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A HISTORY OF THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE AND

OGDEN'S GOLDEN AGE OF THEATRE

1890 - 1909

by

Ronald W. Jenkins

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Theatre Arts

Approved:

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Major Professor

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Head of Department

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Dean of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1965

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## FOREWORD

It is the purpose of this research thesis to acquaint the reader with some of the history of one of Ogden's theatrical eras and the old theatre building that is associated with this era. Although Ogden has had many theatres in its history, none has stood so long and been so significant as the Orpheum or Grand Opera House as it was known prior to 1909. Although somewhat altered from its original form, this theatre still stands today, maintained and well-kept.

In order to lay background for the story of this Golden Era, some early history of drama in Ogden has been included. The Union Opera House, Ogden's first theatre of any importance, is mentioned in this research project as part of this early history. One must not forget, however, that in Utah history practically any enclosure served at some time or another as a theatre. Outdoor pavilions, barns, meeting houses, stables, even the open air, were improvised as theatres.

This research includes information pertinent to the early history of the Grand Opera House, its architect, builders, decorators, and first managers. It also includes accounts of its grand opening and a rather detailed description of its original appearance and design. Also documented are appearances of a number of the actors and actresses of the period between 1890 and 1909, who appeared on the stage of the Grand Opera House.

One section of this treatise contains some pictures of the Orpheum as it appeared in 1890 as well as pictures of the theatre as it appears

today. Also, contained in this section are pictures of some old stage flats and props that came out of the Orpheum Theatre.

When one attempts to do research of this nature, he must rely on all sources for assistance. The writer, therefore, is indebted to the micro-film department of the Ogden Carnegie Free Public Library, the Utah State University Library, the Utah Historical Society, and the Latter-day Saint Church Library in Salt Lake City, the Orpheum Theatre in Ogden, and the following people: Mr. Thomas Osborne, life-long resident of Ogden and stage manager of the Orpheum and Grand Opera House from 1895 to 1961; Mrs. Lucine Pingree, well-known Ogden actress and granddaughter of David H. Peery, Ogden's mayor during the era of the Grand Opera House; the late Minnie Moore Brown, one of Utah's actresses in the early part of the twentieth century; and Mr. Richard Glassman, manager of the present-day Orpheum Theatre. Much assistance was gained, too, through a recent graduate thesis written by Harold R. Oakes on early drama in Ogden. Mr. Oakes was a student at Brigham Young University.

The period of time that encompasses the Golden Era in this writer's opinion is the years between 1890 and 1909. This was the time in which the Grand Opera House operated as a legitimate theatre. During this period some of America's finest actors and actresses were circuiting the country. Although it is difficult to document specific dates and performances, it is known that some of the "greats" in the theatre of the day appeared at the Grand Opera House.

## GRAND OPERA HOUSE

The Orpheum, or Grand Opera House, as it was known prior to 1910, was constructed and opened in 1890. This theatre is one of the oldest in Utah and remained a citadel of entertainment for many years. Although altered in its original design, the old structure has been well-preserved and kept in constant repair through its seventy-three years.

The story of the Orpheum is an interesting one in which many actors and famous theatrical companies made their appearance as they toured the United States. Such famous performers as Sarah Bernhardt, Charles Frohman, Edwin Booth, Emma Abbott, the Joseph Jefferson Company, the Barrymore family, Marie Dressler, and Otis Skinner were among those who appeared on the Orpheum stage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Even in the early years of its history, Ogden was a culture-conscious community. Although its citizens settled for rather crude and humble accommodations in early days, they looked forward to the day when they might have a beautiful structure to attract the best talent that came West. These people had a desire for good entertainment. The great majority had come West with the Mormon movement. Brigham Young encouraged the fine arts--music, drama, art, literature--and so the Mormon people developed an appreciation for these things. Also, many of these Mormons had been converted to the church in foreign countries where they had gained some appreciation for the arts. Many were also well-educated and could appreciate good literature. Almost every small community throughout



Utah had its own brass band and dramatic company.

One of the earliest accounts of entertainment in Ogden was of a play being held in a bowery in 1855. The following commentary appears in Whitney's History of Utah:

At 2 p.m. the assembly repaired to a spacious bowery erected for the purpose of dancing and drama. At 4 p.m. the citizens assembled in the bowery for dancing and other recreations. At 7 p.m. the Ogden Dramatic Association under the direction of W. Paulter presented Luke the Laborer followed by comic and sentimental songs and hornpipe dancing and concluded with a mirth-provoking farce, Raising the Wind<sup>1</sup>.

The first professional actor to appear in Ogden was George Pauncefort, famous for playing Captain Absolute in Sheridan's The Rivals.<sup>2</sup> An account of his tour appeared in the Salt Lake Telegram, Oct. 3, 1864: "Mr. Pauncefort and Mrs. Bell returned from their tour on Saturday evening. They were very successful at Ogden and Brigham City."

The coming of the railroad had a great deal to do with circuits of traveling companies to Ogden and nearby communities. Prior to 1869 travel was overland by stagecoach or wagon and not many of the traveling theatrical companies got as far north as Ogden and Brigham. The railroad into Ogden made it possible for the circuiting of northern Utah cities.

On July 4, 1869, the first circuit performers, Dan Costello's Circus and Menagerie, arrived in Ogden. Other performances were given at the Ogden Tabernacle a little later on that summer. One such was billed as "General Thom Thum and His Party."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Orson F. Whitney, Popular History of Utah. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1916), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>Harold R. Oaks, "An Evaluation of the Beginnings and Influence of Drama in Ogden from 1850 to 1900." (M.S. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1962), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

Utah actor Phil Margetts influenced early drama in Ogden. It was he who suggested the first permanent theatre in the city. Under his supervision an old stable was remodelled to house theatrical performances. It was here that Margetts and Company performed. Exact dates of this performance are not known. It was a frame structure, accommodating about six hundred benches. The old building required constant repair, however, to keep it safe for the public. In 1879 the Union Opera House was opened which forced the closure of the old stable-theatre.<sup>4</sup>

The theatre called the Union Opera House, located west of 321 - 24th Street, was erected in 1878. It remained Ogden's principal theatre until the Grand Opera House (Orpheum) was built in 1890.<sup>5</sup>

Many plays were produced in the old Union Opera House.<sup>6</sup> Miss Minnie Moore Brown recounted an early performance of Pygmalion and Galettea in the Union. In an interview she stated that when she was a little girl she remembered the actor wore tights; she noticed there were large welts and knots on his legs.<sup>7</sup>

The Union Opera House was located on the second floor of the Union Building which has been torn down and replaced with the Berthana Dance Hall on 24th and Grant and Kiesel Avenues. It was gas lighted.

The Union Opera House served as Ogden's best theatre for some ten years. However, due to its rather limited accommodations it came under criticism by many prominent civic leaders, and toward the end of the

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<sup>4</sup>Oaks, op cit.

<sup>5</sup>Milton R. Hunter, Beneath Ben Lomond's Peak (Salt Lake City, Utah: Desert News Press, 1944), p. 144-45.

<sup>6</sup>Illustration Section of this paper for photograph, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup>This information was obtained in a personal interview with Miss Brown on June 15, 1963.

eighties, plans had been made for a new theatre. This was a period of growth for the city of Ogden. New businesses had begun to spring up in the area. Ogden was a main link now with the East and West. All of this, of course, accounted for the upsurge in civic pride.

The idea of a new opera house was brought before the city government and was discussed for many months. It was finally decided that the kind of structure being asked for in Ogden was too costly for the city. The idea was then dropped as far as the city fathers were concerned. However, it wasn't too long until some local businessmen announced their intention to go ahead with plans for a new theatre. J. M. and M. S. Browning and David Eccles, all prominent business men of the time, said they would donate money for the new structure. Land owned by Joseph Clark on the east side of Washington Boulevard was being considered by Browning and Eccles as a site for the new theatre.<sup>8</sup>

Late in April of 1890 final approval was given for the building of the new structure. An old laundry located on part of the property, on which the theatre was to be built, was torn down to make way for the new structure. The following article, giving the account of the building of the new theatre, appeared in the Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard:

Work commenced yesterday in tearing out the C.O.D. Laundry to make room for the new Opera House. Bids are being considered and today the contract for excavating will doubtless be let. While everything is moving with precision, the men backing the enterprise are letting the prospective contractors know that as soon as the work is let they wish them to put on all the men they can scrape together and push the work to completion.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Oaks, op cit.

<sup>9</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (April 26, 1890).

The structure was completed in December of 1890.

The Grand Opera House was to be a duplicate of the California Theatre in San Francisco. S. T. Whitaker was retained as the architect for the structure. It was to be the finest of its kind west of the Mississippi River. Plans called for offices and apartments to be built in front and above the theatre proper. An elaborate minaret was to be erected on top of the theatre with a smaller one on each side to give the building an oriental appearance. An early photo shows the minarets as they appeared in 1896. In front, spiral stairways went up some five stories to each level of the apartment section of the theatre.

S. T. Whitaker was an Ogden man. He had been an amateur actor before going to Europe to study theatre architecture. The Grand was his first big job upon his return to Ogden.

Ground was broken for the new theatre in the summer of 1890. No costs were spared in the interior decor. The chandeliers alone cost \$2,000 each, an enormous amount for 1890. The entire cost for the interior was estimated at about \$25,000.<sup>10</sup>

It was an anxious and excited Ogden City populace that awaited the completion of the Grand Opera House during the summer of 1890. On December 7, the following article appeared in the Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard about the opening of the Grand Opera House:

Before another issue of the Standard, the Grand Opera House in this city will have opened to the public and its walls will have resounded with music, song and dialogues of the performers and the applause of the audience. The event will be noteworthy and every circumstance is tending to make it auspicious. The building is the City's pride and to its owners it will ever be accredited as a monument of enterprize and public spirit.

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<sup>10</sup>Oaks, op cit.

The architect has reason to be a happy and gratified man, for he has won for himself much fame and well-deserved praise. The managers are fortunate in securing so thoroughly equipped a structure in so favorable-located a city; and the beautiful Abbott should be proud to be the first upon whom Mr. Moses' superbly furnished curtain will arise. We refrain from further raptures till the public, by sweet experience, is better attuned to the melody.<sup>11</sup>

The house was sold out for the opening night of the Grand Opera House. A rather sad footnote to this gala opening was that the Union Opera House closed its doors and rang down its curtain the night before the Grand Opera House opened. Not being able to compete with a much finer structure the old Union was later remodelled for a dance hall. The opening night of the Grand Opera House was one of the highlights in Ogden's history as is indicated in the following article that appeared in the Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard, December 31, 1890, which very graphically points up:

The Grand Opera House opened last night. Beautiful, brilliant was the spectacle presented throughout. There were 1,700 persons present to witness this splendid occasion.

