

THE FARMLAND OPERA HOUSE:
CULTURE, IDENTITY, AND THE CORN CONTEST

Rose Wernicke

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Elizabeth Brand Monroe, Ph.D., J.D., Chair

Anita Morgan, Ph.D.

Master's Thesis
Committee

Nancy Marie Robertson, Ph.D.

Dedication

To the makers of history in rural America; yours matters.

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Introduction

In Farmland, a small town in east-central Indiana, a limestone cartouche at the cornice of the Pizza King restaurant bears the words “Opera House.” This marker, typical of small towns throughout the Midwest, hints at a culture of days long ago. It inspires romantic notions of ornate furniture and fixtures, elegantly dressed patrons, and culturally-enriching productions. It seems inconsistent to have such a grand sounding building in a small town named Farmland. However, opera houses held a ubiquitous presence on Main Streets of small towns throughout the nation. They provided the primary, nonsectarian, municipal assembly space for the town; operatic performances rarely, if ever, graced their stages. Instead, these buildings served the public as a venue for local and imported theater productions, political gatherings, church fundraisers, and civic meetings.

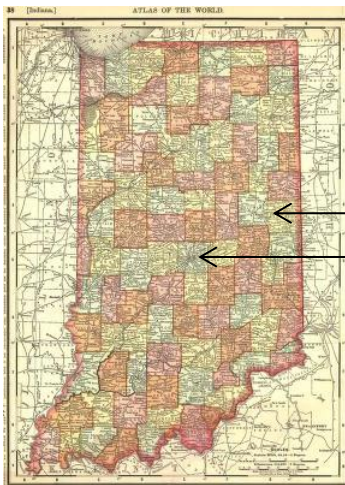


Illustration 1: Map of Indiana.
Rand McNally and Company.



Illustration 2: Cornice Cartouche.
Farmland, Indiana. Photo by author.

Small-town and urban opera houses differ functionally and architecturally. For example, the architect for the Indianapolis English Opera House, operating from 1880 to 1948,



Illustration 3: Farmland Opera House. Photo by Darryl Miller.



Illustration 4: English's Opera House, ca. 1892, Indianapolis. Bass Photo Co. Collection. Indiana Historical Society.

based his design on the Grand Opera House in New York City, including a ground-level theater with more than 1,200 permanent seats arrayed on sloping floors.¹ From its opening night, on September 27, 1880, until its final curtain, on May 1, 1948, English's hosted theatrical events: plays, variety shows, concerts, and dance productions.² For small towns, including Farmland, the arrangement of opera house buildings comprised first-floor commercial spaces and a wide-open second floor to allow for entertainment, community activities, and even high school basketball games. While English's Opera House remained in business until the middle of the twentieth century, by the 1920s, most small-town opera house spaces became vacant shadows of their former days.

¹ Richard K. Knaub, "The History of English's Opera House and the English Theater" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1962), 51-52.

² Appendix A of Knaub's dissertation compiles a complete listing of the programs held at English's Opera House and subsequent theater. *Ibid.*, 269-399.

The short-lived heyday for Farmland's Opera House, 1890 to 1905, coincided with dramatic social and economic changes throughout the area and the nation. The discovery of natural gas and the subsequent influx of industry in east-central Indiana brought new capital, commercial opportunities, and businessmen to the area. Political and economic upheavals in Indiana and the nation raised topics for discussion and debate. Networks of theater bureaus and booking agents enabled a greater variety of theatrical engagements in remote areas. Public entertainments changed in response to reform movements. Although Watson's Hall in Farmland had provided space for public gatherings since 1867, the 1890 construction of the opera house represented the beginning of a new era for the town and became the venue for exploring the changing world. Analysis of the program content, the people involved in procuring, presenting, and attending the events, and how these events fit into the broader social context, reveals a cultural history of Farmland and its residents' efforts to survive, thrive, and define themselves at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The word culture encompasses many meanings and cultural development in Farmland took many forms. In 1895, the *Farmland Enterprise* published this definition of culture:

There is a mistaken idea, says an exchange, that "culture" means to paint a little, to dance a little, to sing a little and to quote passages from popular books. As a matter of fact, culture means nothing of the kind. Culture means master of self, politeness, charity, fairness, good temper and good conduct. Culture is not a thing to make a display of. It is something to use so modestly that people do not discover at once you have it.³

This narrative, by an unnamed author, describes behavior and self-control. For a community, culture also comprises shared attitudes, values, conventions, and social practices. The opera house provided the stage for presenting new ideas, modes of thinking, and controversial subjects, and in effect, became the arena for social development. The variety of speakers and entertainers and the content of the engagements allowed the residents of Farmland to cultivate

³ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 31, 1895.

their cultural selves; their intellects, tastes, and manners, and allowed them to explore what to keep of their traditional cultural modes and what to cast off in light of the new century. They established a unique “Farmland” culture through their interactions with each other and with the outside world that ventured into their community through the opera house.

Late nineteenth-century society differed greatly between rural and urban areas in the United States. Many cities had already become well-established industrial centers which resulted in huge population growth. Related social problems included assimilation of immigrants, overcrowded housing, and labor abuses resulting in social and political reform movements. While small towns participated in portions of the 1890s reform movements, they also remained economically in an earlier industrial age, characterized by efforts to gain manufacturing and grow and prosper. These residents sought to explore who they would become as a community; would they remain small villages as supporters of the local farmers, or would they become manufacturing centers and expand? Farmland also had reached a crisis of identity, and events that took place at the opera house reveal the resulting tension over conflicting needs of its residents and tell the story of one small town’s navigation through the question of what it would become in the twentieth century.

The culture surrounding an opera house captivated me throughout my life. As a girl, I heard tales of Burden’s Opera House in Tampico, Illinois. Later, my work in historic preservation brought me to Farmland. As I prepared measured drawings for restoration of the opera house façade, I wondered: Why did towns build opera houses? What activities and events took place within them? Which were popular, which were not, and why? How did opera houses function as part of small towns?

As I explored the topic, I found several resources to piece together the opera house story. A collection of the local newspaper, the *Farmland Enterprise*, spanning 1888 to 1905,

coincides with the period of greatest activity within the Farmland Opera House. Under Editor W. C. West the paper commenced publication in May 1888, approximately one year before the construction of the opera house, and covered the social, commercial, and political activities of Farmland. West's 1894 biography describes the weekly paper as "newsy, spicy," and "a faithful chronicler of local events."⁴ West figures significantly in this study. His faithful publication of events happening in Farmland chronicled the construction of the opera house and the activities that took place within it (Appendix B). West gave reviews of the shows; reports of meetings; editorials about national, state, and local concerns; and items about the people and culture of the town.

Rural residents' reticence at sharing their private lives necessitated a treasure hunt for sources to flesh out the narrative. One Farmland resident recalled, "We did NOT keep a diary or scrapbook. We did not need help to recall the good times, and the other times, the bad times, we have been trying to forget ever since."⁵ Therefore, information gleaned from other sources supplied details to recreate the dispositions and lives of the people who figured significantly in the opera house story. Contemporary national, state, and county newspapers reported about the performers and speakers at other venues, and these accounts offered a means to sort through local bias. During the course of my research I used on-line subscription and free services which allowed me to search for a wide variety of topics within a broad range of small-town newspapers, county histories, and obscure government reports.⁶ In a few serendipitous instances, personal papers in archival collections mention events at the opera house and give

⁴A. W. Bowen, *A Portrait and Biographical Record of Residents of Delaware and Randolph Counties, Ind.* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Co., 1894), 1163.

<http://archive.org/stream/portraitbiographdr00chic#page/n5/mode/2up>.

⁵Gregory P. Hinshaw and Judy Wilson Wright, *Farmland, Indiana: A Sesquicentennial History, 1852-2002* (Farmland, IN: Farmland History Book Committee of Historic Farmland USA, 2002), 209.

⁶On-line services included newspaperarchive.com, ancestry.com, archive.org, books.google.com, hathitrust.org, fultonhistory.com, and fold3.com.

detail about booking arrangements and program content. These sources also allowed me to reconstruct the personalities of the managers of the opera house from biographies and clues based on their reported actions and activities. The search for sources resulted in a lively encounter with a nineteenth-century small town's social and cultural life and illustrates how Farmland residents navigated external changes and defined themselves as a community.

The pieces to the story of the Farmland Opera House have come together in a framework suggested by geographer John Hudson: an analysis of people, activities, and structure. Hudson bases the development of towns on the following factors: the skill of leading business persons and promoters, the nature and range of activities they perform, and the design of the town's structures. He notes that the construction of buildings demanded activities to pump life into them and that the complexity of the structure required an equally complex effort to support it.⁷

My study of the Farmland Opera House reveals the development of the community's culture and identity. The first chapter provides the story of Farmland from its settlement days in the early part of the nineteenth century, its mid-century development as a town, and the circumstances surrounding the construction of the opera house at the end of the century. I describe the people who participated in the building process, as well as those who ran the opera house after its completion. I introduce the numbers and types of activities that occurred at the opera house and discuss how they changed based on the opera house managers' personalities and life experiences.

In Chapter Two I look at the entertainment events that brought culture to Farmland from the world outside of Randolph County and analyze how they changed from 1890 to 1905. I provide examples of the events, including the performers, their backgrounds, the content of

⁷ John C. Hudson, *Plains Country Towns* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 12-13, 124, 128.

their acts, and reviews of these acts. My analysis of the actors, elocutionists, lecturers, and medicine shows illustrates the external influences on Farmland's cultural development. I explore the reasons why the traveling acts found favor with local tastes and explore the tensions of race, social norms, and class.

Chapter Three focuses on the civic activities that took place in the building. These community events illustrate how the political, social, and economic world outside of Farmland affected the residents and how they responded and incorporated the changes into their town. The types of activities held at the opera house demonstrate the community's hopes for the venue: a grand new venue suitable for significant new events. The opera house as a community center illuminates the evolution of a "Farmland" culture and identity.

The study of the cultural development of a small town through its opera house touches on topics and themes addressed in secondary sources. Several historians have speculated about why small-town residents wanted an opera house. The theories revolve around the intrinsic and extrinsic needs of community development. The construction of the opera house remedied the lack of a gathering space to hold public events within the community and gave the residents a grand place to display their civic pride. The opera house represented Farmland as a community of culture and refinement to visitors. Churches often served as community gathering spaces, but opera houses provided non-sectarian venues that all residents could enjoy. Theater historian William Condee describes the opera house as a place for "socially legitimated, intergenerational events, crossing gender, race, religious, and political boundaries."⁸ Willis Dunbar, professor of history at the University of Michigan, notes that the motive for building an opera house arose

⁸ William Condee, "Hamlet, Sunday School, and Zarrow's Pig Revue: Cultural Regulation in America's Opera Houses," *Journal of American Culture* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 59.

from the expectation that the theater “would be an asset to the town and a source of pride.”⁹ In her comprehensive survey of Nebraska opera houses, D. Layne Ehlers explains their sociological significance to the community: a symbolic coming together of residents and a mark of prestige and permanence for the town.¹⁰

Several historians discuss how small-town residents felt about spending their free time. In his seminal work, *Main Street on the Middle Border*, Lewis Atherton portrays small-town attitudes as “the cult of the immediately useful and the practical.” He describes this mode of thinking as placing the highest value on occupations and pastimes that brought about the greatest material gains. While parents encouraged children to pursue cultural activities, priorities for adults included earning a living and spending leisure time in economically practical and useful ways. Therefore, entertainment was a waste of time and money.¹¹ Entertainment historians David Nasaw and Gillian Rodger provide additional insight to rural leisure time. Nasaw states that middle-class socializing took place in the home and focused on family and neighbors. Rodger cites the work schedules and limited disposable incomes in farming communities as a deterrent to regular shows by professional companies.¹² My study illustrates that rural, nineteenth-century residents made decisions about how to spend their leisure time based on more complex criteria than Atherton suggests, and includes elements of Nasaw’s and Rodger’s explanations.

The definition and description of small towns originates from the ways outsiders viewed the communities and how these impressions changed over time. Lewis Atherton’s mid-

⁹ Willis Dunbar, “The Opera House as a Social Institution in Michigan,” *Michigan History Magazine* 27 (Oct. - Dec.1943): 663.

¹⁰ D. Layne Ehlers, “The Historical Context of Opera House Buildings in Nebraska: The OHBIN Study” (Master’s thesis, University of Nebraska, 1987), 184.

¹¹ Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), xvi, 112-117.

¹² David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 15. Gillian Rodger, *Champagne Charlie and Pretty Jemima: Variety Theater in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 179.

twentieth-century interpretation characterizes small-town hopes for “progress,” measured by population and land value increases, as inherently unattainable. Atherton forms this conclusion of flawed motivations through analysis of contemporary literature.¹³ In the 1980s, human geographer James Shortridge arrives at a synthesized national observation about the location and characteristics of the Midwest, also based on contemporary literature. He deduces that these ideas changed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Shortridge’s conclusions of the country’s opinion during the period 1880 through 1902 place Indiana at the border of the industrial East. However, perceptions shifted during the first decade of the twentieth century, and Indiana became firmly rooted in the national mindset as part of the pastoral Midwest.¹⁴ Civic meetings at the Farmland Opera House display the “progress” mindset and describe how the town sought to become part the industrial East mindset.

Anderson, another east-central Indiana town, fully experienced the late-nineteenth-century industrialization as described in Lamont Hulse’s “Boomers, Boosters and the Manufacturing Spirit: Civic Entrepreneurship and Industrial Development during the Natural Gas Era in Anderson, Indiana 1886-1905.” Hulse traces the gas boom in Anderson from its inception in the late 1880s through the financial panic of the early 1890s. He discusses the residents’ ambivalent attitudes that arose because of their new prosperity. On the one hand they embraced the development opportunities available because of the seemingly endless supply of natural gas; however, they resented the external expertise needed to provide the technical and financial resources required to form viable commercial ventures. Hulse refers to these attitudes as localism: the need to maintain control over profits in a spirit of civic responsibility rather than

¹³ Atherton, xvi-xvii.

¹⁴ James Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 136.

personal gain.¹⁵ As Farmland experienced the gas boom, the strains of a national depression and limited local monetary resources and manpower affected the community's efforts at growing their town.

Other historians identify characteristics of Midwesterners and Midwestern relationships and culture. Andrew Cayton posits that interactions among small-town residents centered on a "lowest common denominator," which means that people based their interactions on topics of mutual understanding and steered away from differences. His framework for describing the behavior of Midwesterners includes concepts of "public pleasantness" and the search for common identity. He also opines that the like-minded reactions of local residents reflect the distinctiveness of the region; therefore, provocatively suggesting that no specific identity exists for the Midwest. Rather, the Midwest serves as the middle ground for other, more notable regions: the East, the West, and the South.¹⁶ Daniel Nelson concludes that the search for compatibility arose because of the economic upheavals occurring at the time, stating "rural Midwesterners sought to minimize the uncertainties of their environments by living and working in a setting they understood or, at a minimum, with people they thought they understood."¹⁷ Cayton's challenging definition overlooks the struggles encountered by Midwesterners as they navigated the changes of the dawning twentieth century and the subtle ways that the residents negotiated conflict. Nelson's conclusion further expands Lamont Hulse's civic-mindedness concept.

¹⁵ Lamont Hulse, "Boomers, Boosters and the Manufacturing Spirit: Civic Entrepreneurship and Industrial Development during the Natural Gas Era in Anderson, Indiana 1886-1905" (Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1987), 8, 13, 50-51.

¹⁶ Andrew Cayton, "The Anti-Region: Place and Identity in the History of the Midwest," in *The Identity of the American Midwest: Essays on Regional History*, ed. Andrew Cayton and Susan Gray (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 143-150.

¹⁷ Daniel Nelson, *Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest 1880-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1995), 3.

Negotiation of a community culture inherently creates conflict among individuals who bring their personal ideas and expectations to the public setting. David Nasaw correlates respectability with appearance, dress, and behavior at public functions, rather than with class background, income, and education. He notes that during the vaudeville era, social decorum of the middle class audience valued restraint of emotion. Additional qualities such as the ability to get along with others, proper grooming and good manners signaled good character.¹⁸ Daniel Nelson notes that upper-middle-class couples dominated the region's political and social institutions, setting standards of taste and refinement for ordinary workers, farmers, and the middle class in rural areas.¹⁹ Susan Rugh, in *Our Common Country*, concludes that attempts by locals to cultivate culture resulted in conformist ideas of genteel behavior that met with resistance from those who clung to their embedded ideas of civility in public. These standards conflicted with the nature of vaudeville entertainment, interactive between performer and audience, which elicited emotional responses from the crowd.²⁰ These concepts come into play in the story of the Farmland Opera House and the residents' experiences of new forms of entertainment.

At the end of the nineteenth century, while small towns worked to become modern and grow, people in cities looked at the countryside with longing. Gillian Rodger, in *Champagne Charlie and Pretty Jemima*, describes how variety entertainment evolved into vaudeville during the nineteenth century. She finds that the acts portrayed sentimentality, nostalgia for rural life, and communal pride in a unified America after the Civil War.²¹ Jean Quandt's *From Small Town to the Great Community* provides a sociological perspective of late nineteenth-century culture.

¹⁸ Nasaw, 32-33.

¹⁹ Nelson, 47.

²⁰ Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family, Farming, Culture and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 177.

²¹ Rodger, 5, 93, 100.

She synthesizes the works of a group of nine progressive intellectuals or “communitarians,” including Jane Addams and Robert Park. Active in social reform, the communitarians saw culture as giving an individual a connection with the largely unseen and complex environment in which he or she played a part. Quandt describes Jane Addams’ ideas: that true culture allowed an individual to improve society and that culture displayed as a badge of personal distinction drew energy away from civic life. Quandt cites Robert Park in noting that people restlessly searched for novelty when deprived of their “natural” outlets for participation in culture, formerly found in small towns and rural society.²² Ideas of pastoralism and the uncomplicated rural way of life compared to the residents’ motivation to grow and prosper describe the paradoxical crossroads that Farmland and other small towns faced at the turn of the twentieth century.

Groundbreaking at its time, Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd’s *Middletown*, a study of Muncie, Indiana, provides a sociological comparison of the city in 1890 and 1925. They note changes in interactions among social classes based on new venues for community activities that arose during the early twentieth century like the Chamber of Commerce and the high school gymnasium. They quote the chamber president as saying its membership included merchants and farmers, an unlikely but new way for these two groups to find a common ground. The construction of high school gymnasiums in the early twentieth century provided new spaces for students, parents, larger kin networks and neighbors to gather for school performances, commencements, and basketball games.²³ Troy Paino builds on the Lynds’ description of how people spent their leisure time. He cites the Lynds’ discussion when noting that the increasing

²² Jean B. Quandt, *From the Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 1, 80-81, 146.

²³ Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1929), 228, 263, 485.

divide between the business and working classes resulted from industrialization.²⁴ Conversely, Leroy Ashby speaks of the changing views of culture around the turn of the twentieth century and how popular entertainment broke down barriers between high and low culture.²⁵ The events taking place within the Farmland Opera House demonstrate the subtle social negotiations between merchants and farmers and how the rules for public behavior changed based on the type of activity.

Many historians endorse the need for studies focused on the perspective of small towns and rural America. In *Main Street Blues*, Richard Davies laments the lack of scholarship concentrating on the impact of industrialization and urbanization on small towns.²⁶ In “A History of the Tibbits Opera House, 1882-1904,” historian Carolyn Gillespie notes that small town theaters need to be studied with an emphasis on all activities that took place within them, not just professional theatrical performances, to fully understand the importance of the venue to the community.²⁷ Brian Clancy’s “An Architectural History of Grand Opera Houses,” focuses on urban facilities. Although he did not include small-town opera houses in his study, he comments that they need to be studied in their own context.²⁸ Michigan historian Willis Dunbar suggests that information about local opera houses describes the development of the social life of a community.²⁹

My study of Farmland, Indiana fills the void. Through the lens of activities within the opera house from 1890 to April, 1905, I reconstruct the social life and personalities of a small

²⁴ Troy D. Paino, “The End of Nostalgia: A Cultural History of Indiana Basketball during the Progressive Era” (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1997), 108, 127.

²⁵ Leroy Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture since 1830* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 127.

²⁶ Richard O. Davies, *Main Street Blues: The Decline of Small-Town America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), x.

²⁷ Carolyn L. Gillespie, “A History of the Tibbits Opera House, 1882-1904” (Ph.D. diss., Kent State University, 1975), 145.

²⁸ Brian Carl Clancy, “An Architectural History of Grand Opera Houses: Constructing Cultural Identity in Urban America from 1850 to the Great Depression” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 2005), 9.

²⁹ Dunbar, 663.

Midwestern town and illustrate its cultural development. The events, their content, the people who took part in them, their advertisements, and reviews provide the basis for analysis revealing Farmland's path through the social changes occurring at the dawn of the twentieth century. The following pages focus on this experience and answer the questions: Why did Farmland build an opera house? What activities occurred in the Farmland Opera House? How did these events give meaning and force to the culture and identity of the town?

Chapter One: Farmland and the Opera House

The last decade of the nineteenth century brought new prospects for Farmland to define itself in the new century, and its newly built opera house provided the venue for residents to explore opportunities. A history of the settlement and development of Farmland provides an understanding of how Farmland grew and developed to arrive at this place of opportunity. The narrative describes the town at the end of the nineteenth century: the demographics of the residents, how Farmland stood in relationship to its neighbors in east-central Indiana, and its economic and social amenities. The people involved in the construction of the opera house give context to its importance to the town. A tabulation of the events introduces the genres of activities that played at the opera house. Finally, a description of the lives of the opera house managers demonstrates how their personal styles affected the social activities at the opera house.

In order to develop culture and an identity as a community, a town must have reached a certain stage of cultivation. Lewis Atherton describes newly-formed, nineteenth-century towns as “rootless, new and raw,” a population having no time for concerns beyond the material necessities of life.³⁰ Residents needed to attain a level of economic and social stability to move beyond a subsistence existence to have the time and resources to develop culture.³¹ By 1888, settlers from the eastern states had inhabited the Farmland area in Randolph County, Indiana, for three generations. Around 1820, new arrivals included the first generation of Quakers and free African Americans escaping the institution of slavery.³² In 1852, the second generation recorded the land to form the town surrounding the newly laid Indianapolis and Bellefontaine

³⁰ Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), 22.

³¹ Peter Harstad, “Indiana and the Art of Adjustment,” in *Heartland: Comparative Histories of the Midwestern States*, ed. James H. Madison (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 161.

³² Ebenezer Tucker, *History of Randolph County, Indiana: with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Chicago: A.L. Kingman, 1882), 33, 136.
<http://archive.org/stream/historyofrandolp00tuck#page/n5/mode/2up>.

(Bee-line) Railroad tracks.³³ Formal incorporation in 1867 provided governmental structure for the town.³⁴ By the late 1880s, the third generation of residents prospered beyond subsistence and could enhance the community culturally.

Farmland epitomized what William Allen White described as the archetypical country town: “a settlement which served as a service center for the farmer and had little or no industry.”³⁵ In the late nineteenth century the six largest towns in Randolph County were Farmland, Winchester, Union City, Lynn, Parker and Ridgeville. The percentage of residents living in rural areas (Table 1) declined from 77 percent in 1880 to 65 percent in 1900. Although the rural population declined, in their 1914 county history, John L. Smith and Lee L. Driver highlighted the 1910 U.S. Census Statistical Survey, quoting that Randolph County “is known for its splendid farms, improved roads, magnificent school buildings”³⁶ As the town modestly prospered, many other small towns failed to incorporate and sank into oblivion.³⁷ The example of other towns’ demises led to Farmland’s characteristic economic conservatism. Although the percentage of people living in rural areas declined, Farmland lived up to its name: a place for farmers to sell their products and purchase what they could not grow or make on the farm. Randolph County’s population may also be characterized by its homogenous qualities. As presented in Table 1, during the 1880 census, non-white and foreign born persons each

³³ Tucker, 451, 506.

³⁴ *Winchester Randolph Journal*, June 27, 1867.

³⁵ William Allen White, a newspaper editor from Emporia, Kansas, promoted the small-town way of life during the Progressive Era. Jean B. Quandt, *From Small Town to the Great Community: The Social Thought of Progressive Intellectuals* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 150, 151.

³⁶ John L. Smith and Lee L. Driver, *Past and Present of Randolph County, Indiana: With Biographical Sketches of Representative Residents and Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families* (Indianapolis: A.W. Bowen & Co., 1914), 798.

³⁷ Towns in Randolph County that did not remain by 1890: Royston, Sampletown, Vernon, New Dayton, Bloomingsport, Snow Hill, Huntsville, Swain’s Hill, Carlisle, Deerfield, Stone Station, Barton, Randolph, and Georgetown. Smith and Driver, 797-798, 896, 919, 944, 951, 962-963, 973-974, 986, 1014.

reported at two percent of the population. By the 1900 census, those portions of the population had reduced to only one percent each.

