the case of Mrs. Vincent, her long and steady years as a member of the Boston Museum company gives testament to her abilities. The Boston Museum, according to contemporary theatre historian Garff B. Wilson, had a "reputation as a first-rate troupe."[172] Henry Austin Clapp called the Boston Museum "the theatre of the capital of Massachusetts: partly because of its age and unbroken record as a place of amusement; even more because of the steady merit of its performances and the celebrity of many of its performers."[173] Edward H. Sothern's memoirs contain this quote from an unidentified source: "The actual merit of the performance at

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[171]Richardson, p. 17, pp. 22-23; Ryan, p. 57. Also see Edward H. Sothern, The Melancholy Tale of "Me": My Remembrances (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916) p. 237. Sothern also mentions that men in the Boston Museum company supplemented their incomes with other endeavors. He recalls that one actor was a barber, another a tailor, and a third was a cab-driver (p. 240).

[172]Wilson, p. 63.

[173]Clapp, Henry Austin, p. 50.

the Boston Museum was, perhaps, greater than that of any other stock company in the country."[174]

On April 25, 1885, a gala celebration of Mrs. Vincent's fiftieth anniversary as a professional actress was held at the Boston Museum. Lengthy descriptions of the event appear in the Boston Evening Transcript and The Boston Herald, attesting to the significance of the celebration to the Boston public. For the occasion the stage and auditorium were festooned with garlands of fresh flowers, special displays and souvenirs acknowledged Mrs. Vincent's long career, and messages from theatre celebrities to Mrs. Vincent were copied in the Herald's account. The audiences for the matinee and evening performances were very large, and Mrs. Vincent received a long-standing ovation at both performances. Admirers also gathered in the street outside the theatre to pay their respects.[175] This testimonial event gives evidence of the high regard for Mrs. Vincent's work.

Research on Mrs. J. R. Vincent's stage career uncovers repeated evidence that her impact on the Boston public and on her professional peers extended beyond her

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[174]Sothern, p. 230.

[175]The Boston Evening Transcript, April 27, 1885, 4:6; The Boston Herald, April 26, 1885, 4:6-7.

professional contributions. She acquired a reputation for generosity, hospitality, concern for the welfare of others both socially and professionally, and abundant humor and good cheer. The writings of those who knew Mrs. Vincent, including Kate Ryan, Mary Catherine Reignolds-Winslow, and E. H. Sothern, contain a number of anecdotes about her charitable acts, her energy, and her delight in practical jokes. Her kind disposition, vitality and sense of humor contributed to her success with comedy roles in her later career, and Kate Ryan observed that she was "adored by the Boston public."[176]

At the time of her death, both the Boston Evening Transcript and The Boston Herald published obituaries of several paragraphs in length. The New York Mirror Annual of 1888 also carried a notice of her death along with a summary of her career. A large crowd attended her funeral on September 6, 1887, and both the aisles of the church and the street outside were crowded with mourners.[177]

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[176]Ryan, p. 44.

[177]The Boston Evening Transcript, April 27, 1885, 4:6; The Boston Herald, April 26, 1885, 4:6-7.

Research on Mrs. J. R. Vincent's stage career uncovers repeated evidence that her impact on the Boston public and on her professional peers extended beyond her professional contributions. She acquired a reputation for generosity, hospitality, concern for the welfare of others both socially and professionally, and abundant humor and good cheer. The writings of those who knew Mrs. Vincent, including Kate Ryan, Mary Catherine Reignolds-Winslow, and E. H. Sothern, contain a number of anecdotes about her charitable acts, her energy, and her delight in practical jokes. Her kind disposition, vitality and sense of humor contributed to her success with comedy roles in her later career, and Kate Ryan observed that she was "adored by the Boston public."[178]

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[178]Ryan, p. 44.

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Many public statements of respect and esteem for Mrs. Vincent were published at the time of her death. Rev. Frederick L. Courtney, the minister of Mrs. Vincent's parish, St. Paul's Church, included the following tribute in a sermon on "Temptation":

> A week ago today there passed away suddenly one who was engaged in a profession which, according to common opinion, is beset by many and serious temptations which it is needless to specify. As long as a Christian public demands a theatre as one of its legitimate amusements there will be a necessity for some persons to become actors and actresses, however many and serious the temptations which they must encounter in that state of life may be. The one of whom I speak so conducted herself that she not only disarmed hostility and prejudice, but gained the regard and admiration of the general public and the respectful reverance (I use the term deliberately) of those who were privileged to know her with some degree of intimacy. Such a character it is a blessing to any community to have possessed, and Boston was richer for it while Mrs. Vincent lived, and is the poorer now that she is gone. The native goodness, warmth and geniality of her disposition were all mellowed and rendered more attractive by her unfeigned piety; and in the ways and doctrines of the church she found the strength needed to overcome temptation to sin, and for the development of the character which was so beautiful in the eyes of those who were permitted to behold it. The last act of her life in which I was allowed to be associated with her was an endeavor to make

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[179] The Boston Evening Transcript, September 6, 1887, 4:1-2; The Boston Herald, September 5, 1887, 5:6-7; The New York Mirror Annual, pp. 129-130; Richardson, pp. 32-33.

> the Easter of one of our clergy more joyful by a present than it would otherwise have been. Only the sad and sorrowful, the tried, the tempted and the poor, whom she comforted and helped and guided and counselled, know to the full what a friend they have lost. May her bright example be well followed, not only by those in her own profession, but by all who name the name of Christ.[180]

An unidentified clipping in the Harvard Theatre Collection expresses these thoughts about Mrs. Vincent:

> The death of Mrs. Vincent removes from the stage one in whom every Bostonian has felt an interest almost personal, and certainly altogether beyond that ordinarily inspired even by the greatest artists. . . . How true and faithful and constant to a high ideal she was the bare facts of her career give ample witness. Mrs. Vincent has been one of the few whom restless ambitions have not tempted away into careers of more or less stellar glory, though perhaps she might have chosen the more conspicuous part with better grace than many others who have hesitated to do so. . . . her natural ease, her humorous instinct, together with a certain spontaneous sympathy that often takes the place of genius or magnetic power, certainly gave her a claim to a high place in the admiration of the best class of play-goers. And all the personal love and esteem that went beyond this Mrs. Vincent certainly richly deserved. Her death is a loss to Boston in every sense.

These sentiments echoed the many similar statements made about Mrs. Vincent two years earlier at her fiftieth anniversary celebration. Typical of the praise

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[180]Clipping from unidentified newspaper dated September 12, 1887, in the Harvard Theatre Collection.

published for the woman and her work is this excerpt from The Sunday Herald, April 19, 1885:

> She is as much a part of Boston as the famous old theatre itself, and her name has long been a household word in many Boston homes. Her friends are legion, and in the history of the stage it is
> doubtful if any one has ever before so endeared themselves to the hearts of any theatre-going public. . . . Apart from the regard in which she has long been held as an actress, there is a deep personal affection and esteem felt for her which probably no other lady on the stage has ever had. Her very name seems to be enshrined as that of an artist who has continually lent dignity and respect to the profession of which she is such an honored member, and she has done more for the stage than all the defenders that have ever written about it.[181]

After Mrs. Vincent's death, her friend, Miss Caroline Staples, donated a thousand dollars to a fund for a proposed hospital. Similar contributions were made by others, including Edwin Booth, and by 1890 a charter was obtained for incorporation of the Vincent Memorial Hospital. Part of the funds for the hospital were raised by a fair in which many of Mrs. Vincent's costumes and fans were exhibited, and some items were sold.[182]

In his memorial address to the managers of the Vincent Memorial Hospital on April 9, 1911, James B.

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[181] Sunday Herald, April 19, 1885, 13:1.

[182] Richardson, pp. 36-38; Sothern, pp. 245-247.

Richardson observed that by her example of good character, Mrs. Vincent had served her community well and had contributed to elevating the status of her profession. He noted that the only other building in Boston for public use which was named for an actress was the Cushman school standing on the birthplace of Charlotte Cushman.[183]

During the fund-raising efforts for the hospital, a club of young women was formed, The Vincent Club. The Vincent Memorial Hospital was eventually absorbed into the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the Vincent Club has continued since its inception to raise funds for the hospital and other Boston charities. As recently as 1971, Mrs. Vincent's legacy was described in a Boston newspaper article about the generations of Vincent Club members who had raised money:

> Don't rap them, those gals with the soft-sell voices and that social tag, Vincent Club. Could you put together a show that would in five nights tidy away $50,000?
> Did you ever build a hospital, from scratch, cake sales and charades, parlaying $494.50 into a multi-million life-saver of laboratories and doctors where some of the first breakthroughs in early cancer detection made world headlines?[184]

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[183] Richardson, p. 38.

[184] The Boston Globe, April 4, 1971.

Mary Ann Vincent's career and personal identity had immense impact on the Boston public of her day, and the continuing work of the hospital founded in her memory and the Vincent Club constitute a remarkable tribute.