There was a sound of revelry by night and the metropolis had gathered there Her beauty and Her chivalry and bright the lamps shown over fair women and brave men. A thousand hearts beat happily, and when music arose with voluptuous swell, soft eyes looked low to eyes that spake again and all went merry as a marriage bell.

It was a blaze of splendor. The bright flashes of the lights in the vast auditorium brought in view a scene never before equalled in the goodly city, if in fact anywhere else, between the Colorado metropolis and the Pacific Ocean. The wealth, the beauty and the representative interest of Ogden, with many visitors from neighboring points, had gathered there in the grand array, each and all bearing a trophy by their presence at the feet of Euterpe, whose honored place it was to formally dedicate our new and elegant temple to Thespis. The beauty of the ladies and the excellence of their attire, the flashing gems, the

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<sup>11</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (December 7, 1890).

bright smiles apparent on every countenance of the nearly 2,000 present,<sup>12</sup> the general good feeling and the grandeur of the place itself, all combined to make the scene in front of the curtain one long to be remembered, one altogether worthy of the time, the place, and the occasion.

One just entering would gaze first upon the immensity of the spectacle outspread before him, and seem to "take in" all the beauties and advantages at a single glance; then he or she would proceed by detail to consider the situation then beginning again, and, if in the presence of an acquaintance, would pleasantly compare notes and discuss features.

Even to a casual observer the appearance of the audience was somewhat in the nature of an awakening. It was metropolitan and high class even viewed from the foyer; while from the stage or either side of the paraquette the spectacle was that of brilliance itself. This appearance applied to the crowded galleries no less than to the throng below. It was a sooth, such an assemblage as any artist might covet as one to be stored up among his cherished recollections and remembered ever thereafter.

The ushers were as nearly as possible omnipresent, but it was not an old thing altogether with some of them and a little delay here and there was observable, nothing, however of any consequence, and the audience was not kept long. It had kept stringing in by twos and fours and higher numbers since shortly after the doors opened at half past seven, thronging the great circled corridors leading to the auditorium at first, then gradually thinning out as the receptacle beyond marked their presence. Shortly after eight the orchestra rendered a brief overture, the curtain rose, and Mr. Frank J. Cannon appeared to make a speech of greeting and introduction, referring in terms of deserved compliment to the founders and proprietors of the establishment, delivering a glowing tribute to Mr. Whitaker, the architect, and speaking in commendatory terms of all who had taken part in making the structure a success, he proceeded to speak of the star of the evening in choice and appropriate language. At this juncture, Miss Abbott appeared and was warmly received.

No more time was spent in preliminaries. The curtain rose on a rustic scene, the flat wings and set pieces forming as pretty a spectacle of the kind as was ever seen on the stage. The characters, some forty altogether, and the opening number, and in the midst of their melody, Elvira, in the person of Miss Abbott, tripped gaily upon the stage and received another rapturous greeting. From first to last her work was a charm to all listeners;

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<sup>12</sup>Difference in seating accounted for in overflow crowd.

from the opening solo up to and including her special conspicuous flights of vocalism in the tout ensemble. The audience were enchanted with that peculiar form of delight which comes only of a liking fully gratified.

Among the throng were recognized S. P. Rounds, Jr. of Denver, Mr. Brown of Cheyenne, Honorable Moses Thatcher, H. C. Whitney, Esq., Manager Burton, Heber M. Wells, John Kimball, S. A. Kenner and numerous others outside of the city. Numerous box parties were formed and all comprising the company appeared in full costume. This reporter caught the following names: occupying the four boxes on the left were: Joseph S. Peery, Miss Miner, Miss Kahn, C. D. Golding, Miss Elliot, Miss Kay, S. J. Burt, R. O. Barker, Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Rogers, H. D. Kink. On the right: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Clark, Mr. and Mrs. S. W. Eccles, Honorable and Mrs. C. C. Richards, President and Mrs. R. D. Richards.

"Ogden has the grandest temple of the muses in the West," said Peter McCourt, and added with a shy laugh, "with the exception of the Tabor Grand." Mr. McCourt is manager of the Tabor and arrived in Ogden last night. The gentleman was met by a reporter in the lobby of the Opera House, and did not have time to talk except to say that every attraction which appears in the Tabor will be at the Grand also. He congratulated the people of Ogden, the proprietors of such a magnificent palace. When the curtain went up on the last act, he remarked with great enthusiasm that he could not touch such a scene as that in the Tabor and he had doubts whether any theatre in the country could. The gentleman will remain in Ogden several days as the guest of Messrs. Bowes and Peery.<sup>13</sup>

The Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard painted quite a vivid picture of that opening in December 1890. Appearing in connection with this same article were others which described the Grand and gave a brief history of it together with other pertinent information.

#### History of the Structure

Years have been spent in speculating on, and proposing a new theatre for Ogden, many companies have been formed for their projects. Until May 1890, when Messrs. David Eccles,

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<sup>13</sup>The Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (Dec. 31, 1890).

Joseph Clark, J. M. Browning and Mr. S. Browning suggested that they were in a position to supply Ogden with an Opera House that had not yet been, nor would be in the near future, surpassed in the West. No sooner had the idea been conceived than after surmounting some minor difficulties, operations began in June 1890. Since that time until the present (December 1890), there have been 2,000 yards of excavating finished; 5,000 cubic feet of cement placed in position; 40,000 cubic feet of quarried stone built in the walls; 2,200,000 bricks made and used in erecting the main walls; 693,946 feet of timber used in the framing of the roof, floors, galleries, bridges, and truss timber; 111,000 pounds of cast iron for supporting the various parts; 9,000 pounds of steel used as girders; eighteen miles of copper and other wires used for conveying electricity to the 1,500 incandescent lights; 16,500 feet of piping used in steam heating, supplying water, etc.; 2,500 feet of rope used for hoisting and cording the counter weights; 12,000 yards of canvas used for scenery purposes. The building has a frontage of 99-8 x 226-0 deep, the largest and finest in the Western Country.<sup>14</sup>

### Features of the Building

The following descriptions appeared in the local newspaper stating some of the features of the theatre. They are as follows.

#### The foyer

This attractive room presents the form of a pleasing semi-circle in the rear of the auditorium, affording an inviting promenade. Grand oak staircases on either side lead to the balcony and family circles above; each stair is supplied with a niche in which is placed a beautiful bronze statue, holding above its head a torch, throwing electric rays through the entire foyer and lighting up the beautiful velvet velour curtains which hide from view the auditorium. Passing in the right, we enter the gent's fumer; while the ladies may turn to an elegant dressing room which occupies a corresponding position to the left.<sup>15</sup>

#### The auditorium

Draw aside the draperies and we are on the threshold of the theatre, with the stage opposite the entrance. The

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<sup>14</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (December 31, 1890).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.



first floor is divided in orchestra and orchestra circle; above this is the first gallery divided into a balcony and family circle and still above this is the gallery proper.

The auditorium is 65 feet between walls in width, 72 feet in length, and will seat 1,700 people--the entire house from top to bottom.<sup>16</sup>

#### The drop curtain

The drop curtain is without doubt one of Mr. Moses'<sup>17</sup> best efforts. It is purely oriental in design and color and represents a view in the Orient from the interior of a mosque. The delicate blue sky is softly blended to a warm gray of the hazy distant city, which is seen beyond the river. The grays and purples of the middle distance form a charming contrast between the extreme delicate distance and the warm sunny foreground where the minarets and domes of the mosques stand in bold relief against the clear sky, and fairly glitter in the strong sunlight.<sup>18</sup>

#### Emergency exits

The emergency exits are all controlled from the box office or electrician's box. By touching the button a current of electricity is conveyed to the door bolts which are so constructed that they shoot back under the pressure and the door is thrown outward by a spring, which is also released by a current of electricity. Entrance to the gallery is reached from the main entrance on Washington Avenue by a separate stairway leading to the right before the box office is reached. Tickets for admission are obtained at the gallery. Thus the patrons of the upper and lower parts of the house separate before entering the box office.<sup>19</sup>

#### Stage house dimensions

The stage is 42 feet x 70. The curtain opening measures 37 feet. It is 27 feet to the fly girder from the stage floor, and 65 feet to the rigging loft. There are two quarter traps, a center trap and one thirty foot bridge.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (December 31, 1890).

<sup>17</sup>Thomas G. Moses was retained as scenic artist.

<sup>18</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (December 31, 1890).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

According to the same article, the theatre provided fourteen dressing rooms.

#### Heating and ventilating

Another unique feature of the theatre was the heating and ventilating system.

Much thought has been given to the subject of heating and ventilating. This has been made perfect by the aid of a powerful fan, by which means the air is taken from the top of the building 80 feet high, where it is pure, and passed over steam coils, and after becoming heated is driven into the theatre, forcing out the foul air, giving a new supply every seven minutes to the entire room. In the same manner the room is cooled to any desired temperature by driving the air over cooling coils.<sup>21</sup>

#### Exits and fire protection

According to the account, adequate exits and fire escapes were provided to empty the 1,700 occupants in one minute. Fire bases and hydrants were located to drench the entire building if such an emergency were to arise.<sup>22</sup>

#### Theatre Rules

Public notice of theatre rules for the Grand Opera House appeared in the Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard in 1891. The notice read as follows:

Messrs. Bowes and Kick wish to announce to the public that they have established rules that will be followed from today on and will be strictly enforced:

- Rule 1 Door open at 7:30 p.m.
- Rule 2 Curtain rises at 8:00 sharp.
- Rule 3 Positively no babies allowed in the theatre except for matinees.
- Rule 4 All parties coming in after the curtain is up will not be seated until the act is over.<sup>23</sup>

Apparently some of these rules were kept because in advertisements of 1894 performances were announced at 7:30 and 8:00 P.M.

<sup>21</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (December 31, 1890).

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid. (March 15, 1891).