	1880	1890	1900
Farmland	661	770	870
Winchester	1,958	3,014	3,705
Union City	2,478	2,681	2,716
Lynn	239	518	705
Parker/Morristown	-	450 ³⁸	909
Ridgeville	775	922	1,098
Six largest towns	6,111	8,355	10,003
Total Randolph County	26,435	28,085	28,653
Residents living in Rural Areas	20,324	19,730	18,650
Percent Living in Rural Areas	77%	70%	65%
Race: White	25,843	27,475	28,255
Non-white	592	610	398
Percent Non-white	2%	2%	1%
Heritage: Native Born	25,886	27,632	28,258
Foreign Born	549	453	395
Percent Foreign Born	2%	2%	1%

Table 1: Analysis of Randolph County Population, 1880-1900.³⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century, debates over race relations cropped up in Randolph County. In the 1840s, the original Quaker congregation, Cabin Creek Friends, divided over the issue of slavery forming the Anti-Slavery Friends and the Cedar Meeting groups. The two reunited after the Civil War. The residents of Randolph County held conflicting opinions on the appropriateness of racial integration in schools. Ebenezer Tucker, a Quaker educator, established the Union Literary Institute to offer secondary education for African Americans and

³⁸ Parker, first known as Morristown, originated with the railroad in the early 1850s but did not incorporate until 1894 with approximately 450 residents.

³⁹ Indiana State Board of Health, *Indiana's Changing Population 1880-1980* (Indianapolis: Indiana State Board of Health, 1982), 165, 172, 173, 176. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Vol. 1 Population*, 1900, 18. Calculation of Residents living in rural areas by author.

whites, who would learn together.⁴⁰ In the 1860s the question of school integration arose at the elementary level. When a parent complained about a black student attending the local school, the principal resigned and closed the school rather than expel the black student. The local school committee divided the town into two districts, in effect establishing an integrated school and a segregated school. Eventually the African Americans in the Cabin Creek Settlement opened their own “colored” school.⁴¹

Residents of Randolph County began discussions about temperance and women’s suffrage in the mid-nineteenth century. According to county historian Ebenezer Tucker, “Friends and Methodists took a strong stand against the use of common drink.”⁴² Temperance societies organized and actively fought the sale of liquor by relentlessly insisting that saloon owners close their establishments.⁴³ Tucker noted that Amanda Way, a Randolph County native took a leadership position in the local temperance movement and eventually “gained even a national reputation.”⁴⁴ Way’s family had a long history of social activism. Her father, Matthew Way, was one of the original anti-slavery settlers in the county. In 1851, Amanda Way became Vice-President of the Women’s Rights Association of Indiana while Mary Frame Thomas, from Richmond, Indiana, presided at the convention. At the Association’s organizational meeting in Dublin, Indiana, Way encouraged women to speak out for their civil rights. She worked

⁴⁰ Tucker, 179-180.

⁴¹ *Winchester Randolph Journal*, February 16, 1860, February 23, 1860, November 23, 1870.

⁴² Tucker, 189.

⁴³ In the 1850s, after a former Winchester sheriff died from complications of alcoholism, the temperance women carried his corpse to the saloon and demanded that the owner smash all of the liquor. When he refused the women destroyed it themselves. The saloon owner’s lawsuit against the women for damages proved unsuccessful when no lawyer would take his case because all of the women’s husbands were local attorneys. Tucker, 190-191.

⁴⁴ Tucker, 190.

alongside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and became a nationally renowned figure in the women's suffrage movement.⁴⁵

In the nineteenth century, religious affiliation typically informed political choice. Although originally settled by Quakers, Randolph County also had strong Methodist Episcopal and Christian congregations.⁴⁶ In the Farmland vicinity the Christian Church organized in 1838 and the Methodist Church in the 1860s. Devotees of these pietistic faiths believed that salvation resulted from a direct relationship with Christ through a conversion experience. These adherents rejected the dogma of established religions and viewed their higher purpose as the revival of society as a whole. Pietists most often voted Republican, the party that advocated for reform. Party affiliation also often followed Civil War sympathies; Northerners allied with the Republican Party as the saviors of the nation and abolishers of slavery.⁴⁷

Construction of the railroad through the town facilitated Farmland's development and firmly established it as a trading center for county farmers. By the late nineteenth century, the Bee-line had grown and become the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad (C.C.C. & St. L.), also known as the "Big Four." From Farmland the route took passengers west to Muncie, east to Winchester and beyond in both directions. In 1888, the east and west schedules each included once-a-day mail and freight trains and passenger trains three times daily.⁴⁸ In June 1892, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad (G.R. & I.) posted routes from Farmland that allowed passengers to travel north and south via Winchester. The extra routes added more

⁴⁵ "Obituary." *Winchester Journal*, March 18, 1914.

⁴⁶ In 1890 the three largest denominations in Randolph County were Methodist, Friends (Quaker), and Christian. *Report on Statistics of Churches in the United States at the Eleventh Census* (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office: 1894) 385, 532, 568, 1282. Methodist and Methodist Episcopal churches had 2,363 members, Friends, 1,920 members, and the Christian Church, 1,835 members. According to Tucker (143) the Farmland Christian Congregation was a "New Lights" sect, referring to a group that had broken from another congregation of an older tradition.

⁴⁷ Richard Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 7, 64-65.

⁴⁸ 1888 train schedules from *Farmland Enterprise*, July 6, 1888, December 7, 1888.

frequent mail delivery. The railroads also offered itineraries for travelers attending special events such as the national Grand Army of the Republic encampment in Washington, D.C., in 1892 and the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.⁴⁹ This infrastructure provided the necessary transportation and communication networks to bring entertainers and speakers to Farmland.

The discovery of natural gas caused several communities in east-central Indiana near Randolph County to experience dramatic increases in population, economic resources, and industry (Table 2). Seemingly overnight, these communities shifted from farming villages to manufacturing centers. While these towns' populations doubled and more from 1890 to 1900, Farmland's population grew a modest thirteen percent, from 770 to 870 residents (Table 1). As shown in Illustration 5, the Trenton Natural Gas Field, lying under a swath of east-central Indiana counties, encompassed only part of Randolph County. Farmland strove to catch the gas boom, establishing gas companies, drilling for gas, and courting industries. The Farmland Gas Company formed in March 1887, and by June 1887 its first well had yielded commercially viable quantities of gas. In February 1889, the company drilled its eighth well, which alone tripled the total output per day of the previous seven.⁵⁰ At the end of 1889, well number ten came in at "double the capacity of No. 8."⁵¹ The supply of natural gas eventually ran out and the portion of the Trenton Field available locally did not yield enough to produce as large a population growth for Farmland as for other gas boom towns. Farmland remained a farming village.

⁴⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, June 3, 1892, August 25, 1893

⁵⁰ "True Grit." *Farmland Enterprise*, February 8, 1889.

⁵¹ "Let Us All Sing." *Farmland Enterprise*, January 3, 1890.

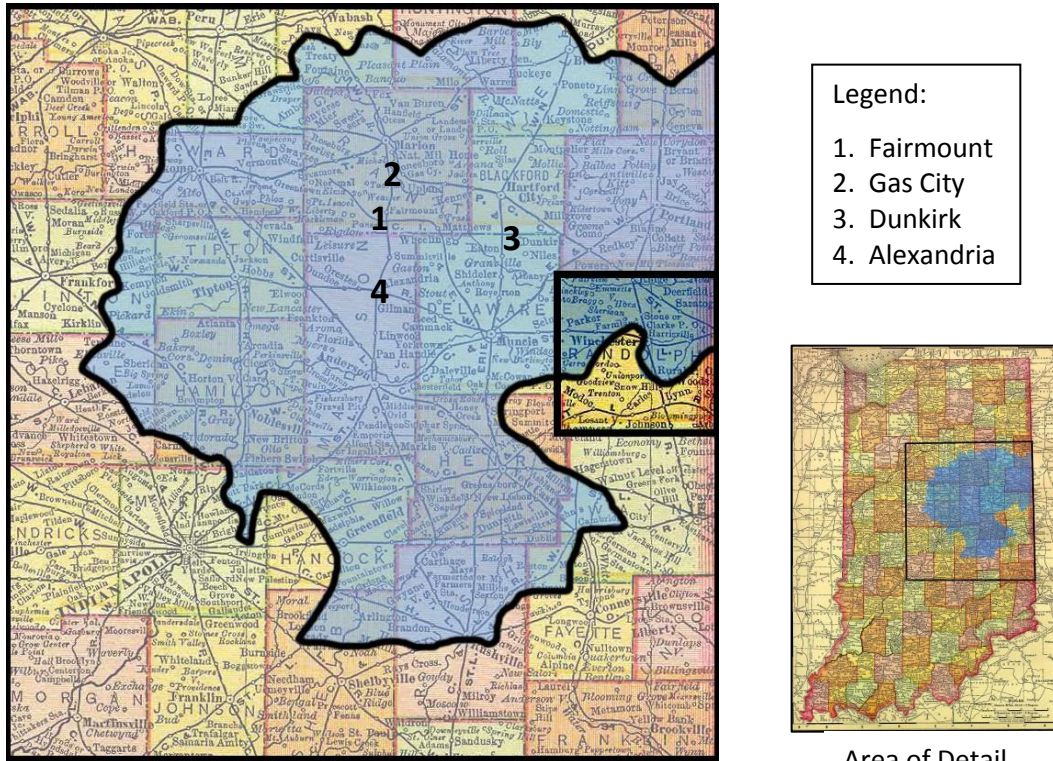


Illustration 5: Trenton Natural Gas Field and Randolph County.⁵²

	1890	1900	Percent Increase
1. Fairmount	1,462	3,205	119%
2. Gas City	145	3,622	2,398%
3. Dunkirk	1,024	3,187	211%
4. Alexandria	715	7,221	910%

Table 2: Changes in Population of Gas Boom Towns.⁵³

An abundance of fraternal lodges and patriotic organizations in the town gave residents outlets for social activity. On June 13, 1859, the Farmland men organized lodges for both the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) and the Free and Accepted Masons (F. & A.M.).⁵⁴

⁵² Illustration 5 interpolated by the author. Sources for original maps: Rand McNally and Company, *Indiana Map* (Chicago: The Encyclopedia Britannica Company, 1895). [http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu:9001/StyleServer/calcrn?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/Indiana/Indiana1895b.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item\(Name,Description\),cat\(Name,Description\)&style=simple/view-dhtml.xml](http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu:9001/StyleServer/calcrn?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/Indiana/Indiana1895b.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item(Name,Description),cat(Name,Description)&style=simple/view-dhtml.xml). Indiana Department of Natural Resources, *Indiana Oil and Gas Wells Webmap*. <http://gis.in.gov/apps/dnr/oilgaswells/>.

⁵³ Indiana State Board of Health, 35, 164, 165.

⁵⁴ Tucker, 210-212.

The ladies auxiliary branches came later; the Daughters of Rebekah (I.O.O.F.) in 1886 and Order of the Eastern Star (F. & A.M.) in 1890.⁵⁵ By 1867, the residents had formed a chapter of the International Order of Good Templars (I.O.G.T.).⁵⁶ The Improved Order of Redmen began to gather in 1888 along with their auxiliary chapter Daughters of Pocahontas.⁵⁷ The Knights of Pythias organized in 1898. Civil War veterans maintained a prominent role in the social life and politics of Farmland with the institution of the Moses Heron Post Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) in 1883 and its related Sons of Veterans (S.O.V.) and Women's Relief Corps (W.R.C.). In 1895, the Patriotic Order Sons of America organized.⁵⁸

The Farmers Mutual Benefit Association (F.M.B.A.) organized during the 1890s in Randolph County. This men's society grew out of the Grange and Farmers' Alliance movements.⁵⁹ The *Winchester Journal* reports about F.M.B.A. activities reveal the variety of perspectives held about the organization; members looked for a political and secretive organization in which to socialize without their wives.⁶⁰

Farmland residents also had access to public entertainments and social clubs. George B. Watson, a grocer, had provided the community gathering space for over twenty years. Watson's Hall, on the second story of his grocery store, contained a large open space for meetings, entertainment and gatherings.⁶¹ In the late 1880s the activities at Watson's Hall included box suppers, spelling bees, and traveling entertainments (Appendix A). Clubs formed for social and

⁵⁵ Smith and Driver, 731, 739.

⁵⁶ *Winchester Randolph Journal*, April 25, 1867.

⁵⁷ *Winchester Journal*, March 28, 1888.

⁵⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, July 12, 1895.

⁵⁹ Ernest D. Stewart, "The Populist Party in Indiana," *The Indiana Magazine of History*, Part 1 Vol. 14, no. 4 (December 1918): 337.

⁶⁰ "Our people are a little too smart to be caught with such chaff, as their speakers seem to be most persistent where Republicanism is the strongest." *Winchester Journal*, September 10, 1890. "From some cause, to us unknown, this paper was not furnished with any copy of the proceedings." *Winchester Journal*, June 18, 1890. "The Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association meets every Wednesday night . . . Here's your chance if you can slip off from the old lady." *Winchester Journal*, June 18, 1890.

⁶¹ "Business Change." *Farmland Enterprise*, February 1, 1889.

quasi-educational purposes. After originally gathering on Easter Eve, 1878, a group of friends calling themselves the “Easter Club” gathered each year on the Saturday before Easter.⁶² A Lyceum Club existed in Farmland as early as 1867.⁶³ In 1888, the club reorganized and cited its purpose as “literary improvement.”⁶⁴ The group met and debated such topics as “Will the Farmers’ organization continue to be a factor in the politics of the country?” and “The human race is constantly growing weaker and wiser.”⁶⁵

At the end of the 1880s the Farmland community offered all of the amenities for commerce, travel, and entertainment, but the residents yearned for more. When reviewing activities at Watson’s Hall, editor West of the *Farmland Enterprise* cited the standing-room-only crowd as a need for a “larger more commodious hall for public entertainments” for the growing town.⁶⁶ In the summer of 1887 John W. Clayton, president of the newly organized Farmers’ and Residents’ Bank, hired contractor Samuel Wright to construct a bank building with an opera house on the second floor. In December 1887, before completion of the project, a natural gas explosion destroyed the structure.⁶⁷ In April 1889, Philip Murray Bly and John Henry Thornburg purchased the site and began construction of a drugstore and opera house.⁶⁸

Bly and Thornburg owned a well-established drugstore and had been members of the Farmland community for many years. In 1875, Bly apprenticed as a druggist with Lewis Gable and in 1880 became his partner. In 1881, Thornburg purchased Gable’s share, forming the Bly

⁶² *Farmland Enterprise*, April 19, 1895.

⁶³ *Winchester Randolph Journal*, February 7, 1867.

⁶⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 30, 1888.

⁶⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 10, 1890.

⁶⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 28, 1888.

⁶⁷ Organization of the bank, *Farmland Enterprise*, May 19, 1893. Contract with Wright, *Farmland Enterprise*, December 21, 1888. Future opera house manager George Retter was the step-son of Samuel Wright. The two were inspecting the structure on December 24, 1887, when they smelled gas and lit a match to find the source of the leak. The resulting explosion killed Wright and scarred Retter. *Farmland Enterprise*, December 21, 1888.

⁶⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 19, 1889.

and Thornburg druggist partnership. Both men actively participated in community life. Bly held memberships in the Odd Fellows Lodge and the Sons of Veterans, worshipped at the Methodist Church, and served on the school board.⁶⁹ Thornburg demonstrated his financial skills, acting as treasurer for the town's Fourth of July Committee and Lyceum Club and as revenue collector for the Farmland Natural Gas Company.⁷⁰ He later became the gas company president and served as vice president of the Harrison Republican Club during the 1888 presidential campaign.⁷¹ Although their personal motivations for building the opera house remain undocumented, the *Farmland Enterprise* commended their "public spirit" for making the venue possible.⁷²

During the opera house construction W. C. West kept the public informed about the building progress through articles in the *Enterprise*. By the end of May the foundation had been dug.⁷³ At the end of July the structure had advanced to a finished basement and rising brick walls, and reports commented that the residents watched with pride.⁷⁴ West's excitement rose as the building neared completion, and he described the opera room as "a place to witness a class of stage entertainments hitherto unknown in this part of the country."⁷⁵ West's progress updates fed the residents' curiosity, generated interest, and set up the expectation that the opera house would bring grand, new activities.

⁶⁹ A. W. Bowen, *A Portrait and Biographical Record of Delaware and Randolph Counties, Ind.* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Co., 1894), 1092-1093. *Farmland Enterprise*, April 27, 1894.

⁷⁰ Fourth of July Committee, *Farmland Enterprise*, June 29, 1888. Lyceum Club, *Farmland Enterprise*, March 8, 1889. Collector for Farmland Natural Gas Company, *Farmland Enterprise*, March 15, 1889.

⁷¹ Harrison Club, *Farmland Enterprise*, July 27, 1888. President, Farmland Natural Gas, *Farmland Enterprise*, February 12, 1892.

⁷² *Farmland Enterprise*, November 15, 1889.

⁷³ Lot purchase, *Farmland Enterprise*, April 19, 1889. Foundation nearly complete, *Farmland Enterprise*, May 31, 1889.

⁷⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, July 26, 1889.

⁷⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 15, 1889.

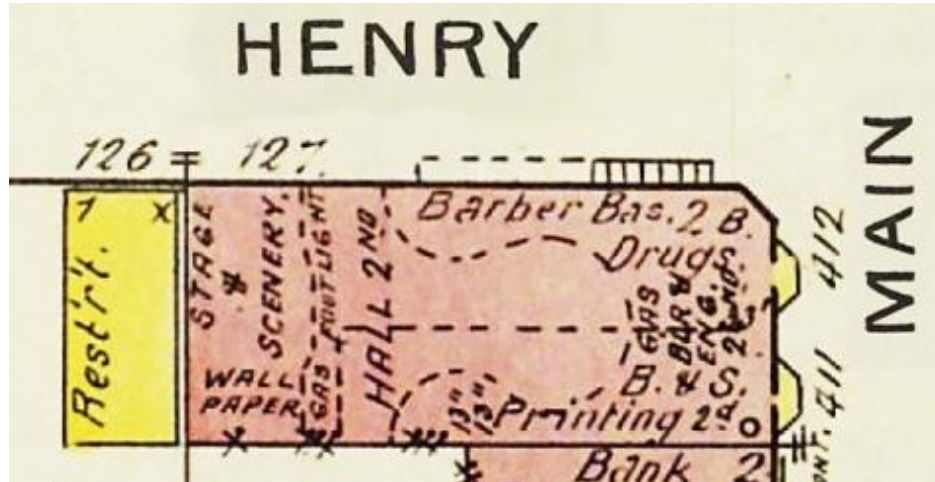


Illustration 6: Sanborn Drawing of the Farmland Opera House. Adapted from Sanborn-Perris Map Company. *Farmland, Randolph County, Indiana*. (September, 1893). <http://www.libraries.iub.edu/index.php?pageId=1002186>. Accessed February 26, 2010.

Farmland’s opera house building held a prominent place in the town’s streetscape and its design resembled a utility hall.⁷⁶ Situated at the southwest corner of Main and Henry Streets, the building became a flagship at the town’s central intersection. The first floor contained the drugstore and two additional spaces for retail establishments, one facing Main Street and one at the rear of the building facing Henry Street. The opera house and two offices occupied the second floor (Illustration 6). The flexible opera house design included a flat floor with removable seating, allowing for a variety of activities. The balcony contained two boxes and additional open seating.⁷⁷ The hall held 606 people.⁷⁸

With the opera house structure in place, Bly and Thornburg needed to supply activities. Cultural and social events in Farmland followed a season, and the same held true for opera

⁷⁶ Theater historian Ned Donahoe described three types of theaters, utility halls, opera halls and grand opera houses, based on the location of the theater within the building and the arrangement of floors and seating. Ned Donahoe, “Theaters in Central Illinois-1850-1900” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois, 1953), 1-2.

⁷⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 10, 1890.

⁷⁸ Julius Cahn, *Julius Cahn’s Official Theatrical Guide*, Vol. 10 (New York: Publishing Office, Julius Cahn, 1905), 417. <http://archive.org/details/juliuscahnsoffic101905cahn>.

house activities. The season followed the weather, starting in the fall when farm work ended and the weather became cool enough to gather in a poorly ventilated, second-floor space. The season closed early in the spring when farm work resumed and social events moved outdoors. The Farmland Opera House Day Book (Appendix B) lists the activities that took place within the opera house, and Table 3 summarizes the sixteen seasons focused on in this study. The tabulated columns represent the dual function of the opera house: an entertainment venue and a community center. Chapter Two describes the activities included in the Traveling Entertainment column, including shows that came from outside Farmland. Chapter Three discusses the first Community Center column, Political, Civic, and Educational. The Social and Entertainment column represents the leisure activities organized, performed, and attended by residents of Farmland. Changes in these events may be ascribed to the personalities and experiences of the opera house managers. The discussion following describes the managers and their styles affecting the community social events at the opera house.

Season	Traveling Entertainment	Community Center		Total	Manager
		Social and Entertainment	Political, Civic, Educational		
	(number of performances/number of engagements)				
1890	15/5	4	0	19/9	Bly & Thornburg
1890/1891	14/9	1	7	22/17	Retter
1891/1892	18/9	3	8	29/20	Retter
1892/1893	19/10	8	10	37/28	Retter
1893/1894	9/2	20/11	4	33/17	Retter
1894/1895	6/5	3	7	16/15	Retter
1895/1896	7/7	6	2	15/15	Retter
1896/1897	5/4	2	9	16/15	Retter
Retter Totals:	78/46	43/34	47		
1897/1898	5/5	4	1	10/10	Bly
1898/1899	8/7	3	2	13/12	Bly
1899/1900	8/4	3	2	13/9	Bly
1900/1901	13/5	2	5	20/12	Bly
1901/1902	3/2	2	1	6/5	Bly
1902/1903	22/10	0	23/7	45/17	Bly
1903/1904	16/12	1	6	23/19	Bly
Bly Totals:	75/45	15	40/24		
1904/1905	6/6	5	13	24/24	Orville
Total:	174/102	67/58	100/84	341/244	

Table 3: Summary of Activities at the Farmland Opera House.⁷⁹

Bly and Thornburg booked the activities for the first season and hired George E. Retter to manage the 1890/1891 season.⁸⁰ The thirty-year-old Retter had worked in a wide range of

⁷⁹ Compiled from the Farmland Opera House Day Book, Appendix B.

⁸⁰ During construction of the opera house, Bly and Thornburg often traveled to Indianapolis for business related to their new building. Here, they most likely made contact with entertainment bureaus. *Farmland*

jobs. After his father died in 1869, he moved with his mother to Farmland. Retter left school at the age of twelve, worked in a woolen mill, carried water for a railroad construction crew, and aided his uncle on a trip to the eastern states. In 1880, he married Mae (Mary) Belle Spillers from Farmland, and they had two sons and a daughter. Retter worked as a painter and contractor before opening a restaurant in 1883. In 1885 he went to Indianapolis to work as a superintendent for the Roller Coasting Company, then returned to Farmland and clerked in a general store. In the late 1880s he opened the Retter House Hotel, which remained open until the 1940s.⁸¹ He had planned and equipped another restaurant in the building that would have contained the new opera house in 1887; instead, he sustained injuries in the explosion that leveled the nearly constructed building.⁸²

Retter's interests expanded while he managed the opera house. His involvement with his young sons included encouraging the town's boys in athletic events, and he became known as "Dad" to all.⁸³ Retter participated in the short-lived gas boom in Randolph County by joining a group of entrepreneurs in the Progress Gas and Oil Company.⁸⁴ His fraternal associations included the Sons of Veterans and the I.O.O.F., and he sought leadership positions such as captain of local "teams" and representative to state conferences and committees for the organizations.⁸⁵ Retter hosted social gatherings at his home, the Retter House Hotel, for young

Enterprise, October 11, 1889. G. E. Retter announced that he had "taken the management of Bly & Thornburg's new opera house for the season," *Farmland Enterprise*, September 19, 1890.

⁸¹ Bowen, 1230-1231. Mary Belle Retter's obituary reported that she operated the Hotel Retter for fifty-six years. *Randolph County Enterprise*, June 6, 1945.

⁸² *Farmland Enterprise*, December 21, 1888. Also see note 67.

⁸³ Bowen, 1231. Although Retter had not lived in Farmland since 1903, his 1943 obituary still referred to him as "Dad." *Randolph County Enterprise*, February 10, 1943.

⁸⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, June 30, 1893. Bowen, 1231.

⁸⁵ Retter attended I.O.O.F. "festivities" in Indianapolis and inspected the Knightstown Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home as part of his responsibilities as a member of the State Encampment Sons of Veterans Committee. He served as Captain for local I.O.O.F. "teamwork." *Farmland Enterprise*, October 21, 1892, May 18, 1894, June 14, 1895.

people attending dances, political banquets, and weddings.⁸⁶ Retter used his artistic and creative talents by painting signs and murals and decorating interiors for local businesses.⁸⁷ He managed and directed theatrical productions that featured local amateur actors and benefitted Farmland causes.⁸⁸ On December 12, 1896, Retter opened Dad's Kitchen restaurant, although he remained the manager of the opera house for part of the 1896/1897 season.⁸⁹ In 1903, Retter followed the Gold Rush to Nevada, and his wife and children remained in Farmland to run the hotel.⁹⁰ Although Retter's wife served as co-host to some of these events, his activities centered on his work at the opera house and socializing as an individual.