Among Mrs. Vincent's good friends and admirers was actor E. A. Sothern. His son, E. H. Sothern, lived with Mrs. Vincent when he was a young man beginning his acting career in Boston. The younger Sothern devotes a chapter in his memoirs to Mrs. Vincent, and his tribute to her provides an appropriate closing:

> She was never more than a stock actress on a small salary. Her life had been one of hard work and generous sacrifice. For half a century she had labored and loved. Her one life has done more to break down New England's aversion to the calling of the actor than would the eloquence of a thousand homilies. And one of the sweetest tributes I can pay my father's memory is to recall the fact that Mrs. Vincent was his friend.[185]

The careers of Mrs. W. G. Jones, Maggie Mitchell, Kate Reignolds and Mrs. J. R. Vincent illustrate the variety of career opportunities and the degree of success available to actresses in the American theatre during the period 1850-1870. Each of these women sustained steady employment in the theatre over a period

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[185] Sothern, p. 247.

of many years, and each appears to have selected a preferred career path. Mrs. Jones remained in New York throughout most of her long career, maintaining twenty-three consecutive years in residence at three New York stock theatres, followed by twenty-five active years in shorter residences at New York theatres and touring experiences. Mrs. Vincent performed for thirty-five years as a key figure in the famous Boston Museum company. Maggie Mitchell elected to focus her forty-year career primarily on successful touring along with periodic appearances in New York. Kate Reignolds combined touring with periods of residence in St. Louis, New Orleans, Boston and New York during her fifteen most-active years. The records of these women exemplify the opportunities actresses found available in the American theatre at mid-century. There is no indication that any of them was denied work opportunity because of their sex, or that their career choices were limited by their sex. The careers of these four women support my contention that the American theatre from 1850 to 1870 offered many talented women opportunities for stable employment, and that actresses of that time had options to pursue differentiated career patterns comparable to those available to men in the theatre. The fact that women worked with men in the theatre is obvious proof

that women and men shared like work conditions as performers.

The careers of Mrs. W. G. Jones, Maggie Mitchell, Kate Reignolds and Mrs. J. R. Vincent also illustrate the unique economic opportunities available to actresses as compared to economic gains possible for women in other employments. In the previous chapter on theatre salaries, I discussed the considerable difference in economic rewards obtained by women in the theatre as compared with women's wages in other occupations. That information supports the conclusion that the four actresses discussed here must have earned salaries substantially larger than was possible for women in other kinds of employment. Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Vincent and Kate Reignolds all began to perform as adolescents to contribute to family finances, and these three clearly achieved a degree of economic success which exceeded their childhood circumstances. Maggie Mitchell became wealthy through her success as an actress. Therefore, the careers of these four women support my contention that the American theatre at mid-century offered women economic opportunities that exceeded the chances for financial gain available in other occupations open to women.

Along with the chance for success as an actress, some women chose to explore opportunities for management

achievement in the American theatre during the nineteenth century. The next section of this study will describe the management careers of three such women: Mrs. John Drew, Laura Keene, and Mrs. John Wood.

Section Two: The Actress-Managers

The three women discussed in this section had impressive careers as performers, however the intention in this section is to focus on their years as theatre managers. In comparison with the preceding section, the biographical information presented is condensed, and only the most significant information about their acting careers is included.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the theatre manager carried a variety of responsibilities. The manager either owned or leased the theatre building and was responsible for all aspects of its practical functioning. The manager hired all personnel for operation of the theatre, including the performers, the scenic artists, backstage helpers, costume sewing persons, box office personnel, and maintenance staff. All matters pertaining to the business operation, such as bookkeeping, publicity, and contract arrangements, were carried out by or supervised by the manager. The manager also selected the plays to be produced and functioned to varying degrees, as the director of productions.

The three women discussed in this section, Mrs. John Drew, Laura Keene, and Mrs. John Wood, successfully managed theatres for varying lengths of time. All three of these women were born in England. Mrs. Drew and Laura Keene came to America as young actresses, and Mrs. Wood accompanied her husband, actor John Wood, to the United States. All three women were widowed, and Mrs. Drew and Laura Keene were both mothers.

The success of these women, and others, was in contrast to the general exclusion of women from management positions in other occupational areas during the mid-nineteenth century. However, no record could be found to indicate that the assumption of management duties in the theatre by women met with any public disapproval.

LOUISA LANE DREW

Born in England, January 10, 1818, the daughter of an English actor, Louisa Lane appeared as a child actress in England and later in the United States. Her American debut occurred in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre on September 27, 1827, as Duke of York to Junius Brutus Booth's Richard III. From 1828 to 1833, she appeared at various theatres in Philadelphia, New York, and on tour in New Orleans, Cincinnati, and other cities. Returning to the East, she appeared often in

New York at the Old Bowery Theatre during the 1830s, and she also performed in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre. In 1841-42, she joined the stock company at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia playing juvenile lead roles. During 1847 and 1848 she undertook another western and southern tour with appearances in Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans. In 1849 she was a member of the Museum Theatre company in Albany, New York.

Divorced from singer Henry B. Hunt whom she married at age sixteen, and widowed in 1849, less than two years after her marriage to comedian George Mossop, Louisa Lane was married to actor John Drew in July 1850. The Drews returned in Philadelphia in 1852 to appear at the Chestnut Street Theatre, and in 1853 they moved to the Arch Street Theatre, which John Drew co-managed with William Wheatley. In 1860 the stockholders persuaded Mrs. Drew to assume full management of the theatre, afterwards known as Mrs. Drew's Arch Street Theatre. Mrs. Drew's first season was difficult, and her husband returned from touring to star in productions and draw the public. In 1862 John Drew died after a short illness. Mrs. Drew continued as manager of the Arch, which she successfully maintained as a stock company until 1877. At that time, Mrs. Drew succumbed to public pressure to present travelling stars, and she changed

the Arch Street Theatre to a combination system. Mrs. Drew remained the manager and sat on the Board of Directors of the Arch until her retirement in June 1892, after thirty years of profitable and respected management.[186]

T. Allston Brown was among those who admired Mrs. Drew as an able manager and a good businesswoman:

> When she took the Arch the property had depreciated greatly, and was mortgaged to the amount of twenty thousand dollars. Under her management the theatre greatly prospered, the mortgage was quickly paid off, and a surplus left for the stockholders. The stock, which had a par value of five hundred dollars a share, under her management reached a value of seven hundred and eighty dollars, and could not even then be purchased, except upon the death of a stockholder.[187]

Brown quotes "many old actors" as saying that Mrs. Drew was one of the best stage directors they had worked with, and Brown tells of a principal stage carpenter who said Mrs. Drew was always able to teach him something new about his craft.

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[186]Biographical sources include "Mrs. John Drew" by T. Allston Brown in Famous American Actors of Today edited by Charles E. L. Wingate and F. E. McKay; and Autobiographical Sketch of Mrs. John Drew (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1899); and an unidentified clipping dated April 2, 1890, in the Locke Collection, New York Library of Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.

[187]Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," p. 131.

A chief element in Mrs. Drew's success was her ability to book the services of well-known performers to appear with her resident stock company. She continued to perform herself, taking on forty-two roles during her first management season, and continuing to act regularly thereafter. Her obituary notice in The New York Dramatic Mirror states that she had learned from the errors her husband made while he co-managed the Arch. The Mirror states that "a history of the house during Mrs. Drew's management would be almost an epitome of the activity of the American theatre during this period."[188] Certainly, during Mrs. Drew's tenure, many of the best actors in America played at the Arch. Such major names as Wallack, E. L. Davenport, Cushman, Lotta and Mrs. Farren appear on Arch Street playbills. Both Fanny Davenport and Ada Rehan worked for Mrs. Drew prior to joining Augustin Daly's company in New York. Yet Mrs. Drew maintained modest box office prices, charging 37½ cents for dress circle seats and 15 cents for the amphitheatre or top balcony seats.[189]

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[188] New York Dramatic Mirror, September 11, 1897.

[189] Moses, Montrose J. Famous Actor-Families in America, p. 180.

In addition to able business administration, Mrs. Drew had a reputation for running an excellent working environment. In her memoirs, actress Rose Eytinge comments on her several seasons at the Arch Street Theatre, calling it "...without exception, the best-conducted, cleanest, most orderly and most all-around comfortable theatre that I ever acted in."[190] Those who worked for a time under Mrs. Drew's management were regarded as having been well-trained. A typical comment is that of Mrs. G. H. Gilbert about young Ada Rehan: "...what is important is that she had had, even at that early age, the good, old-fashioned training in general work. I know that at one time she had been with Mrs. John Drew in Philadelphia, and anyone who had had that experience was the better for it."[191]

In an interview which was published in April 1890, Mrs. Drew praised the hard work and high quality of the old stock companies, and she summarized the changes in American theatre which took place during her long career. She was displeased by the trend toward later evening curtain times, and she disliked matinees, which

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[190]Eytinge, Rose. The Memories of Rose Eytinge (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, Publishers, 1905), pp. 244-245.

[191]Gilbert, p. 164.

had become increasingly popular. Apparently these changes in traditional scheduling had been management nuisances.

Mrs. Drew's decades as a manager drew no unusual comment. There is no record of any opposition or criticism of her assumption of the managerial role in the early 1860s. References to her work as a manager mention her capability as an administrator, which did not seem to surprise or offend the public.

In addition to her contribution as an admired actress and an effective manager, Louisa Lane Drew left another legacy to the American theatre. As mother to actor John Drew and actress Georgia Drew Barrymore, and as grandmother to Ethel, John and Lionel Barrymore, and progenitor of the later generations of Drews and Barrymores, Louisa Lane Drew was the matriarch of a great theatre family.

LAURA KEENE

Born circa 1830 in England, Laura Keene became an actress at an early age and is reputed to have performed in the renowned company managed by English actress-

manager, Madame Vestris.[192] Keene was contracted to come to New York in 1852 to join Wallack's company, where she played leading roles for two seasons. She left Wallack's abruptly in 1854 and moved to Baltimore where she managed a theatre for a short time. Then Miss Keene began months of travel which took her to the western states, and according to some sources she traveled to Australia and other Pacific islands.