## SCENERY AND PRODUCTIONS AT THE "GRAND"

The scenery in the era of the Grand Opera House was elaborate and the productions were such that they required extensive work on the part of a stage crew to set them up. Photos are shown in the illustration section of this thesis which indicate careful scenery construction. The flats in the pictures are about fifty years old and remain today in good condition.

Most of the scenery that was shipped in the era of the Grand Opera House was tall and heavy. The productions were gigantic and spectacular and, as stated above, required many hours to get them ready for presentation to an audience. Mr. Thomas Osborne stated that the scenery for most of the shows he helped with was bulky and heavy. He recounted that it took sometimes twelve and thirteen hours to set up for a performance: "There was such an awful lot of stuff to carry into the theatre; we worked all day and often into the night just before the performance would start to get a show ready."<sup>24</sup>

Reference to the following productions illustrate how elaborate and complicated scenery was in those days:<sup>25</sup> In November 1894 the Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard ran an account of Lincoln J. Carter's The Fast Mail Train in which it advertised "Niagara Falls by moonlight, with furling mist, 14 freight cars, illuminated cabooses with practical working engine." It further stated, "The Dago Devil, realistic rivers, steam and steamboat, explosions and other startling effects." A short time later

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<sup>24</sup>Personal interview June 15, 1964.

<sup>25</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard, December 3, 1894; November 1894.

another advertisement ran, "Neil Burgess and the County Fair, new scenery and all mechanical effects with horses running three-fourths of a mile in full continuous view of the audience."

Not only were the props and scenery complicated, but some of the actors were a bit unusual, too. One show advertised real live animals: "See the best Shetland ponies, see Egyptian donkeys, see the blood hounds." This was part of a bill for Uncle Tom's Cabin.<sup>26</sup>

Later on, in 1902, Madame Modjeska appeared in Henry VIII as Queen Katherine. The newspaper account from the Ogden Standard stated, "car-loads of special scenery with fifty people."<sup>27</sup> The article appeared January 1, 1902.

On January 10, a few days later, when Iola Pomery appeared in Fin Eggs' Ferry, the Ogden Standard stated: "Electrical effects, the torpedo explosion, the great steamboat scene." A play called The White Slave played March 10, 1902, and the Ogden Standard billing ran, "The rainstorm of real water, the wreck of Beile Creole."<sup>28</sup>

According to Mr. Thomas Osborne, the three most gigantic productions ever to come to the Grand Opera House were The Palace of the King, Ben Hur, and The Heart of Chicago. Of The Palace of the King, Mr. Osborne recounted that it took him and his crew eight hours to set up the scenery. A picture of the advertising of Viola Allen and The Palace of the King appears in the illustrations section of this thesis. The following account of The Palace of the King appeared March 5, 1902:

<sup>26</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard, November 24, 1894.

<sup>27</sup>Ogden Standard daily paper in 1902, Semi-Weekly title dropped.

<sup>28</sup>See Appendix note #1.

The advance sale of seats for the engagement of Miss Viola Allen at the Grand will open on Tuesday morning. As this is the most important engagement of the theatrical year, those desiring tickets for the best seats had better be on hand early on the day of the sale . . . this will be Miss Allen's first appearance in Ogden. Her tours during the first two years have been confined to the larger cities, and were it not for her managers having certain obligations to fill, Miss Allen would have closed her season with the completion of her New York engagement.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Osborne stated that Lincoln J. Carter "always brought the spectacles to the stage." He further stated, with some definite criticism, that "most of Mr. Carter's actors were quite poor." He seemed to make up for poor acting with expensive sets and convincing mechanical effects." An example of one of Mr. Carter's difficult scenes involved a train coming downstage on tracks. It was an exciting and breathtaking situation in the play, The Heart of Chicago. Mr. Osborne stated that the scene was so realistic that the "first two rows in the front of the auditorium at the "Grand" stood up and screamed in terror." The reaction of the audience was noted in the Ogden Standard following the performance:

The play is the sort that appeals to the masses because of its sensationalism. The fire scene in the first act was a realistic representation of the great Chicago fire. The great scene, however, is the one showing the drawbridge which has been opened by the villain. An apparently real engine comes snorting and puffing down the track to be stopped just in the nick of time by the heroine, who fights her way from the track where she has fallen. At long last she succeeds in turning on the red light, the danger signal as the engineer jumps from his locomotive and picks up the heroine from the tracks. The audience breaks into tumultuous applause. (This scene called for several encores.)<sup>30</sup>

The "granddaddy" of the spectaculars was Ben Hur. Mr. Osborne stated that the scenery was so heavy that it split one of the girders in

<sup>29</sup>Ogden Standard (March 5, 1902).

<sup>30</sup>Morning Examiner (December 8, 1908).

the fly loft. The original stage play came to the Grand Opera House on December 7, 1908, and featured the famous chariot race on stage. The horses were tied to a treadmill which enabled them to run at full speed with the chariot wheels spinning also. The horses and chariots were such that they accomplished the illusion of the arena race.

A more descriptive and detailed account of this spectacle appeared in the Ogden Standard on December 7, 1908: "FORTY-SIX MEN AT WORK PREPARING THE GRAND STAGE FOR THE BIG PERFORMANCE OF BEN HUR." The next day the following article appeared:

There were 46 men busily engaged in preparing the stage for last night's performance of Ben Hur. The great 200 foot cyclorama was in place upon the massive rollers two feet in diameter and forty feet high, which when turned during the race scene gives the effect of the audience encircling the vast amphitheatre of the Roman stadium with their eyes, while watching the progress of the racing chariots.

Sixty-five huge forty-six foot special drop scenes were put in place in the scenery loft, the company using their own heavy block and tackle.

The company played Cheyenne for three nights ending Saturday under conditions not often met with. The scenery was piled in the alley adjoining the theatre on account of the limited size of the stage which necessitated the scenes being worked from without. The set used at Cheyenne was shipped to Salt Lake yesterday and installed there for the engagement while the show is filling the Ogden engagement.<sup>31</sup>

It was interesting to note that the scenery was too big for the Cheyenne performance. One can imagine the difficulties that would be encountered with presenting this show in a small theatre. Very little was mentioned about the actors and/or performance in the production; apparently actors were incidental in comparison with the huge and magnificent pageantry of it all.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Ogden Standard (December 8, 1908).

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

It is not known whether or not other spectaculars came to the Grand Opera House. Quo Vadis was advertised for Salt Lake, but nothing could be found by this researcher as to whether it played in Ogden. In later years when the theatre played vaudeville, there were many animal acts which were quite unique.<sup>33</sup>

Through its many illustrious years the Grand had practically every kind of entertainment--Ben Hur to circus acts, even a few prize fights.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>For further reference to vaudeville, see Appendix, note #2.

<sup>34</sup>John L. Sullivan fight. See p. 19.

## STAGE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Stage craftsmanship during the era of the Grand Opera House was commendable. In an earlier description in "Scenery and Productions at the Grand" it was pointed out how carefully some of the old flats were put together.<sup>35</sup> Even more indicative of this workmanship are the pictures of some chairs that were supposedly built for Maude Adams.<sup>36</sup> Although the paint has come off in places, one can see how carefully and painstakingly these chairs were built. The carving of the legs, for instance, shows this.

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<sup>35</sup>A photograph of two early stage flats that are presently used to mask the movie screen at the Orpheum theatre are shown in the illustrations section. These old flats would date back to about 1912. The scenic designs on them are typical of the period covered by this thesis.

<sup>36</sup>Chairs shown in the photos of illustration section were given to the Ogden Civic Theatre. Mrs. Lu Taylor, member of this organization, stated the chairs came from the old Grand Opera House and were made for one of Maude Adams' shows.



## EARLY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

It was through biographies and old newspaper ads that the meager information that follows was found. It must be remembered that many famous theatre personalities came through Ogden and played at the Grand Opera House. Professional roadshows and variety shows were playing almost nightly. An example of just one week's billings appeared in the Ogden Standard of 1906. It was the Mac Swain Company. The advertising read: Tuesday, The Little Minister; Wednesday, East Lynn; Friday, Miller's Daughter; Saturday, Jessie James. All of these were presented during the week of February 7, 1906.<sup>37</sup>

The new theatre in Ogden brought a surge of talent to the public--so much that there was a marked decline in local amateur performances.<sup>38</sup> Some new performances were given by Weber Academy and the Sacred Heart Academy during the ensuing years after 1890, but these were not too many in number. Some noteworthy productions in the Grand theatre during the first year were:<sup>39</sup>

1. Jane Eyre, January 14, 1891, Charlotte Thompson starring.
2. Black Mantles, May 23, 1891, Mrs. Sloan, Mr. R. C. Easton; Mr. G. W. Thatcher, conductor of the Logan Opera Company
3. The Private Secretary, January 26 and 27, 1891, Charles Frohman Company.
4. Alabama, an early operetta, July 13 and 14, 1891, A. M. Palmer.

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<sup>37</sup>The Ogden Standard (February 5, 1906).

<sup>38</sup>Oaks, op cit.

<sup>39</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard. (December 31, 1890)

5. John L. Sullivan appeared in a 20-round exhibition about  
May 1891.

## FAMOUS THEATRE PERSONALITIES WHO APPEARED

## AT THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE

Emma Abbott opened the theatre on December 31, 1890. The account of her performance has already been given in the previous section of this thesis. It is not known whether Miss Abbott ever appeared in other years, but it is certainly possible that she did. Miss Abbott was a prominent opera star of the "nineties."

Edwin Booth, said to have been the greatest interpreter of Shakespeare's Hamlet the world has ever known, probably appeared sometime in 1890. Mr. Thomas Osborne remembered seeing him play Hamlet. This could not be corroborated, however, since Booth went into retirement and only played a few performances during 1891 and 1892. Booth appeared several times earlier in the old Salt Lake Theatre. This would be several years before the Grand Opera House opened, however.

Charles Frohman was probably "Mr. Showman" himself. Charles Frohman's companies made several appearances in Ogden during the "nineties" and early twentieth century. Three of these performances appeared as follows: Charley's Aunt, November 7, 1894;<sup>40</sup> Jane, October 21, 1895;<sup>41</sup> and William Gillette in Sherlock Holmes, September 18, 1895.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ogden Standard (November 7, 1894).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid. (October 21, 1895).

<sup>42</sup>Ibid. (September 18, 1895). The actor who played Ben Hur in the production of the same name was Conway Tearle. Very little was mentioned about his performances in the production. He later became a silent movie actor of the early "twenties," and was still active in the acting profession in the "thirties."