As the opera house manager, Retter secured the traveling entertainments, decorated the stage and sets, sponsored dances, and removed unruly patrons. During his tenure, 1890/1891 through 1896/1897, forty of the forty-three Community Social and Entertainment events included dances, "home talent" productions, and musical club meetings (Table 3). These activities reached a zenith when Retter opened the 1893/1894 season with a series of dances. Later that season, a group of young people organized a dancing club consisting of ten lessons at the opera house followed by a social dance. The same season a music club formed and practiced at the opera house, giving a final concert on April 3, 1894.⁹¹ These activities overshadowed the lack of traveling entertainment, a trend that began during the 1893/1894 season (Table 3). In the fall of 1893, according to the *Farmland Enterprise*, while Retter made improvements to the

⁸⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 7, 1890, October 21, 1892, February 23, 1894, September 7, 1894.

⁸⁷ Painted a sign for the new opera house, *Farmland Enterprise*, August 1, 1890. Decorated E.S. Secrest's Barber Shop located in the basement of the opera house, *Farmland Enterprise*, December 15, 1893. Built and painted a sign for the Barber Shop, *Farmland Enterprise*, March 1, 1895.

⁸⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 8, 1889, February 7, 1890, July 31, 1896.

⁸⁹ Restaurant opening, *Farmland Enterprise*, December 18, 1896. Retter's name was no longer used in the newspaper in conjunction with bringing shows or performances to the opera house after November 26, 1896.

⁹⁰ "G. E. Retter, who is traveling for a Western mining company, was at home the latter part of last week visiting his family." *Farmland Enterprise*, March 25, 1904.

⁹¹ See Appendix B. *Farmland Enterprise*, March 23, 1894.

opera house, he also needed some “encouragement” to book shows that the citizenry would appreciate.⁹² Congruent with Retter’s personality and connection with the town, many of the events scheduled under his management focused on socializing among the residents.

Management of the opera house returned to P. M. Bly after the 1896/1897 season.⁹³ Bly’s professional and social patterns had taken a more stable and traditional path than Retter’s. Bly and his wife, Flora, were both born in Randolph County and were lifelong members of the Methodist Church.⁹⁴ They socialized frequently with members of their extended family living in the area and regularly with friends through the “Easter Club.”⁹⁵ By 1897, Bly had been in the drugstore business for twenty-two years. During his management of the opera house, not only did the number of Community Social and Entertainment events decrease, but none were sponsored by Bly himself. As with Retter, Bly’s social patterns had been set long before he became owner of the opera house, and his long-standing, stable connection to the community meant that he had no need to create additional opportunities to socialize.

Finally, in 1904, Bly hired traveling performer Harry Orville to manage the opera house.⁹⁶ In 1889, Orville came to Farmland as part of Dr. White Cloud’s Indian Medicine Show and he married Ruth Lever, the daughter of a local farmer.⁹⁷ The Orvilles continued to travel and perform, returning to Farmland to visit family and entertain at the opera house. In 1904 they

⁹² *Farmland Enterprise*, September 29, 1893. *Farmland Enterprise*, November 3, 1893. Retter’s mother also became sick and died in October of 1893. He most likely was busy with her care and arrangements. *Farmland Enterprise*, October 20, 1893.

⁹³ The Bly and Thornburg partnership had disbanded by 1897. Bly purchased Thornburg’s share of the partnership in early 1895. The reasons for the partnership dissolution remain unknown; however they frequently posted notices in the newspaper for customers to settle their accounts so the partnership could pay off their building debts, and Thornburg had many health problems. “Dissolution of Partnership.” *Farmland Enterprise*, February 22, 1895. Building debt, *Farmland Enterprise*, January 4, 1895. Thornburg’s health, *Farmland Enterprise*, August 2, 1889, March 31, 1893.

⁹⁴ “Obituary: Phillip Murray Bly.” *Winchester Journal*, February 21, 1917.

⁹⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 19, 1895.

⁹⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 25, 1904.

⁹⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, July 12, 1889.

chose to permanently reside in Farmland. Orville brought his experience in traveling shows which revived the “home-talent” productions that had been popular in the early 1890s.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the population of Farmland grew modestly and the town’s amenities increased in step. The residents observed the example of the growth in neighboring towns due to the discovery of natural gas and expected that Farmland would also grow. By 1888, Farmland reached a stage of development as a town that required a venue for community and social development. The resulting opera house provided this place, offering a stage for entertainment and a physical forum for the community to explore the political, economic and educational topics of the day. West’s promotion of the opera house led the community to believe that the venue would be a place of grand, new events. The opera house was also a business establishment that required a manager. The contrasting stories of Retter, Bly, and Orville illustrate the stylistic reasons for the Community Social and Entertainment activities that occurred at the opera house and why they changed during each manager’s tenure.

Chapter Two: An Entertainment Venue

Although Farmland had an opera house, no opera played there. In the late nineteenth century, small-town residents looked to become “cultured,” and their attempts brought acceptable and unacceptable entertainment forms to the opera house. The analysis begins with contextual information about the popular entertainment genres and the working business model of booking the performers in outlying areas. Then, a table enumerates the performances that came to Farmland indicating the type of show, followed by an exploration of what these events meant to the community. The backgrounds of three performers who took the Farmland stage, as well as the content of their shows, further illustrate the differences between vaudeville and lyceum entertainment. Farmland’s acceptance or rejection of performances and performers reflects local tastes based on the residents’ familiarity with the performer and the content of the acts, and whether these acts displayed roles thought to be appropriate based on gender and race.

Late nineteenth-century public entertainment grew out of the variety tradition. Variety included plays, skits, songs, and aerial and acrobatic displays. Shows could include any type of act honed by an actor’s talents and tastes. The variety stage offered the opportunity for less popular actors from professional theater to star in their own shows, gave them license to create their own content, and brought new life to fading careers.⁹⁸ As social reform concerns took increased significance in American life, entertainment styles changed to appeal to audience tastes. To remain commercially viable, variety theaters and managers needed to attract larger crowds, and they found shows appropriate for families that enticed women and children to theaters. As a result, the variety genre separated into vaudeville and burlesque. Vaudeville became the type of show appealing to family audiences, while the label burlesque signified a

⁹⁸ M. Alison Kibler, *Rank Ladies: Gender and Cultural Hierarchy in American Vaudeville* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 82.

sexualized style of entertainment. Terminology such as “first-class” identified a clean, moral show to the potential audience.⁹⁹

Networks of traveling performers brought vaudeville shows and other forms of entertainment to rural communities. These theatrical systems formed in response to the 1873 financial panic. Managers of smaller theaters no longer could afford to maintain full-time stock companies locally, so the actors took their shows on the road. This business model took advantage of economies of scale; that is, theaters could get new acts regularly and actors could hone their acts by performing them repeatedly at different venues.¹⁰⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century, advance agents further streamlined the business by visiting potential venues and scheduling the performances for the traveling troupes. For example, W. G. Hunter served in this capacity for the Chaos Flat Company, the opening night performers at the Farmland Opera House. He booked the venue, arranged the advertising with the local newspaper, and served as public relations representative and trouble-shooter for the company.¹⁰¹

Publications such as *Julius Cahn's Theatrical Guides* facilitated the advance agent's job. Published yearly, the guides provided logistical details. Each theater's listing described the stage and seating capacity. It listed the manager's name, title and printing requirements for the local newspaper, railroad lines leading into the town, and the name and lodging costs for the local

⁹⁹ Gillian Rodger, *Champagne Charlie and Pretty Jemima: Variety Theater in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 154.

¹⁰⁰ Leroy Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture since 1830* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 119. Gary Cross, *A Social History of Leisure Since 1600* (State College, PA: Venture Publishing Co., 1990), 73. Robert Lewis, *From Traveling Show to Vaudeville: Theatrical Spectacle in America 1830-1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), xi, 11. Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), 355. Rodger, 78.

¹⁰¹ *New York Dramatic Mirror*, undated. accessed from fultonhistory.com.

hotel.¹⁰² The advance agent could plan the troupe's schedule and make the necessary contacts for the venue, lodging, transportation and advertising. He could also use the population numbers and seating capacity to determine how many performances to stage.

Uncle Tom's Cabin and minstrel shows reinforced racial stereotypes on the vaudeville circuit. Although Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the novel as an anti-slavery statement, readers, playwrights, actors, and audiences reinterpreted and retold the story to suit their tastes. Stowe's minstrel-style portrayal of the African characters added to the popularity of the stage show.¹⁰³ Minstrel shows featured black actors or white actors who used burnt cork to blacken their faces. Popular since the early nineteenth century, the acts derisively portrayed African Americans as simple, bumbling farmhands with no sophistication. The minstrel shows ended with a cakewalk dance, developed by slaves to simultaneously entertain and mock their owners.¹⁰⁴ Minstrel shows also became a prevalent means for amateurs to raise funds for local clubs and charities.¹⁰⁵ The popularity of these types of shows illustrates the continuing tensions over race relations after the Civil War.

Medicine shows reached their height of popularity in the late nineteenth century. A large part of the medicine man's success with a crowd came from establishing the appearance of medical legitimacy. Show organizers used entertainment as a means to help create "a proper mood," distract the audience from preconceived notions, and clear their minds to accept new information. The medicine men used subtle language to instill the feeling of illness among even

¹⁰² Julius Cahn's *Official Theatrical Guide Vol. 2 1897-1898*, 312-313.

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066454610#page/313/mode/1up> accessed March 2, 2012.

¹⁰³ Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2005), 7-9.

¹⁰⁴ Ashby, 88-89. Karen Sotiropoulos, *Staging Race: Black Performers in Turn of the Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 2, 21, 215.

¹⁰⁵ Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones: A History of the American Minstrel Stage* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1968), 126.

healthy members of the audience, and to persuade them that the potion of reference would cure their problems. The salesmen employed the promise of continued entertainment and contests or prizes to sustain the show's momentum.¹⁰⁶

By the late nineteenth century, the lyceum circuit had become another network for theater managers to book morally and intellectually stimulating programs. The lyceum's reputation arose from its origin as a local setting for mutual education and evolved into a public lecture form with expert speakers.¹⁰⁷ During the last quarter of the century, the lyceum bill extended to include impressionists, readers, and other acts to supply the entertainment sought by audiences.¹⁰⁸ Because of the movement's geographic expansion, booking bureaus formed to organize itineraries for the performers.¹⁰⁹

The Farmland Opera House staged a wide variety of traveling entertainments and the types changed over the first sixteen seasons. As illustrated in Table 4, during the first eight seasons vaudeville acts appeared on the stage seventy-eight times from forty engagements while lectures took place fifteen times from eleven engagements. During the second eight seasons, although the vaudeville performances outnumbered the lectures (forty-six compared to thirty-four) the number of lecturers engaged exceeded that of vaudeville acts (twenty-eight compared to twenty-four). The following analysis illustrates the many factors which resulted in this subtle switch in programming. The discussion begins with opening night at the Farmland Opera House and describes types of entertainments and individual performers and explores the

¹⁰⁶ James Harvey Young, *The Toadstool Millionaires: A Social History of Patent Medicine in America before Federal Regulation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 168-169, 195-197.

¹⁰⁷ Angela G. Ray, *The Lyceum and Public Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 8, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Marjorie Harrell Eubank, "The Redpath Lyceum Bureau from 1868 to 1901" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1968), 199-200.

¹⁰⁹ Ray, 33, 39.

culture of social expectations of behavior and taste that developed through the entertainment activities at the opera house.

Season	Vaudeville	Lectures	Traveling Performances and Entertainment
	(number of performances/number of engagements)		
1890	15/5	0	15/5
1890/1891	7/6	7/3	14/9
1891/1892	18/9	0	18/9
1892/1893	16/7	3/3	19/10
1893/1894	9/2	0	9/2
1894/1895	4/3	2/2	6/5
1895/1896	5/5	2/2	7/7
1896/1897	4/3	1/1	5/4
Subtotal	78/40	15/11	93/51
1897/1898	1/1	4/4	5/5
1898/1899	3/3	5/4	8/7
1899/1900	8/4	0	8/4
1900/1901	11/4	2/1	13/5
1901/1902	2/1	1/1	3/2
1902/1903	10/3	12/7	22/10
1903/1904	10/6	6/6	16/12
1904/1905	2/2	4/4	6/6
Subtotal	47/24	34/27	81/51
Total	125/64	49/38	174/102

Table 4: Entertainment Events at the Farmland Opera House. Compiled from Appendix B.

The opera house opened with great fanfare on January 18, 1890, featuring the Deaves Sisters in their vaudeville act “Chaos Flat.”¹¹⁰ Ada and Rillie Deaves grew up in a theatrical family in San Francisco, California, and began acting when they were young.¹¹¹ During the 1880s, both actresses performed in supporting roles in shows throughout the nation; Ada most often playing the Irish maid, or soubrette, and Rillie the ingénue.¹¹² Each had more than fifteen years of experience before their performance in Farmland.

The program for “Chaos Flat,” as performed in Muncie, Indiana, the night before Farmland (Appendix C) illustrates the vaudeville format. The show comprised three acts with songs, recitations, and a ventriloquist interspersed. The show revolved around life in a New York apartment building. Billed as a new and original script, “Chaos Flat” combined roles previously played by the Deaves Sisters and songs and literary pieces already part of public culture. Ada had experience reciting “The Beautiful Snow” when she appeared in “The Paper Doll” in 1888.¹¹³ She portrayed Biddy Ronan, an Irish woman who paralleled the Mrs. Roonan character in “Chaos Flat.” The songs “Are You Going to the Ball,” “Since Katie Learned to Play,” “Down Went McGinty,” and “Tootsy Woosy” already existed in popular culture.¹¹⁴ “Chaos Flat” allowed the

¹¹⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, January 17, 1890.

¹¹¹ Both Ada and Rillie are listed in the 1875 San Francisco City Directory as actresses at Maguire’s New Theater (234). Census data shows Ada born in 1856 and Rillie in 1862, making them ages nineteen and thirteen, respectively, in 1875. 1870 Census and City Directory information obtained from Ancestry.com on December 31, 2012.

¹¹² Ada in “May Blossoms” playing a soubrette, *Chicago Tribune*, March 16, 1884. Ada had played Biddy Ronan, “the good-hearted, garrulous, Irish woman,” *Morning Oregonian* (Portland), June 30, 1885. As part of the “We, Us & Co.,” Ada played Bella Bustle, a charming soubrette, *Boston Daily Globe*, January 12, 1886. Rillie played the role of “Gladys Wyncott, the pretty, willful ward” in “The Rajah” in 1883 and 1886, *Chicago Tribune*, October 28, 1883, and *Titusville Herald* (PA), April 26, 1886.

¹¹³ “Miss Ada Deaves, as a giddy maiden of uncertain age, was decidedly clever, especially in her recitation of ‘The Beautiful Snow.’” *Steubenville Daily Herald* (OH), December 6, 1888.

¹¹⁴ “Are You Going to the Ball this Evening?” by J.P. Skelly, 1881 and “Tootsy Woosy” by Jesse Williams, 1884. *Library of Congress Performing Arts Encyclopedia* at <http://www.loc.gov/performingarts/> accessed January 31, 2012. “Down Went McGinty,” by Joseph Flynn, 1889. The Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music. Sheridan Libraries of the Johns Hopkins University. <http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/>. Accessed January 31, 2012. “Since Katie Learned to Play” sung by the Princeton Glee Club in 1892. *The Princetonian*,

Deaves Sisters to display their honed talents and to please the audience with familiar themes and songs.

Ada and Rillie Deaves created some of their costumes, which received many comments in newspaper reviews. Reviewers from Akron and Erie, Ohio, noted the costumes were “fine and of great variety.”¹¹⁵ A comment published forty-five years after the performance, by Fred West, son of *Farmland Enterprise* editor W. C. West, recounted that Farmland’s opening show scandalized the audience because the actresses wore pink tights and dressed in skimpy costumes.¹¹⁶ Illustrations 7 and 8 show Ada and Rillie Deaves in their Chaos Flat costumes. Ada’s outfit suggests a “grotesque” character.¹¹⁷ Her ensemble includes all the accoutrements of a comic role, including an oversized bustle, betasseled umbrella, pince-nez, exaggerated hair knob, pet carrier attached to her belt, and a perplexed-looking dog. Rillie’s maribou trimmed costume and suggestive gaze exude sexuality and femininity, the fodder for the scanty costume lore. Ada’s farcical feminine character contrasted sharply with traditional ideals of a nineteenth-century woman. The Farmland audience probably found both characters disreputable.

Vol. XVI, no. 93, March 31, 1892. <http://libserv23.princeton.edu/princetonperiodicals/>. Accessed January 31, 2012.

¹¹⁵ *New York Dramatic Mirror*, undated, obtained from fultonhistory.com.

¹¹⁶ *Randolph County Enterprise*, March 30, 1935.

¹¹⁷ Alison Kibler describes actress Kate Elinore’s grotesque style as “eccentric appearance” and “mismatched costumes.” Kibler, 60.



Illustration 7: Ada Deaves, “Chaos Flat.” MS Thr 629, Harvard Theater Collection, Harvard University.



Illustration 8: Rillie Deaves, “Chaos Flat.” MS 2313, W.H. McGown Collection of Photos, Hargrett Rare Book Library, University of Georgia.

Reviewers commented negatively about the show’s content. In Akron, Ohio, the reviewer noted that the show itself lacked content, but said the specialty numbers “were first class.”¹¹⁸ The Bradford, Pennsylvania, review described the act as having “no plot.”¹¹⁹ W. C. West of the *Enterprise* reported that the audience found the show displeasing and thought the Deaves Sisters were not very good comedienne.¹²⁰ Promotional articles noted that the show resulted from the author’s “personal experience.”¹²¹ Both Ada and Rillie Deaves had played with the Madison Square Theater Company during the 1880s and had lived temporarily in New York.

¹¹⁸ *New York Dramatic Mirror*, undated, obtained from fultonhistory.com.

¹¹⁹ *Bradford Era* (PA), October 4, 1889.

¹²⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, January 24, 1890.

¹²¹ *Boston Daily Globe*, August 11, 1889. Although the author of the play remains unnamed, the article notes that W. G. Hunter and the Deaves Sisters are partners and therefore collaborated to write the play.

The show's manager, W. G. Hunter, further described the act as a farce of the experience of apartment dwelling:

If you have ever lived in a flat you can appreciate the connection the word Chaos has with the daily workings of life in a flat house, and for people who have never been initiated into the mysteries of a flat, they need only to sit through our first act to recognize how appropriate the title is.¹²²

In 1890, the populations of Akron, Ohio, and Bradford, Pennsylvania, numbered 27,601 and 10,514, respectively, while Farmland had fewer than 1,000 residents.¹²³ The small-town audiences had not experienced the waves of immigration or crowded apartment living as had New Yorkers, therefore, they failed to see humor in the show.

Burlesque appeared briefly on the Farmland Opera House stage. In late 1892, G. E. Retter, the opera house manager, booked Emily Zola's Burlesque Show and the Paris Gaiety Girls. Surprisingly, West complained of the lack of attendance at the Paris Gaiety Girls show and called it a first-class event. However, advertisements from other newspapers portray a show that would have been objectionable to the conservative residents of Randolph County. The advertisement for the show in Oskaloosa, Iowa (Illustration 9) depicts scantily clad women, alcoholic beverages and gambling.

¹²² *New York Dramatic Mirror*, December 20, 1888.

¹²³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Vol. 1 Population*, 1900, 319, 343.

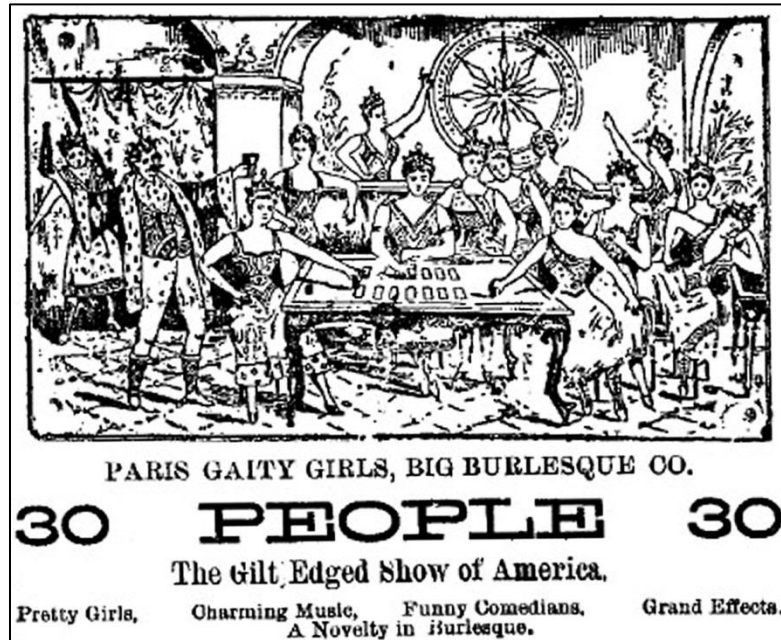


Illustration 9: Paris Gaiety Girls Advertisement. *Oskaloosa Daily Herald*, February 1, 1892. Accessed from newspaperarchive.org, January 21, 2013.

In an incident reported in New Philadelphia, Ohio, a young woman became so outraged at the sight of an advertisement for the Paris Gaiety Girls that she destroyed it with her umbrella.¹²⁴ After the company performed in Farmland, the newspaper reported boisterous young men from Winchester disrupted the house and also complained about poor attendance. West's comments reflect his support for his friend, opera house manager George Retter, rather than his endorsement, "[he] has met with poor encouragement in trying to please the people by securing first-rate attractions."¹²⁵ The highly sexualized nature of burlesque was not an acceptable form of entertainment in conservative Randolph County. No other burlesque shows played at Farmland.

Alba Heywood, a vaudeville comic actor, met with appreciative audiences during his four Farmland performances: two at Watson's Hall in 1888 and at the opera house on February

¹²⁴ *New Philadelphia Democrat* (OH), February 16, 1893.

¹²⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 25, 1892.

15, 1890 and April 20, 1896.¹²⁶ Unlike the Deaves Sisters, he was born and raised in the Midwest, the son of a teacher. Heywood's father, Chester Heywood, helped him develop speaking skills to prepare for his career as an actor.¹²⁷ Heywood began touring in 1887 and continued performing until he and his brothers struck oil in Texas in the late 1890s.¹²⁸ Heywood took the stage as an impersonator and elocutionist with accompanying musical performers. He travelled through the Midwest during the early years of his theatrical career.¹²⁹ Heywood's repeat performances in small towns gave him the opportunity to perfect his skills and endeared him to the theater-goers (Illustration 10).¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Dates from Appendix B "Farmland Opera House Day Book," Appendix A "Watson's Hall Day Book," and from Alba Heywood Collection Scrapbook clipping of the *Farmland Times*, between February and May 1887. Alba Heywood Collection, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

¹²⁷ Chester Heywood obituary, reprinted in *Collections and Researches made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, Vol. XIV*, 1890, 121-123.

http://books.google.com/books?id=pJUUAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&ad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false Accessed January 12, 2013.

¹²⁸ Scrapbook clippings from Alba Heywood Collection, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, Louisiana. "The Heywood Brothers," in *Successful Men* Vol. 5 no.4 (April 1902), 254-257.

¹²⁹ Scrapbook clippings from Alba Heywood Collection. Handwritten titles for the clippings include the name and location of the publication and the date. Clippings appear in roughly chronological order, beginning September, 1887 through October, 1889.

¹³⁰ Heywood performed in Farmland three times from early 1888 to February 1890. Reviews from his scrapbook mention that in July, 1888 he had been in Holland, Michigan "a few months ago," in September, 1888 he had "greatly improved" since his last visit to Coldwater, Michigan. Scrapbook clippings from Alba Heywood Collection.



"They haint none on ye seen nothin' o' my specks, have ye?"



"Spouse I'd let ye whip my son? Wal I reckon not. 'That's somethin' I never done myself."



"I'm one of the ticklish kind."



"Tell ye what that's teetsome pie, haint it Bud?"



WHAT IS THE POLICY of the Heywood-Caldwell Bureau to present it's talent in the fairest possible manner, making no claims which cannot be substantiated. In styling Mr. Heywood "the greatest impersonator" we fully comprehend the magnitude of the claim. But as we are simply echoing the oft-repeated expression invariably heard at the close of his entertainment, we fear no censure for using a title the public has already voluntarily bestowed. In addition to his original creations Mr. Heywood impersonates a wide range of eccentric characters from the works of standard authors. In these he sinks his own individuality completely and lives the characters he is impersonating.

We wish to call special attention to Mr. Heywood's MASTERPIECE, "Grandfather Pelgen." This beautiful monologue (which occupies thirty minutes of the evening's entertainment) was written expressly for Mr. Heywood by Herbert Hall Winslow and is presented by no other artist. It has proven a great success. In it Mr. Heywood, in evening dress, delineates six distinct characters, giving to each an artistic touch and personality that carries with it conviction. It tells a story full of heart interest, love, devotion, heroism, quaint humor and homely pathos.



"He was a great old joker, Nate was."



"Say mister, are we on this side o' the bridge, or on the other side?"



"To szwim you got to go like dis."