By late 1855, Laura Keene had returned to New York, where the theatre known as Tripler Hall had been closed for renovation. Keene obtained a lease for the building, and in December 1855, it re-opened as Laura Keene's Varieties. This marked the beginning of Miss Keene's career as a New York theatre manager. She opened her first season with Prince Charming by Planche, which was also being presented at the Broadway Theatre. The press was not receptive to Keene's production, and

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[192]The only biography of Laura Keene is that by John Creahan, The Life of Laura Keene (Philadelphia: The Rodgers Publishing Co., 1897). An essay by William Winter on Keene in Vagrant Memories (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1915) points out various dates cited by other sources for Keene's birth, ranging from 1820 to 1830. Additional biographical data in article in New York Times, June 1886 (no author) and an undated article from the Newark Sunday Call entitled "Laura Keene's Death a Mystery" by Edward Sothern Hipp. As mentioned in Chapter One, Footnote 11, a dissertation on Laura Keene at Tulane University Library is not on microfilm and is not available through inter-library loan.

other opposition to her opening delayed the first performance. Apparently somebody gained access to her theatre and vandalized the scenery. In the spring of 1856 a competitor, William E. Burton, found a mistake in Keene's lease agreement and was able to force Keene to vacate the theatre.

Keene was able to secure financing to build her own theatre, which was designed by architect John M. Trimble, and was opened on November 18, 1856. Located east of Broadway between Houston and Bleecker Streets, the theatre seated 1800 patrons and was beautifully appointed. A New York Times article about Keene published in 1886 said of Laura Keene's Theatre:

> The record of the theatre during Miss Keene's management is remarkable. Several players who have since won lasting fame wherever the English-spoken drama has supporters were associated with her. Blake, Couldock, Harry Perry, T. B. Johnstone, James S. Browne, Walcot, and many others who had already made their reputation were concerned in the affairs of the house. Joseph Jefferson and Edward A. Sothern practically began their brilliant careers there, and Miss Keene introduced to New Yorkers John T. Raymond, Milned Lovick, Stuart Robson, F. C. Bangs, Effie Germon, Ione Burke, B. G. Rogers, Walter Lennox, Charlotte Thompson, Eliza Couldock, and Rose Eytinge.[193]

Keene's abilities as a manager were tested by the severe financial panic of 1857. Her biographer, John Creahan,

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[193] Op. Cit.

notes that there were great difficulties in producing The Sea of Ice, which became Keene's first major success. According to Creahan, "...Half salaries and other reductions were the order of the day."[194] Joseph Jefferson admired Keene's ability to cope with financial limitations:

> As an actress and manager Laura Keene was both industrious and talented. If she could have afforded it, no expense would have been spared in the production of her plays; but theatrical matters were at a low ebb during the early part of her career, and the memorable panic of 1857 was almost fatal to her. In the midst of financial difficulties she displayed great taste and judgment in making cheap articles look like expensive ones, and both in her stage setting and costumes exhibited the most skillful and effective economy. She was a high-mettled lady, and could be alarmingly imperious to her subjects with but little trouble.[195]

Laura Keene managed her company with an iron hand, instilling discipline and insisting on respect. She was often referred to as "The Duchess," and some found her authoritarian manner offensive on occasion. Jefferson tells of disputes between himself and Keene over stage business, rehearsal practices, and theirs was apparently a competitive relationship.[196] Actress Kate Reignolds,

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[194] Creahan, p. 20

[195] Jefferson, Joseph. Rip Van Winkle: The Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson, p. 143.

[196] Jefferson, pp. 145-158.

who worked in Keene's company as a young woman, found Keene both demanding and encouraging. Reignolds, too, suffered some indignities under Keene's strong sway, however the young woman admired Keene as actress, manager, and woman, and in later years Reignolds perceived Keene's discipline as contributing to her own personal and professional growth.[197] The Manuscript Collection at the Library of Congress contains the Rules and Regulations of Laura Keene's Varieties Under the Management of Laura Keene, which were as follows:

1. Gentlemen, at the time of rehearsal or performance, are not to wear their hats in the Green Room or talk vociferously. The Green Room is a place appropriated for the quiet and regular meeting of the company, who are to be called thence, and thence only, by the call boy, to attend on the Stage. The Manageress is not to be applied to in that place, on any matter of business, or with any personal complaint. For a breach of any part of this article, fifty cents will be forfeited.

2. The call for all rehearsals will be put up by the Prompter between the play and farce, or earlier, on evenings of performance. No pleas will be received, that the call was not seen, in order to avoid the penalties of Article Fifth.

3. Any member of the Company unable from the effects of stimulants to perform, or to appear at rehearsal, shall forfeit a week's salary, and be liable to be discharged.

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[197]Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors, p. 71.

4. For making the Stage wait, fifty cents.

5. After due notice, all rehearsals must be attended. The Green Room clock or the Prompter's watch is to regulate time; ten minutes will be allowed, (the first call only), for difference of clocks; forfeit, twenty-five cents for every scene-the whole rehearsal at the same rate, or four dollars at the option of the Manageress.

6. A performer rehearsing from a book or part at the last rehearsal of a new piece, and after proper time given for study, forfeits one dollar.

7. A Performer introducing his own language or improper jests not in the author, or swearing in his part, shall forfeit one dollar.

8. Any person talking aloud behind the scenes to the interruption of the performance, to forfeit fifty cents.

9. Every performer concerned in the first act of a play to be in the Green Room dressed for performance, at the time of beginning as expressed in the bills, or to forfeit five dollars. The Performers in the second act to be ready when the first finishes. In like manner with every other act. Those Performers who are not in the two last acts of the play, to be ready to begin the farce, or to forfeit one dollar. When a change of dress is necessary, ten minutes will be allowed.

10. Every performer's costume to be decided on by the Manageress, and a Performer who makes any alteration in dresses without the consent of the Manageress, or refuses to wear them, shall forfeit for each offence or omission, one dollar.

11. If the Prompter shall be guilty of any neglect in his office, or omit to forfeit where penalties are incurred, by non-observance of the Rules and Regulations of the Theatre, he shall forfeit for each offence or omission, one dollar.

12. For refusing, on a sudden change of play or farce, to represent a character performed by the same person during the season, a week's salary shall be forfeited.

13. A Performer refusing apart allotted him by the Manageress, forfeits a week's salary or may be discharged.

14. No Prompter, Performer, or Musician, will be permitted to copy any manuscript or music belonging to the Theatre, without permission from the Manageress, under the penalty of fifty dollars.

15. Any Performer singing songs not advertised in the bills of the day, omitting any, or introducing them, not in the part allotted, without first having consent of the Manageress, forfeits a night's salary.

16. A Performer restoring what is cut out by the Manageress, will forfeit one dollar.

17. A Performer absenting himself from the Theatre of an evening when concerned in the business of the Stage, will forfeit a week's salary, or be held liable to be discharged at the option of the Manageress.

18. In all cases of sickness, the Manageress reserves the right of payment or stoppage of salary during the absence of the sick persons.

19. No person permitted, on any account, to address the audience, but with the consent of the Manageress. Any violation of this article will subject the party to forfeiture of a week's salary, or a discharge, at the option of the Manageress.

20. Any new rules which may be found necessary shall be considered as part of these Rules and Regulations, after it is publicly made known in the Green Room.

The following unnumbered rules appear at the bottom of the page:

> Ladies and Gentlemen bringing servants, must on no account permit them behind the scenes.
>
> Ladies and Gentlemen are requested not to bring children behind the scenes, unless actually required in the business.
>
> It is particularly requested that every Lady and Gentleman will report to the Prompter their respective places of residence.
>
> Ladies and Gentlemen prevented attending the rehearsal by indisposition, will please give notice to the Prompter BEFORE the hour of beginning.
>
> No stranger, or person not connected with the Theatre, will be admitted behind the scenes, without the written permission of the Manageress.

A pivotal production in the life and career of Laura Keene, as well as in the lives and careers of Joseph Jefferson and E. A. Sothern, was the presentation of Our American Cousin, which opened at Laura Keene's Theatre on October 18, 1858. Jefferson and Sothern achieved great popularity in the respective portrayals of Asa Trenchard and Lord Dundreary. Sothern was to continue playing Dundreary in various productions for years to follow. The play was revived again by Keene during the 1861-62 season, and was subsequently taken on tour by Keene in 1863. Laura Keene was appearing in her tour production of Our American Cousin at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D. C., on April 14, 1865, when John Wilkes Booth shot and killed President Abraham Lincoln, who was attending that performance with his wife. Creahan's

biography states that Laura Keene was the person who identified J. W. Booth as the assassin, since she saw him at close range as he jumped to the stage and made his escape. Keene was later briefly arrested and detained for questioning about the events of April 14, however sources indicate that she never spoke of that fateful evening to her friends and colleagues.[198]

In 1860, Dion Boucicault and his wife, Agnes Robertson, joined Keene's company in New York. Boucicault supplied a number of plays, including the popular The Colleen Bawn, which Keene produced with erratic success. The season of 1862-63 was not successful, perhaps because of influences of the Civil War, or perhaps owing to Keene's policies. At the close of the season in the spring of 1863, Laura Keene turned over the lease of the theatre to John Duff, who engaged Mrs. John Wood to manage the theatre. Laura Keene then began the tour of Our American Cousin discussed above.

Records of Laura Keene's activity in the latter part of the 1860's are sparse. Apparently she continued to tour, but with varying degrees of success. Her health began to fail as well, and friends commented on her difficult fortunes.

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[198]Creahan, p. 23.