Mrs. Fiske and Company were not allowed into syndicate-owned or controlled theatres of the West. Mrs. Fiske had stood almost single handedly against the syndicates and trusts. It was stated in her biography that she could only play in Denver--the rest of the theatres of the West were closed to her.<sup>43</sup> Since Charles Frohman<sup>44</sup> controlled the West, it is assumed that he controlled the performances in Ogden at the Grand Opera House. His companies were continually appearing in Ogden and it would be, therefore, unlikely that Mrs. Fiske ever played in Ogden much before 1909.

Mrs. Fiske was successful, however, in finally breaking the syndicates and was allowed into most of the theatres in the nation after 1909. It seems reasonable to suppose that one of Mrs. Fiske's companies played in Ogden after this date, because a letter was sent to her from her husband, who managed one of the companies, dated Ogden, Utah, June 23, 1910. It should be noted that Mrs. Fiske in later years traveled with one company while her husband traveled with another. This explains the small note that was written to her by her husband.<sup>45</sup>

Thomas Keene, a famous theatrical name in the era of the Grand Opera House, played in Ogden in 1894. The following newspaper article appeared in the Ogden Standard on November 28, 1894: "Thomas Keene Company will appear this week in The Merchant of Venice and Richard III."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Archie Binns, Mrs. Fiske and The American Theatre (New York: Crown Publishers), p. 179.

<sup>44</sup>It is not the intent of this research project to extend itself into the life of Charles Frohman; however it might be stated that he was one of the foremost theatrical producers from 1880 to 1916. He, with many other notables from the United States, went down with the Lusitania.

<sup>45</sup>Binns, op cit., p. 345.

<sup>46</sup>Ogden Standard (November 28, 1894).

Keene re-appeared on the stage of the Grand two years later in King Louis XIV. The newspaper advertised him to appear January 1896.<sup>47</sup>

Joseph Jefferson, Jr. appeared February 20, 1905, in The Rivals.<sup>48</sup>

Madame Mantelli, famous opera star, appeared in Faust and Il Travatore during the week of February 24, 1905.<sup>49</sup>

Isabel Irving, a comedienne of the "nineties" era, appeared in Winston Churchill's comedy The Crisis. She was billed in the Ogden Standard on April 7, 1904.<sup>50</sup>

Otis Skinner made a one-night stand in Ogden as a matter of necessity. (His company was nearly broke.) The exact date could not be found, but Mr. Skinner mentions in his biography, Footlights and Spotlights, that it was during the 1895 tour. The company had evidently played Hamlet throughout the West, appearing at the Salt Lake Theatre, and in San Francisco, and had not been too well received. It was feared that the company would not be able to get back to Chicago. Skinner then booked back through Salt Lake and Ogden for one-night stands "to bail them out." He said in his chapter, "Roughing It Back to Chicago":

I owed everybody, printers, transfer companies, scenic artists, property makers, my working force, and above all my actors. These last were patient and forbearing with me and took our reverses like true soldiers of fortune. We had our railroad tickets back to the Missouri River, nothing more. . . .

We were off to pick up a few pence at Ogden and Salt Lake City. We traveled by day in the coach, and at night our women were given berths in the pullman while we men took to the tourist sleeper. What cash there was in the treasury was held by Buckley against the necessities of meal stations where

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<sup>47</sup>Ogden Standard (January 1, 1896).

<sup>48</sup>Ibid. (February 20, 1905).

<sup>49</sup>Ibid (February 24, 1905).

<sup>50</sup>Ibid. (April 7, 1904).

we breakfasted, lunched, and dined en famille as frugally as possible. A frightful thing occurred on the way. At a cashier's desk of a meal station while the bell was ringing for departure of the train, Buckley laid down a twenty-dollar gold piece among his silver under the impression that it was a dollar and didn't discover his mistake until we were fifty miles away. Then, in our melancholy, befell the miracle, manna dropped from heaven! At the upper station, nineteen dollars which we thought gone forever, returned to us by telegraph from the scene of the awful blunder.

Ogden and Salt Lake City helped us out a little, then a few Nebraska towns, and finally Omaha! There we played to enough cash to purchase our transportation to Chicago.<sup>51</sup>

Lottie Collins and her Troubadores appeared January 4, 1895.

The account of her performance appeared in the Ogden Semi-Weekly:

Lottie Collins' Troubadores at the Grand last evening presented one of the best entertainments seen in Ogden for many a day.

It was catchy, fresh, up-to-date; it went with speed and mirth from start to finish. Lottie Collins is the attractive center around which the lesser lights revolve. She is brisk, breezy, the embodiment of animation and the soul of vivacity. That farce comedy "The Fair Equestrienne" and the operetta "The Devil Bird" were written especially for Miss Collins and are full of opportunities for that artist to appear to advantage. . . . The impression she made was favorable to the audience, but it is idle to predict that Miss Collins will ever make a success in comic opera.

The specialty parts were of the rich rare sort which are so often imitated but seldom reproduced. . . . Lottie Collins can put it down in her memoranda that this, her latest appearance in Ogden was a flattering success and that her large audience was a unit in pronouncing her entertainment an enjoyable one.<sup>52</sup>

Lottie Collins was evidently quite popular with Ogden audiences because she appeared several other times besides the occasion described above.

James Jeffries appeared November 27, 1904, in Davy Crockett. He

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<sup>51</sup>Otis Skinner, Footlights and Spotlights (New York: Cornwall Press, Inc.), p. 246.

<sup>52</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (January 4, 1895).

was popular with the Ogden audiences, because he was one of those who returned several times in engagements.<sup>53</sup>

Mason and Mason, one of the funniest comedy teams of the day, appeared December 8, 1904.<sup>54</sup>

Florence Roberts played in Marta of the Lowlands in January 15, 1905. The Morning Examiner stated that she was "extremely popular in Ogden."<sup>55</sup>

Several opera companies appeared during 1906. Among these were: The Williams Opera Company on June 4, 1906;<sup>56</sup> the San Francisco Opera Company, September 19, 1905;<sup>57</sup> Babette by Victor Herbert played in October of 1906 (the company was not listed in the billing).

In 1907 Ogden had its first grand opera, or so stated the Morning Examiner. It was Madame Butterfly. It starred Reva Vivienne, and appeared March 14, 1907.<sup>58</sup>

Blanch Walsh appeared in The Straight Road on April 16, 1907. A picture of Blanch Walsh appears in the illustrations section of this thesis. Miss Walsh was one of the noted actresses of the era.<sup>59</sup>

Certainly the colorful and popular Miss Lillian Russell will be an indelible name on the pages of American theatre history. Many a gentleman's heart throbbed when he saw Miss Russell on the stage of the Grand Opera House for her first Ogden appearance on April 11, 1907.

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<sup>53</sup>The Morning Examiner (November 27, 1904).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. (December 7, 1904).

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. (January 14, 1904).

<sup>56</sup>Ibid. (June 4, 1906).

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. (Sept. 19, 1906).

<sup>58</sup>Ibid. (March 14, 1907).

<sup>59</sup>Ibid. (April 4, 1907).

Miss Russell starred in a play called The Butterfly. An advanced newspaper account in the Ogden Morning Examiner of April 6 stated:

In "The Butterfly," the new comedy which will be seen soon at the Grand, Miss Lillian Russell plays Elizabeth Killigrew, the young widow of old Pete Killigrew, who gathered up a great many millions by stealing railroads and invested a few thousand in salvation by supporting a church.

At the opening of the play, the financier has been dead just a year and a day, and his beautiful widow, Betsy, is blossoming out of her mourning into brilliant colors. Betsy has never been in love and never expects to find happiness from infatuation for any man; but she means to find it, and imagines that a title will bring it to her.

She seeks a coronet that belongs to the Earl of Dexminster, who is only too anxious to bestow it on her, and transports her with her fortune to British soil. Betsy is duly elated at the Earl's proposal, when a new will is discovered.

Old Peter Killigrew, before his death, had determined to put up bars against fortune hunters, and his method was to decree in his will that should his widow marry a second time, the happy man must be a native born American citizen. If she would take for a second husband any man not an American, then the fortune should pass to a nephew.

She first threatens to go into a convent, but a few moments later is overjoyed at discovering a way of conforming to the will and launches herself on one of the most extraordinary and complicated matrimonial adventures that ever convulsed New York or Newport. The twin playgrounds of hasty marriage and convenient divorce is an adventure that keeps all the characters of the comedy in swift swirl of excitement and cross purposes up to the very moment of the final fall of the curtain on the happiest solution of Betsy's problem. . . .

Mr. Joseph Brooks has surrounded Miss Russell with an exceptionally good cast. In the company are: Eugene Ormonde, John Flood, Fredrick L. Tilden, Charles Lamb, Roland H. Hill, Isabel Richards, Kate Griffith, and Rosalie D. Vaux. The gowns worn by Miss Russell are creations in every sense of the word. Mere man cannot describe them. The scenes of the comedy are laid in New York and Saratoga and the scenic settings are very pleasing to the eye.<sup>60</sup>

A picture of Miss Russell appears in the illustrations section of this thesis. She shares billing with Blanch Walsh.

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<sup>60</sup>Ogden Morning Examiner (April 6, 1907).



Lillian reappeared just a little more than two years later in a play called Wildfire. This performance was on the stage of the Grand Opera House, and the advertisement for her appeared in the Morning

Examiner:

Lillian Russell will be the attraction of Ogden on Wednesday, March 10, when she will offer for the first time her great racing comedy success, Wildfire, by George Broadhurst and George V. Hobart.

In this piece the American beauty has scored the greatest hit of her career and comes here direct from Denver and Chicago where she made two record-breakers.

In stepping from comic opera to the more exacting work of straight characterization, Miss Russell has surprised even her most sanguine admirers. Her handling of the central character of the play has established her in the foremost ranks of American comediennes, and her tour following has been a succession of triumphs.<sup>61</sup>

It was interesting to the writer to note that the news clipping indicated that Miss Russell had just finished two smash hits and that she was coming directly to Ogden. It might, therefore, appear that Miss Russell and her managers had thought enough of Ogden and the Grand Opera House to bill the play directly from Denver. Also, the newspaper noted that Miss Russell was appearing in her first "straight characterization" which would seem to indicate a change of pace not only for Miss Russell, but also for Ogden audiences.