"But Schakey he always goes dot vay."

Illustration 10: Alba Heywood Pamphlet. Alba Heywood Collection, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Heywood crafted his shows using popular materials from other actors. In 1892 Heywood obtained the rights to the play “Edgewood Folks” from veteran actor Sol Smith Russell.¹³¹ Between 1880 and 1885, Russell had starred in the play and then went on to perform in other productions.¹³² In 1895, Heywood acquired a new act, playwright Herbert Hall Winslow’s “Down in Injianny.”¹³³ Written in dialect, both “Edgewood Folks” and “Down in Injianny” contained the sentimental themes and the experiences of ordinary folks that resonated with the people of Farmland.¹³⁴ The *Enterprise* reported him as a “first-class” performer and declared the show a hit.¹³⁵ Heywood’s Midwestern nativity and childhood and his folksy, predictable acts endeared him to the Farmland audience.

Traveling vaudeville performers often adapted plays from popular culture into their acts. Troupes performed these shows repeatedly on the Farmland stage.¹³⁶ The plays included popular Victorian melodramas such as “East Lynne,” “Fanchon the Cricket,” “Rip Van Winkle,” “M’Liss,” and “Ten Nights in a Barroom.” The stories centered on the motifs of self-indulgent people who fell on hard times and, in the end, reformed their ways. These themes reflect the importance of morality and temperance in the culture of Farmland.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin, minstrel shows, and cakewalks that took place at the Farmland Opera House reveal the unresolved conflicts of race and integration within the community. From 1890 to 1905, five “Tom Shows” played at the opera house and at least once in a tent

¹³¹ “Season ’92-93 Alba Heywood and a Capable Company in New Edgewood Folks by Permission of Sol Smith Russell.” *New York Dramatic Mirror*, undated, obtained from fultonhistory.com.

¹³² Richmond Hill, *A Thespian Temple: A Brief History Academy of Music and Review of the Dramatic Events of Over Fifty Years in the City of Buffalo, New York* (Buffalo: The Courier Company Printers, 1893), 21. <http://books.google.com/books?id=XDFAAAAAYAAJ>. Accessed January 13, 2013.

¹³³ *Who’s Who in Music and Drama*, eds. Dixie Hines and Harry Prescott Hanaford (New York: H. P. Hanaford, 1914), 326-327. <http://archive.org/stream/whoswhoinmusica00hinegoog#page/n8/mode/2up>.

¹³⁴ “Edgewood Folks” “Down in Injianny” Scripts, Alba Heywood Collection, McNeese State University, Lake Charles, Louisiana.

¹³⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, February 21, 1890.

¹³⁶ See Farmland Opera House Day Book, Appendix B.

outside of town. Professional and local amateurs both performed in minstrel shows. Cakewalks occurred twice as local holiday entertainment. In December 1898 Charles Ward, a member of the African American community, hosted the cakewalk at the opera house.¹³⁷ The advertisement for the December 24, 1900 cakewalk noted that a dance would be held after “for the white people.”¹³⁸ These activities demonstrate Farmland residents’ ambivalence about race. The community, founded and settled by white persons from North Carolina, avoiding the institution of slavery, could also enjoy entertainments that mocked African Americans. Although some of the residents supported school integration, as demonstrated through earlier debates, some leisure activities held clear lines of segregation.¹³⁹

Medicine shows figured prominently in the entertainment and leisure choices available to the Farmland public. Some medicine shows performed at the opera house, while others supplied their venues by bringing tents to set up in open civic spaces.¹⁴⁰ The shows stayed for several days of performances. Dr. White Cloud’s Indian Medicine Company held the audience at Watson’s Hall for a whopping thirteen nights in 1889.¹⁴¹ In 1893, Hamlin’s Wizard Oil Show performed for six days at the opera house.¹⁴² The German Medicine Company visited twice in 1903, for a total of fifteen days.¹⁴³ These lengthy engagements indicate sufficient attendance from the locals to be profitable for the medicine shows. West inadvertently confirmed this conclusion through his derision of the residents’ taste in entertainment using the medicine show as an example.¹⁴⁴ In 1904 he commented, “Patent medicine shows draw larger crowds than any

¹³⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 22, 1898.

¹³⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 21, 1900.

¹³⁹ See discussion in Chapter 1, page 17-18.

¹⁴⁰ “Medicine Man comes through town.” *Farmland Enterprise*, July 18, 1902.

¹⁴¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 5, 1889.

¹⁴² *Farmland Enterprise*, March 31, 1893.

¹⁴³ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 17, 1903. *Farmland Enterprise*, October 9, 1903.

¹⁴⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 15, 1896.

other class of 'entertainers' that come to this place."¹⁴⁵ Although the patrons of medicine shows remain unnamed, local farmer Charles B. Funkhouser interleaved his diary with broadsides from patent medicine shows.¹⁴⁶ While West deemed medicine shows as lower-class, their entertaining and familiar content brought some form of treatment, albeit unscientific, for the medical needs of the town and drew crowds.

After the first five seasons at the opera house vaudeville performances significantly declined. As illustrated by the difference in the number of performances and engagements shown in Table 4, the early seasons at the opera house included traveling acts that stayed several days. Traveling companies performed in Farmland, usually for a one- or two-night engagement, although some remained longer. Companies that remained five to seven days included the popular patent medicine shows and a company that spent time in Farmland to rehearse and experiment with its acts prior to taking them on the road to larger towns and cities.¹⁴⁷ By the mid-1890s, more information had become available for the advance agents and opera house manager to determine the likelihood of being able to supply a large enough audience to make an engagement of several nights a financial success. West often commented that G. E. Retter, manager of the opera house, needed "encouragement" to book acts and that encouragement would have come in the form of large audiences. West criticized local tastes in entertainment, often commenting that his readers did not know how to appreciate high-class

¹⁴⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 18, 1904.

¹⁴⁶ The inscription on the inside front cover: "C.B. Funkhouser's Book, bought of Bly & Thornburg, Farmland, Indiana, June 1st 1882." BV 3186, Charles Benton Funkhouser Papers, 1862-1936. William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society. Broadsides from the collection include Hamlin's Wizard Oil Cure Rheumatism; Gay Bros., New York City; Psychine, Oxygnized Cod Liver Oil, & Cotsfoot Expectorant; and Zoa Phora Medicine Co. SC 2632, Charles Benton Funkhouser Papers, 1862-1936. William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society.

¹⁴⁷ "Miss Ogarita is now in Farmland with her company, which is being reorganized and strengthened for a campaign of larger cities." *Farmland Enterprise*, January 15, 1892. Hamlin's Wizard Oil Company, *Farmland Enterprise*, April 7, 1893.

entertainment.¹⁴⁸ In a May 1896 review, he quipped that the people of Farmland “maintained their usual reputation for failing to patronize all first class performances. The next medicine man that comes this way will be given a hearty reception.”¹⁴⁹ One traveling entertainer, upon seeing the small crowd, decided that performing was not worth his effort and left.¹⁵⁰ West also complained that theatrical people considered Farmland a poor show town, and that more shows went “broke” in Farmland than in any other town of its size in the state.¹⁵¹ The publication of Julius Cahn’s theatrical guides, beginning in the 1896/1897 season, gave the advance agents better information to choose routes for their acts based on the size of the town and theater and other amenities.

* * *

FANNLAND—Pop., 1,500. B. & T. New Opera House. George E. Retter, mgr. and bus. mgr. S. c., 606. Illum., gas. Frank Howard, stage carp. Width prosc. opening, 21 ft. Height, 18 ft. Depth footlights to back wall, 22 ft. Dist. curtain line to footlights, 4½ ft. Dist. bet. side walls, 37 ft. Dist. bet. fly girders, 29 ft. Height grooves from stage, 12 ft. Stage to rigging loft, 12 ft. 3 grooves. Depth under stage, 3½ ft. 1 trap, located center. Theatre second floor. Orches., piano. Printing required, 4 stands, 22 3-sheets, 40 1-sheets, 40 ½-sheets. Dates read, Opera House. George E. Retter, bill-poster and adv. agt. Newspaper—“Fannland Enterprise,” weekly, Friday. Hotels—Retter House, \$2 and \$1.25. Bales & Hubbard Boarding House, \$1 to \$3.50 per week. Railroads—C., C., C. & St. L., T. T. Daily, agt. Big 4. Transfer Co., Thornburg & Owen.

* * *

Illustration 11: Farmland Listing in *Julius Cahn's Official Theatrical Guide*. Vol.5 (1900-1901). <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066453935;view=1up;seq=356>

Reported low attendance at opera house entertainments also related to pure numbers.

According to the Julius Cahn listing (Illustration 11), the Farmland Opera House held 606 seats,

¹⁴⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 2, 1890.

¹⁴⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 15, 1896.

¹⁵⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 4, 1894.

¹⁵¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 20, 1893.

and the population of Farmland was 1,500, although the correct population numbers were 770 in 1890 and 870 in 1900.¹⁵² Although people from neighboring areas attended events in Farmland, performers often staged several shows during an engagement and the population could not support multiple performances. The inflated population figures reported to Julius Cahn set the town up for failure as an entertainment venue. Exaggerating numbers occurred frequently in newspaper reports and reflected optimism about the expected growth of the town.

Expectations of behavior also reduced audiences. Boisterous conduct of some patrons kept some people away from the opera house. Several theories explain unacceptable behavior in social situations. Often a response to local attempts to cultivate culture, rowdy behavior symbolized rejection of imposed civility.¹⁵³ Also, vaudeville entertainment elicited responses from the audience, which often took forms which contrasted sharply with Victorian ideas of social decorum centering on appearance, dress, deportment, and restraint of emotion.¹⁵⁴ Reports in the *Farmland Enterprise* of emotional or plain bad behavior at opera house functions involved young males attending dances without the required female accompaniment, disturbances caused by drunken patrons leaving the venue, and boisterous conduct during the shows.¹⁵⁵ The most telling report of what constituted unacceptable behaviors at the opera house may be gleaned from Manager Retter's published rules:

Rule 1. Legitimate applause in recognition of the merits of deserving performers on the stage of this theater is always heartily encouraged and enjoyed by both performers and management; but the stamping of feet, whistling, cat calling and other similar noise does not come under this rule and will not be tolerated.

¹⁵² Julius Cahn, *Julius Cahn's Official Theatrical Guide*, Vol. 10, 417. Indiana State Board of Health, *Indiana's Changing Population 1880-1980* (Indianapolis: Indiana State Board of Health, 1982), 165.

¹⁵³ Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family, Farming, Culture and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 177.

¹⁵⁴ David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 32-33.

¹⁵⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 11, 1890, December 18, 1891, November 1, 1895.

Rule 2. Throwing programs, paper balls, candy and other articles, is positively forbidden.

Rule 3. Smoking, gentlemen wearing hats, and running up and down stairway leading to gallery during performance will not be tolerated hereafter.

Rule 4. The doors of this theater open at 7:30 pm; curtain rises promptly at 8:15. Persons coming late will not be seated by the ushers unless it can be done without annoyance to the audience.¹⁵⁶

Retter assured the public that the rules would be enforced and that they could attend the performances with confidence that behavior would be respectable. He publically set the boundaries for acceptable behavior at the Opera House, thereby delineating the venue as one for high-class shows requiring high-class behavior.

Lectures figured prominently on the bill at the Farmland Opera House and they increased during the second eight seasons of operation (Table 4, page 36). The most simplistic explanation for the shift comes from the beginning of the "Lecture Course" series during the 1897/1898 season. However, the style of lectures and orators also changed as the genre reorganized at the end of the century. Lectures prior to 1897/1898 included speakers who were local, Civil War veterans, or young women with training in elocution, and the subject matter of their speeches brought educational and entertaining topics to their audiences. Dr. J. A. Houser spoke for five evenings in December 1890. West commented that Houser "is an Indiana Man" and that "the *Enterprise* is proud of him."¹⁵⁷ Houser studied phrenology and combined his medical knowledge of the brain and nervous system with a religious doctrine of connecting life at an atomic level in harmony with a "Divine Essence."¹⁵⁸ Rev. James B. Watson of the Congregational College in nearby Ridgeville gave a more down-to-earth talk on "Pluck, Patience

¹⁵⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 17, 1896.

¹⁵⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 19, 1890.

¹⁵⁸ Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Indiana and the Indianans*, Vol. 3 (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1919), 1291-1292.

and Perseverance.”¹⁵⁹ These types of lectures exposed the audience to new topics and motivation from local speakers, giving the audience familiar speakers to present novel ideas.

In the 1890s, Civil War veterans and topics continued to hold importance in the lecture circuit. Frank Huff, a member of the 19th Indiana Regiment, spoke in February 1891. West reminded the *Enterprise* readers of Huff’s connection to the town by highlighting that he had been a member of the “Iron Brigade” and had attended a regimental reunion in 1889 in Farmland. Huff became a lecturer after being injured in a railroad accident, and he spoke about “The Possibilities of American Life.”¹⁶⁰ Other veterans lectured about the events of the Civil War. E. W. McIntosh and Ralph O. Bates both recounted their experiences as prisoners of war at the Confederate Andersonville Prison, and both embellished their stories for entertainment value. McIntosh’s show, “Prison Life in Dixie,” included tales of his parole from Andersonville and survival of the explosion of the steamboat Sultana. According to his great-grandnephew, Bill Tharp, McIntosh’s life story deserved to be told, although “he did exaggerate to make it even more interesting.”¹⁶¹ Bates’ story, “Billy and Dick: From Andersonville Prison to the White House,” wove a tale of two soldiers who escaped from Andersonville Prison and were sent to the White House by General William T. Sherman to be nursed back to health by Mrs. Lincoln. The story concluded with President Abraham Lincoln personally telegraphing the soldiers’ parents to reassure them that their sons were in his care.¹⁶² Members of his regiment debunked Bates’ fantastical narrative and the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) denounced him as a fraud.¹⁶³ Whereas Huff, McIntosh and Bates all profited from the public sympathy alive for Civil

¹⁵⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, February 24, 1893.

¹⁶⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, February 20, 1891.

¹⁶¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 31, 1895. Robert Allan Stevens, “Incredible Stories of Uncle Epp: Soldier, POW, Survivor, Minstrel, and Lincoln’s Office Boy,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* Vol. 103, no.2 (Summer 2010): 141, 144, 146-150.

¹⁶² *Farmland Enterprise*, March 20, 1896.

¹⁶³ *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 23, 1894.

War veterans, they demonstrate the variety of ways the veterans employed these memories: Huff representing the model of a speaker who used Civil War loyalties as a promotional tool, McIntosh recounting tales for their entertainment value, and Bates profiting from public sympathy through fantastical stories.

Women also found a way to the stage through the lecture circuit. Hallie Q. Brown, an African American elocutionist, spoke five times in Farmland from 1889 to 1902. Her sister, Mary Weaver, lived in the Cabin Creek Settlement near Farmland.¹⁶⁴ Brown, born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was the daughter of former slaves. In 1864, the Brown family moved to Chatham, Ontario, Canada, where she began her path to public speaking by addressing the livestock around her home. Racial tensions in the local public school caused Brown's parents to search for an institution focused on educating African Americans. In 1870, they moved to Wilberforce, Ohio, so Brown and her older brother could attend Wilberforce College.¹⁶⁵

Brown became internationally renowned during her extensive career. After finishing her education, Brown taught school. In 1892 she worked under the direction of Booker T. Washington at the Tuskegee Institute. She returned to Wilberforce and remained connected with the school until her death in 1949. While on break from her teaching duties, she attended the American Chautauqua Lecture School, which led to her role as a lyceum orator and an international speaker. Her engagements included lyceum performances, fundraising gatherings for the Wilberforce Library, and speeches on behalf of social movements such as the Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Conference, the Colored Women's League and temperance groups.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 11, 1896. "Death of Jesse R. Weaver," *Farmland Enterprise*, October 21, 1898.

¹⁶⁵ Ronald L. Jackson and Sonja M. Brown Givens, *Black Pioneers in Communications Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 64, 66, 67.

¹⁶⁶ Jackson and Givens, 68-70, 72.

Brown's five shows in Farmland illustrate the similarities and differences between vaudeville and elocution, nuances about race relationships, her development as a public figure, and her connections to the community. In August 1889, Brown performed at Watson's Hall with local soloists Grace Collins and Lola Robbins who filled the time between Brown's acts with musical numbers.¹⁶⁷ The program included elocutionary items from *Bits and Odds: A Choice Selection of Recitations for School, Lyceum and Parlor Entertainments* such as: "Aunt Jemima's Courtship," "The Little Hatchet Story," and "Zangrella, the Gypsy Flower Girl."¹⁶⁸ Faustin S. Delany compiled these pieces, written by various authors, which Brown had perfected as an elocutionist.



Illustration 12: Hallie Q. Brown as Zangrella. Hallie Quinn Brown Collection, Central State University Archives, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

The format of Brown's elocutionary performance paralleled other vaudeville performances; she recited a number of pieces with costume changes in between (Illustration 12). However, Delany's description of elocution explains the difference:

¹⁶⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, August 30, 1889.

¹⁶⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, August 30, 1889. Faustin S. Delany, *Bits and Odds: A Choice Selection of Recitations, for School, Lyceum and Parlor Entertainments* (Xenia, OH: Chew Printers, 1884), 34, 51-56, 59-61. <http://www.ohiomemory.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15005coll34/id/367>.

True expression is a simple interpretation of nature. Elocution is the art of expressing thoughts and sentiments in the most natural manner. But elocution is also a science. It embraces a study of the respiratory system and the construction and management of the vocal organs. The elocutionist has not so much to do with giving forth the original thoughts and feelings of his own mind as he has in giving forth those thoughts and feelings he has created in his mind, suggested by the expressed words of another, and causing the listener on the other hand to start the kindred chords vibrating in unison with his own.¹⁶⁹

Therefore, the elocutionist not only performed to interpret the selection, but also to inspire the audience to create meaning of their own. While vaudeville evoked a vocal response from the audience, elocution catered to a well-behaved, actively thinking audience.

Elocution became the suitable performance path for young women. Elocution schools provided a proper course for obtaining public speaking skills.¹⁷⁰ Female elocutionary acts at the opera house that followed this model to the stage included the Reed Sisters from Noblesville, Indiana, and locals Lena Mark and Nellie Nixon.¹⁷¹ Nellie Nixon, daughter of Farmland physician John Nixon, attended the Indiana Boston School of Expression and Dramatic Art, rather than Farmland High School.¹⁷² The elocutionary schools provided the training to allow young women to perform publicly without the stigma of becoming a stage actress.

Brown brought a broader scope of the world to her second and third performances in Farmland. In 1896, along with her elocutionary selections, Brown described her travels to Europe. The show also featured Miss Manye, a young African girl, who accompanied Brown and sang selections both “in her native and the English tongue.”¹⁷³ The *Enterprise* article announcing Brown’s 1898 engagement said that the show would include a choir of African students from

¹⁶⁹ Delaney, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Marjorie Harrell Eubank, “The Redpath Lyceum Bureau from 1868 to 1901,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1968), 202.

¹⁷¹ “Miss Lena Mark, a pupil of Mrs. M.H. Hamilton, teacher of elocution and drama.” *Farmland Enterprise*, December 23, 1892. “The Reed Sisters obtained their education at Ada, Ohio.” *Logansport Journal*, June 12, 1892.

¹⁷² *Farmland Enterprise*, June 13, 1902. Nellie Nixon was not listed in any Commencement Ceremonies for Farmland High School.

¹⁷³ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 11, 1896.

different tribes who “will give the weird songs, manners and customs of the natives and their superstitions.”¹⁷⁴ West did not create this description; rather, he quoted directly from her promotional broadside.¹⁷⁵ The students performed the majority of the program (Illustration 13), however, Brown’s recitation of “The Chariot Race” from Indiana author Lew Wallace’s *Ben Hur* added the local touch that the Farmland audience typically enjoyed.

Brown’s presentation of native African culture was groundbreaking in 1898. Articles in the *Enterprise* often chronicled residents’ travel experiences and the international focus was the Philippines in the Spanish American War. The homogenous population of Randolph County had not experienced immigration for many years and no new immigrants had come to the area and brought their native culture. West gave this effusive review of the performance:

Each entertainment was delightful and reflected credit on Miss Brown and the others engaged. This talented lady never fails to interest and instruct and her efforts in behalf of her race and her school are more than ordinarily commendable. The four young gentlemen and the young lady who make up her company are residents of Africa and are very polite, intelligent, and appreciative students and we wish them well.¹⁷⁶

Through the 1898 performance, Brown introduced the Farmland audience to African culture and brought a representation of persons of color that went beyond the traditional depictions of them as former slaves. However, West’s comments reflect an acceptance of the Africans based on their manners and their gratefulness.

¹⁷⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, August 12, 1898.

¹⁷⁵ See Appendix D. Advertising Broadside, Hallie Quinn Brown Collection, Central State University Archives, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

¹⁷⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 2, 1898.

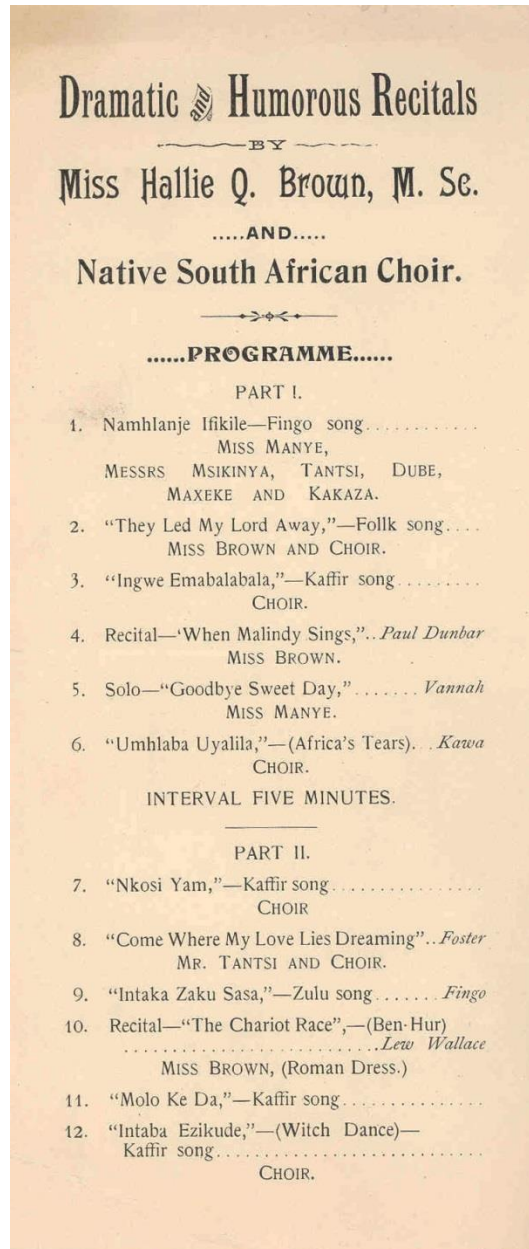


Illustration 13: Hallie Q. Brown Performance Program, circa 1898. Hallie Quinn Brown Collection, Central State University Archives, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

Brown's performances often coincided with visits to her sister. However, after Anna Weaver's husband died and she moved to Wilberforce, Ohio to be near her mother and sister, Brown continued to visit Farmland and perform.¹⁷⁷ Her 1900 and 1902 performances returned to her elocutionary fare. Along with Brown's recitations, the program for 1900 included musical

¹⁷⁷ "Death of Jesse R. Weaver." *Farmland Enterprise*, October 21, 1898.

numbers featuring George T. Simpson, fellow faculty member at Wilberforce, and William A. Calhoun on piano.¹⁷⁸ In 1902, Brown's selections included her "Travels Abroad" lecture and "Songs and Sorrows of the Negro Race" elocutionary presentation.¹⁷⁹ Brown's continued performances and West's expansive reviews of her and her shows demonstrate a mutual affection between Brown and the people of Farmland. Randolph County historian, Gregory Hinshaw, describes Randolph County's nineteenth-century, sympathetic attitudes and fondness towards African Americans as "patronage."¹⁸⁰ Penny Ralston, originally from Cabin Creek, interviewed elderly members of the community for her 1971 study. She concluded that black residents felt that as long as they assimilated by working hard and being economically self-sufficient, they earned the respect of their white neighbors.¹⁸¹ The community clearly continued to debate racial integration and acceptance.

Beginning in the 1897/1898 opera house season, lectures became organized through "The Farmland Lecture Course." The sequence included a number of events held at the opera house organized by a teacher or the high school principal. Advertisements in the initial years, by unknown organizers, stated the hope that the lectures "may become an established factor in the general progress of Farmland."¹⁸² In 1897/1898 and 1898/1899, the "Farmland Lecture Association" sponsored the first two seasons of the series. The high school principal organized the next four seasons called the "Farmland High School Lecture Course." By transferring the name to the High School Lecture Course these cultural events became affiliated with education, an acceptable way for Farmland residents to spend leisure time. The lecture series became a means for adults to indulge in entertainment.

¹⁷⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 7, 1900.

¹⁷⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 17, 1902.

¹⁸⁰ Gregory Hinshaw, interview by author, Winchester, IN, July 20, 2012.