In 1868, Keene went to England for a short stay, returning in 1869 to Philadelphia where she assumed management of the Chestnut Street Theatre. She directed the remodeling of the theatre, and upon its opening the Philadelphia Press commented that under her management "the Chestnut, now one of the most beautiful theatres in America, has become the resort of our best people."[199] Two weeks later, on October 13, 1869, the same newspaper praised Keene in this way:

> She is among the best managers in the art world . . . Her industry, ability and thrift have brought her . . . a handsome competence, which she has earned by downright labor . . . She has played under flinty difficulties and turned them over from the bottom . . .[200]

Keene also performed at the Chestnut, repeating many of the roles that had brought her success in earlier years. Nonetheless, her efforts were not entirely successful, and after one season in Philadelphia, Keene returned again to New York.[201]

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[199] Quoted in Creahan, p. 34.

[200] Quoted in Creahan, p. 35-36.

[201] The Manuscript Collection at the Library of Congress contains various papers which belonged to Laura Keene, among which is a statement of weekly receipts at the Chestnut Street Theatre, April 11-16, 1870, showing Gross Receipts of $1877.56, Expenses of $1297.41, and a Balance of $580.15. The latter figure may be assumed to represent Miss Keene's profit for the week.

In the remaining three years of her life, from 1870 to the spring of 1873, Laura Keene appeared from time to time in New York theatres. She did not resume management of a theatre, but she did launch a publication entitled Fine Arts. This venture lasted a short time and met with little success. Keene also made appearances as a lecturer on the drama. Ill with consumption in these last years, Laura Keene died on November 4, 1873. She left two daughters from an early marriage to John Taylor; a second marriage to John Lutz had ended with his death in 1869.

Shortly before her own death, Laura Keene had organized a movement to collect funds for Matilda Heron, an actress whose career had run somewhat parallel to Keene's. Heron's fortunes had declined, and she was destitute. Laura Keene contacted many people to assist in raising funds for Heron. This concern for others' welfare was not unusual for Keene. Jefferson was among those who respected her basic kindness: "Laura Keene was in private life high tempered and imperious, but she had a good heart and was very charitable. I never heard her speak ill of any one but herself; and this she would

sometimes do with a grim humor that was very entertaining."[202]

Decades after Laura Keene's death, William Winter wrote in Vagrant Memories that he thought Keene had not fulfilled her promise. Winter recalled many of Keene's performances with high praise, but he believed that she made two mistakes which damaged her career: departure from Wallack's Theatre, and relinquishing her own theatre to tour. Winter attributed these decisions to a "restless nature," and he concluded that Laura Keene did not achieve the impact she might have had on the American theatre. His focus, however, was on Keene as actress, and he does not discuss her prowess as a pioneer woman manager.[203]

MATILDA CHARLOTTE VINING WOOD

Born to theatrical parents in England on November 6, 1831, Matilda Vining's first stage appearance occurred in 1841. Thereafter she performed in various theatres in England, and she married actor John Wood. She was then to be known as Mrs. John Wood for the remainder of her career. In 1854, Mrs. Wood and her husband were contracted to cross the Atlantic and

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[202] Jefferson, p. 158.

[203] Winter, William. Vagrant Memories, pp. 54-59.

perform at the Boston Theatre, where they remained for three seasons. In 1856, the Woods moved to New York where they worked at Burton's Theatre. The summer of 1857 found them at Wallack's Theatre, and in the fall they went to Ben De Bar's St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, and then on to St. Louis and San Francisco.[204]

The first record of Mrs. Wood's management indicates that in January 1859, she ran the Forrest Theatre in San Francisco, and in March of that year she managed the American Theatre in San Francisco.[205] Returning to New Orleans in 1860, Mrs. Wood managed a "short season" in the spring at the Varieties.[206] She then returned to New York and appeared with Joseph Jefferson from May through the summer, and among her most popular performance numbers was her rendering of the song "Dixie," which she had also popularized in the south.[207] Subsequently, Mrs. Wood appeared at the Winter Garden in

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[204]Biographical information found in Barnard Hewitt's essay on Mrs. Wood in Notable American Women, pp. 648-649; obituary notice in The New York Times, January 13, 1915, 9:3; and in Hines, Dixie and Harry P. Hanaford, editors, Who Was Who in the Theatre (New York: H. P. Hanaford, Publisher, 1914), pp. 2616-2617; also Kendall, p. 310.

[205]Hewitt, p. 649.

[206]Kendall, p. 387.

[207]Odell, 7: p. 223. Also Leavitt, p. 79.

1861, and she took part in the production of The Colleen Bawn at Niblo's in 1862. Mr. and Mrs. Wood had separated during the months on the west coast, and Mr. Wood died in 1863.

The next opportunity for Mrs. Wood to assume management responsibilities occurred in 1863 when Laura Keene gave up control of her theatre in New York to tour with Our American Cousin. In October 1863, the theatre re-opened as the Olympic, managed by Mrs. Wood for the next three seasons. Odell noted the frequent change of bill at the Olympic in contrast to the runs of several weeks' duration which had become common in New York theatres by the early 1860s. During her second season, Mrs. Wood strengthened her acting company, notably by the addition of Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, who was later to be one of the "Big Four" in Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre company. In December of 1864, Mrs. Wood produced a revival of Boucicault's The Streets of New York which ran a record-breaking 100 performances.[208]

Mrs. Wood's third season (1865-66) found E. L. Davenport added to the company, joining comedian James Lewis who would later accompany Mrs. Gilbert to Daly's famous company. Another significant member of Mrs.

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[208]Odell, 7: p. 549, 552, 635-636.

Wood's group was J. H. Stoddart, who was to say of Mrs. Wood:

> Mrs. Wood, I think, stood alone in a certain line of characters. She was immensely popular, and much liked and respected by her company. While she managed the Olympic, it was conducted in a thoroughly artistic way; she was a power in herself, liberal in her views, and spared no expense that she deemed necessary to the proper conduct of her theatre. I was with her during the three years of her management, and her retirement from it caused great regret, not only on the part of the public, but also to all her associates.[209]

Mrs. Gilbert says little in her memoirs of Mrs. Wood's management practices, but she does state that she refused other offers because she "would not leave Mrs. John Wood as long as she wanted me."[210] Perhaps one of Mrs. Wood's gifts as a manager lay in her personal charm, which also enhanced her performances as a singer and comedienne. Mrs. Gilbert describes her in this way:

> I think she is the most absolutely funny woman I have ever seen, both on and off the stage. The fun simply bubbled up in her. Then she could sing and dance a bit, and in the burlesques and farces she did, such as "The Sleeping Beauty" and "The Fair One with the Golden Locks," she was inimitable. There were certain parts of hers that I always loved to watch her in, no matter how often I had seen her do them.[211]

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[209] Stoddart, James H. Recollections of a Player (New York: The Century Co., 1902), p. 143-144.

[210] Gilbert, p. 77.

[211] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

After the close of the third season of the Olympic, Mrs. Wood decided to return to England, where she resumed acting. In 1869 she became manager of the St. James Theatre in London. She returned to America in 1872 to appear on tour for nine months, then she went back to London and continued to manage the St. James until 1879. In 1882 she became co-manager of the Court Theatre in London, continuing in that role until 1891. In the following years, Mrs. Wood continued to perform, her last appearance taking place in 1905. She died in 1915 at the age of eighty-three.

Mrs. John Wood's twelve years in the United States was marked by praise and respect. She was always admired as an entertaining and charming performer, and her short managerial career in America was good preparation for the eighteen years she successfully managed theatres in London.

The accomplishments of Mrs. John Drew, Laura Keene and Mrs. John Wood illustrate that women were successful as managers in nineteenth-century theatre and were able to sustain the role of manager for many years. Mrs. John Drew managed the Arch Street Theatre for thirty-two consecutive years. Laura Keene's management of various theatres covered a period of fifteen years. Twelve years of Mrs. John Wood's thirty-year management career took place in American theatres. There is no indication

that these women suffered any disadvantage in their managerial efforts due to their sex. Each of these women achieved a reputation for excellent management and their success is further evidence that some able women found more chance for professional advancement in the theatre than was generally available to women in other occupations during the nineteenth century.

The careers of the four actresses, Mrs. W. G. Jones, Maggie Mitchell, Kate Reignolds and Mrs. J. R. Vincent, along with the management achievements of Mrs. John Drew, Laura Keene and Mrs. John Wood, illustrate the success of many theatre women, illustrate the opportunities for stable employment for women, and provide examples of the variety of career patterns open to women in the mid-nineteenth century American theatre. In the next section the careers of twenty-two other theatre women are summarized to provide additional evidence that the American theatre from 1850 to 1870 offered substantial professional opportunity to women.

Section Three: Other Women in Mid-Nineteenth Century Theatre

Women were not marginal figures in the nineteenth-century American theatre. The career studies in the preceding two sections illustrate the variety and significance of seven individual theatre careers,

however many other women were active in the American theatre of the 1850s and 1860s. This section provides information on twenty-two additional women whose success further illustrates the extent of opportunity which was available to women in the theatre at that time. Not all of these women were great actresses, and not all of their lives proceeded happily. But each of them had the opportunity to earn a living in the theatre during the decades under study, and each of them conducted a career with a notable degree of success.

Kate Bateman, born in Baltimore in 1842, was the daughter of actor parents who exploited their eldest daughters, Kate and Ellen, as child performers from 1844 to 1849 on tours in the midwest and eastern cities. Successful in New York in 1849, the Bateman sisters then were hired by P. T. Barnum, who reportedly paid them jointly $1,000.00 per week for appearing at his Museum in New York, and then on tour in England. The popular sisters continued as child stars, performing in New York and on tour extending as far west as San Francisco, until 1856. Kate Bateman then went on as an adult actress, beginning with her appearance in 1860 at the Winter Garden in her mother's play Evangeline. Achieving success in the role of Leah in Leah the Forsaken in Boston in 1862, Miss Bateman then repeated the role at Niblo's in New York in 1863, then in London, and again

at Niblo's in 1866. After her marriage in 1866 to an English doctor, Kate Bateman moved to London and continued her career on the London state during the 1870s. She appeared in a number of Shakespearean productions with English actor Henry Irving and was well-received by London audiences. Illness forced her to retire for a time, but she again performed in the 1890s. At that time she also opened a school for actors. Kate Bateman died in 1917 in London.[212]

Kate Bateman was one of many actresses who began performing as a child and as a member of a theatrical family. The later transfer of her career to the London stage was unusual for an American actress, however her marriage to a respected physician and son of a well-known English writer and historian may have facilitated that success.