This researcher thought perhaps a newspaper critique from the Morning Examiner of her second appearance in Ogden on March 9, 1909, might be worth noting:

Lillian Russell in the racing Broadhurst comedy drew a good sized house at the Grand last evening despite the raging elements (and a "pretty penny" charged there, too, at the gate for admittance).

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<sup>61</sup>The Morning Examiner (March 10, 1909).

Miss Russell, however, is ever a drawing card, which together with the fact that she disappointed Ogden playgoers last season while negotiating Wyoming snowdrifts in the vicinity of Cheyenne, assured her a full house. Wildfire is a scream from start to finish in the line of racing plays and afford Miss Russell adequate opportunity for a display of her versatility and accomplishments. "The queen of comic opera" still retains her rare beauty which with exceptional histrionic ability assures for her in the field of legitimate comedy success and popularity for many years to come. We, who have seen and heard Lillian Russell for two decades or more, are sometimes prone to think of her as somewhat along in years; and in fact, to prattle of so-called "perennial youth." In fact, a more common error is hardly made by theatre-going people.<sup>62</sup>

W. C. Fields appeared billed in The Orpheum Show on January 28, 1902. The headlines read, "Featured Song and Stories, by W. C. Fields."<sup>63</sup>

Fredrick Ward appeared February 6, 1902, in a play called The Mountebank.<sup>64</sup>

Maude May Babcock, a noted theatre personality (and later Head of the University of Utah theatre), brought Trelawney of the Wells to the Grand May 19, 1902. It was sponsored or produced by the University of Utah Dramatic Club.<sup>65</sup>

Madame Modjeska appeared with Louis James on January 4, 1902.<sup>66</sup>

Louis James and Fredrick Ward appeared together in Alexander The Great on October 23, 1903.<sup>67</sup>

John Phillip Sousa came to the Grand Opera House on October 14, 1904.<sup>68</sup> The account of Sousa and his band appears in the "critique" section of this thesis. Just as a side note, this writer recalled the late Mrs. Gus Becker (whose husband was the founder of the Becker Brewery in Ogden) relating that she and her husband entertained John Phillip

<sup>62</sup>The Morning Examiner (March 9, 1909).

<sup>63</sup>The Ogden Standard (January 28, 1902).

<sup>64</sup>Ibid. (February 6, 1902).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid. (May 19, 1902).

<sup>66</sup>Ibid. (January 4, 1902).

<sup>67</sup>Ibid. (October 23, 1903).

<sup>68</sup>Ibid. (October 13, 1903).

Sousa at their summer home in Ogden Canyon when he came to Ogden. Sousa's picture appears in the Illustrations section.

William S. Hart played in The Virginian on April 2, 1908.<sup>69</sup>

James Corbett appeared in The Burglar and The Lady on April 19, 1908.<sup>70</sup>

Lew Dockstader and his minstrels appeared on May 3, 1908. The Lew Dockstader Minstrels were famous during the early twentieth century. A picture of Lew Dockstader appears also in the Illustrations section of this thesis.<sup>71</sup>

Joseph and William Jefferson, sons of the great Joseph Jefferson, appeared in The Rivals November 22, 1908. They carried on the tradition of the family with a well-received performance. The following account appeared in The Morning Examiner:

Joseph Jefferson portrays the part of Sir Lucius, a new role which demands a delicacy in handling that none other than the true artist such as he can give it. He succeeded W. J. Florence in his late father's company and profited by the ideas of two of our greatest comedians. This wonderful advantage in conjunction with his own brilliant talent, permits a performance that scintillates with exquisite beauty.<sup>72</sup>

Sarah Bernhardt may have appeared sometime in 1910, according to Thomas Osborne. He, however, wasn't sure. This researcher could find no account of Miss Bernhardt having appeared that year nor in 1911.

A rather interesting story was related to this writer by Thomas Osborne about an eccentric actor named Henry Miller. It seems Mr. Miller

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<sup>69</sup>The Morning Examiner (April 2, 1908).

<sup>70</sup>Ibid. (April 19, 1908).

<sup>71</sup>Ibid. (May 2, 1908).

<sup>72</sup>Ibid. (November 23, 1908).

was very superstitious. Mr. Osborne recounted that the stage hands bet if they hung some crepe paper over Miller's dressing room door that he wouldn't come out. The bet was carried out a half hour before curtain time. When the actor stepped out to check on the time he saw the crepe paper and immediately went back inside his dressing room. Mr. Osborne laughingly said, "For that we got hell from the manager."<sup>73</sup>

Maude Adams gave several performances in Ogden, but unfortunately these early dates and names of productions could not be found. Her biographies say nothing of her ever coming to Ogden; however, she did appear July of 1914 when the Grand Opera House was known as the Orpheum.<sup>74</sup> An account appeared in a biography of Mrs. Fiske in which the writer stated that in 1902 Charles Frohman had sent Maude Adams West to California to play against Mrs. Fiske. (This was the time that Frohman and Mrs. Fiske were having difficulty because of his great hold on the theatre world.) It is quite possible that Maude did play in Ogden before 1914.<sup>75</sup>

In concluding this section of famous personalities, this researcher feels that the following quotation taken from the biography of Eugene O'Neill written by Arthur and Barbara Gelb, illustrates the importance Theatre goes placed on personalities. It follows:

The plays did not really matter to the audience; either they were sentimental melodramas like East Lynne, the intricacies of whose plot (no matter what title) the audiences knew by heart, or they were Shakespearian and other classical and semi-classical revivals. Audiences came to see actors, not plays--and sometimes not so much actors as personalities.<sup>76</sup>

It would seem that Ogden's populace was no exception when it came to personalities of the theatre. They turned out with full reverence to see the "greats" of the day.

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<sup>73</sup>Osborne, op cit.

<sup>74</sup>Ogden Standard Examiner (July 5, 1914).

<sup>75</sup>Binns, op cit.

<sup>76</sup>Arthur and Barbara Gelb, O'Neill (New York: Harper Bros., 1906-1962), p. 34.

## REVIEWS OF PLAYS AND PERSONALITIES

This is one of the early theatre reviews to be published in an Ogden newspaper. It was written under the heading, "Theatre Chats":

The week has been a gala one, theatrically considered, for Ogden. Four nights out of six is a pretty good severe test for a city of Ogden's size. However, it was a question of taking attractions in this way or not at all, and the opera house management took advantage of the opportunity to give Ogden three superb companies.

Hanlon's "Superba" drew out the best audience, as it is in the habit of doing wherever it goes. The Hanlon's style of entertainment affords amusement for every class of people, from the judge who sits on the bench to the little child who is not able to get a peep at the stage without climbing on his seat with both feet. After all, we bigger folk have a good deal of the child about us, and it is sort of relapse to our younger natures to be able to regale our imaginations on spooks and fairies and imps.<sup>71</sup>

Not all the shows that played at the Grand were as well received as the one referred to in the above article. In December of the same year (1892) a rather scathing article was written about a play. The writer showed absolutely no mercy in exposing the performance for what it was:

In the performance of any given task there is usually an object in view; and the nearness of the approach to that object depends entirely upon the attainment. Whether a show be a tragedy, a drama, an opera, or a spectacle piece, the object of the author in its creation and the performance in its production is to please those who see and hear it. The author's task ends when the piece is given to the performer, and it is the latter's duty to give practical form to the former's idea. If the performer, either through inability or lack of inclination, fails to do justice to the piece, he misrepresents the author and disappoints or disgusts the audience. On a number of occasions, Ogden audiences have

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<sup>71</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (February 24, 1892).

been slightly treated; but the latest and one of the most flagrant abuses of the public was Kajanka.

The piece at best is just passable and creditable to its authors; but if the Miller brothers had witnessed its presentation here, they would have either failed to recognize it or desired to disown it. The piece was very successfully murdered, and effectually buried so far as Ogden is concerned. Not only did the company fail in the usual object to please their audience, but they succeeded admirably in insulting those who paid their money for an evening's enjoyment.

Kajanka was robbed of its only feature, and the one which makes it "Kajanka" the spectacular effect. As well, one might set up a skeleton and say, "There is a human being in all its glory," as to claim that the abominable farce seen in Ogden was Kajanka.<sup>78</sup>

The following article appeared in the theatre section of the Ogden Semi-Weekly describing the performance of Lottie Collins and her "Troubadores":

Lottie Collins' Troubadores at the Grand last evening presented one of the best entertainments seen in Ogden for many a day. It was catchy, fast, fresh, and up-to-date. Lottie Collins is the attractive center around which the lesser lights revolve. She is brisk, breezy, the embodiment of animation and the soul of vivacity. That farce comedy, "The Fair Equestrienne" and the operetta, "The Devil Bird" were written especially for Miss Collins and are full of opportunities for that artist to appear to advantage. . . .

The impression she made was favorable, but it is idle to predict that Miss Collins will ever make a success in Comic Opera.

The specialty parts were of the rich rare sort which are so often imitated but seldom reproduced. Wood and Shepard, in their Negro characters, enacted the same droll humor that has characterized their appearance on the stage since they were first seen here with the Thatcher Minstrels. They just earned a good share of the applause. The livewire performing by the Murs was exceedingly clever; as were the acrobatic feats and dancing of Marion and Hayes, assisted by three graceful young ladies. Mr. Ward and Miss Willmuth, in their vocal parts, were in good voice and were received with generous applause.

Lottie Collins can put it down in her memoranda that this, her latest appearance in Ogden, was a flattering success and that her large audience was a unit in pronouncing her entertainment an enjoyable one.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Ogden Semi-Weekly Standard (December 7, 1892).

<sup>79</sup>Ibid. (January 5, 1895).

Lottie Collins appeared other times, which would seem to indicate that both Miss Collins and Ogden were pleased with this initial performance. It was interesting to note how conservative the critic was about Mr. Ward's and Miss Willmuth's vocal renditions. One would assume by the remarks that "being in good voice" was to say they were "passing fair" in the presentation of their numbers.

The famous Madame Modjeska appeared with Louis James in Henry VIII on January 4, 1902. Modjeska and James made a favorable impression on Ogden audiences, as the following newspaper article indicates:

Never before has a play been offered here so completely staged and handsomely costumed. The managers have done well by their stars and have equipped their company with every essential detail calculated to add to the artistic performance. The different scenes last night in Henry VIII were revelations of scenic completeness. The performance stands out in other ways distinctly. The Cardinal Woolsey of Louis James was a masterpiece. An actress of the graces and arts of Helena Modjeska is so delightful in any role that she undertakes that it is difficult to determine in which she is the best.