¹⁸¹ Penny Ralston, "The Cabin Creek Settlement: The Historical Study of a Black Community in Randolph County, Indiana" (Honors Program Thesis, Ball State University, 1971), 58-59.

¹⁸² *Farmland Enterprise*, December 23, 1898.

On the surface, lectures and vaudeville acts appeared similar to one another: a show with unrelated acts and musical numbers. However, the subtle differences between the two genres illustrate their underlying class distinctions. The lecture series speakers came from the lyceum circuit and often had a higher level of education than vaudeville performers. The lecture series speakers brought a variety of topics and styles of acts. The slate included university professors and men with advanced degrees in theology, experienced clergymen, and educators. These positions provided the public speaking training and experience needed to be a successful lecturer, as professors and teachers gave lectures to their students and theologians and ministers gave sermons to their colleagues and congregations. The speakers came to the stage with a stamp of approval, either by inclusion in the *Who's Who in the Lyceum* or through the representation of an entertainment bureau. The lyceum presented itself as a higher class of entertainment than vaudeville: a platform for a message and new ideas, not simple repetitive rhymes.¹⁸³ Although the movement had begun with a purely educational motive, by the end of the nineteenth century the rosters of lyceum bureaus included readers, impersonators, and magicians, along with the religious speakers and university presidents.¹⁸⁴

Farmland residents attending the lecture series heard a wide spectrum of topics. In 1897, Jahu DeWitt Miller's speech, "The Stranger at Our Gate," denounced the influx of immigration.¹⁸⁵ J. P. D. John's 1898 speech "Reply to Ingersoll" formed a rebuttal to the speeches of agnostic Robert G. Ingersoll, who decried the hypocrisy of a God who would damn his creation to hell and of the politicians who noted that the nation was formed on Christian beliefs. Frank A. Morgan's talk, "The Evolution of a Lover," gave advice to couples and affirmed

¹⁸³ *Who's Who in Music and Drama*, eds. Dixie Hines and Harry Prescott Hanaford (New York: H. P. Hanaford, 1914), 9-11. <http://archive.org/stream/whoswhoinmusica00hinegoog#page/n8/mode/2up>. Accessed June 6, 2012.

¹⁸⁴ Marjorie Harrell Eubank, "The Redpath Lyceum Bureau from 1868 to 1901" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1968), 199-200.

¹⁸⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 29, 1897.

the challenges and joys of the married state.¹⁸⁶ Dr. Stanley Coulter of Purdue University focused on inspiring young people through his speech “The Spirit That Wins.” Indiana University professor, John A. Miller, brought a lesson in astronomy through his lecture “An Hour with the Stars.”¹⁸⁷

The range of programming held at the Farmland Opera House from 1890 through 1905 illustrates the changing tastes and ideas of socially acceptable entertainment and entertainers. By sheer numbers, the national popularity of vaudeville that brought the genre to Farmland in the early years of the opera house, gave way to the more restrained lyceum or lecture format. Content most appealing to the local audience did not include original material, quite the opposite. The spectators appreciated the familiar, as evidenced by the repeat performances and reminders in the promotions for shows that the performer had already given in Farmland, as well as the already published songs sung in the vaudeville numbers. The opening night performance, “Chaos Flat,” depicted the urban experiences of immigration and crowded city living which collided with the contemporary experiences of Farmland residents. Although some material in the show may have been familiar, the combination of foreign themes and women in unfamiliar roles made the act distasteful.

Alba Heywood epitomized the familiar. He visited several times, came from the Midwest, spoke in a manner popular in the Midwest, and adopted an act that referred to Indiana. Hallie Q. Brown came to the stage as a lyceum speaker, a role acceptable for a woman. She brought a new portrayal of African Americans as people with a heritage and story deeper than their former slave days, in sharp contrast to the racially derisive cakewalks and minstrel shows that also appeared on the Farmland stage.

¹⁸⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, February 4, 1898.

¹⁸⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 18, 1903.

The opera house performances gave fodder for negotiations over class and public respectability. While West attempted to coerce readers to attend what he felt were high-class shows, his choices were not always well informed. The audience reacted to the shows in the manner elicited by the genre, but these responses brought challenges to the town's prevailing notions of appropriate public behavior. The consistent scheduling of lecture series indicates that enough attendees found merit in the programs and that they occurred infrequently enough to make them a viable choice for leisure entertainment. They also held the high moral, educational purpose consistent with the overall conservative bent of the town.

Chapter Three: A Community Center

The community center events at the opera house fostered the growth of Farmland's identity. Here, residents upheld their political leanings in the arena of late nineteenth-century politics, and they relived the Civil War by celebrating aging veterans. They investigated opportunities to become an industrialized place of factories, powered from the natural gas wells nearby, while considering what it meant to remain a village of merchants and farmers. They participated in new styles of religious expression and new vehicles of education for adults and children. The discussion of these events begins with a contextual history from which the significance of the activities to Farmland springs.

The opera house opening occurred during the golden age of Indiana politics. In 1888, the nation elected Indiana native Benjamin Harrison as President of the United States. Indiana also held an important place in national politics, as a swing state.¹⁸⁸ Political activity in the state and nation reached a fervor. Campaign strategies changed from the army style, which used tactics reminiscent of gathering the troops for war, to a new merchandising approach, appealing to voters as thinking men who could be swayed by intelligent arguments.¹⁸⁹ The new style included a cadre of professional speakers, eloquent men who spoke about economics and the change from an agrarian to an industrial society.¹⁹⁰

Late nineteenth-century political topics fueled debates. The balance of power in the state and nation shifted several times between the Republicans and Democrats. From 1888 to

¹⁸⁸ Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 1.

¹⁸⁹ Richard Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 164-165.

¹⁹⁰ Phillips, 44-51.

1905, the Indiana General Assembly passed four apportionment acts.¹⁹¹ Accusations of voting improprieties during the 1888 presidential election led to the adoption of the Australian, or secret ballot, and the Indiana General Assembly approved the system in 1889.¹⁹² The rise of the Prohibitionists and Populists in politics invited discussion among voters about their necessity, how the new parties would affect the Republicans and Democrats, and what they meant for individuals' long-standing party loyalties.

The surge of third parties arose from economic and social challenges. Farmers looked to government intervention to alleviate the depressive conditions of rising costs and falling prices, leading to the formation of the Farmers Mutual Benefit Association (F.M.B.A.). This society of secret rituals became the voice of agrarian political discontent and contributed to the organization of the Populist Party.¹⁹³ Although in agreement with temperance reform, the group chose not to ally itself with the Prohibitionists for fear of diminishing the farmers' political goals.¹⁹⁴

Participation by third-party supporters and voters in general reached an apex in the 1896 election and thereafter, political fervor declined.¹⁹⁵ In 1898, the Republicans took confidence because William McKinley held the presidency and they had soundly defeated the Democrats and third parties in 1896. The build-up to the Spanish American War also shifted the focus, as Charles Hernley, head of the Indiana Republican Party, wrote to Robert S. Taylor on

¹⁹¹ *A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly Vol. 1. 1800-1899* (Indianapolis: Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly and Indiana Historical Bureau, 1980-1984), 586-588.

¹⁹² Robert R. La Follette, "The Adoption of the Australian Ballot in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (June, 1928): 105, 117.

¹⁹³ Phillips, 31, 173-174.

¹⁹⁴ Ernest D. Stewart, "The Populist Party in Indiana," *The Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (December, 1918): 342-344.

¹⁹⁵ Phillips, 44-46.

April 12, 1898, "All of the Love Feasts have been declared off and are liable to remain so until after the policy of the administration is fully settled with regard to the Cuban affair."¹⁹⁶

In the late nineteenth century, the Civil War continued to figure prominently in political events through the activities of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.). The group formed almost immediately after the Civil War, ostensibly to fulfill the veterans' needs for the camaraderie of the regimental campfire. However, founder Benjamin F. Stephenson organized the G.A.R. in part to support political candidates.¹⁹⁷ The veterans held reunions in the summer or fall that began in a local grove with a picnic and re-enactment "exercises," and culminated in an evening "Campfire." These sentimental gatherings allowed the veterans to resurrect their wartime social rituals for an evening.¹⁹⁸ The campfires served two purposes: to reminisce about the days gone by and to advance a political agenda, including stump speeches by political candidates and support for the causes of the G.A.R., especially veterans' pensions.¹⁹⁹ Although the G.A.R.'s official charter prohibited politicking within the confines of the organization's activities, the reunions often became another form of political meeting.

Economic development at the turn of the century brought about local boosting efforts. Boosting occurred as industry from the East moved to the agricultural Midwest. Towns grew, or "boomed," as their markets reached an unprecedented level of activity, placing them in step with the national economy. Local "boosters" recognized opportunities and promoted their towns to potential industrial and commercial developers.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Phillips, 61. Quoting Charles S. Hernley to Robert Taylor, April 12, 1898. Taylor Papers, Indiana State Library.

¹⁹⁷ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 24-25.

¹⁹⁸ McConnell, 174.

¹⁹⁹ McConnell, 126.

²⁰⁰ Lamont J. Hulse, "Boomers, Boosters and the Manufacturing Spirit: Civic Entrepreneurship and Industrial Development during the Natural Gas Era in Anderson, Indiana 1886-1905" (Master's thesis, University of Delaware, 1987), 3, 5, 12, 29.

As politics and the economy changed, religious groups also underwent reform. The Holiness Church, a religious movement growing out of Methodism, espoused communalism, personal conversion, and “holy jumping” or loud and unrestrained worship. The popularity of the movement resulted from Americans’ social and economic recovery after the Civil War. Many felt that the affluence gained during Reconstruction took away from the traditional piety expressed within the community of Methodists. The Holiness Movement became a new means “for personal endurance and collective counter-attack upon the evils which these changes [the rise of industrialization and subsequent cultural effects] represented.”²⁰¹ Rather than the establishment of a traditional church, the Holiness Church took an evangelical form, holding camp meetings and revivals throughout the country. These meetings usually had some plan or agenda, but the organizers believed in “the program of the Spirit,” creating a dynamic, unpredictable event. They looked to the millennium as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus’ physical return to earth and espoused their faith as a means to prepare the world. Leaders of the Holiness Movement viewed the liturgical clergy as agents of the wealthy and publicly treated them with ridicule and sarcasm.²⁰²

Late nineteenth-century educational reforms affected both farmers and school children. Farmers’ Institutes became the means to educate the rural population about incorporating scientific agriculture into their farming practices. The institutes evolved to address the nineteenth-century changes to Indiana farming. Professor William C. Latta of Purdue University identified these changes as:

1. From self-sufficing to commercial agriculture,
2. From soil mining to soil renewal,

²⁰¹ Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980), 6, 217.

²⁰² William Kostlevy, *Holy Jumpers: Evangelicals and Radicals in Progressive Era America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7-9, 18, 19, 25.

3. From manpower to horse and mechanical power farming,
4. From grain growing to mixed husbandry,
5. From farming as a means of subsistence to agriculture as a business.²⁰³

The 1887 Hatch Act provided federal support for agricultural experiment stations and required them to communicate their findings in a “useful and practical” manner.²⁰⁴ The 1889 Institute Act passed by the Indiana General Assembly charged the agricultural department at Purdue University, the state’s land-grant college, with appointing a chairman in each county to organize the local meeting, providing information about the latest technical and scientific findings about farming, and accounting for the \$5,000 appropriation allowed for conducting the institutes throughout the state.²⁰⁵ The gatherings lasted from one to several days and included lectures by Purdue professors, local professional men, and farmers. State Superintendent of Farmers’ Institutes, William C. Latta, scheduled the traveling speakers and institute dates throughout the state, but the organization of the specific meetings remained at the local level with the county chairman.²⁰⁶

Latta’s vision for the program moved beyond the science and mechanics of farming. He defined the work of the institute as a way “to make farm life attractive as well as profitable, thereby bringing contentment the source of all happiness.”²⁰⁷ In 1890 he reported that the involvement of small-town residents in the movement contributed to the improved prosperity

²⁰³ William C. Latta, *Outline History of Indiana Agriculture* (Lafayette, IN: Alpha Lambda Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Pi in cooperation with Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station and the Department of Agricultural Extension and the Indiana Agricultural Extension Agents, 1938), 103.

²⁰⁴ Jeffrey W. Moss and Cynthia B. Lass, “A History of Farmers’ Institutes,” *Agricultural History* 62 no. 2 (Spring, 1988): 150.

²⁰⁵ College of Agriculture Records, Purdue University, 1947-1903. Box 1 of 2 Bound Volumes Farmers’ Institutes, Nov. 13, 1895 – Aug. 3, 1896. “Brief Outline of the Farmers’ Institute Work in Indiana,” undated, 810-813.

²⁰⁶ Glenn P. Lauzon, “Civic Learning through Agricultural Improvement: Bringing ‘The Loom and the Anvil into Proximity with the Plow’ in Nineteenth-Century Indiana” (Ph.D diss. Indiana University, 2007), 395, 405-407.

²⁰⁷ *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 30, 1888-1889* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Buford, 1890), <http://books.google.com/books?id=mKo0AAAAMAAJ>. Accessed October 28, 2012, 183.

of agriculture.²⁰⁸ Latta's model for the institutes recognized the importance of the cooperation of the merchant community and the team of the farmer and his wife in the success and enjoyment of rural life.

During the last half of the nineteenth century lawmakers and state education officials worked to upgrade and standardize the education system in Indiana. In 1873, the State Board of Education adopted graduation requirements for high schools that aligned secondary education with requirements for acceptance to a state university. By the end of the 1880s, the State of Indiana had adopted a Uniform Course of Study delineating subjects and years of study. Students earning a diploma from a commissioned (four-year) high school could apply to a state college or university without an examination.²⁰⁹ The formalization of curriculum requirements gave guidance to rural schools, allowing their administrators and teachers the opportunity to provide the coursework needed for the students to attain college acceptance.

The Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1893 conveyed the importance of a public library to supplement community educational programs. The document discussed the need for carefully selected books, in language and topic accessible to the levels and interests of the readers. The author praised library books for inspiring patriotism, devotion, and virtue, and encouraging readers to achieve nobler lives, thereby decreasing crime, and increasing domestic happiness. The report promoted a library for the public, not just for the

²⁰⁸ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture, Vol. 31, 1889-1890* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Buford, 1890), 341. <http://books.google.com/books?id=Gqw0AAAAMAAJ>, Accessed October 28, 2012.

²⁰⁹ The 1893 report also laid out requirements for a noncommissioned (three-year) course of study. After receiving a diploma from a non-commissioned school, students could study a fourth year at a commissioned school to be eligible for the college entrance exam waiver. Hervey D. Vories, *Thirty-Ninth Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Buford, 1893), 41-46. <http://books.google.com/books?id=nfigAAAAMAAJ>. Accessed February 8, 2013.

school, noting the short duration of schooling compared to the lifetime opportunity for education.²¹⁰

In Indiana, basketball became tied to a high school education. In the early 1890s, James A. Naismith had created the sport as a game that could be played indoors and provide exercise for boys at the YMCA during the winter months. Brought to Indiana by Naismith's former student, Rev. Nicholas C. McKay, basketball quickly spread through the state.²¹¹ School sports provided a common topic of conversation and a means to encourage school spirit, and basketball became a new way of bringing the community together.²¹²

The Farmland Opera House provided the venue for residents to explore contemporary topics related to opportunities for their community. In the *Farmland Enterprise*, W. C. West provided a lens to the public's hopes and expectations for the facility when praising Bly and Thornburg's civic-mindedness at the construction of the opera house.²¹³ The residents wholeheartedly embraced the venue and looked for appropriately grand events to hold within its walls. Leaders of local and county political parties, veterans of the Civil War, merchants and civic groups, high school principals, and religious organizations booked the opera house for their events. Table 5 summarizes the political, civic, religious, and educational activities and the analysis that follows explains how the community worked through contemporary topics and defined themselves for the new century.

²¹⁰ Vories, 19-20.

²¹¹ Troy D. Paino, "The End of Nostalgia: A Cultural History of Indiana Basketball during the Progressive Era" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1997), 57-61.

²¹² Steven Riess, *Sport in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1995), 89.

²¹³ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 15, 1889.

Season	Political	Civic and Religious	Educational	Total
1890	0	0	0	0
1890/1891	4	2	1	7
1891/1892	4	3	1	8
1892/1893	6	4	0	10
1893/1894	0	2	2	4
1894/1895	4	1	2	7
1895/1896	0	0	2	2
1896/1897	6	0	3	9
1897/1898	1	0	0	1
1898/1899	0	0	2	2
1899/1900	0	2	0	2
1900/1901	2	2	1	5
1901/1902	0	1	0	1
1902/1903	2	21/5	0	23/7
1903/1904	0	1	5	6
1904/1905	6	2	5	13
Totals:	35	46/25	24	100/84

Table 5: Community Center Activities at the Farmland Opera House. Compiled from Appendix B Daybook.

Between 1888 and 1905 political activity in Farmland took several forms and may be characterized based on the decline in activity after the 1896 election and an upsurge in the 1904 election season (Table 5). In part these changes reflect the general trend of state and national political activity and a new generation of participants, but also the way that Farmland identified with its political culture. Through the rallies, campaign club meetings, district nominating conventions, and Civil War regimental reunions held at the opera house, the residents of Farmland navigated the changing tides of late nineteenth-century politics. They learned a new way to vote, participated in new campaign styles, debated the concerns of third parties, and

interacted with new participants in the political process, i.e., new district co-constituents, campaign speakers, first voters, and women. Farmland residents affirmed their Republican political identity and also used meetings at the opera house to sort through the political issues of the day.

Even today, some Randolph County residents boast of their heritage as “Rock-Ribbed Republicans.”²¹⁴ A December 1910 article in the *Winchester Journal* describes the county’s voting results at the turn of the century by stating, “Randolph County is the only county in the state to never elect a Democrat to county office since the Civil War.”²¹⁵ Although Randolph County Democrats Isaac P. Gray and John E. Neff served as Indiana Governor and Secretary of State, respectively, no other county Democrat won an election for county, state, or national office between the Civil War and 1912.²¹⁶ As with many northern states, most voter loyalty to the Republican Party arose from Civil War allegiances and remained consistent with the local religious traditions upheld in the Quaker, Methodist-Episcopal, and Christian Churches. A 1916 history of the Democratic Party in Indiana explained the prevalence of the Republican Party in Randolph County as a factor of the strength of the Friends Church and the Civil War sentiment siding with Lincoln.²¹⁷

Although the Republicans held the majority of votes in Randolph County, encompassing attorneys, merchants and farmers, the persons supporting the Democratic Party also came from all social spectra of the county. Local, well-respected and civically-active physicians L. N. Davis

²¹⁴ Gregory Hinshaw, *Rock-Ribbed Republican: One Hundred Fifty Years of the Grand Old Party in One of Indiana’s Republican Strongholds, 1854-2004* (Winchester: Sesquicentennial Randolph County Republican Central Committee, 2004).

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹⁶ Isaac P. Gray was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1876. He became Governor at the 1880 death of Governor James D. Williams and was elected Governor in 1884, serving a full term. John E. Neff was elected Secretary of State in 1874 and re-elected in 1876. John B. Stoll, *A History of the Indiana Democracy: 1816-1916* (Indianapolis: Indiana Democratic Publishing Company, 1917), 750-752. <http://archive.org/details/historyofindiana00stol>. Accessed November 8, 2012.

²¹⁷ Stoll, 750.

and John Nixon supported the Democratic Party. Davis followed his father's political legacy.²¹⁸

Farmer Charles B. Funkhouser noted in his diary that he attended Democratic rallies, elections, and witnessed a William Jennings Bryan speech.²¹⁹ The loyal Democratic following in Randolph County came from professional men and farmers.

Political gatherings at the opera house focused on state and federal elections; schoolhouses and groves held the local campaign meetings and debates. For example, in the 1892 election local Republican candidates, Alonzo L. Nichols for Circuit Court Judge and Matthew H. Rubey for County Treasurer, campaigned at the Maxwell Schoolhouse.²²⁰ Later that year the debate for County Prosecuting Attorney took place in the Oak Grove Schoolhouse.²²¹ Speakers and the topics at the opera house had a broader scope, consistent with the expectation that the opera house served grand events.

In the early 1890s political meetings held in the opera house addressed the topics of the Australian ballot and apportionment. At the rally on October 31, 1890 J. S. Engle explained to the audience how to vote under the "new law."²²² The constantly changing political district boundaries increased political activity in the county. The 1891 apportionment law had divided Randolph County and placed Farmland in a General Assembly district with Delaware County.²²³ This action by the Democratic majority of the General Assembly spurred local Republicans into

²¹⁸ A. W. Bowen, *A Portrait and Biographical Record of Delaware and Randolph Counties, Ind.* (Chicago: A. W. Bowen and Co., 1894), 1101-1103, 1144-1145.

²¹⁹ Charles Funkhouser kept a diary in a single ledger book from June 1, 1882 through December 30, 1896. The inscription on the inside front cover states: "C.B. Funkhouser's Book. Bought of Bly & Thornburg, Farmland, Indiana, June 1, 1882." The entries consist of one line per day and each numbered page contains one month of entries. Citations that follow include the subject of the entry, page number, and date. Funkhouser Diary. Rally, 29, 10/28/1884; election days, 30, 11/4/1884; 47, 4/5/1886; W.J. Bryan, 173, 10/24/1896. Bound Volume 3186 Charles Benton Funkhouser Papers, 1862-1936. William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society.

²²⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, November 4, 1892. Hinshaw, *Rock-Ribbed Republican*, 37-39.

²²¹ "Treason in Monroe Township." *Farmland Enterprise*, November 11, 1892.

²²² *Farmland Enterprise*, October 31, 1890.

²²³ *A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly Vol. 1, 1800-1899* (Indianapolis: Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1980-1984), 586. The Act was declared unconstitutional after the election, on December 17, 1892.

action. In April 1892, they held a “Joint Senatorial Convention” at the opera house to nominate local candidates and solidify their campaign platform.²²⁴ The Republicans met to digest and understand political decisions made at a state-wide level and integrate them into their county system.

Third parties factored into campaigns beginning in 1892. In April 1892, Charles A. Robinson, president of the Indiana F.M.B.A., spoke about the ongoing debate throughout the Midwest between farmers’ organizations and Populist Party organizers. He spoke of the need for cooperation between farmers and businessmen and equated the economic situation of labor factions with that of the farmers. He promoted election of lawmakers and officers from the industrial classes.²²⁵ In 1896 when John R. Brunt, Democratic nominee for Congress, came to campaign in Farmland, West derisively referred to him as the “Popocratic” candidate.²²⁶ The Prohibition Party held two meetings at the opera house during the 1892 campaign. On September 10, Rev. Aaron Worth, the party candidate for governor, accused the Republican Party of allowing “the whisky element” to coerce the nomination of Benjamin Harrison for president and Ira Chase for governor. West took the opportunity to denounce Worth’s assertions and remind readers of the party’s previous temperance legislation.²²⁷ For the next Prohibition Party meeting, on November 3, West merely announced that the “Prohibition element” would meet.²²⁸

The Populist and Prohibition parties did not gain a following in the dry, rural community of Farmland. The farmers of the area had formed F.M.B.A. organizations; however, they often

²²⁴ “Senatorial Convention.” *Farmland Enterprise*, April 29, 1892.

²²⁵ Clifton J. Phillips gives a detailed account of the debate between farmers’ organizations and the Populist Party. Phillips, 30-37. *Farmland Enterprise*, April 22, 1892.

²²⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 16, 1896.

²²⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 16, 1892.

²²⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 28, 1892.

used them for socializing and ritual.²²⁹ Temperance had been a part of the Randolph County culture from its settlement days, and accusations by the Prohibition Party of improprieties on behalf of the Republicans incited the local loyal following. During the 1896 election, Randolph County voters cast the largest number of votes during the 1888 to 1904 period. However, rather than an increase in votes for third parties, the Democratic support increased to 33 percent of the vote as compared to 30 percent in the previous presidential election, while the Republican percentage decreased by one percent (Table 6). In Randolph County, the third party heyday of 1896 caused the Democratic Party to become stronger. However, by 1904 the Republican Party regained its strength and participation grew to 73 percent of the Randolph County votes.

Election Year	Republican	Democrat	Other Parties	Total	% Democrat	% Republican
1888	4,662	2,256	221	7,139	32%	65%
1892	4,053	1,996	683	6,732	30%	60%
1896	4,731	2,670	632	8,033	33%	59%
1900	5,050	2,392	261	7,703	31%	66%
1904	5,131	1,940	0 ²³⁰	7,071	27%	73%

Table 6: Randolph County Election Results, 1888-1904.²³¹

Organization of the Randolph County Republican Party explains how the political meetings came to Farmland. The Republican Central Committee of Randolph County arranged the political activities for the county and served as the link between the Republican State Committee, candidates, speakers, and the local constituents. The County Chairman acted in the same manner as an advance agent for an entertainer: he secured venues, scheduled the meetings, found speakers and prepared their local itineraries. The chair promoted the schedule

²²⁹ See discussion in Chapter One, page 22.

²³⁰ Election results in the *Winchester Journal* and *Farmland Enterprise* did not report votes for third party candidates.