Agnes Booth was born in Australia where she made her stage debut at age fourteen. She emigrated with her family to the United States' west coast, and appeared as Agnes Land in Mrs. John Wood's company in San Francisco in 1858. She then worked in the stock company at

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[212] James, pp. 111-112; New York Times, April 12, 1917, 11:6; Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors, p. 136; excerpts of critics comments on Kate Bateman's performances are in Mullin, pp. 54-57.

Maguire's Opera House for seven years. In 1865, she moved to New York and played leading roles at the Winter Garden and at Niblo's Garden with Edwin Forrest. In 1866 she was engaged as the leading lady at the Boston Theatre managed by Junius Brutus Booth, Jr., whom she married in 1867. She remained at the Boston Theatre for seven seasons, and in subsequent years she toured, played again in New York at the Booth Theatre and in several other New York stock companies. Agnes Booth was very popular and successful, continuing her career until her retirement in 1903.

Widowed in 1883, Agnes Booth married John B. Schoeffel, the manager of the Tremont Theatre in Boston, in 1885. Sources indicate that the Schoeffels lived in a gracious home in Manchester-by-the-Sea where they entertained frequently. Apparently Agnes Booth was fully accepted in Boston society and was financially secure.[213]

Caroline Chapman, born in London, was a member of a large theatrical family, some of whom emigrated to America in 1827. Her father (or her grandfather,

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[213] Clapp and Edgett, pp. 43-46; James, pp. 202-203; New York Times, January 3, 1910, 9:5; comments by critics are in Mullin, pp. 63-64. See also National Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White & Company, 1924), p. 465.

according to some sources) began an early showboat business on the Mississippi in 1831, and for several years Caroline performed with family members and others on the boats. In the late 1840's she appeared in New York, and in 1852 she went to San Francisco and debuted at Maguire's Theatre. The next year she joined the San Francisco Theatre company. Popular with California audiences through the 1850s, Caroline Chapman played with many actors from the east, including Edwin Booth and Laura Keene. With her brother, William, Caroline Chapman was a great success in San Francisco and on tour to the California mining camps. She was noted for her comic energy and sparkling personality onstage, and she indulged in burlesques of other performers, especially rival celebrity Lola Montez.

The rough schedule and the abandon which apparently characterized the Chapman's work during the 1850s eventually took its toll. Caroline Chapman was unsuccessful in finding work in New York following her brother's death in 1857. And she was no longer as popular with California audiences. Her career waned during the 1860s, and she retired in 1870.

Caroline Chapman was a pioneer in western American theatre. She was among the first performers to tour the mining camps, and she set new standards for performance

in the San Francisco theatre at mid-century. She was one of the first successful American troupers.[214]

Annie Clarke was born in Boston in 1845 or 1846. She appeared as a child actress at the Boston Museum, Boston Theatre and Howard Athaneum to supplement her widowed mother's meager income. In the season of 1861-1862 she joined the Boston Museum company as a "walking lady," advancing to supporting roles during Kate Reignolds' reign as leading lady. Reignolds was followed by Kate Denin, who abandoned the company abruptly, and then, in 1866, Annie Clarke became the leading lady at the Boston Museum. She was to retain this position for twenty years, playing a broad range of roles and establishing prominence in Boston and New England. She retired from the Boston Museum in 1892, and later performed as a member of Charles Frohman's company in New York, as well as appearing with Richard Mansfield's company and Julia Marlowe's company. She remained active in her stage career until her death in 1902.

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[214] James, pp. 322-323. Ludlow, Noah, Dramatic Life As I Found It (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1966. Originally published in St. Louis, 1880), pp. 568-70; Rourke, Troupers of the Gold Coast, pp. 38, 40, 43, 51-53, 68, 70-71, 80-81, 112-118, 152.

Although not born into a theatrical family, Annie Clarke did begin to perform as a child in order to assist in supporting the family. Her long association with the Boston Museum afforded her an admired position in that city. In 1982 a number of prominent Bostonians organized a testimonial for the actress which is described in actress Kate Ryan's book Old Boston Museum Days. Like her godmother, Mrs. J. R. Vincent, Annie Clarke was both respected and loved by her co-workers and her appreciative audiences.[215]

Lotta Crabtree was born in New York circa 1847 to a bookseller and his wife, who was employed as an upholsterer. Lotta's father went to California during the Gold Rush, and her mother followed later with young Lotta and her baby brother. Eventually hardship in the mining camp community and economic straits led Mrs. Crabtree to follow the suggestions of Lola Montez and other performers to permit young Lotta to perform. At age seven, Lotta began her extraordinary career which was to be supervised and managed by her ambitious and shrewd mother. As a child star, Lotta toured in the mining camps and towns of California and gained

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[215]Clapp and Edgett, pp. 56-57; Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors, pp. 156-157; Ryan, pp. 63-79.

popularity with city and rural audiences. She was versatile, capable of singing, dancing, pantomime and burlesque.

After achieving substantial celebrity in the west, Lotta made her New York debut in 1864, and then toured as a visiting star in Chicago and Boston. In 1867 she returned to Wallack's Theatre in 1867, and she won star status in New York.

Lotta then formed her own company and developed a repertory of plays which she toured until 1891. Having amassed a fortune, much of it in real estate holdings, Lotta retired and lived comfortably with her mother. Following Lotta's death in 1924, a number of lawsuits were filed contesting her will. Individuals claiming to be relatives attempted unsuccessfully to gain some of the vast fortune which Lotta had bequeathed to a number of charitable organizations.

An excellent and entertaining study of Lotta's career is Constance Rourke's Troupers of the Gold Coast which describes not only Lotta's success, but the determined management by her mother, Mary Ann Crabtree,

who was one of America's first successful stage mothers.[216]

Julia Dean was born in 1830 in Pleasant Valley, New York, an off-spring of the famous Drake family which had been among the earliest theatre touring families in the Western territories. She was linked through a cousin's marriage to the Chapman family and actress Caroline Chapman.

In the 1840s, Julia Dean began her career acting with her father's companies in New York state. She then achieved early notice in Ludlow and Smith's company in Mobile, Alabama, where she and young Joseph Jefferson were utility players. Returning to New York, she debuted in 1846 at the Bowery, and was well-received. She then toured successfully in southern and western states and performed often in New York between 1850 and 1856.

After 1856, and then known as Julia Dean Hayne following her 1865 marriage, she appeared in the west, playing in cities and mining camps. Unlike many performers who began their careers in the western states,

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[216]Clapp and Edgett, pp. 74-77; Hewitt, pp. 203-205; James, pp. 395-396; New York Times, September 26, 1924, 21:3; Wilson, A History of American Acting, pp. 182-185; Rourke, Troupers of the Gold Coast.

Julia Dean Hayne arrived as a celebrity, famed for her beauty and her musical voice. Her marriage to Hayne was very unhappy; he was a dissolute character who squandered much of the considerable monies earned by his wife. In 1865, the actress obtained a divorce, played for almost a year in Salt Lake City, and after a second marriage returned to New York. She was not well-received when she appeared at the Broadway Theatre in 1867, and critics thought her acting style had become crude and abrasive through the hard years of performing in the west. Julia Dean's sudden death after childbirth in 1867 ended her career at age thirty-seven.[217]

Louisa Eldridge was born in Philadelphia in 1830 and established a career there prior to her marriage and temporary retirement in 1852. Financial pressures motivated her return to the stage in 1857-58, and from that time until her death in 1905, Louisa Eldridge performed in various New York theatres. In 1860 she became a member of the New Bowery company for three years, where, at age thirty, she began to play the old

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[217] James, pp. 449-450; Jefferson, pp. 112-114; Ludlow, pp. 711-712; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, p. 299; New York Times, March 7, 1868, 4:6; Rourke, pp. 120-121. Also Ralph Elliott Margets, "A Study of the Theatrical Career of Julia Dean Hayne," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1959).

woman parts which were thereafter her specialty. In the mid-1860s she spent a season each in Cincinnati and Washington. Returning to New York, she continued her career through the latter decades of the 1900s. Known in her later years as "Aunt Louisa," Mrs. Eldridge was active in the formation and support of the Actor's Fund and other charities for the benefit of theatre people. She died in New York in 1905.

Louisa Eldridge had no family connections with the theatre. Her father was a Philadelphia politician. She married a successful shipping merchant and had three children, two of whom followed careers in the theatre. Her occupation as an actress combined successfully with her role and wife and mother, and her many volunteer activities to assist in fund-raising were parallel to the social service activities carried out by many middle-class unemployed women of the time. She was active as an actress for more than fifty years, enjoying consistent popularity and earning affection and respect in her profession.[218]

Rose Eytinge began her career in the early 1850s in her native Philadelphia when she was seventeen years

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[218] Clapp and Edgett, pp. 94-95; New York Dramatic Mirror, January 2, 1897, p. 2; New York Times, December 10, 1905, 7:1; New York Times, December 12, 1905, 10:2.

old. She subsequently achieved popularity on a tour of the western states. At age twenty she joined a stock company in Albany, and in 1862, at age twenty-seven, she became a member of Laura Keene's Varieties in New York. During the 1860s she played many important roles at various New York theatres and on tour with the Davenport-Wallack combination company. She was hired as principal actress at Wallack's in New York in 1868. After a few years living abroad with her husband in the early 1870s, Miss Eytinge resumed her career with great success in New York, Boston, London, and on tour. She withdrew from the stage in the late 1880s, opened two schools for actors, and then briefly performed again in the early 1900s. At the time of her death in 1911, she was cared for by the Actors' Fund.