To a personality, amazingly almost mysteriously agreeable, Madame Modjeska unites keen intelligence, the nicest taste, and a facility of technique that has not been surpassed by an artist of her time. The quality of her craft is so delicate and so cunning that it's a possession of emotional wonder. Her voice is most charming and delightfully attuned to meet the ear and use with thorough understanding of its possibilities and limitations. To follow her declamations gives great delight.

The performance of Cardinal Woolsey by Mr. James is one of the richest and most suggestive that has been presented to the stage. In fidelity to Shakespeare it is absolutely true. It becomes a majestic and magnetic performance.<sup>80</sup>

This article seemed to be one of the better written accounts of plays and players that appeared at the Grand Opera House.

John Phillip Sousa has already been mentioned in this thesis; however, the following was the account of his performance as reported by The Morning Examiner.

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<sup>80</sup>The Morning Examiner (October 15, 1904).

Only those who were present at the Sousa concert last night at the Grand Opera House fully appreciated what the music lovers of Ogden missed by not being there. For the first time in eight years Sousa appeared before an Ogden audience and a fair-sized house, only, greeted him. It is certain that the people of Ogden never heard better music, for higher priced artists have never before been in town. Every member of the company is an artist in his work and the band as a whole is on par with any band ever taken on the road by Sousa.

That Sousa's compositions are popular are [sic] attested by the fact that every one who played last night was vociferously applauded. The concert last night deserved a better audience.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>The Morning Examiner (October 15, 1904).



## REMODELING AND THE GRAND GETS A NEW NAME

In 1909 the Grand Opera House underwent some remodeling and renovation. Just exactly what was done at this time is not known. It is assumed that perhaps the minarets which were on top of the original structure were removed. Mr. Osborne related that he thought this was so. He also stated there was a small replica of the dome on the outside, placed originally in the boxes on the inside of the theatre. These, he said, were removed; new seats were installed, and the interior was newly painted.

After its remodeling in 1909, the old Grand Opera House became known as the "Orpheum." It was taken over by the Orpheum Circuit and went quite extensively to vaudeville. Some early months in 1909 advertised the theatre under both the "Grand Opera House" and the "Orpheum."<sup>82</sup>

The following article appeared in The Morning Examiner on the changing of the Grand Opera House to the Orpheum Theatre:

The passing of the Grand Opera House in Ogden over to the control of Martin Beck and the Orpheum Circuit also carried with it the control of the Opera House in Logan.

Klaw and Erlanger and Mr. Beck and his interest are closely allied. While vaudeville will hold sway in the Grand Opera House in Ogden, the legitimate will also be presented, the intention being now to give the legitimate two nights every week and vaudeville will be presented in the Logan Opera House.

This means that all big theatrical companies that cross the continent will have a week in Utah of which four nights will be given to Salt Lake at the Salt Lake Theatre.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Ogden Evening Standard (June 30, 1909).

<sup>83</sup>The Morning Examiner (April 25, 1909).

The transition from the roadshow to vaudeville was brought about in part by the change in people's tastes and ideas. The Morning Examiner points out this fact in an editorial appearing January 10, 1910.

This is a strenuous age. We are a restless people. The business man spends his day scheming and working to attain his end, and when night comes he is ready to be amused. Long plays are a bore and he is apt to find his mind drifting back to the problems that have beset him during his working hours.

In vaudeville, even if an act does not please, it is short, and there is always a choice of memories to carry you off to dreamland.

That is why vaudeville has made rapid strides in public favor. The public clamours for novelty and it is to the vaudeville stage they look for it.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>The Morning Examiner (January 10, 1910).

## CONCLUSION

One must take his hat off to those far-sighted, civic-minded individuals who provided Ogden with its first temple of the muses. The Grand Opera House was one of the finest, most up-to-date structures in the four Western States. It afforded Ogden a unique and rare opportunity to receive the best stage entertainment of that day.

We leave the study of the Grand Opera House with the hope that perhaps it might give the reader an insight into the theatre of an era that once was.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

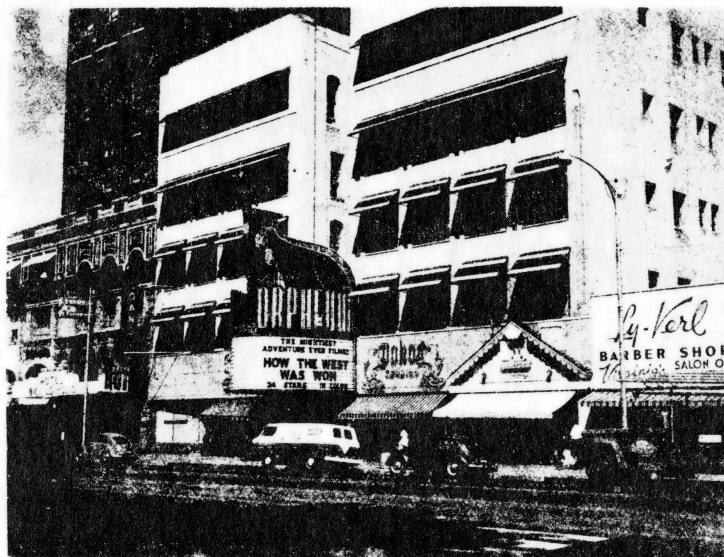


Figure 1. Front of the Orpheum Theatre as it appears today



Figure 2. Rear of the Orpheum Theatre  
as it appears today

# THEATRE

# To-Night!

## LITTLE ALMA DRAMATIC CO.

Grand Production of the Beautiful Society Drama

# THE BANKER'S DAUGHTER,

In Six Acts and Six Tableaux.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS.

FLORENCE ST. VINCENT BROWN, (maid, wife and widow.)	RUBY LAFAYETTE
Lillian, (the Banker's Daughter,)	Estella Stanley
Natalie, (her daughter,)	Little Alma
Aunt Fanny, (with a romance,)	Amy Lee
Lisette, (a pert maid,)	Anna Washburn
Mr. Westbrook, (the banker,)	P. L. Clark
Mr. Babbage, (his partner,)	J. P. Curran
John Strebelow, (with plenty of money,)	Clay Clifton
Harold Rutledge, (an artist,)	J. North
Count de Carojac, (a fire eater,)	L. D. Rogers
Mons. Montvillers, (an art critic,)	H. Hudson
Dr. Watson, (willing to oblige,)	W. Thorne
G. Wash. Phipps, (doing Europe on the rust,)	J. P. Curran
Old Brown, (a millionaire,)	J. P. Curran

### SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.—New York—Florence to be married—Westbrook's failure—Strebelow's proposal

ACT II.—Paris—Meeting of old friends—The explanation.

ACT III.—Phipps doing Europe—The insult—The challenge—A sensation at last.

ACT IV.—The duel—Death of Rutledge.

ACT V.—Lillian's grief—Parted.

ACT VI.—Natalie's letter—Phipps proposes—Reunited

"Speculate no more in human hearts."

**The Performance to Conclude with a Laughable Farce.**

Figure 3. An old handbill that was typical of the period of the Grand Opera House. (The Little Alma Dramatic Company did, in fact, appear at the Grand in the theatre's early years.)

THE MORNING EXAMINER

**COMING TO THE GRAND**

Thursday <b>DOCKSTADER'S MINSTRELS</b>	Saturday <b>"TEN NIGHTS IN A BAR ROOM"</b>	All Weeks All Week <b>"TITIT"</b>
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**GRAND OPERA HOUSE**  
THURSDAY NIGHT  
ALL NEW THIS YEAR  
LARGEST AND  
**LEW DOCKSTADER**  
AND HIS OWN GREAT  
**MINSTRELS**  
TO PEOPLE TO  
MIL O'BRIEN  
DOCKSTADER AS "EGGY"  
"A HELL DAY IN THE WHITE HOUSE"  
"When the Showman on the New Stage"  
1910 SHOW UP  
JAMES EARL RAY, JR., D.D.

Figure 4. Advertisement for the famous Lew Dockstader Minstrels

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 1932

**MILWAUKEE TRUCKS GO TO RACE TO CRASH THE TRUCKS**  
MILWAUKEE, Wis., March 2.—A Milwaukee trucking association today announced that it would send a team of trucks to the Grand National Motor Race at Daytona Beach, Fla., to compete for the \$100,000 prize offered by the race promoters.

**A LETTER FROM LINCOLN FOUND IN A BURNING PILE**  
ST. PAUL, Minn., March 2.—A letter written by Abraham Lincoln to a friend in St. Paul, Minn., was found in a burning pile of papers in the city today.

**CEREMONIES ATTENDING KING CROWNED'S CORONATION**  
ST. PAUL, Minn., March 2.—A number of ceremonies were held today in St. Paul, Minn., to mark the coronation of King Crowned, the ruler of the kingdom of the South Sea Islands.

**JURORS PRASED AND THEN CONVICED A MAN TO PRISON FOR 10 YEARS**  
CHICAGO, March 2.—The jury in the trial of a man charged with the murder of a woman in Chicago today returned a verdict of guilty and sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

**A GIRL STUNTING KENTUCKY IN BEHALF OF HER FATHER**  
CHICAGO, March 2.—The Chicago girl who is stunting in Kentucky in behalf of her father, a man who has been sentenced to prison for life, today returned to Chicago after a successful tour.

**WORLD'S MARKETS**  
LONDON, March 2.—The opening of the London market today was characterized by a general decline in prices.

**RELAIS DELIVERING**  
ST. PAUL, Minn., March 2.—A number of deliveries were made today by the St. Paul Relais service.

**NEW YORK PRODUCE**  
NEW YORK, March 2.—The market for produce in New York today was active and prices were generally higher than yesterday.

**COFFEE**  
NEW YORK, March 2.—The market for coffee in New York today was active and prices were generally higher than yesterday.

**CASH TRADE**  
NEW YORK, March 2.—The cash trade in New York today was active and prices were generally higher than yesterday.

**ADVERSE REPORTS**  
NEW YORK, March 2.—Adverse reports were received today from various sources regarding the market.

**GRAND OPERA HOUSE**  
MISS VIOLA ALLEN  
The Palace of the King

**The White Slave**  
The Denver Express

**WANTS**

**REAL ESTATE**

Figure 5. The upper center column shows Miss Viola Allen in The Palace of the King advertisement





Figure 6. The Great John Phillip Sousa appeared October 14, 1904, with his famous band. (The advertisement is shown in the upper right hand corner.)

