

Collections. References to slaveholding may be found in Edward D. Neill's article on "Occurrences in and Around Fort Snelling from 1819 to 1840" in volume 2 of the same series, and in James H. Baker's "Address at Fort Snelling in Celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the Treaty of Pike with the Sioux" in volume 12. Other books from which information on slavery in Minnesota may be gleaned are Thomas M. Newson's *Pen Pictures of St. Paul, Minnesota, and Biographical Sketches of Old Settlers* (St. Paul, 1886); J. Fletcher Williams' *History of Saint Paul and of the County of Ramsey, Minnesota* (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 4); and Benjamin C. Howard's *Report of the Decision of the Supreme Court of the United States and the Opinions of the Judges Thereof, in the Case of Dred Scott versus John F. A. Sanford* (New York, 1857).

L. A.

EARLY DRAMA IN MINNEAPOLIS

Can you give me any information relative to the beginnings of dramatic entertainment in the pioneer days in Minneapolis?

CARLTON MILES, Minneapolis

There is little material on the history of the earliest dramatic enterprises in Minneapolis and it is, therefore, difficult to state when the first plays were produced. Musical activities and lyceum lectures probably took the place of drama in the earlier years of the city.

The first place used for theatrical purposes according to Isaac Atwater's *History of the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota*, 1: 326 (New York, 1893) and Horace B. Hudson's *Half Century of Minneapolis*, 115 (Minneapolis, 1908), was Woodman's Hall, owned by Ivory T. Woodman. Neither source gives the date of its erection, but Atwater states that the first attraction here was the "Sally St. Claire troupe."

The second hall used for theatrical entertainment, according to the same accounts, was Harmonia Hall. "Here," says Atwater, "John Templeton, Alice Vane, and little Fay Tem-

pleton are among those who gave to the theatre the lustre of their presence." Between 1860 and 1866 Harrison's Hall appears to have been used for amusements, and in 1864 a second Harmonia Hall was built.

The first real theater in Minneapolis, the Pence Opera House, was dedicated on June 21, 1867. It was described in the *Minneapolis Daily Tribune* as the "largest in the west," with "as good painting and fresco work as any building in the United States." The floor was built level and furnished with removable upholstered settees, each seating five persons. The total seating capacity was 1,400, and the cost was approximately fifty thousand dollars. On June 24 it was opened as a theater with Rachel Johnston and J. R. Healy in the "Hunchback," which was followed by "East Lynne," "Lady Audley's Secret," "Leah the Forsaken," and "Ingomar." The company which produced these plays, like most of the dramatic companies in the early days, was a repertoire company offering a different attraction each night. Several weeks earlier, on June 3, Miss Johnston had made her first appearance in Minneapolis. On this occasion the *Tribune* made the following comment: "A new and meritorious star arose on the dramatic horizon last night. The opera glasses that swept the firmament conveyed to the retina of various eyes a pleasing picture. The play was the beautiful drama of 'East Lynne' and was put on the boards in a magnificent manner. The parts were well rendered, and the audience remained intensely interested to the last."

Early in July, 1867, Emilie Melville, "vocalist and comedienne," and her troupe, including George F. De Vere, Nellie Mortimer, and Mrs. Creamer, arrived in Minneapolis for a three weeks' engagement at the Pence Opera House. Their performances included "The Hidden Hand," "Our American Cousin," "Fanchon, the Cricket," "Somnambulist," "The Comical Countess," "Kitty O'Sheal," and "Camilla's Husband." During the third and last week of their engagement "The Black Cook" was played. About the same time a drama entitled "The Black Crook" was being given in St. Paul, and

this gave the Melville troupe the opportunity to run the following advertisement : "The Black Crook put to the blush by the Great Comic Sensational Extravaganza, entitled the Black Cook, introducing the renowned Parish Ballet Troupe! And Gudger's Transformation Scene!"

Charles Plunkett and his company of twenty actors also appeared at the new theater shortly after its opening. This was his second appearance in Minneapolis that season. On the occasion of his former visit the *Tribune* made very favorable comment on his work but caustically advised that "the orchestra should bear in mind that practice makes perfect and a personal application will perhaps enable them to play an accompaniment that will not set one's teeth on edge." The company presented a group of plays ranging from "The Drunkard," "Robert Emmett," and "Pet of the Public" to "Macbeth," which the *Tribune* states "was brought forward as well as we ever saw it," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Othello." This was a period in which the temperance play was very popular. Two were included in the repertoire of the company, "Drunkard Saved," and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."

The Minnesota Historical Society has a collection of theatrical handbills dating from 1867. Most of these are advertisements of St. Paul attractions, but they represent many plays that also were offered in Minneapolis, and in these cases identical handbills were probably used in the latter city. The file of the *Minneapolis Daily Tribune* in the society's newspaper collection is complete, beginning with the first issue in 1867, and contains advertisements and criticisms of the various amusements offered in that city from time to time.

L. A.

RAMSEY'S EARLY CHURCH CONNECTIONS

I am desirous of learning whether the late Governor Alexander Ramsey of Minnesota was whilst a student at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania, in the early thirties a member of the First Presbyterian Church of that city.

ETHAN A. WEAVER, Germantown, Pennsylvania



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