The child of non-theatre parents, Rose Eytinge apparently was drawn to the stage by natural interest. She was married first to a theatre manager. Her second husband was a journalist who served in the 1870s as United States Consul General to Egypt. Her third husband was an English actor. She had three children, none of whom followed theatre careers.

In her later years, Rose Eytinge wrote a play, a novel, and her memoirs, which are affectionate reminiscences about her years on the stage. She recalled her happy success in the mid-nineteenth century noting that

she was the first leading lady on the English-speaking stage to receive a weekly salary in three figures in 1868. Sources do not indicate whether financial distress or personal preference caused her to spend her last years in the Brunswick Home on Long Island under Actor's Fund subsidy.[219]

Clara Fisher, born in England in 1811, became a child actress and was quite successful in London and touring throughout Britain. One of six children, Clara's early debut is credited to the enthusiasm for theatre of her father, an amateur actor. In 1827 the Fisher family came to America, and young Clara immediately appeared at the fashionable Park Theatre in New York. She was very popular, and for seven years she traveled to various stock companies to play leading roles. Her sister, Jane Marchant Fisher, also established a successful career in America, performing under her married name, Mrs. Vernon.

In 1834 Clara Fisher married musician J. G. Maeder and continued her career as Mrs. Maeder. Economic

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[219] Clapp and Edgett, pp. 96-100; James, pp. 591-592; Rose Eytinge, The Memories of Rose Eytinge, Being Recollections and Observations of Men, Women, and Events, during half a century (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, Publishers, 1905); New York Times, December 21, 1911; 11:5. See also Mullin, p. 176.

reversals in 1837 forced the Maeder's into semi-retirement. They moved to Albany in 1844, however Mrs. Maeder made an occasional appearance in New York theatres during the 1840s.

In the 1850s, Mrs. Maeder resumed her acting career on a full-time basis, specializing in character roles in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities with stock companies. Later she joined Augustin Daly's company in New York, and she continued to perform in New York and with Daly's touring companies until her retirement in 1889. Her stage career spanned seventy-two years.

Clara Fisher Maeder and her husband had seven children, two of whom died young. Four of the remaining five children eventually worked in the theatre.

In 1897 Autobiography of Clara Fisher Maeder was published, which is a conversational and somewhat rambling recollection of the actress' long and perenially successful career. Clara Fisher Maeder is representative of the longevity possible for women in theatre careers during the nineteenth century.[220]

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[220] Autobiography of Clara Fisher Maeder edited by Douglas Taylor (New York: Burt Franklin, originally published 1897, reprinted 1970); James, pp. 622-623; Ludlow, p. 376; National Cyclopaedia of American

(Footnote Continued)

Euphemia (Effie) Germon, the child of actors, was born in Augusta, Georgia, in 1845. Her father was the actor who first portrayed Uncle Tom. Young Effie began her career as a child in Baltimore, and later she performed in Philadelphia and Washington. She then moved to New York and appeared at Brougham's Lyceum and then at Wallack's Theatre. In 1863, Miss Germon returned to Philadelphia for a two-season engagement at the Chestnut Street Theatre, and then in the fall of 1864 she re-joined Wallack's company in New York where she remained until 1888. Miss Germon continued to appear in New York until 1907. She died at the Actors' Fund Home on Staten Island in 1914.

Best known for soubrette roles in her youth, Effie Germon was primarily a comic actress. Her career is typical of the New York stock company actress with appearances in other Eastern cities. In her later years she toured with a few productions, but she was primarily seen in New York.[221]

(Footnote Continued)
Biography, pp. 471-472; New York Dramatic Mirror, February 13, 1897, p. 23; New York Times, November 13, 1898, 8:1. Excerpts of critics' comments are in Mullin, pp. 197-199.

[221] Clapp and Edgett, pp. 115-118; New York Times, March 7, 1914, 11:5.

Anne Hartley Gilbert began her career as a child dancer in London. She married an English dancer, and in 1849 she and her husband emigrated to America and settled west of Milwaukee. In 1850 or 1851 they moved to Chicago where they worked for theatre manager John B. Rice. During the 1850s the Gilberts were employed by stock companies in Cleveland, Louisville, and Cincinnati, and during that time Mrs. Gilbert developed skill as a character actress. In 1864 the Gilberts accepted an offer to work for Mrs. John Wood at the Olympic Theatre in New York, where Mrs. Gilbert stayed for three seasons. (Mr. Gilbert died in 1866.) Next Mrs. Gilbert spent three years at the Broadway Theatre, and in 1869 she joined Augustin Daly's company at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. She was to remain with Daly for thirty years until his death in 1899. Along with Ada Rehan, John Drew and James, Lewis, Mrs. Gilbert was known as one of "Daly's Big Four." She was famous for "old woman" roles. In 1904, at the age of eighty-three, Mrs. Gilbert played her first starring role in Charles Frohman's production of Granny, produced especially for her. She died in Chicago during the tour of the play.

Successful on the American stage for more than half a century, Mrs. Gilbert had achieved prominence and respect. Critic William Winter remembered her as ". . . not only one of the most accomplished of dramatic

performers; she was one of the noblest and sweetest of women." The Stage Reminiscences of Mrs. Gilbert, published in 1901, recall with humor and affection the many persons and plays which were woven in the decades of hard work and applause. Anne Hartley Gilbert was another woman who enjoyed a long success in the American theatre.[222]

Matilda Heron, born in Ireland in 1830, came to Philadelphia with her family at age twelve. She played in stock companies in New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco. After a journey abroad during which she saw a production of La Dame Aux Camelias, Heron translated the play and performed the central role in Philadelphia in 1855 and then on tour. By 1856 she was achieving popularity as Camille in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Mobile and New Orleans. In 1857 she enjoyed a brief but stellar success as Camille at Wallack's Theatre in New York where her production ran for 100 performances. Miss Heron then toured again in Camille and other plays, and reportedly made one hundred

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[222]Clapp and Edgett, pp. 115-118; Gilbert, Anne Hartley. The Stage Reminiscences of Mrs. Gilbert, edited by Charlotte M. Martin (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901); James, pp. 29-30; Winter, William, Vagrant Memories, Being Further Memories of Other Days, p. 248; and also see Winter, pp. 247-256. See also Mullin, pp. 217-220.

thousand dollars. By the mid-1860s, Miss Heron's popularity diminished, her health began to fail, and her fortune evaporated. She died almost destitute at age forty-six.

Although Matilda Heron's career was brief compared to many of the woman discussed in this study, her impact on American acting was regarded as substantial. Heron introduced what came to be known as the Emotional School of acting, a term applied to strong realistic portrayal of violent emotions. The role of Camille was a perfect vehicle for Heron's style, and for years afterwards she was remembered for the wrenching pain of her performance.

Heron is also representative of the woman who came from humble origins, chose the theatre for a career, and was able to establish significant artistic and financial success, if only for a limited time.[223]

Fanny Herring, the daughter of English performers, came to America as a child with her widowed mother. Her first appearance was at the Bowery in 1842 at age twelve. Orphaned at fourteen, Miss Herring obtained

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[223] James, pp. 187-188; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, p. 263; Wilson, A History of American Acting, pp. 122-214; Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre, pp. 179-180; Winter, pp. 68-72; Mullin, pp. 242-245.

employment at the Chatham Street Theatre as a ballet girl. Gradually, during the 1840's, Miss Herring worked her way up the ladder in New York theatres. By 1852 she was a member of the company at the Olympic, in 1859 she joined the New Bowery company, and in 1862 she went to the Old Bowery where she worked until 1866. She toured in the late 1860s, then returned to New York where she continued to perform until 1892. Fanny Herring was a typical New York stock actress of the 1850s and 1860s, appearing in a vast number of roles and maintaining a comfortable degree of popularity with New York audiences.

In the late 1840s, Fanny Herring married a man not connected with the theatre, and they had two sons, one of whom became an actor. There is no mention of divorce or marriage difficulties in the information available about the actress, so presumably she maintained her non-theatre marriage successfully while continuing her acting career.

Like Kate Reignolds and Annie Clarke, Fanny Herring assumed financial responsibility in a widowed family at an early age. She also managed to survive being orphaned young and conducted her career for many years playing a broad variety of roles in city stock theatres and on tour. Fanny Herring is typical of the hard-working professional actress who did not achieve

star status, but who maintained a long and productive career.[224]

Cordelia Howard, daughter of actress Caroline Fox, began her career at age two in 1850. Two years later in Troy, New York, where her father, George C. Howard, managed a stock company, the Howard family was involved in the first dramatization of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Cordelia's father produced the play using a script written by her uncle. Her mother appeared in the cast, and Cordelia played Little Eva. The play opened in September 1852, and ran for 100 performances in Troy, followed by a run in Albany. Next the production moved to the National Theatre in New York, where it triumphed and Cordelia Howard became famous at the age of four years. The 1853 run of over 200 performances was followed by a series of tours in the United States and England through the 1850s. Cordelia Howard was the most well-known and the most popular of the many actresses who portrayed Little Eva, and she repeated the role continuously until 1861, when she retired from the stage at age thirteen.

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[224] New York Dramatic Mirror, July 12, 1902, p. 3; New York Times, May 19, 1906, 11:6.