²³¹ *Winchester Journal*, November 7, 1888, November 9, 1892, November 4, 1896, November 14, 1900, November 9, 1904.

of gatherings in the *Winchester Journal*, the Republican newspaper. At the scheduled assembly, the chair presided, giving the opening speech and introducing the other speakers.

The change in campaign styles appeared through the speech contents and the speakers. The new type of discourse took the form of a clear, logical argument. James Watson, former U. S. Senator from Rushville, Indiana, remembered the change in styles as follows:

After the Civil War [public speaking] was pyrotechnic and ornate, with passionate appeals to patriotism and prejudice. About all one had to do in the North was to wave the bloody shirt, flaunt the Flag in the face of the people, pull a few tail feathers out of the American eagle, and tell a few funny stories, and let it go at that.

Nowadays campaigners argue facts and figures, tariff, finance, trade and traffic, international relations, fiscal policies, and mercantilism in general.²³²

The professional speakers at the opera house podium, rather than candidates or local committee members, increased. During the 1890 election, all speakers at the opera house came from within the Republican Party Committee or candidates campaigning within their district. Of the three campaign meetings in 1892, one professional speaker, Robert E. Kennedy, the former Lieutenant Governor of Ohio, spoke. After 1892 the state and national Republican "professionals" outnumbered the local candidate and district speakers.²³³ The county party chair arranged for the meetings, and by including the Farmland Opera House on the professional speakers' itineraries from 1892 to 1904, he demonstrated that Farmland was important enough to impress the speaker and draw a crowd.

Judge Robert S. Taylor of Fort Wayne, Indiana, spoke at the opera house on October 29, 1894 and embodied the quintessential professional campaign speaker. He began political campaigning in 1868 when he successfully ran for Allen County Representative to the General

²³² James E. Watson, *As I Knew Them: Memoirs of James E. Watson, Former United States Senator from Indiana* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), 40-41.

²³³ See Appendix E, Republican Rally Speakers. For this analysis, professional speakers include those from out of state or who came by arrangement of the State Republican Central Committee.

Assembly. He continued to campaign for the state Republican Party and spoke in each subsequent election. Because his political involvement centered on analysis of the issues at hand rather than running for office, the 1899 *History of the Indiana Republican Party* referred to him as “one of the ablest statesmen and at the same time one of the poorest politicians that Indiana has produced.”²³⁴ Taylor, a persuasive orator, also published his speeches in newspapers throughout the state.²³⁵ J. J. Hazelrigg, publisher of the *Greensburg Standard* newspaper, reacted to R. S. Taylor’s offer to furnish his speeches to the paper by noting, “In our opinion this class of campaign work is by far the most effective and is worth many times more than the old hurrah and torch-light methods.”²³⁶ The prominence of professional speakers at the Republican Party campaign meetings and Taylor’s reputation of presenting rational arguments illustrates the shift in Farmland to the modern merchandising style of campaign.

During election years, political campaigning inserted itself into other events. The 1896 Farmland High School Commencement featured John L. Griffith, a Republican primary candidate. Although he spoke about “Books and Authors,” the young woman introducing him commented, “He is our choice for the next Governor of Indiana.”²³⁷

Civil War veterans took an active part in the campaigns through “Soldiers’ Reunions.” In 1892, the 36th Indiana Regiment held a two-day reunion in Farmland. During the evening event at the opera house, several members of the unit recounted tales from their war days. West reported that although the veterans heard pleasant and delightful tales, they also “were once more carried back to the days of yore, when dark clouds hung like a pall over their every

²³⁴ Russell M. Seeds, *History of the Republican Party of Indiana*, Vol. 1 (Indianapolis: The Indiana History Co., 1899), 169.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 168-169.

²³⁶ J. J. Hazelrigg & Sons to R. S. Taylor, September 7, 1894. Robert S. Taylor Correspondence and Papers, Indiana Collection, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

²³⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 17, 1896.

movement.”²³⁸ Two soldiers’ reunions took place there in the fall of 1896. At the Randolph County Soldiers’ Reunion, W. A. Ketcham, the Republican candidate for Indiana Attorney General, spoke at the campfire exercises. The *Farmland Enterprise* noted that he did not discuss the campaign, but his mere presence served to remind the voters of his candidacy.²³⁹ At the 19th Indiana Regiment Reunion, no candidates spoke, but the imagery presented at the campfire and the rousing Union loyalties supported the Republican candidates.²⁴⁰

The story of the 19th Indiana Regiment illustrates the origins of late nineteenth-century Civil War mythology and what it meant for the veterans politically. The company originally formed in July 1861 and joined the Army of the Potomac, familiarly known as the “Iron Brigade.” In 1864, they consolidated with the 20th Indiana Regiment after their three years of service ended. The combined regiment reported to Washington, D.C., in April 1865 and remained there until June 1865.²⁴¹ The Regiment had the opportunity to either march in or witness the Grand Review, a procession that celebrated the end of the war. When the Regiment reunited in Farmland on September 17, 1896, Major J. H. Stine spoke at the evening campfire exercises. He called service in the 19th Indiana “the morning star of my life.” The tone of his speech took on a dream-like quality as he recounted his experiences. Near the end, he spoke of taking part in the Grand Review in terms of “approaching the grand stand, to pass review before the spectators of the world.” He placed the regiment in line with other heroic war figures: Leonidas, King of Sparta, at the Battle of Thermopalaee; and Lord Cardigan of the Crimean War. Stine ended with a reminder that “the gallantry of those who greatly distinguished themselves on the battlefield

²³⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 7, 1892.

²³⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, August 28, 1896.

²⁴⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 25, 1896.

²⁴¹ William H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Indiana* Vol. 2 (Indianapolis: Samuel M. Douglass, State Printer, 1866), 176, 193.

will go down in history and song.”²⁴² Stine equated the heroes of the Civil War with those of myth and history defending their native lands. This type of remembrance and the rekindling of bonds reminded the audience of the soldiers’ sacrifices and that their actions would not need to be repeated.

Presidential elections in 1900 and 1904 each had unique campaigns in Farmland. The 1900 campaign featured two meetings at the opera house with professional speakers from within Indiana. However, two large outdoor gatherings took place in Farmland featuring national political figures with colorful histories. On September 3, W. S. Taylor attended a Soldiers’ Reunion at nearby Mills Lake and then spoke in Farmland.²⁴³ The Indiana Republicans highlighted Taylor as the model of overcoming voting scandals.²⁴⁴ Organizers in Farmland learned the night before that he would be coming and hastily erected a stand “in the center of the square.”²⁴⁵ Dan E. Sickles also came to Farmland in 1900 but spoke at Halliday’s Grove. Sickles’ colorful past included killing Philip Barton Key, son of Francis Scott Key, in a rage over improprieties with Sickles’ wife.²⁴⁶ After being wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg, Sickles donated his amputated leg to the Army Medical Museum in Washington, D.C. and visited it until his death.²⁴⁷ These nationally recognized figures required a larger venue, which only the outdoors could provide. Their appearances in Farmland demonstrate that the state Republican organizers perceived the community as important to maintaining a loyal following.

²⁴² *Farmland Enterprise*, September 25, 1896.

²⁴³ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 7, 1900.

²⁴⁴ In January 1900, William Goebel, Kentucky’s Governor-elect, had been assassinated. Taylor was indicted on murder charges and sought asylum in Indiana. “W. S. Taylor Dies: A Kentucky Exile.” *New York Times*, August 3, 1928.

²⁴⁵ Presumably this gathering was held at the most prominent intersection, Main and Henry Streets, since Farmland did not have a town square. The *Winchester Journal* report (September 5, 1900) corroborated that the rally was held in Farmland. *Farmland Enterprise*, September 7, 1900.

²⁴⁶ “Gen. Sickles Dies: His Wife at his Bedside.” *New York Times*, May 4, 1914.

²⁴⁷ Christine Quigley, *Skulls and Skeletons: Human Bone Collections and Accumulations* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2001), 125-126.

In the 1904 campaign Farmland's younger generation took the lead. Campaign Clubs regularly formed during election years; however, the young men actively formed their own club "Teddy's First Voters."²⁴⁸ They demonstrated their youthful enthusiasm by parading in the streets and purchasing uniforms.²⁴⁹ These activities resembled the military style of earlier campaigns; however, the new merchandising style appeared through the support from the Republican State Committee, which provided the young men with literature and pictures of Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Fairbanks, and J. Frank Hanly, future Governor of Indiana.²⁵⁰ During the 1890s, young men in Farmland had been schooled in the importance of first voting, therefore encouraging them to take leadership in politics. On September 30, 1892 West republished an article from the *Indianapolis Journal* titled, "A Word to First Voters." The article characterized casting a first vote as a rite of passage into manhood. The article theorized that the young man's first choice of political party shaped his personal associations and his future course in life. A man might change his mind or party, but that would take a strong reason, and therefore the young man should start out in the right place. According to the article, the first vote required great thought and should be for a strong candidate. West listed the young men who pledged publicly to cast their first votes as Republican to emphasize the importance to the young men of Farmland.²⁵¹ By 1904, the young men took ownership of the campaign by forming their own club rather than looking to their elders for leadership.

Although the community celebrated young men's first votes, West's articles only held an inkling of recognition that women would become part of the process. In his report of the 1892 "Joint Senatorial Convention" W. C. West noted that several ladies witnessed the proceedings

²⁴⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 23, 1904.

²⁴⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 16, 1904.

²⁵⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 30, 1904.

²⁵¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 21, 1892.

from the opera house gallery, made lunch, and entertained the visiting delegates.²⁵² In 1896, at the 19th Indiana Regiment Reunion, he commented that as they served lunch, two women polled each veteran as to how they intended to vote in the coming election.²⁵³ While recounting W. S. Taylor's September 1900 visit to Farmland, West finally recognized that women might eventually have a role in politics: "The number of ladies present, and the careful attention they accorded the speakers, evidences the fact that they enjoy political discussion."²⁵⁴ Despite the previous work of local women Amanda Way and Mary Frame Thomas, the women's suffrage movement continued to suffer in Randolph County.

The opera house provided the setting for Farmland residents to discuss commercial opportunities and to test the relationship between local merchants and farmers. After the discovery of natural gas, Farmland's boosting efforts took many forms. West, one of the town's leading boosters, used the *Enterprise* as a promotional tool for both the townspeople and those outside the area. He published articles encouraging the residents to clean their properties and spiff-up the town. He praised building improvements made by local owners that removed old-fashioned looking elements and built modern accoutrements to their facades.²⁵⁵ He exhorted building owners to temporarily decrease their rental rates during economic depressions to allow small shops to remain in business.²⁵⁶ West promoted hard work and a positive attitude as the keys to a successful boosting campaign.²⁵⁷ Farmland boosters hoped to follow the success of other gas belt towns. Muncie, Dunkirk, Alexandria, and Kokomo had set up glass factories such as Ball Brothers and Kokomo Opalescent Glass. The late nineteenth-century formula for attracting manufacturing to an area included offering incentives such as cash bonuses for

²⁵² *Farmland Enterprise*, April 29, 1892.

²⁵³ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 25, 1896.

²⁵⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 7, 1900.

²⁵⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 7, 1893.

²⁵⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, January 23, 1891.

²⁵⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, December 19, 1890, May 5, 1893, June 23, 1893.

relocation expenses, free rent for a specified number of years, and free fuel. The efforts for the most part did not include new products or processes, but provided financial enticements to lure existing businesses to the gas belt.

Farmland boosters set to work after the 1890 election with a flurry of meetings at the opera house. W. C. West, a vocal proponent in the *Farmland Enterprise*, asked for more “men of capital” to get involved in helping to find factories.²⁵⁸ The meetings in early 1891 resulted in the formation of the Farmland Improvement Committee, charged with locating and encouraging manufacturers to relocate to Farmland.²⁵⁹ In September 1891, the committee’s efforts bore fruit. In return for \$300 and five years of free rent, the Ash Handle Factory in nearby Ridgeville agreed to relocate to Farmland. The business used local timber to manufacture handles and spokes. With the additional capacity to be gained at Farmland, the owner hoped to add machinery to make butter tubs and butter plates.²⁶⁰

The boosters came out in full force again in the spring of 1893, when the Improvement Committee scheduled four meetings at the opera house.²⁶¹ To aid the committee’s efforts, West published a four-page “Booster” section in the newspaper. He extolled the virtues of Farmland by describing the town, its leading citizens, and existing businesses. He noted that the Farmland Improvement Company would “offer free land and free gas in inexhaustible quantities to all factories desiring to locate in the town.”²⁶² The meetings were not well attended, and the newspaper remained silent about boosting efforts until October 1893.²⁶³ In rebuttal to an article

²⁵⁸ “More Energy Needed.” *Farmland Enterprise*, December 19, 1890.

²⁵⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, February 6, 1891.

²⁶⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, September 4, 1891.

²⁶¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 26, 1893, June 2, 1893, June 16, 1893, June 23, 1893.

²⁶² “Farmland!” *Farmland Enterprise*, May 19, 1893, Supplement.

²⁶³ Meetings were held May 29, June 2, June 16, and June 26. West blames a storm for the light attendance at the first meeting and advertised the June 26 one with the caveat that “this may be the last meeting unless more interest is manifested.” *Farmland Enterprise*, June 2, 1893, June 16, 1893, June 23, 1893.

published in the neighboring *Ridgeville News*, West reported the reasons for dropping the efforts. He blamed the economic panic for limiting the growth of manufacturing.²⁶⁴ Although successful in gaining the handle factory, much to the chagrin of their neighbor Ridgeville, the halt of boosting efforts reflects the residents' fiscal conservatism.

Milk, another seemingly unlimited resource in a farming community, brought manufacturing opportunities. In April 1891, C. D. Jones of Davis and Rankin, a butter and cheese factory-building company, visited Farmland. He touted the advantages of churning in the factory rather than at home, and promoted his company's efficient equipment that could extract a greater yield of butter than hand-churning.²⁶⁵ According to an Indiana State Board of Agriculture report, the early 1890s surge in the construction of creamery plants resulted from the promotion efforts of Davis and Rankin. However, by 1898 many of these businesses had closed because they had been constructed in areas lacking sufficient dairy farms to supply the milk for processing, or the complex subscription structure for financing the equipment for the factory created undue financial burden on the contributing stockholders.²⁶⁶ Eventually the Farmland residents built a creamery. In November, 1899, those who pledged subscriptions met at the opera house with J. B. Silver, an agent of the Elgin Building Factory Company, to discuss the project.²⁶⁷ The creamery opened in early 1900.²⁶⁸ Although the specific reasons for not

²⁶⁴ "Not Wild and Giddy. But Steady, Reliable, Regular." *Farmland Enterprise*, October 27, 1893.

²⁶⁵ "Butter and Cheese Factory." *Farmland Enterprise*, April 21, 1891.

²⁶⁶ *Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture*, Vol. 39 (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Buford Printing and Binding, 1898), 426. The structure for financing creameries was based on securing commitments for subscriptions and then creating a corporation, issuing shares to the subscribers in proportion to their initial contribution. If the articles of incorporation did not include a clause that each shareholder was liable for their own commitment, the promoter could enforce a mechanic's lien on the entire property for one shareholder's uncollected subscription. Manfred W. Ehrich, *The Law of Promoters* (Albany, NY: Matthew Bender & Company, 1916), 71-72.

²⁶⁷ "The Creamery a Certainty." *Farmland Enterprise*, November 3, 1899.

²⁶⁸ *Winchester Journal*, January 17, 1900.

establishing a creamery until 1899 remain unknown, likely the residents waited until they felt that the enterprise would be financially viable.

In one instance the boosters met to consider a commercial venture based on a home-developed invention. At a meeting in early 1892 Dr. John Nixon, a local physician, gathered the residents of Farmland to ask for funds to build a sanitarium.²⁶⁹ Nixon had patented the “depurator” for the treatment of lung and throat diseases. He wanted to create a hospital for consumptives and needed to raise \$25,000 to build the facility.²⁷⁰ In 1892, deposits in the Farmers and Citizens Bank totaled just over \$40,000.²⁷¹ Nixon’s subscription requirements were too steep, amounting to more than fifty percent of the cash held by the residents. Fiscal conservatism prevailed and the hospital was not built.

Meetings at the opera house in 1900 signaled the end of the gas boom. As natural gas supplies dwindled, gas companies attempted to recoup the cost of laying pipe for transmission by passing the costs to consumers. Residents objected to the higher prices and gathered at the opera house to form a new company to secure their own supply of natural gas. The resulting company, Hoosier Gas and Oil, used the proceeds from its sale of stock to lease land and drill wells, hoping for the success that would require the laying of pipe. However, their endeavor did not last long; a notice in the *Enterprise* in November 1902, commented that M. E. Wood had purchased the company’s equipment at public sale.²⁷² Farmland’s economic conservatism served them well. While the natural gas business fell victim to dwindling resources, the handle factory and creamery remained operational.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, February 19, 1892.

²⁷⁰ United States Patent No. 476,548. <http://www.google.com/patents/US476548>. Accessed February 3, 2013.

²⁷¹ *Indiana Documentary Journal for the Year Ended 1892*, Official Report of Bank Examiners, 301.

²⁷² *Farmland Enterprise*, November 7, 1902.

²⁷³ Listings in the 1908 Farmland Directory include “Samuel Ash, handle mfg.” and “Myron G. Moore, creamery proprietor,” 151, 157.

The Farmland Improvement Committee also nurtured relationships between merchants and farmers. At the same time Farmland's businessmen sought to create an industrial base, demands of farmers and the Populist Party throughout the nation, state, and locally brought the question of the connection between farmers and townspeople to the forefront.²⁷⁴ At the February 1891 booster meeting at the opera house, Reuben C. Shaw, a farmer and businessman, suggested organizing the Farmland Mercantile, Mechanical and Professional Association. At this meeting, the association created a "Corn Contest" for local farmers. The committee invited the farmers to present one hundred ears of their corn and to describe their farming methods used to achieve their results. Association members contributed prize money for the winners. The group, structured mainly by merchants, stated its objective: "to foster and promote the agricultural interests of this locality."²⁷⁵

Despite the committee's efforts, the contest did not turn out as they planned. The farmers participated as requested, attending organizational meetings and showing up to collect the prize money at the announcement of the winners.²⁷⁶ However, only three of the sixteen contestants attended the follow-up "Corn Contest" in the opera house.²⁷⁷ West used the term "entertain" when describing the Improvement Committee's expectations of the farmers.²⁷⁸ Although the farmers happily collected their prize money, their nonattendance at the contest indicates that they felt no need to entertain the townspeople by describing their farming methods. The merchants' stated goal had to do with appreciation and respect for the farmers'

²⁷⁴ W. C. West published a series of articles in the *Farmland Enterprise* commenting on the growing unrest of farmers, illustrating that the unrest was also felt locally. *Farmland Enterprise*, April 11, 1890, December 5, 1890, January 9, 1891.

²⁷⁵ "Premium to Corn Growers." *Farmland Enterprise*, February 6, 1891.

²⁷⁶ "Meeting of the Contestants for Corn Prizes." *Farmland Enterprise*, April 17, 1891. "The Successful Contestants for the Corn Prize." *Farmland Enterprise*, October 16, 1891.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* *Farmland Enterprise*, October 30, 1891.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

toils and contributions to the community, however the juxtaposition of the event the rise of the F.M.B.A. suggests an underlying political purpose.

While churches often used the opera house for fundraising and entertainment activities, in 1903 two large Holiness Mission events came to the venue. The Farmland Holiness Revivals held at the opera house featured central Indiana native John T. Hatfield. For ten days in January the self-proclaimed “Hoosier Evangelist,” spoke vociferously for the cause.²⁷⁹ Hatfield epitomized all that Holiness advocates espoused. His dramatic conversion included feeling “the heavy pressure of God’s hand on his soul,” the sound of the Holy Spirit, and a vision of “hell-fire beneath him” until “at last he reached a place of complete surrender and utter abandonment to God.” He also experienced the “program of the Spirit.” When faced with the task of giving a sermon on which he could not find inspiration, he discovered notes for it in his Bible. They disappeared after he finished the sermon.²⁸⁰ In April, Edwin L. Harvey and Susan Fogg of the Metropolitan Holiness Church of Chicago held “a ten days meeting.”²⁸¹ Harvey had also experienced an intense transformation and donated his extensive wealth, earned in the hotel business, to the church.²⁸² Fogg, an African American, had the reputation for exuberance. Harvey and Fogg traveled during 1903 on behalf of the Holiness’s Metropolitan Church Association and spoke to racially integrated crowds.²⁸³ Despite the unrestrained, emotional nature of the meetings, the movement took hold in Farmland, with an active following through

²⁷⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, January 2, 1903.

²⁸⁰ John T. Hatfield, *Thirty-Three Years a Live Wire: The “Hoosier Evangelist”* (Cincinnati: Ringgold, Young, and Channing Streits, 1905), 211-213, 242. John C. Patty, *Twenty-Five Years on the Firing Line. Life of John T. Hatfield, the Hoosier Evangelist* (Louisville: Pentecostal Publishing Company, 1908), 16-18, 39-41.

²⁸¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 24, 1903.

²⁸² William Koslevy, *Holy Jumpers: Evangelicals and Radicals in Progressive Era America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 41.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 9, 104-105.

the early twentieth century.²⁸⁴ While the rules for social behavior at secular entertainment prohibited rowdiness and espoused segregation, these conditions did not apply to the new form of religious expression.

The end of the nineteenth century brought professional and scientific changes in educational methods and standards to rural communities such as Farmland. While the adults increased their knowledge and expertise at farming, formalized curriculum requirements initiated at the state level spurred the local schools to upgrade educational opportunities available for students. The additional schooling for children meant they could choose occupations other than farming and enter professions attainable only through education beyond a high school level. The activities at the opera house—Farmers’ Institutes and school activities such as high school commencements, lecture series, and basketball games—illustrate the process of defining who would be educated and what education would mean for residents of Farmland.

The opera house hosted the county Farmers’ Institutes for five years, 1894 through 1897, and again in 1899. Winchester, the county seat, hosted the primary state-sanctioned county institute each year. The community support provided by newspapers, hall owners, and lunch providers meant county organizers had money left for supplementary institutes.²⁸⁵ The Farmers’ Institutes in Farmland resulted from the availability of these excess funds.

The speeches at Farmers’ Institutes addressed technical and economic topics about farming, promoted education for farmers and upheld the positive aspects of farm life. The technical and economic topics fulfilled the spirit of the Hatch Act: to provide information in ways

²⁸⁴ Smith and Driver noted in their 1914 *Past and Present of Randolph County, Indiana*, that “The principal center of organized [Holiness] bands has been around Farmland.” 706.

²⁸⁵ “The unexpended part of your allowance can be used for a subsequent meeting provided you advertise the same as county institutes.” Latta to B. F. Wilmore January 27, 1896. College of Agriculture Records, Purdue University, 1894-1903. Purdue University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections. Bound Volumes Farmers’ Institutes, November 13, 1895—August 3, 1896, 511.

farmers could implement the findings of the Agricultural Experiment Station. The speeches also gave voice to the farmers' individual experiences by having them present their own material. Technical topics included animal husbandry, farm buildings, crop production, and road construction and maintenance. Economic topics related to farm finances, recordkeeping, insurance, and labor sources.²⁸⁶

The talks about farm life fulfilled Latta's goal of promoting the rural way of life as enjoyable and satisfying. At the 1894 institute he delivered a speech on "Attractions of Rural Life."²⁸⁷ In 1895 Dr. L. N. Davis, a local physician and farm owner, spoke on: "How Better the Social Conditions of Farmers' Families."²⁸⁸ In 1899, local farmer Clyde Moore debated the question "Does the Farm Afford Opportunity for True Development?"²⁸⁹ An additional means of promoting satisfaction with farm life came through the active inclusion of women in the institutes. In 1895, farmwife Flora Meeks gave an address about "Women's Part on the Farm," and in 1896, Mrs. John W. Diggs reported on "The Care and Management of Poultry."²⁹⁰ Both women spoke about traditional female roles, but their inclusion among the speakers raised the importance of women's contributions to the success of farms.

Flora Meeks' speech illustrates how the content of the Institutes fulfilled Latta's goal of promoting contentment with farm life from a woman's point of view. She described the division of profit from an economic asset of the farm, a cow. A woman made and sold butter from the cow's milk and maintained control of the proceeds, while the man reaped the return from the sale of the meat. She commented that these separate income streams represented the teamwork of husbands and wives. In comparison, merchants' wives' money came in the form of

²⁸⁶ Appendix F, Farmers' Institute Speeches, list the titles of all speeches given at the Farmland Farmers' Institutes.

²⁸⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 23, 1894.

²⁸⁸ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 12, 1895.

²⁸⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 31, 1899.

²⁹⁰ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 22, 1895, March 27, 1896.

an allowance from their husbands, which restricted the women's monetary control. Meeks highlighted the importance of keeping her family well-fed and nourished as maintaining the productive labor of the farm. Her responsibilities also included training the next generation of farmwives, her daughters, "so they don't grow up ignorant."²⁹¹ Meeks' speech affirmed the contribution of women on the farm, wives equal footing with their husbands, and placed importance on the tasks women performed without challenging them to do more in an already labor-intensive lifestyle.