THE EXAMINER, CHICAGO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1904.



**THE EXAMINER**  
Published every day in the year by the Examiner Publishing Co.  
110 N. Dearborn, Chicago, Ill.

Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1877, under No. 253, Post Office at Chicago, Ill., authorized for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917. Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917, authorized for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917.

**THE SPICE QUESTION**  
It is again the case to protect the people from the use of adulterated and inferior spices. The United States Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning to consumers to be on the alert for the use of such spices. The adulterated spices are sold in large quantities and are used in many of the most popular dishes. The Administration has advised that consumers should buy only the genuine spices and should not be misled by the cheap imitations.

**THE SPICE QUESTION**  
It is again the case to protect the people from the use of adulterated and inferior spices. The United States Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning to consumers to be on the alert for the use of such spices. The adulterated spices are sold in large quantities and are used in many of the most popular dishes. The Administration has advised that consumers should buy only the genuine spices and should not be misled by the cheap imitations.

**AMUSEMENTS**

**SPECIAL SUNDAY AND MONDAY**

**Grand Opera House**

**“Heart of Chicago”**

**LINCOLN J. CARTER’S MASTERPIECE**

POPULAR PRICES: 75c, 50c, 25c.

SEATS NOW SELLING.

---

**Grand Opera House**

**TUESDAY NOV. 22**

**FIRST TIME HERE**

Mr. John C. Fisher’s \$50,000 Production presented by Mrs. M. F. Fisher in conjunction with the Augustus Day Estate.

**SAN TOY**

WITH

**JAMES T. POWERS**

Miss M. Parkman, Miss Pauline, Hughie Burns, Josephine Brough, Margaret McKinley, John Pomeroy, Charles Arling, Fred W. Henley.

**GRAND CHORUS OF 56 AND SPECIAL ORCHESTRA**

The Greatest Production of Musical Comedy Ever Made in America. Prices: \$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.00, 75c.

SEAT SALE OPENS MONDAY, 8 A. M.

---

**Grand Opera House**

**THURSDAY MATINEE AND NIGHT**

**THANKSGIVING DAY**

CHARLES H. TAYLOR’S ELABORATE

**Devil’s Auction**

The greatest auction ever held in Chicago. A large number of valuable pieces of property, including real estate, are being sold. The auction is held at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, on Thursday, November 24, 1904. The auction is held at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, on Thursday, November 24, 1904. The auction is held at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, on Thursday, November 24, 1904.

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**Grand Opera House**

**SATURDAY MATINEE AND NIGHT**

**NOVEMBER 26**

**THE GREAT AND ONLY**

**BLACK PATTI**

AND HER TROUBADOURS.

40—PEOPLE—40

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**THE SPICE QUESTION**  
It is again the case to protect the people from the use of adulterated and inferior spices. The United States Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning to consumers to be on the alert for the use of such spices. The adulterated spices are sold in large quantities and are used in many of the most popular dishes. The Administration has advised that consumers should buy only the genuine spices and should not be misled by the cheap imitations.

**TABLE LINEN AT REDUCED PRICES**

Pluck the Cloth Row, the Turkey Lotter

Our Ladies' Fine	GOOD
Gulf	All our linen stock is on the tables ready for easy clearing. The prices and styles are so tempting that we look for you to take them like a new lot.
Blue	50c Thanksgiving dinner
Ever	75c
50c	80c 25c Dinner Napkins
	\$1.00 90c 27c

**Silk Petticoats**  
We guarantee a perfect fit and new styles of silk and rayon. Ask for them in our department.

**Undergarments**  
We guarantee a perfect fit and new styles of silk and rayon. Ask for them in our department.

<b>Handkerchiefs</b>	<b>Handkerchiefs</b>	<b>Handkerchiefs</b>
White	White	White
Black	Black	Black

**Fur Scarfs**  
We have a new fur scarf for you. It is made of the finest fur and is the latest in style.

**WANT ONE OF OURS**

**Can We Sell a Wrap to you?**  
If the chances are good you can if you will visit our Wrap department.

**Underwear**  
at Reduced Prices on Bargain Tables. Ask for them at 10c, 35c and 49c.

**PAINE & HURST, Dry Goods.**

MARKET REED HOTEL.

---

**THE PROBABILITY**  
Is that you will die this year?  
Is that you are at any time?  
The Certainty Is That You Must Die Some Time.

**Insure your Life—NOW—Delay is Dangerous**

**John L. Herrick, State Manager,**

**DES MOINES LIFE INSURANCE CO.,**

MARKET REED HOTEL.

---

**WOMEN'S SUITS**  
SHIRT TAILORED AND GARMENTS

—Save money by taking advantage of the large stock and low prices for the BEST QUALITY GOODS AT CLARK'S STORE.

Women's Suits	550 00
Women's Suits	550 00
Women's Suits	550 00
Women's Suits	550 00
Women's Suits	550 00
Women's Suits	550 00

**I. L. CLARK & SONS' CO.**

Figure 7. Lincoln J. Carter's The Heart of Chicago appeared November 20, 1904. (One might note the prices for admission: Heart of Chicago, 75¢, 50¢, and 25¢. On other billings for that week San Toy, \$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.00, 75¢, and 50¢.)

**FIGHT IN OHIO IS ALL A MISUNDERSTANDING**

**NIAGARA CONCEDES MUCH TO UNCLE SAM**

**WORLD'S MARKETS**

**STATE NEWS**

**WOMEN'S FASHION**

**SEASONABLE STYLES FOR GIRLS**

**RUPERT OF NEWARK**

**BOYS' LINEN**

**Looking Out...**

**A. E. Weatherly**

**Wm. Driver**

**Dead's Ankle**

**Monday, Jan. 6**

**RUPERT OF NEWARK**

**BOYS' LINEN**

**SEASONABLE STYLES FOR GIRLS**

**WOMEN'S FASHION**

**STATE NEWS**

**WORLD'S MARKETS**

**NIAGARA CONCEDES MUCH TO UNCLE SAM**

**FIGHT IN OHIO IS ALL A MISUNDERSTANDING**

Figure 8. The Great Madame Modjeska and Lewis James appeared on January 3, 1902. (The advertisement can be seen in the upper right-hand corner.)



Figure 9. Microfilm photo of advertisement for Ben Hur when it appeared the week of December 7, 1908.

# COMING TO THE GRAND

Thursday, April 11 - Lillian Russell Tuesday, April 16 Blanche Walsh



Figure 10. The double billing of Blanch Walsh and Lillian Russell for their appearance at the Grand Opera House on April 11 and 16, 1907



Figure 11. An early stage flat made about 1914 (bottom portion). (Note how ornate these old flats were-- quite typical of the era of the Grand Opera House.)



Figure 12. An early stage flat made about 1914 (top portion). (These flats are used today to mask the movie screen in the present Orpheum Theatre.)

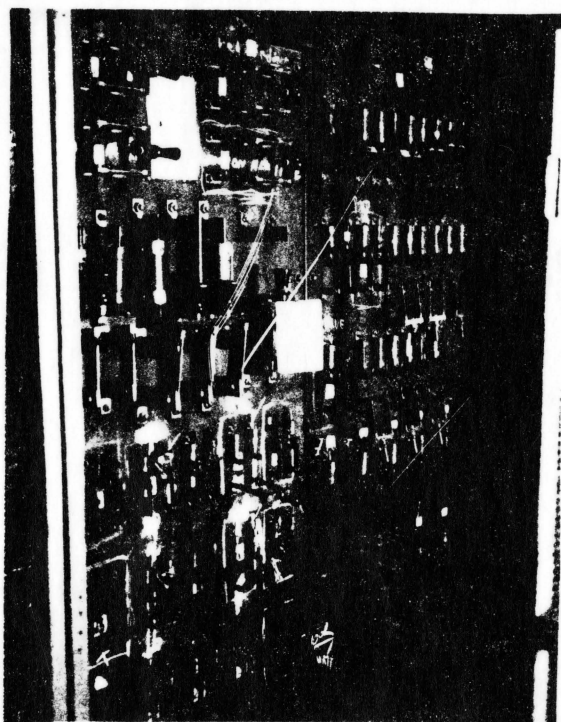


Figure 13. Light panel that was installed in the original structure in 1890. (One may note the old "breakers.")

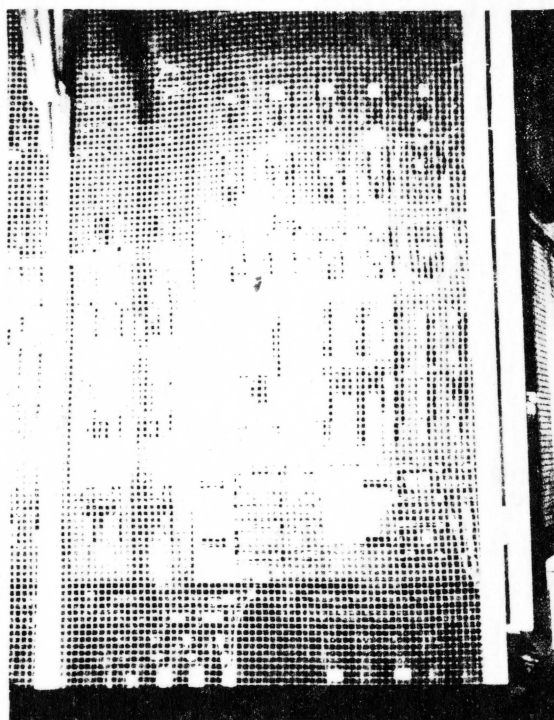


Figure 14. Light panel in Grand Opera House in 1890 (taken with the wire cage closed). (One may note the old dimmer in the upper portion of the picture.)