In 1928, at the age of eighty years, Cordelia Howard wrote brief but entertaining memoirs of her stage career. She had married Edmund J. Macdonald in her early adult years, and she had never returned to public life. Her memoirs, edited by her nephew George P. Howard, comment on her discomfort with public recognition and celebrity status. However, she recalls many theatre personages such as P. T. Barnum, Charles Kean, Lawrence Barrett, Fanny Davenport, and her uncle, pantomimist George L. Fox, with affection, and she writes that her stage childhood was a very happy and secure existence.

Cordelia Howard was one of many child stars to enjoy success in the mid-nineteenth century, and her historic association with the original Uncle Tom's Cabin makes her a significant personality in American Theatre.[225]

Jean Davenport Lander performed as a child in England, and for a short time in the United States. Then, after a return to Europe to study music, she made her adult stage debut in London. She came back to

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[225] Hewitt, pp. 171-179; James, pp. 224-225; Macdonald, Cordelia Howard, "Memoirs of the Original Little Eva," Educational Theatre Journal 8 (December 1956): 267-282; Wilson, Three Hundred Years of American Drama and Theatre, pp. 202-203.

America in 1849 and appeared in theatres in New York and in California during the 1850s. In 1860, after her marriage to General Frederick Lander, she retired from the stage, and when her husband was killed in the Civil War, Mrs. Lander committed her energies and her inheritance to caring for war wounded in South Carolina. In 1865, Mrs. Lander returned to the stage at Niblo's Garden in New York and remained in the company there for several years. Later she appeared at the Boston Theatre and in Washington, D. C., where she moved in the early 1870s and made her retirement home.

Jean Davenport Lander survived two major career transitions. She was originally popular as a child prodigy, and she later returned successfully to play adult roles. Her hiatus from the stage during the Civil War did not damage her popularity, and undoubtedly her marriage to a General and war hero added prestige to her post-war career.

Mrs. Lander's scrapbooks and personal papers are in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. Many clippings attest to the vast number of productions in which she appeared. She had been the first actress to perform the role of Camille in the United States, however Matilda Heron's subsequent portrayal caused Jean Davenport to eliminate the role from her repertoire. After the Civil War, Mrs. Lander tended to prefer to

perform in European translations, and she was known for her intelligence, petite beauty, melodious voice and perfect diction.[226]

Adah Isaacs Menken established a sensational reputation based on her performance of the lead role in Mazeppa, in which she rode a horse in a flesh-colored costume. Born in the 1830s, probably in Louisiana, Menken deliberately clouded and distorted details of her personal life, even adopting a number of assumed names. Apparently the financial crisis of 1857 destroyed the business of her first husband, and as a result she tried an acting career, debuting in Shreveport and later in New Orleans. A short tour followed, and then she appeared in 1859 at the National in New York. A second marriage and charges of bigamy made Menken notorious, and after recovering from a period of depression, she returned to the stage in 1861 in the role in Mazeppa, creating a public uproar. Performing in Mazeppa and other similar equestrian plays, she toured the country, and in 1864 she took Mazeppa to London. By that time she was receiving $500.00 per performance. A stormy

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[226] Clapp and Edgett, pp. 202-204; Morris, p. 144 and p. 172; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography; pp. 127-128; Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterdays with Actors, pp. 118-119; Washington Star, August 3, 1903, 2:4. See also, Mullin, p. 155.

third marriage in 1866 resulted in Menken's final departure from America to Europe, where she performed with limited success until her death in 1868.

Menken's brief popularity and financial success as a performer sprang from her early notoriety and association with scandal. She capitalized on her image as an adventuress, and unlike the other women included in this study, she seems to have encouraged public disapproval. She managed to convert private disasters into celebrated escapades, and in this manner she became one of America's first performers to succeed by repeatedly shocking the public, both on and off the stage.[227]

Anna Cora Mowatt, descendant of American Colonial forebears, was born in 1819 and as a child and young woman enjoyed amateur theatricals and writing. Her husband's financial failure forced her to write for an income during the 1840s. Then, in 1845, her play Fashion was produced at the Park Theatre in New York,

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[227] James, pp. 526-528; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 5: pp. 435-436; New York Times, August 21, 1868, 4:6. See also Johnson, pp. 147-159, for interesting but not well-documented information. Two biographies on Menken are Bernard Falk, The Naked Lady or Storm over Adah (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1934), and Allen Lesser, Enchanting Rebel: The Secret of Adah Isaacs Menken (Philadelphia: Ruttle, Shaw and Wetherill, 1947). Critics comments are in Mullin, pp. 327-328.

and afterwards it was presented many times in other cities and abroad. Successful as a playwright, Mrs. Mowatt next tried acting at the Park Theatre. Her debut in 1845 was well-received, and she subsequently toured the United States and England for nine years, retiring from the stage in 1854.

Widowed in 1851, Mrs. Mowatt married Richmond newspaper editor William Foushee Ritchie in 1854, but the marriage was unhappy and the couple separated in 1860. During the next seven years, Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie continued to write and she published two novels. She died in 1870 near London of the tuberculosis which had plagued her most of her adult life.

Anna Cora Mowatt's brief but highly successful acting career was unusual for a woman raised in a socially prominent and financially secure family. Her only childhood connection with theatrical activity had been the amateur presentation of plays for family and friends. Her introduction to professional theatre through production of her play must have convinced her that professional performance was an acceptable and suitable way for her to earn a living for her ailing husband and herself. Apparently she gave up her acting career because of ill-health and turned to the less physically strenuous occupation of writing.

Mowatt's chief biography, Eric Wollencott Barnes, attributes changes in public attitudes towards women in the theatre at mid-nineteenth century to Mowatt's example and influence. She was always regarded as a "lady" and she behaved with dignity and poise, both privately and publicly.[228]

Elizabeth Ponisi was born in England in 1818, and became enamored of the stage through her childhood admiration for troupes of strolling players who visited her Yorkshire village. She married actor James Ponisi in her teens and toured the provinces with him by coach and by foot. Her London debut was in 1848, and in 1850 she came to America under a three-month contract. She never returned to England. Appearing first at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, she was given star billing and a warm reception. Known as Madame Ponisi, she moved to New York in November 1850, and debuted at the Old Bowery. Later she joined the stock company at the Broadway Theatre, where she appeared during the 1850s, often in support of Edwin Forrest.

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[228]Barnes, Eric Wollencott, The Lady of Fashion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954); James, pp. 596-597; Mowatt, Anna Cora, Autobiography of an Actress (Boston: Ticknor Reed, and Fields, 1853); Wilson, A History of American Acting, pp. 113-118. See also Mullin, pp. 339-340.

During the 1860s, Madame Ponisi continued her career in New York, including appearances at Laura Keene's Theatre in the first production of Boucicault's The Colleen Bawn. She also toured a number of times with Forrest. In 1871 she joined Wallack's company and remained there until the company disbanded in 1888. Her last stage appearance was in a benefit for her close friend Louisa Eldridge in 1893. Madame Ponisi had divorced and married a second time in 1859; she raised seven step-children, and was widowed in 1884. Following retirement, she lived quietly in New York until her death in 1899.

Elizabeth Ponisi's long and uninterrupted career resembles the careers of Mrs. W. G. Jones, Clara Fisher Maeder, and Anne Hartley Gilbert. Like those women, Elizabeth Ponisi was born in England, apparently to parents of humble means. Like the other women, she married a man who worked in the theatre, and like the others she began her performing career early in life. Madame Ponisi was another woman who managed career longevity and earned a comfortable old age.[229]

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[229] New York Dramatic Mirror, September 1, 1894, p. 2; New York Times, February 22, 1899, 9:5.

Agnes Robertson was born in Edinburgh and began her career in the English provinces during her adolescence. She later appeared in London with Charles Kean. Shortly after her marriage to Dion Bouciacult in 1853, Robertson came to the United States and performed at Burton's Theatre in New York, where she achieved instant popularity. In 1854 she appeared at the Boston Museum, and then in many cities, establishing a fine reputation, particularly for her portrayal of the heroines in her husband's plays. In 1860 Robertson returned to London and performed there for six years, returning to tour America in 1866. She then made her home in London until her death in 1916, having retired from the stage twenty years before. Although Robertson's later career was in London, she was still admired and loved by the American public. In 1890, shortly after her divorce from Boucicault and his subsequent death, a benefit for Agnes Robertson at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York contributed more than $2000.00 for her benefit.

Like Mrs. John Wood, Agnes Robertson was able to maintain popular appeal on both sides of the Atlantic. She specialized in the portrayal of sweet Irish and Scotch peasant girls which probably pleased the large British immigrant population in American audiences. Robertson's marriage to Boucicault produced six children, three of whom pursued theatrical careers.

Boucicault's infidelities and his charges that he was never legally married to Robertson, thus labeling his own children illegitimate, aroused great sympathy for Robertson. She was clearly admired and respected throughout her long career.[230]

Ann Wallack, born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1815, was the daughter of an actress mother, and her uncles, Harry and Tom Placide, were both actors. As Ann Duff Waring, she made her debut at age twelve at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia and performed many roles in that city. Her first marriage left her a young widow, and she then met and married J. W. Wallack, Jr. Thereafter she was known to the public as Mrs. J. W. Wallack. In New York she appeared at the Park Theatre, Burton's, Laura Keene's, Brougham's Lyceum, the Winter Garden, and Booth's. With the formation of Wallack's company, she became a prominent member of that group, and maintained a successful career until 1874 following her husband's death. She lived comfortably until her death in 1879, and she left a sizeable legacy in real estate and provisions for her mother and a loyal servant.