The discussions after each speech gave farmers the opportunity to publicly declare the value of their experience over the scientific authority of the university professors. When Professor Latta disagreed with Isaac J. Smith's presentation at the 1894 institute, Smith defended his position, based on his "experience, common sense and a good degree of literary information."²⁹² West applauded Smith for "tenaciously" upholding the knowledge gained from his practical experience.²⁹³ This debate shows that although farmers looked to the university for expertise and new methods, they did not subjugate their practical experience to an outside authority. Their enthusiasm to be a part of this educational opportunity did not preclude their learning from each other's' experiences.

From 1888 to 1905, the Farmland public school system transformed from a simple, graded school to one with primary and high school divisions. In the fall of 1889, Farmland admitted its first class of high school students. The next spring, the school board and town raised money for a new school building through the sale of municipal bonds; the new structure opened for the 1890/1891 school year. Replacing a twenty-two-year-old structure, the new two-

²⁹¹ "Women's Part on the Farm." *Farmland Enterprise*, March 29, 1895.

²⁹² *Farmland Enterprise*, March 23, 1894.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

story school contained a library and had three classrooms on each level.²⁹⁴ Before Farmland's foray into secondary education, parents who wanted further education for their children sent them to a county seminary or Winchester High School.²⁹⁵ In the fall of 1905, Farmland High School adopted the required standards and received the status of a commissioned high school.²⁹⁶ Prospects for students in Farmland opened up at the turn of the century with the addition of a high school and the adoption of curriculum standards that would allow them to apply to the state universities with the same level of credentials as their peers from larger towns and cities.

The improved school system included the grand, new event of Commencement Exercises, held at the opera house. On March 28, 1891, the Opera House hosted the First Annual Farmland High School Commencement.²⁹⁷ Commencement exercises began as a novelty event at the Opera House but quickly became mundane. The class of 1891 included six students, all of whom gave speeches. West reported that the financial success of the event illustrated the large attendance and that the audience gave the speakers their attention and good behavior, demonstrating their interest in the school.²⁹⁸ By the third commencement held in 1894, West refrained from commenting on the content of the students' speeches, but congratulated them

²⁹⁴ "Farmland Public Schools." *Farmland Enterprise*, October 17, 1890.

²⁹⁵ Zoa Branson, from Farmland, graduated from Winchester High School. *Farmland Enterprise*, March 22, 1889.

²⁹⁶ *Winchester Journal*, November 8, 1905.

²⁹⁷ "High School Commencement." *Farmland Enterprise*, April 3, 1891. The commencements continued as long as the school had students to graduate. The titles of the event give the clue as to the availability of a class to graduate. The "second" occurred in 1892. No commencement occurred in 1893 because the Farmland School Board adopted the standard three-year course for a non-commissioned high school. The "third" commencement occurred in 1894, followed by the "fourth" in 1896, "fifth" in 1897, "sixth" in 1899, the "annual" in 1901 and the "eighth" in 1902. In 1895 an all-school entertainment took the place of commencement. "The Commencement." *Farmland Enterprise*, April 8, 1892. *Farmland Enterprise*, April 3, 1891, April 8, 1892, April 24, 1894, April 5, 1895, April 17, 1896, April 30, 1897, April 28, 1899, May 10, 1901, May 2, 1902.

²⁹⁸ "High School Commencement." *Farmland Enterprise*, April 3, 1891.

for “leaving the deceased heroes of Greece and Rome out of the programme.”²⁹⁹ The next commencement, in 1896, excluded student speeches entirely. The importance of the election year precluded the potential offerings of wisdom from the seven graduates, and John L. Griffiths, candidate for Indiana Attorney General, addressed the audience.³⁰⁰ In 1897 and 1899, the student speakers returned, along with guest speakers Professor Stanley Coulter of Purdue University, and Rev. Burris Jenkins of Indianapolis University.³⁰¹ The commencement organizers appear to have recognized the need for professional speakers to satisfy the audience.

In 1901 commencement took a new form under the guidance of Principal J. F. Bobbitt. The event titled “Evening with Riley” featured student speeches analyzing James Whitcomb Riley’s works. West enthusiastically noted the absence of “the ordinary subjects.” He reported that “there was no chanting of ‘essay dread with fate,’ and the youth who assures us that ‘all along the pathway of the untrodden past you can see the footprints of an unknown hand’ seems to have failed in the examinations.”³⁰² Instead, Farmland residents received a lesson in literary criticism of Riley’s style. One student spoke of the use of dialect as the preservation of the local tongue. Another presented Riley’s works of humor and pathos. The analysis of Riley’s voice of the “common man” offered an additional means for the audience to connect with the topic by portraying the “thoughts and emotions of the lowly, in contrast to men of wealth and distinction who are upheld as a superior race.” The last speaker equated Riley with Charles Dickens for delving into life through a child’s eyes, and giving a voice to the nature of childhood.³⁰³ The

²⁹⁹ “Nine in the Class.” *Farmland Enterprise*, April 24, 1894. W. C. West’s son, Fred, was a member of this graduating class.

³⁰⁰ “High School Commencement.” *Farmland Enterprise*, April 17, 1896.

³⁰¹ “High School Commencement.” *Farmland Enterprise*, April 30, 1897. “High School Commencement.” *Farmland Enterprise*, April 28, 1899.

³⁰² *Farmland Enterprise*, May 10, 1901.

³⁰³ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 10, 1901.

exercises became entertainment for the audience because the speeches addressed the aspects of Riley's style that made him a favorite son throughout Indiana.

In 1902, a fire in an adjacent building damaged the opera house entrance requiring a change of venue for the commencement. The newly decorated Methodist Episcopal Church hosted the graduation exercises. The format returned to student speeches and a guest speaker program.³⁰⁴ After 1902, graduation exercises remained in the local churches.³⁰⁵

The changing format of the graduation exercises reflected the developing tastes and interests of the school principals and the audiences. The 1891 exercises occurred at the infancy of the opera house and the high school. The parents and neighbors who had not graduated from a high school themselves were eager to experience the new activity and the new venue, to see what a high school graduation entailed. West's reviews of ensuing graduations reflect his irritation with the repetitive content of adolescent speeches. The principals also recognized the importance of entertaining the audience by adding professional speakers and the "Evening with Riley" presentation. Although the 1902 exercises moved because of a fire, holding the event at area churches revived the novelty of attending the commencement in buildings that guests might not have visited. That the commencement exercises remained in churches also reflects the changing expectation of the event; graduations had become an established rite of passage for the students and took a recognizable form each year, not as a novel entertainment vehicle but as regular and predictable as a church service.

The content of the graduation speeches illustrates what the students or their teachers believed a high school education meant. The majority of speeches made by male students reflected ideas of progress, such as "How to Make Farmland a City," "The Triumphs of Science,"

³⁰⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, May 2, 1902.

³⁰⁵ The 1903 Commencement was again held at the Methodist Episcopal Church and in 1904 at the Christian Church. *Farmland Enterprise*, May 8, 1903, April 22, 1904.

“American Idea,” and “Up-to-Date.” One speech in the initial graduation argued the importance of attending high school: “Why Should a Farmer Get an Education?”³⁰⁶ These young men recognized that high school education could mean moving beyond their parents’ spheres of rural experience.

The topics of the young women’s speeches reveal their expectations for their future in society. They placed themselves in supporting roles through speeches titled, “The Value of Little Things,” “What Can a Woman Do?” and “Little Things.” Other narratives, “Well Begun is Half Done,” “Living Up to Our Capabilities,” and “Ability Makes Opportunity,” reflect expectations for women to be industrious and use their time wisely. When one young woman spoke about the vocations available to females, West highlighted her point “that a woman could keep a secret” as her most important argument.³⁰⁷

Ideas about why women should get an education were reflected in two speeches in 1892. Leota Willey discussed “The Value of School Days.” These values encompassed making use of the short period of schooling, making friends, and obeying teachers. Through these actions one would gain the respect of classmates and friends. Mattie Robinson’s speech, “True Education,” reflected her ideas that education required “exercises of the mind.” She advocated for educational opportunities such as kindergartens and public libraries.³⁰⁸ The themes of the young women’s speeches reflect an internal role of self-improvement in order to receive affirmation from others and of pleasing members of the community.

The rising interest in education included the drive to obtain a well-stocked library. The new school building in 1890 included a room for the library.³⁰⁹ Financing the cost of library

³⁰⁶ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 3, 1891, April 8, 1892, April 27, 1894, April 30, 1897.

³⁰⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, April 3, 1891, April 8, 1892, April 27, 1894.

³⁰⁸ “Farmland Commencement.” *Winchester Journal*, April 6, 1892. “The Commencement.” *Farmland Enterprise*, April 8, 1892.

³⁰⁹ *Farmland Enterprise*, October 17, 1890.

books became a project for the residents. Events at the opera house, including the High School Lecture Series, advertised that the proceeds from the show would be added to the school library fund. By referring to the establishment as the “school library,” the announcements identify the readership with children and not adults. By placing the library in the realm of the school, the library became sequestered for the use of the students.

The rise and development of basketball became a means to gather community at the opera house. In December 1903, students organized the Farmland Athletic Association, for the purpose of providing “exercise for the members during the winter months.” Although the club included both boys and girls at the beginning, girls were quickly eliminated from any report about basketball, and West does not report about any girls sports. The school board showed its support for basketball by allowing the students to play in a vacant room in the school and by purchasing a ball.³¹⁰ The first game occurred on January 19, 1904.³¹¹ On April 22, 1904, West reported that the Athletic Association cleared \$6.70 and the Lecture Association \$3.60, indicating either a lower cost for fielding a team rather than hiring a lecturer, or the preference of the audience for basketball.

Basketball brought out the passions of players and spectators. In February 1904, an article noted that the Farmland team forfeited the game to Union City because of the home team fans’ poor sportsmanship. The article said that a marshal would be hired to maintain order in the future. Later that month, West reported that the noticeable feature of the game was the absence of wrangling among the players.³¹² Basketball brought about unexpected education for the residents of Farmland: the appropriate behavior for sporting events. While ten years earlier

³¹⁰ “Farmland Athletic Association” *Farmland Enterprise*, December 11, 1903.

³¹¹ *Farmland Enterprise*, January 22, 1904.

³¹² *Farmland Enterprise*, February 12, 1904, February 26, 1904.

the public behavior debate centered on the appropriate behavior at public entertainments, basketball brought a new challenge to the social rules.

The community center role of the opera house allowed the Farmland residents a venue to define their identity in the changing culture of the late nineteenth century. The political meetings held at the venue illustrate how the residents became aware of the important issues of the day and the rise of third parties, explaining why the Populist and Prohibition parties did not take root in a community of farmers and temperate residents. The meetings also describe the forward-moving state of turn-of-the-century politics: away from the Civil War and its veterans and styles and toward modern, professional campaigns and the early inklings of women's participation and suffrage. The memories of the Civil War waned from 1890 to 1905, and the activities at the opera house show how the aging veterans rose to a final burst of prominence through the fight for pensions and their soldiers reunions. The attempt to keep the "fight" alive is found in the events sponsored by the Sons of Veterans.

The civic meetings held at the opera house illustrate the dialogue about what the community should become. The boosters jumped on the gas-boom bandwagon, but they also recognized their continued reliance on local farmers. They found manufacturing establishments, but ones that used the natural resources, wood and milk, of a rural, nineteenth-century community. The simple-sounding Corn Contest illustrates the complex spoken and unspoken motivations of the residents. While outwardly defining the event as a means to improve relationships and give farmers a proud voice about their occupation and lifestyle, the unspoken motivations reflect the political agenda: to remain true to the Republican Party while third parties formed. Although Farmland did not secure as many factories as its citizens had hoped, their conservative approach served the town well. In August 1890, before the first boom effort, West published an article in which scientists warned of the limited nature of natural gas

supplies.³¹³ The terms offered to the handle factory in 1891 included a cash bonus and free rent, but no promise of free fuel. By foregoing the first offer to build a creamery, the investors avoided the 1893 depression and built the facility later during a time of increasing prosperity for farmers. The businesses that remained viable included the handle factory and the creamery, those that used the abundant, reliable natural resources of the area.

In Farmland, education was at the forefront of progress and entertainment. Instituting a high school curriculum and hosting the Farmers' Institutes at the Opera House represented the community's efforts to support modern ideas, while maintaining its farm identity. The Farmers' Institutes held at the opera house exemplify late nineteenth-century community building. Residents from all occupations, ages, and both genders gathered to share entertainment and education and to exchange ideas. They reaffirmed the importance of their roles in the community and their own enterprises.

³¹³ "Natural Gas Supplies." *Farmland Enterprise*, August 29, 1890.

Epilogue and Conclusion

Today the Farmland Opera House continues to stand at the corner of Main and Henry Streets. A Pizza King restaurant operates in the first floor retail space and the second floor opera house remains unoccupied. During the twentieth century use of the opera house slowly declined. At the close of the 1904/1905 season, the last of the focus of this study, P. M. Bly owned the building.³¹⁴ Jesse Hoppes purchased the business and building in 1910.³¹⁵ Entertainment activities continued at the opera house through the 1920s, and basketball games continued well into the 1930s. In 1937 a group of investors attempted to return Hoppes Hall, as the opera house was then known, to its former entertainment purpose by remodeling it into a movie theater. However, the Indiana Licensing Board refused to approve the plan because the second floor theater did not meet fire codes.³¹⁶ Almost 50 years later, another group installed horseshoe pits to use as a pitch during inclement weather.³¹⁷ Today remnants of batting cages and putting greens litter the floor.

Although Farmland's Opera House has fallen into disuse, it remains a symbol of the town's late nineteenth-century hopes and dreams. Built to hold the crowds attending the expanding cultural events held in the town, construction of the opera house also signaled the entrance of Farmland into the modern era. The town was now equipped to host vaudeville performers, lecturers, intelligent and restrained political speakers, boasting residents, and basketball players. The opera house occupied not only a prominent place on Farmland's Main Street, but also in the minds and culture of its residents. W. C. West, editor of the *Farmland*

³¹⁴ It is unclear how long Harry Orville remained manager of the opera house, however, he died in 1909.

³¹⁵ P. M. Bly hired Jesse Hoppes in 1909 to work in the drugstore. Hoppes had graduated in 1908 from Purdue University with a degree in Pharmacy. John L. Smith and Lee L. Driver, *Past and Present of Randolph County, Indiana: With Biographical Sketches of Representative Residents and Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families* (Indianapolis: A.W. Bowen & Co., 1914), 1170.

³¹⁶ *Randolph County Enterprise*, March 31, 1937, April 7, 1937.

³¹⁷ *Indianapolis News*, January 3, 1983.

Enterprise, provided descriptions of the structure, suggesting that its mere presence would give a favorable impression to visitors. He also set the tone for public pride and excitement based on the town's new setting for entertainment and community activities. As the first large, formal gathering space, the opera house offered new ways for the town's residents to experience culture outside of their customary patterns. Prior to the opening of the opera house, public gatherings took place in arenas which reflected long-standing identities: churches, schoolhouses, lodges, small local halls, and individual homes. The opera house allowed the Farmland residents to embrace new social and cultural experiences, available at the dawning of the twentieth century.

While christened with a grand name, the structure's simple, open floor plan allowed for a wide range of activities, including theatrical entertainment, dances, political rallies, and basketball games. Over the first sixteen seasons the residents of Farmland had 341 opportunities to participate in cultural, political and educational events at the opera house. The majority of these events brought the outside world to Randolph County: 174 performances from traveling entertainers and lecturers, 35 political meetings and rallies focused on state and national elections, 29 meetings advancing the search for new commercial ventures, and 17 nights of revivals featuring nationally renowned religious figures.

Traveling entertainers and lecturers introduced culture from faraway places, nationally and internationally. "Chaos Flat" presented new and unfamiliar ideas on the stage. The dress and mannerisms of the Deaves Sisters depicted women as farcical and sexual characters in a social arena far from the experience and imaginations of the small-town and rural audience. Hallie Q. Brown's presentations also brought the unfamiliar to the stage: an intelligent, well-traveled African American woman, contrasted with nineteenth-century roles for African American characters. Her shows also presented native Africans displaying their indigenous

culture. She blended into the culture of a racially segregated town, not only through its affection for her but also performing with local elocutionists and musicians. She demonstrated an acceptable way for women to appear onstage.

Topics debated elsewhere in the United States, such as immigration, religion, and politics, came to the stage through traveling lecturers. Political speakers at the opera house took on a new campaign style represented by the “professionals” who addressed the state and national issues in a rational and logical manner, compared to the previous tactics of commandeering loyalty as in gathering the troops for war. Farmers’ Institutes created by national and state initiatives provided farmers with the most recent scientific farming methods. New state standards for education brought about the first high school commencements, held at the opera house. In the final two seasons of this study, the new sport of high school basketball found its place at the opera house.

Analysis of the spectrum of events reveals certain overarching preferences. Based on reported attendance numbers, W. C. West’s reviews, and return engagements, Farmland residents preferred the familiar: the performer, content of the show, or topics and themes appropriate to their prevailing beliefs about gender roles and racial stereotypes. The audience received the unfamiliar more readily when at least one familiar element was present: either performer or content. For example, Hallie Q. Brown’s shows followed the popular elocution style, and she had familial connections to the town. She presented standard elocution fare, but also Africans as people with a unique culture and traditions to a receptive Farmland audience.

Attempts by individuals to form a community identity inherently bring conflicts. Just as the types of local social events reflected the opera house managers’ personalities and life experiences, residents approached civic activities with their own priorities. The October 24, 1891 “Corn Contest” illustrates the interplay of a group activity with a stated purpose and the

competing goals of individuals. The merchants sponsored the function professing a desire to enhance their relationships with local farmers and allow them the opportunity to educate the townspeople about their methods. However, such a gathering at the burgeoning of the Populist movement clearly indicates the merchants' unspoken goal of maintaining the farmers' loyalty to the Republican Party. The farmers happily collected the prize money for their crops, but by not attending the contest they demonstrated that they considered "entertaining" the merchants a low priority.

While on the surface the activities at the opera house appeared to be unbounded by religious, class, gender, and social distinctions, conflict arose as individuals negotiated a community identity. The opera house managers attempted to set cultural standards through their choice of shows and house rules for behavior. W. C. West' reviews and promotional items also communicated his ephemeral ideas of high class entertainment. Audience responses elicited by vaudeville performers, some lecturers and revivalists clashed with behavior expectations. Merchants attempted to change the Farmland economy by courting manufacturing enterprises. Farmers' Institutes disseminated new scientific methods of the academics for farming which conflicted with the local farmers' practical knowledge. However, amid these conflicts, women found new public roles in the life of the town through elocutionary training and the Farmers' Institutes.

At the same time the boosters focused on progress, the community's preference for nostalgia created a paradox. Although the small-town merchants tried to build their town, their preference in commercial entertainment indicates a yearning for the simple lifestyle of the countryside. Recurrent favorites on the stage reflected pastoral themes, such as Alba Heywood's "Down in Injianny," and content based on the prose of James Whitcomb Riley, the "Hoosier

Poet.” Boosting efforts in Farmland resulted in businesses of a pastoral nature, processing local raw materials.

This microhistory of the Farmland Opera House provides the details of the people and events of a late nineteenth-century small town and presents an alternate view to prior studies. Lewis Atherton’s *Main Street on the Middle Border* derides the boosters’ notions of progress as flawed.³¹⁸ However, the Farmland Boosters approached the task of growing their town with lofty goals, informed by examples from nearby towns and cities. They ventured into a new arena of commerce, but tempered the risks with fiscal conservatism. Atherton characterizes residents’ primary motivations as based on what brought about the greatest material gain and what could be considered practical.³¹⁹ The preferences that emerged through this study for nostalgia and the forward looking tone of Farmers’ Institutes and education for children reveal more complex motivations.

The conflicts that surfaced at the opera house illustrate that the residents negotiated them in a manner integral to their local culture. For example, in the 1860s, when faced with differing views on racial segregation in schools, the town chose to create separate institutions rather than continue to fight. This same style of conflict resolution appeared as the residents negotiated a community identity through the political rallies, booster meetings, and educational activities at the opera house. Andrew Cayton has generalized these interactions as “the lowest common denominator.”³²⁰ His interpretation ignores the nuanced relationships of small-town society. The works of Daniel Nelson and Lamont Hulse speak to the tenuous economic situation

³¹⁸ Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), xvi-xvii.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Andrew Cayton, “The Anti-Region: Place and Identity in the History of the Midwest,” in *The Identity of the American Midwest: Essays on Regional History*, ed. Andrew Cayton and Susan Gray (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 149-150.

of the late nineteenth century, which resulted in what I describe as the balance of risk and reward demonstrated by the boosters.³²¹

Although the Farmland Opera House and countless other opera houses in small towns closed long ago, they remain a cultural artifact of an important transitional period. They provided the venues for the events that illustrate how citizens of the towns navigated the social, cultural, and economic trends of the new century. Rather than symbolizing permanence, as D. Layne Ehlers opines, the opera house presented all that the twentieth century had to offer.³²² The design characteristics of these general utility halls, a second level space with a flat floor, created a center for activity and discussion in the late nineteenth century; however their location on the upper level eventually led to unsuitability for a public gathering space.

This study has examined a nineteenth-century opera house, its small town, and its activities to explain how Farmland, Indiana emerged from a post-Civil War society to a twentieth-century community. Rather than looking at the opera houses as establishments of “small-town” thinking, they should be celebrated examples of how citizens examined new ideas. Instead of insular and provincial institutions, the opera houses on small-town Main Streets brought the culture of the world outside into the communities and gave a venue for residents to integrate the two.

³²¹ Lamont Hulse, “Boomers, Boosters and the Manufacturing Spirit: Civic Entrepreneurship and Industrial Development during the Natural Gas Era in Anderson, Indiana 1886-1905” (Master’s thesis, University of Delaware, 1987), 50-51. Daniel Nelson, *Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest 1880-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 3.

³²² D. Layne Ehlers, “The Historical Context of Opera House Buildings in Nebraska: The OHBIN Study (Master’s thesis, University of Nebraska, 1987), 184.

Appendix A

Watson's Hall Daybook

Watson's Hall was built in 1867 and served as the general entertainment venue until the Farmland Opera House opened. In December 1890 the G.A.R. took over Watson's space as its clubhouse and no further public entertainment occurred there. The listing below begins at the start of the run of the *Farmland Enterprise*. Daybook reconstructed from *Farmland Enterprise* articles and notices.

Date	Event	Sponsor/Company/Actors/Speakers
1888 Season (Spring and Summer)		
4/27	Concert	Winchester Cornet Band and Orchestra
6/22	Meeting	Fourth of July Planning Committee
6/29	Meeting	Fourth of July Planning Committee
7/20	Political Meeting	Republicans: Organize a Harrison Club
1888/1889 Season		
10/5	Dance	Musicians: Patterson's Orchestra
10/27	Entertainment	Moore's Novelty Company
11/24	Civic Meeting	To organize a literary society
11/29	"Grand Ball"	
12/15	Entertainment	Alba Heywood Concert Company
12/24	"The New Year"	Friends' Sabbath School
1/1	"Masque Ball"	Musicians: Ridgeville Orchestra
1/24	Ball	"J. B." Club
1/26	Bean Supper and Spelling Bee	Grand Army of the Republic
2/9	Mock Trial	Lyceum Club
2/23	"Between Two Fires"	Sons of Veterans

3/1	Stockholders Meeting	Farmland Natural Gas Company
3/1-2	“Davy Crockett”	Lloyd Melville Dramatic Company
3/15	Spelling Match	Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church
3/16	“Between Two Fires”	Sons of Veterans
3/25	Spelling Match	Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church
3/27-4/3	Medicine Show	Dr. White Cloud’s Indian Medicine Company: Dr. Perkins, Harry Orville
4/6	“Crazy” Social	Ladies Gleaning Society
4/9	Concert	Patterson-Robbins Concert Company: Prof. W. Frank Patterson, C.H. Hermann, George Hurdle
5/10	“My Partner”	
6/4	Meeting	Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church
6/8	Strawberry and Ice Cream Festival	Ladies Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church
6/15	Strawberry and Ice Cream Festival	Ladies of Farmland

1889/1890 Season

8/26	Elocutionary	Hallie Q. Brown
9/2	Elocutionary	Hallie Q. Brown
11/6	Trained Dog Show	Tony Ashton
11/9	Oyster Supper	Mite Society of the Christian Church
12/21	Box Supper	Ladies of Farmland
12/28	“Under the Laurels”	Windsor High School Library Combination
2/8	Basket Supper	Grand Army of the Republic
3/25	Supper	Independent Order of Red Men
4/9	Civic Meeting	To explore organizing a building and loan.

4/14	Meeting	Building and Loan Committee
5/25	Meeting	G.A.R., W.R.C., S.O.V. gather to attend Decoration Day at the Christian Church
6/21	Strawberry and Ice Cream Festival	

1890 Season

11/25	Dance	Huntsville and Losantville Residents
11/27	Dance	Farmland Residents
11/29	"Old Maids" Supper	G.A.R., W.R.C., S.O.V.

Appendix B

Farmland Opera House Day Book

Reconstructed from notices and reviews of events in the *Farmland Enterprise*.