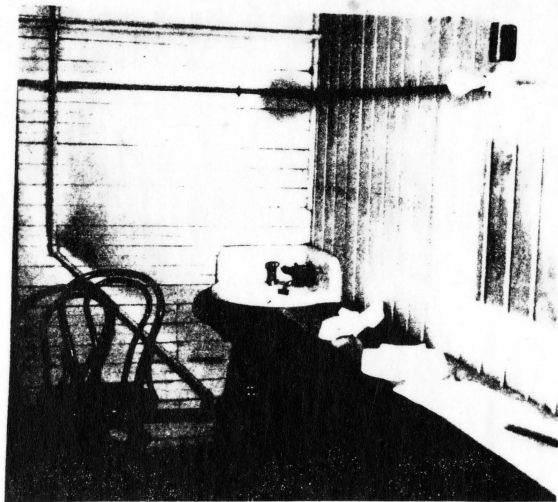


Figure 15. Old dressing room located below the stage



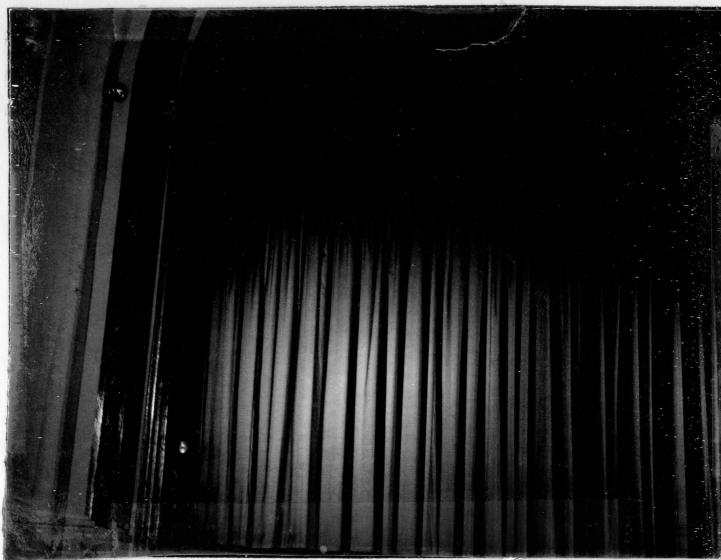


Figure 16. Proscenium arch and front curtain as they appear today



Figure 17. Opening that used to house the old box seats. (These were closed off during a later remodeling.)

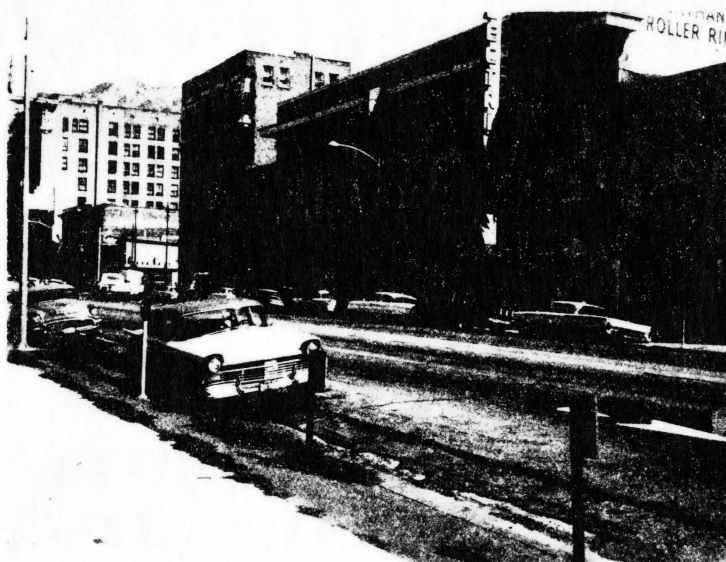


Figure 18. Berthana--site of the old Union Opera House

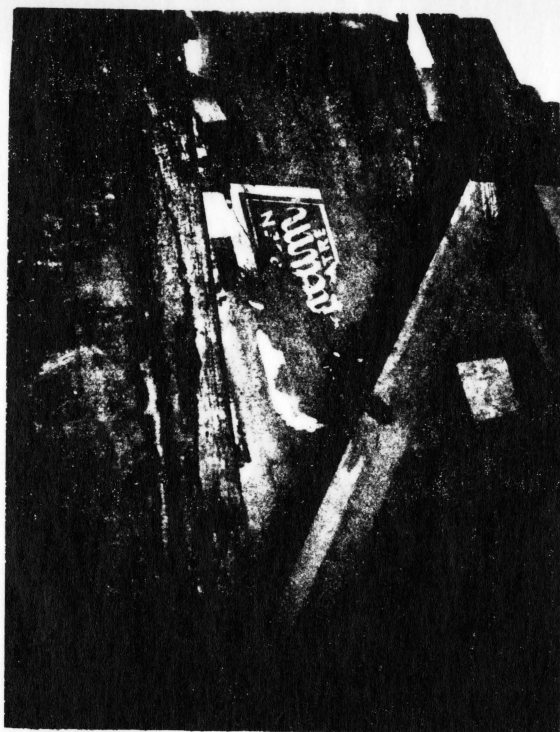


Figure 19. Old tree flat--fireproofed

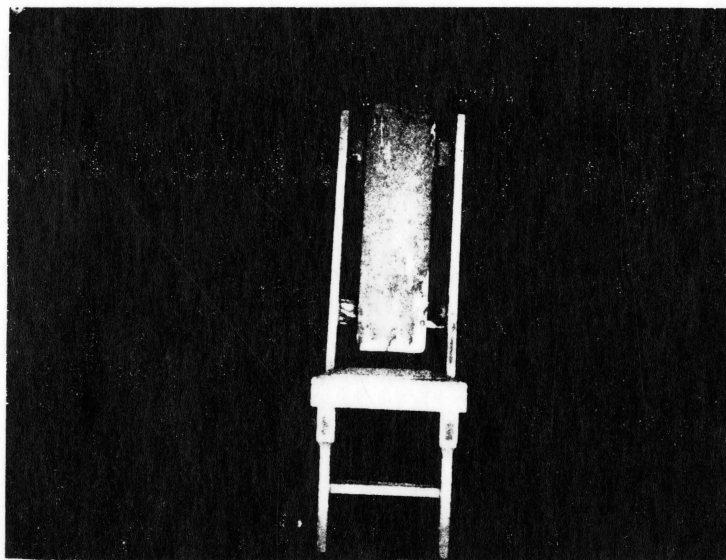
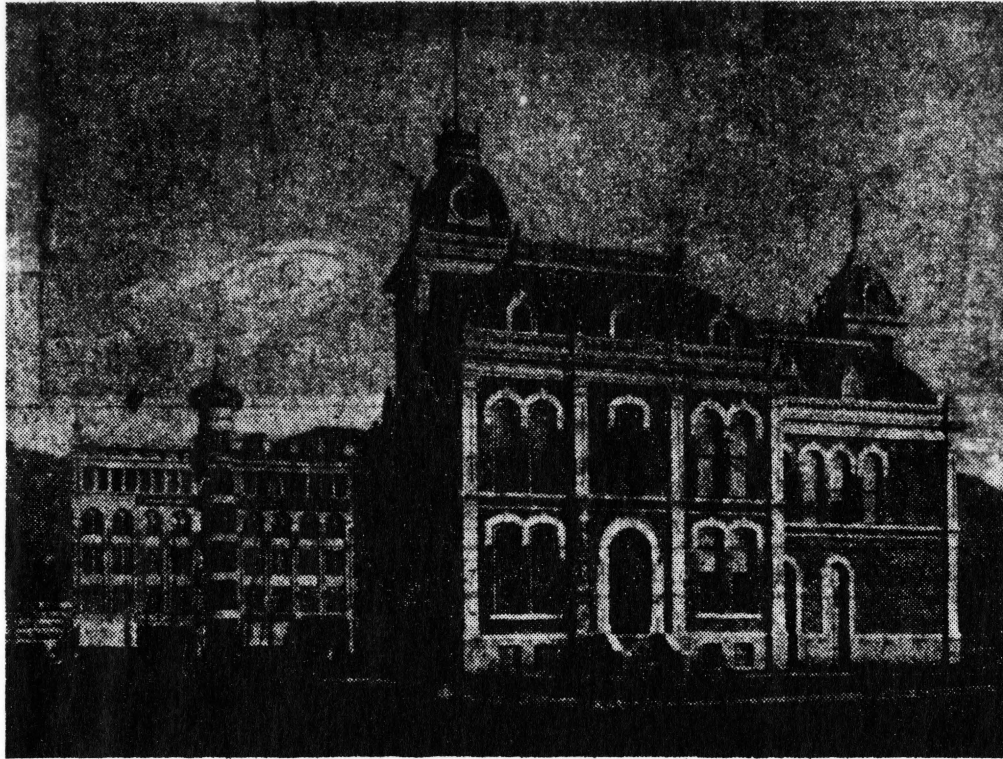


Figure 20. Old chair said to have been made for  
Maude Adams



### OLD CIVIC CENTER

This photograph, taken in 1893, shows the Ogden City Hall, with the famous clock tower. It was located just north of the present Municipal Building. The Grand Opera House, later the Orpheum Theater, is in the background. The city hall was in use until the new building was constructed in the 1930s, to house all city and county offices. The county courthouse, built in 1876, was on 24th just east of Washington.

Figure 21. The old Civic Center and the Grand Opera House in 1893



Figure 22. Full page "spread" of the Opera House opening in 1890. (The old ink drawings show the front of the building together with the foyer on the lower left, the seating plan in the lower center, and the proscenium and box seats on the right.)

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APPENDIX

## APPENDIX NOTES

1. It was interesting to the writer to note that dates for all mentioned productions were related by Mr. Osborne. When checked in the newspaper microfilm, the dates were nearly correct.
2. In later years when the theatre played vaudeville, there were many animal acts which were quite unique. If one might digress for a few sentences, the following stories of vaudeville acts might be of interest. These incidents occurred later than this thesis covers, but they were so interesting that this researcher felt them worth mentioning.

Mr. Osborne related that he was back stage during a leopard animal act when suddenly the lights went out in the theatre. The stage was left completely dark, and a voice shouted out, "For God's sake get these leopards back in the cage; I'm a dead man if they find me." This voice belonged to the man who had trained the leopards.

Mr. Osborne couldn't remember the man's name, but he has never forgotten the incident. Leopards are probably the most dangerous of animals, and they will attack even their trainer. He also said they were finally rounded up and put back in the cage. He stated the trainer was a mighty thankful man.

Another incident that was not so terrifying but nonetheless interesting involved the Powers' elephants which came through on one other vaudeville act. Mr. Osborne remembered that the elephant trainer had to walk the elephants all over the stage just before performance time. This was done so they would perform for the audience. Most elephants won't walk into a strange place.