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[230] Clapp and Edgett, pp. 307-310; James, pp. 175-176; New York Times, November 7, 1916, 11:4;
(Footnote Continued)

Ann Wallack was evidently a very fine actress. Joseph Jefferson commented on the force of her tragic acting, stating that "In the quality of queenly dignity I think she even surpassed Charlotte Cushman . . ." William Winter attributed to Ann Wallack much of her husband's professional success "because she cheered and aided him in all his high ambitions and endeavors, and supplied the prudence which he lacked in the conduct of practical affairs."

Ann Wallack's long career is another example of one which began in childhood within the circle of a theatrical family. Her wealth in her later years attests to the financial success she and her husband enjoyed, and to her management of that wealth in her widowhood.[231]

Lucille Western made her stage debut in 1858 in a risque play entitled Three Fast Men, produced by her stepfather in various cities. Public disapproval followed, and Lucille and her sister Helen had difficulty in obtaining employment for a few years. In 1860, Lucille Western purchased the rights to a dramatization

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(Footnote Continued)
Reignolds-Winslow, Yesterday with Actors, pp. 64-67. See also Mullin, pp. 385-387.

[231] Jefferson, p. 61; New York Times, February 13, 1879, 5:4; Winter, Vagrant Memories, p. 119.

of East Lynne, which she successfully produced and played the star role. The play made her famous, and she toured in East Lynne for sixteen years, earning upwards of $250,000.00, which she reportedly squandered.

Lucille Western became a celebrity, but she was never known as a first-rate actress. Her popularity and financial gain came from her image as a temptress and renegade. She was not associated with scandal, as was Adah Isaacs Menken, but she chose to perform in plays which challenged middle-class morality and in which she often exploited her sexuality and suggestive beauty.

Lucille Western courted celebrity and deliberately created an aura of mystery around herself. She attempted to avoid the public by concealing her face behind heavy veils, and she generally took her meals in her hotel suite while on tour. She preserved the image of glamour by avoiding chance encounters in public.

Western's career is an example of a touring actress who appeared primarily in one star vehicle, just as Maggie Mitchell scored perennial success with Fanchon.[232]

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[232]Logan, p. 443; Lloyd Morris, Curtain Time (New York: Random House, 1953) p. 208; New York Times, January 12, 1877, 5:3; see also Mullin, p. 507.

Maria Pray Williams, known for most of her career as Mrs. Barney Williams, made her first appearance in her native New York at the Chatham Theatre in 1842 when she was age seventeen. As Mrs. Mestayer, wife to comedian Charles Mestayer, she worked during the 1840s on tour in Rio de Janiero, and in stock companies in New York, Boston and Cincinnati. After Mestayer's death, his widow married Barney Williams in 1849. Mr. and Mrs. Williams performed together in New York and toured in the 1840s, performing as far west as San Francisco where they were enormously popular. In 1856, the Williamses went to London where they played for the Royal Family and then toured in Europe. In 1859, Mr. and Mrs. Williams began a six-year period touring in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and New York. From 1867 to 1869, Mr. Williams managed the Little Broadway Theatre, and Mrs. Williams played leading roles there. In the 1870s they toured together until Barney Williams' death in 1876. Mrs. Williams' final appearance was in Philadelphia in 1877. She died in 1911.

Maria Pray Williams was active on the American stage for thirty-five years. Twenty-five of those years she spent as partner to her husband, Barney Williams, specializing in comedy. Mr. and Mrs. Williams were one of the few husband-and-wife comedy teams to meet with national success; Maria's sister Malvina Pray and her

husband William J. Florence were another successful comedy team. Both couples enjoyed long and happy marriages in conjunction with long and fruitful careers.[233]

The twenty-two careers summarized in the foregoing material further illustrate the variety of career patterns, the opportunities for long and stable careers, and the degree of professional success available to women in mid-nineteenth-century American theatre. Agnes Booth, Annie Clarke, Lotta Crabtree, Clara Fisher, Anne Hartley Gilbert, Elizabeth Ponisi, Anne Wallack and Maria Pray Williams maintained careers that lasted for decades. Caroline Chapman and Julia Dean became major stars in the western mining areas. Matilda Heron and Adah Isaacs Menken each enjoyed a brief but meteoric success, and like Lucille Western achieved notoriety. Kate Bateman and Cordelia Howard were among the first child stars, and Fanny Herring, who began to perform as a child, exemplified the working actress who never achieved star status. Louisa Eldridge, Rose Eytinge, and Effie Germon were typical of actresses who were popular for years in New York theatres. Agnes Robertson

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[233] Clapp and Edgett, p. 386-392; New York Times, May 7, 1911, II, 11:4.

was successful in American and English theatre. Anna Cora Mowatt and Jean Lander achieved stardom in New York and successfully maintained a place in polite society.

The twenty-two women described in this section along with Mrs. W. G. Jones, Maggie Mitchell, Kate Reignolds, Mrs. J. R. Vincent, Mrs. John Drew, Laura Keene, and Mrs. John Wood, are examples of the many women who found economic security, career opportunities, and public admiration through their varied and successful accomplishments in the American theatre.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The careers which have been summarized in this study demonstrate that women had flexibility and autonomy in career choices. They could remain in one city and conduct a long career, as was true for Mrs. W. G. Jones and Mrs. J. R. Vincent. Women could tour the country, as did Maggie Mitchell, Mrs. Barney Williams, Lucille Western and many others. Women could combine touring with terms of residence in city stock theatres, as Kate Reignolds, Laura Keene, and others. Women performed under all sorts of circumstances, including the rough environments of the western territories where Caroline Chapman, Julia Dean and Lotta Chapman enjoyed great success. Various career options were open for talented women and men in mid-nineteenth-century theatre, and personal choice, not gender, appears to have governed the option selected.

Not only was steady employment available for women in the theatre, the possibility for many years of employment is illustrated in many of the careers described in this study. Of the women whose careers have

been described here, those active on the stage for more than forty years include Agnes Booth, Lotta Crabtree, Louisa Eldridge, Rose Eytinge, Effie Germon, Maggie Mitchell, and Elizabeth Ponisi. Careers of more than fifty years belonged to Clara Fisher, Anne Hartley Gilbert, Mrs. W. G. Jones, Mrs. J. R. Vincent, and Ann Wallack.

The information presented in this study indicates that many women began careers in the theatre out of economic necessity, often appearing as child actresses to supplement family income. Such was the case for Annie Clarke, Lotta Crabtree, Fanny Herring, Kate Reignolds, and Mrs. W. G. Jones. Other women, like Anna Cora Mowatt and Louisa Eldridge, turned to acting to relieve financial pressures in adult life. While many women who became actresses were children of performers, such as Kate Bateman, Caroline Chapman, Julia Dean and Effie Germon, some women like Maggie Mitchell and Mrs. J. R. Vincent apparently chose to become actresses without any prior family association with the theatre. For all of these women, a career in the theatre clearly provided greater economic opportunity than work in other fields. Although the general pattern of women's wages in the theatre was definitely lower than wages paid to men, still, women in the theatre had much more economic equity with men than women in other occupations, as

supported by the salary data in Chapter Three of this study. Women in the theatre earned far more than women in other areas of employment in the mid-nineteenth century, as discussed in Chapter Three, so the theatre clearly offered greater economic opportunity to women than other employments provided.

The question of the nineteenth-century American actress' social status and whether social censure was perceived as a problem by the actress herself is a topic for further research. The tendency of theatre historians has been to generalize across the entire nineteenth century on the assumption that social attitudes towards women in the theatre were relatively static. In addition, little attention has been given to a comparison of attitudes towards actresses as compared with attitudes towards other working women. Finally, there has been no study to determine whether those women who chose theatre careers might have achieved a noticeable improvement or change in social status had they selected other career paths. Considering that most of these women came from humble origins, I contend that they had little chance for significant upward mobility in any way other than through public success in the theatre.

Additional research is also needed on the careers of women in the theatre prior to 1850. While the mid-century decades studied here were a time of

significant theatrical growth, there was ample theatrical activity prior to 1850, and women performers contributed to that activity. Very little information has been assembled on the salaries of men and women in the theatre prior to 1850, and such data might yield additional evidence concerning professional equity in the American theatre.

The emergence of women in management roles in American theatre is another area for further research. The three actress-managers who are discussed in this study were pioneers in management practices among both male and female managers. In particular, the role of the female manager such as Catherine Sinclair in the Gold-Rush years in California would enhance our understanding of the impact women had on theatre development.

Finally, this study has suggested another research area related to women as managers of acting careers. The careers of Lotta Crabtree and Maggie Mitchell were influenced by the early influence of their mothers who apparently made shrewd contracts for the actress-daughter. The emergence of the "stage mother" in the American theatre has yet to be studied.

In conclusion, this study indicates that women were active, influential, and successful in the mid-nineteenth-century American theatre. Many actresses enjoyed lengthy and rewarding careers, and they

contributed to the possibility for other women to pursue professional careers on the American stage. Working with men, under the same circumstances as men, and with options to choose a career path similar to that available to men, the American actress from 1850 to 1870 enjoyed success, career longevity, and differentiated career patterns. Equality in wages between actresses and actors occurred in some, but not all, cases. Equality in the number of acting jobs available to women and men was seldom, if ever, possible because of the predominance of male roles in dramatic literature. Therefore, perfect employment equality did not exist between women and men in mid-nineteenth century theatre. But, in an era when the subordination of women pervaded our society, the theatre was a unique context in which the actress, through the merit of her talent and effort, experienced career autonomy rarely available to other working women, and often earned a greater degree of fair compensation than women in other occupations. In this sense, the mid-nineteenth-century theatre, in contrast to other social institutions of the time, offered actresses an exceptional degree of professional equity.

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