Date	Event	Sponsor/Company/Actors/Speakers
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">1890 Season</div>		
1/18	"Chaos Flat"	Chaos Flat Company: Ada Deaves, Rillie Deaves, Harry Porter
2/1	"Jephthah and His Daughter"	Local Actors: Prof. Cox, Grace Collins, Charley Halliday, Bessie Roberts, Bun McNees, Ethel Thornburg, Emma Roberts
2/15	Variety	Alba Heywood Concert Company: Alba Heywood
2/17-22	"The Little Duchess" "Pearl of Savoy" "Fanchon the Cricket" "East Lynne" "The Child of the Regiment" "Child of the Woods"	Gypsie Lester Comedy Company: Miss Lester, Mr. Lester
3/5	Variety Concert	Charles F. Higgins Concert Company: Charles Higgins, Laura Barden, Henry Higgins, Isabel Jamieson, H. Cornelius
3/15	"Jephthah and His Daughter" "Under the Mistletoe Bough" "Mrs. Jarley's Wax Figger Show"	Local Actors
4/7	Dance	The Farmland Easter Club
4/12	"In The Enemy's Camp" or "The Stolen Dispatches"	Local Actors: Sons of Veterans Members
4/25	"Stricken Blind" "Catching a Husband" "Rip Van Winkle"	The New York Theater Company: Robert Garrett, Adrienne Mitchell

1890/1891 Season

9/8	"Lights O' London"	Lights O' London Combination: Mr. Robinson, manager (Madison Square Theater Company)
9/22	"The Hermit"	Foreman-Morton Combination
10/1	Republican Rally	Congressman Henry U. Johnson
10/9	Republican Rally	Senator Theodore Shockney
10/14	Republican Rally	Thomas E. Boyd, A. O. Marsh
10/31	Republican Rally	W. D. Stone, J. S. Engle
11/15	Entertainment	Burdell Specialty Company: Mr. Luttrell, advance agent
12/16-20	Scientific Lectures	Lecturer: Dr. J. A. Houser
1/16	Civic Meeting	Farmland Improvement Committee
1/17	"Tennessee Warblers"	Pugsley Brothers
1/23	Civic Meeting	Farmland Improvement Committee
2/6-7	"Gypsy's Warning"	Will D. Marine, Ed E. Hardacre (black-face artist), Farmland Dramatic Club, Farmland Band, Grace Collins, Mrs. T. W. Keasbey, Mrs. J. W. Erther, Dollie Watson, Mabel Collins, Mr. McGuire, James Luellan, Harry Burres, Ira Wood, Andy McNees, Fannie McElwee, pianist.
2/23	"Possibilities of American Life"	Lecturer: Frank Huff
3/6	"Snow White and the Nine Dwarfs"	Local Actors
3/24	"Uncle Tom's Cabin"	Mason & Morgan's Company
3/27	Commencement	Farmland High School: First Annual
5/27	"Elocutionary"	Miss June Thomas

1891/1892 Season

8/20-22	"A Hero in Tatters"	Tressel Theater Company
9/30	Entertainment	Wilcox Family Musical Comedy
10/14-15	Elm Lane, The Gypsy's Warning	The Gypsy's Warning Company: Will D. Marine
10/24	"Corn Contest"	Farmland Improvement Committee
11/4-7	Mesmerist	Prof. J. W. Flewwelling
11/23-24	"Lady Rifleshot"	Padgett's Specialty Company
11/26	"Grand Ball"	C. W. Leeka, W. W. Thornburg
12/12	Dance	G. E. Retter, N. P. Burres
12/29-30	Entertainment	Ogarita Theatrical Combination
1/9	Dance	
1/18-19	"Only a Woman's Heart" et al.	Ogarita Theatrical Combination
2/1	"Little Lord Fauntleroy"	Ogarita Theatrical Combination: Ogarita, Harry Bayard, Karl S. Bayard
2/12	Civic Meeting	Dr. John Nixon
2/27	Entertainment	Birchum's Black Art & Specialty Company: Mr. Birchum, Mr. Ross, Fred O. Jones
3/4	Annual Meeting	Farmland Natural Gas & Oil
4/1	Commencement	Farmland High School: Second Annual
4/23	Political Meeting	Republicans
4/27	Political Meeting	Farmer's Mutual Benefit Association: C. A. Robinson
4/28	"Joint Senatorial Convention"	Delaware and Randolph County Republicans: Frank Ellis, Theodore Shockney
7/9	Political Meeting	Republicans: Farmland Campaign Club

1892/1893 Season

9/10	Political Meeting	Prohibition Party: Rev. Aaron Worth
9/26	Political Meeting	Republicans: Henry U. Johnson
10/4	Reunion Campfire	36th Indiana Regiment: General William Grouse, W. F. Mullen, etal.
10/5	"Uncle Tom's Cabin"	Langstaff's UTC Company: Charles Langstaff, Ada Thorpe, Tony Mason, Russell Bales, Ida Langstaff, Prof. Silas Long, Prof. Tom Lott
10/8	Partner Dance	
10/13	Republican Rally	Robert E. Kennedy
10/26	Republican Rally	Rev. W. O. Pierce, W. A. Thompson
11/3	Political Meeting	Prohibition Party
11/22	Burlesque Show	Paris Gaiety Girls
12/8-9	Burlesque Show	Emily Zola's Company
12/12-16	"Two Irish Hearts," "Rip Van Winkle," "M'Liss," "Fanchon the Cricket," "East Lynne"	Elite Comedy Company: J. H. Thorne, manager
12/17	"Select Society Entertainment"	Lena Mark, Chandler Connett, Myrtle Grandy, local talent, Grace Collins
12/31	Entertainment	Prison for Life company
1/9	"Lady Audley's Secret"	Miss Rena Marsells
1/19	Square Dance	
2/9	Dance	
2/15	Elocutionary	The Reed Sisters
2/20	"Pluck, Patience and Perseverance"	Lecturer: James B. Watson

3/9	Dance	Ves Gillum and Charley Clevenger
3/ 17	Old Fiddlers Concert	Randolph County Musicians
4/1	Grand Easter Ball	The Farmland Easter Club
4/3-8	Medicine Show	Hamlin's Wizard Oil Company
4/29	Dance	
5/29	Civic Meeting	Farmland Improvement Committee
6/2	Civic Meeting	Farmland Improvement Committee
6/10	Violin Recital	Prof. Wm. D. Koch and students
6/16	Civic Meeting	Farmland Improvement Committee
6/26	Civic Meeting	Farmland Improvement Committee

1893/1894 Season

11/11	Grand Ball	G. E. Retter
11/18	Dance	G. E. Retter
12/16	Dance	G. E. Retter
1/1	Dance	G. E. Retter
1/8	Dancing Club	Maude Young, teacher, Prof. Alfred Damm, music
1/15	Dancing Club	
1/22	Dancing Club	
1/24-25	"The Slave Girl's Dream"	Me & Him Comedy Company: Prof. DeVer, Ed and Beulah Oberlys, Adelaide and Alexander Herrmann
1/29	Dancing Club	
1/30	Organizational Meeting	Etude Musical Club
2/5	Dancing Club	
2/12	Dancing Club	

2/13	Club Meeting	Etude Musical Club
2/19	Dancing Club	
2/26	Dancing Club	
3/2	Annual Meeting	Farmland Natural Gas & Oil
3/5	Dancing Club	
3/12	Dancing Club	
3/16	Concert	Farmland Epworth League
3/17	Farmers' Institute	
3/19	Social Dance	Farmland Dancing Club
4/3	Musicale Program	Etude Music Club
4/26	Commencement	Farmland High School: Third Annual
5/8	Club Meeting	Etude Music Club
5/17-23	Entertainment	Hyde's Comedy and Concert Company
7/20	Organizational Meeting	Progress Gas and Oil Company

1894/1895 Season

9/11	Elocutionary	Reed Sisters
9/26	Republican Rally	W. A. Ketcham
10/6	Republican Rally	William M. Marine
10/9	Concert	Etude Music Club
10/20	Entertainment	Pete Peterson Company
10/23	Republican Rally	R. A. Brown
10/28	Republican Rally	R. S. Taylor
1/1	Private Party	E. S. Secest

1/16	"Sweet Briar" or "The Flower Girl of New York"	Local Actors
2/6	Madame Fry Majestic Entertainment of Boston	Madame Fry and Daughter
3/ 4	Annual Meeting	Farmland Natural Gas & Oil
3/16	Farmers' Institute	
4/5	Entertainment	Farmland Female Debating Society and Farmland School Children
4/15-16	Entertainment	Hyde's Comedy and Concert Company
6/3	"Prison Life in Dixie"	Lecturer: E. W. McIntosh

1895/1896 Season

8/16	Entertainment	Southern University Glee Club: Miss Clay, Freddie Helm
10/10	"Old Farmer Hopkins"	Lecturer: Frank S. Davidson
10/28	Entertainment	
12/20	"Deestrick Skule"	Local Actors
1/1	Social Dance	Elmer Bales
1/8	Banquet	Odd Fellows and Rebekah Lodges
2/22	Entertainment	Harry and Ruth Orville
2/29	Old Fiddlers Concert	Randolph County Musicians
3/9	Second Sight & Magician, The Wonder of the Age	Prof Hampton, Miss Olivette
3/21	Farmers' Institute	
3/23	"The Danger Signal"	Local Actors

3/25	"From Andersonville Prison to the White House"	Lecturer: Ralph O. Bates
4/14	Commencement	Farmland High School: Fourth Annual: John L. Griffith, Speaker
4/20	"Bi-Chloride of Fun"	Alba Heywood Concert Company
5/12	Entertainment	Hall's American Entertainers: Cicero S. Seibert

1896/1897 Season

7/27	Republican Rally	John Worrell
8/5	Rehearsal for Soldier's Reunion	Directed by: G. E. Retter
8/10	Kaleidoscope Carnival	Miss Burwell, Local Actors "Coming Woman" and "Naughty Tommy"
8/21	Soldiers' Reunion	5 th Annual Randolph County Soldiers' Reunion: W. A. Ketcham, etal.
9/3	Elocutionary	Hallie Q. Brown, Miss Mayme
9/19	Reunion Campfire	19th Indiana Regiment
10/10	Political Meeting	Populists: John R. Brunt
10/24	Republican Rally	Hiram Brownlee
11/2	Republican Rally	A. O. Marsh
12/4	Entertainment	The Warmack Sister' Creole Specialty Company
12/22	Entertainment	Farmland School Children
1/13	Social	For Farmland Young People
3/5	Farmers' Institute	
3/12-13	Entertainment	Hawthorne Sisters Comedy Company and Local Actors
4/22	Commencement	Farmland High School: Fourth: John L. Griffith

1897/1898 Season

10/7	District Convention	Women's Relief Corps
10/11	"Mascot Blackface Minstrels"	Local Actors
10/27	"The Stranger at Our Gate"	Lecturer: Jahu DeWitt Miller
11/20	"Around the Stove"	Hoyt Conary
11/23	Concert	Methodist Episcopal Church Choir
12/25	Private Party	G. E. Retter
1/3	"Rip Van Winkle"	Edward H. Frye
1/15	Political Meeting	Republicans
2/10	"The Evolution of a Lover"	Frank A. Morgan
6/6	"Editha's Burglar," "Prince of Liars"	Park Comedy Company: Baby Gail, Van C. Durrett, manager

1898/1899 Season

8/19-20	Elocutionary	Hallie Q. Brown and Choir of African Students
9/3	"Reply to Ingersoll"	Lecturer: J. R. D. John
10/6	"Odd Fellowship"	I.O.O.F. Hall Dedication: O. N. Cranor
11/2	Republican Rally	John L. Griffiths
11/4	"The Sources of Power"	J. J. Mills, President of Earlham College
12/28	"Old Fashioned Cake Walk"	Charles Ward
1/27	Musical Concert	Asotceam Trio Concert Company: Arthur Wells, Henry Saleer, Hayes Greenwalt

2/4	Concert and Specialty Entertainment	Harry and Ruth Orville and Local Actors: Lettie Barker, Wilbur McProud, Ed Roberts, Chas Hester, Everett Hewitt, Harry and Clyde Burren.
3/2	"Original Southern Cakewalk"	Lillian Russell Tuxedo Colored Minstrels
3/15	"Spanish American War Reproduction"	Stereopticon Show
3/24	Farmers' Institute	
4/22	Commencement	Farmland High School: Fifth: Rev. Burris Jenkins
5/4	"An Ole Plantation Night"	Farmland Male Chorus Society

1899/1900 Season

9/30	"Peculiar People"	Impersonator: Margrette Mellison
10/26	Meeting	Farmland Cooperative Creamery
11/25	Meeting	Farmland Cooperative Creamery
12/9	"A Noble Outcast" or "Jerry the Tramp"	Selma Dramatic Company
12/30	"A Rag Time Feast"	Farmland W.R.C. Post
1/15	"Silas Hunter in New York"	Local Actors
1/31	"Uncle Tom's Cabin"	Bailey's Big UTC Company: Prof. Harry Clair's Military Band, Seeker Wilks, Seeker Jr., Malcome Anderson
3/17	Egyptian Star Flight of Silk - Prof. Hermann's magic tricks	Harry & Ruth Orville
4/2-6	"East Lynne," "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," "A Fool for Luck," "Joshua Whitcomb," "Jane, or Is Marriage a Failure?"	Mackay Stock Company: W. E. Keifer, manager, his wife and daughter, Mr. & Mrs. John Negrotto, E. H. Mickey, Rosabel Leslie

1900/1901 Season

8/31-9/1	Music and Elocutionary	Hallie Q. Brown, George T. Simpson, Wm. A. Calhoun
10/ 8	Organizational Meeting	Hoosier Oil & Gas: W. W. Fowler, G. E. Retter
10/12	Republican Rally	Newton Gilbert
10/17	Republican Rally	Frank B. Posey
10/31	Republican Rally	Lincoln S. Baldwin, W. J. Hilligoss
12/24	Cake Walk and Dance	Chattanooga Tennessee Band
1/4	Farewell Party	Misses Adah and Fledda White
1/21-26	Entertainment	Barbour Theater Company: Harry W. Marsh, Mitchell Ingraham, A. J. Hicks, Thomas Sullivan, Edwin Barrie, Katherine Van Esse, Mollie Schuchert, Amelia York
1/28	Special Meeting	Hoosier Oil & Gas Company
3/22-23	Entertainment	The Metropolitan Players
4/12	"Imogene"	Winchester Actors
5/3	Commencement "An Evening with Riley"	Farmland High School : Sixth Annual
5/10-11	"Maids of Myth" Minuet"	Physical Culture Club: Miss Pickerill of Emerson College of Oratory, Boston, Local Actors

1901/1902 Season

10/8	Annual Meeting	Hoosier Oil & Gas Company
12/17	Impersonator	Prof. S. I. Connor
12/20-21	Entertainment	Harry and Ruth Orville, Mrs. Clyde Burres
1/3	Dance	Musician: Van Capper
3/14	"Spy of Gettysburg"	Local Actors

1902/1903 Season

8/1	Civic Meeting	Boosters
10/13-18	"Songs and Sorrows of the Negro Race," "Character Building," "Travels Abroad."	Hallie Q. Brown, Local Actors: Mae Meeks, The Ladies Quartet, The Mandolin Club, Joe Smith, Mrs. L. N. Davis
10/22	Republican Rally	Alonzo L. Bales
10/31	Republican Rally	J. Frank Hanly
11/13	Concert	McGibeny Family
11/18	Magician	Karl Germaine
12/1	Caricaturist	E. Vance Cooke
12/24	Humorous Lecture	A. W. Colnner
1/2-10	Holiness Revival	John T. Hatfield, Mr. & Mrs. A. S. Phillips
2/2	Annual Meeting	Farmland Telephone Company
2/20	"The Kankakee Poet"	W. W. Pfrimmer
4/8	Lecture	Austin Hunter
4/10-17	Entertainment	German Medicine Company
4/26-5/4	Holiness Meetings	Metropolitan Holiness Church of Chicago: Edwin L. Harvey, Susan Fogg
5/5	Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin	
5/6	Entertainment	Ideal Entertainers
6/21	Farmland Holiness Mission	

1903/1904 Season

10/5-9	Entertainment	The German Medicine Company
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10/30	Schaefer-Martens Concert	Indianapolis Conservatory of Music: Herr Schaefer, Mr. Martens, Miss Rust, Nellie Diggs
11/16	Entertainment	Empire Vaudeville Company
11/19	"A Summer in the Mountains"	Scot Butler, President of Butler University
12/10	"The Spirit that Wins"	Prof. Stanley Coulter, Purdue University
12/23	"Eli and Jane"	Motion Picture
1/6	"An Hour with the Stars"	John A. Miller, Indiana University
1/8	"Eli and Jane"	Heber Edison Motion Picture Entertainment
1/21	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Union City
1/28	Humorist	Gilbert Eldridge
2/1	Annual Meeting	Farmland Telephone Company
2/5	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Union City
2/11	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Albany
2/19	"Because I Love You"	Harry Orville and Local Actors
2/20	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Winchester
2/26	Entertainment	Ideal Entertainers
3/12	The Village Vagabond	Maude Henderson Comedy Company
3/25	Lecture	Dr. Cole of Los Angeles CA
4/4	Basketball Game	Farmland High School vs. Town Boys

1904/1905 Season

9/19	Political Meeting	Farmland Republican Club
9/22	Republican Rally	James A. Bingham and Albert O. Marsh
10/4	Republican Rally	P. T. Colgrove

10/17	Political Meeting	Republicans: Teddy's First Voters Club: Fred W. Sheets
10/31	Political Meeting	Prohibition Party: Rev Sherman Powell
11/1	Republican Rally	C. S. Jelley
11/19	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Albany
11/24	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Dyan
11/29	Concert	McGibeny Family
12/15	"Eli and Jane"	Motion Picture Melodrama
12/22	Dramatic Impersonator	Newton Beers
12/27	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Albany
12/29	"Because I Love You"	Local Actors
1/10	"A Night in Persia"	Rev. S. K. Nweey stereopticon lecture
1/26	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Muncie
2/6	Rehearsal for "Nevada"	Local Production
2/6	Annual Meeting	Farmland Telephone Company
2/11	Basketball Game	Farmland vs. Gaston Wizards
2/22	"Nevada" or "The Lost Mine"	Local Actors
3/8	"Picturesque Japan"	Mr. Batchelor
3/11	School Children's Matinee	Harry Orville
3/17	"Shamrock Entertainment"	Harry and Ruth Orville
3/25	"Under the Laurels"	Bon Ton Stock Company
4/10	Civic Meeting	Dr. Jones, Union Christian College

Appendix C

Chaos Flat Program

Program from "Chaos Flat," Belknap Playbills and Programs Collection, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Box 18.

Programme for To-night.

The Misses Deaves!

ADA and RILLIE

In their Successful Musical Comedy

CHAOS FLAT

Supported by the Excellent Comedians

Harry Mack & Harry Porter

And a strong company under the management of E.W. Chittenden.

Cast of Characters

Daisy Montgomery

Madam Golightly, irrepressible nailor

Mrs. Roonan

Beautiful Snow, an aesthetic maiden Ada Deaves

Beatrice Montgomery

A Young Chappie

Chips Roonan

A Moonlight Frolic..... Rillie Deaves

Cladius Bucamp Brickner

Michael Roonan Harry Mack

Fred Montgomery (known as Casey) Harry Porter

Pop Montgomery Horace Newman

Hamilton Brigham W. G. Hunter, Jr.

Clio (a kitchen girl) Rose Leon

Jane Minnie Hosey

Synopsis

ACT I – Interior of Montgomery Flat. Time—Morning

ACT II – Street in New York. Time—Six weeks later. Afternoon.

ACT III – Scene 1—Passage leading to Specialty Hall. Scene 2—Palace. Time—Evening.

Musical Introductions and Specialties

Act I

Are You Going to the Ball? (Song and Dance).....Daisy

Awfully Swell.....Beatrice

“It is near it” Pop

Act II

Chip’s Dream “Beautiful Snow” recitation..... Mrs. Roonan

Chip’s Dream “Shadow Dance” (phantom)..... Chips

“Since Katie learned to play” (song) Casey

“She Gave a Sly Glance” (duet)..... Chips and Casey

“Little Peach” (recitation) Mrs. Roonan

“Down Went McGinty” Mr. Roonan

“Casey’s Party” (Irish Reel) Mr. and Mrs. Roonan, Chips and Casey

Grand MedleyBy the Company

Act III

“Don’t Cher Know” (swell duet)..... Beatrice and Daisy

Ventriloquism Specialty Claudius and Casey

“Tootsy Wootsy” (song)..... Casey

Minnette Clog Beatrice and Daisy

Grand Finale.....By the Company

Gustave Rutledge.Musical Director.

Harry Mack.Stage Manager.

Appendix D

Advertising Broadside for Hallie Q. Brown

DRAMATIC  HUMOROUS RECITALS
AT THE K. OF P. HALL,
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE A. M. E. CHURCH, HAMILTON, OHIO,
FRIDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5, 1898, AT 8 O'CLOCK.

"Miss Brown, in her elocution, is unquestionably brilliant. Her 'Fifty Miles an Hour,' descriptive of Mrs. Garfield's ride to Washington when her husband was shot, was given with that generous touch of womanly feeling that made it the gem of the entertainment."—*Miami Helmet*, Piqua, Ohio.

"It was most interesting to hear the American style of elocution. Her flexible voice passed with ease from sunshine to shadow, and this combined with the graces of facial expressions and flowing gesture, added a charm to the play of imagination that enriched each rendering."—J. SPENCE-HODGSON, Esq., President of the Manchester Association of Elocutionists.



"As I listened to her musical voice and felt the charm of her graceful presence, I could sincerely trust that our people would respond to the appeal that this noble-hearted philanthropist would make to them in the name of her race."—LADY HENRY SOMERSET.

"Of her recitation too much cannot be said. As a reader, she is the peer of any professional in the land. She has a sweet flexible voice. Her enunciation is distinct, her manner graceful, and her gesticulations eminently appropriate to the character of her selections. On one occasion an educated and much-travelled gentleman, who has listened to all the most noted elocutionists in the United States and Europe, was so enthusiastic over Miss Brown's rendering of the 'Church Bells,' that he declared he never saw or heard it equaled; that her manner, voice and gesture were all superior to anything he had ever listened to or hoped to hear."—*Christian Herald*, London.

Miss HALLIE Q. BROWN, M. S. C.,
of Wilberforce University, Ohio.
Home from a Four Years tour in Europe,
— WITH A —
CHOIR OF AFRICAN STUDENTS:
Miss MANYE, Messrs MSIKINYA, DUBE, TANTSI AND MAXEKE.
Each student represents a different tribe and will give the weird songs, Manners and Customs of the Natives; and their Superstitions, Witch Doctors and their Practices and other items of interest and instruction.
ADMISSION 25 CENTS. TICKETS FOR SALE AT HECK'S.

Broadside. Hallie Quinn Brown Collection, Central State University Archives, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

Appendix E

Republican Rally Speakers

For this analysis, professional speakers include those from out of state or who came by arrangement of the State Republican Central Committee. Chart compiled from Rally notices and reviews in the *Farmland Enterprise*.

Date	Speaker	Party Role
10/1/1890	Henry U. Johnson	Local Candidate - U. S. Representative
10/9/1890	Theodore Shockney	Sitting State Senator
10/14/1890	Hon. Thomas E. Boyd	Local Speaker - Candidate from neighboring district
10/31/1890	Capt. W. D. Stone	Local Candidate - State Representative
9/26/1892	Henry U. Johnson	Local Candidate - U. S. Representative
10/20/1892	Robert E. Kennedy	Professional Speaker (Ohio)
10/26/1892	W. A. Thompson	Local Speaker (Muncie, Indiana)
9/26/1894	W. A. Ketcham	Candidate for Indiana Attorney General
10/6/1894	Wm. M. Marine	Professional Speaker (Baltimore, Maryland)
10/23/1894	Robert A. Brown	Professional Speaker (Franklin, Indiana)
10/29/1894	R. S. Taylor	Professional Speaker (Ft. Wayne, Indiana)
7/27/1896	John Worrell	Professional Speaker (Indianapolis, Indiana)
10/16/1896	James Watson	Professional Speaker with local connections. The rally became so large it was moved outdoors.
10/24/1896	Hiram Brownlee	Professional Speaker (Marion, Indiana)
11/2/1898	John L. Griffiths	Professional Speaker (Indianapolis, Indiana)
9/3/1900	W.S. Taylor	Professional Speaker – former Governor of Kentucky. The rally became so large it was moved outdoors.
10/12/1900	Newton Gilbert	Candidate for Lt. Governor
10/17/1900	Frank B. Posey	Professional Speaker (Evansville, Indiana)

10/31/1900	Lincoln S. Baldwin	Professional Speaker (Indianapolis, Indiana)
10/22/1902	Alonzo Bales	Local Speaker
10/31/1902	J. Frank Hanly	Professional Speaker (Lafayette, Indiana)
9/22/1904	James A. Bingham	Professional Speaker (Evansville, Indiana)
10/4/1904	P. T. Colgrove	Professional Speaker (Michigan)
11/1/1904	C. S. Jelley	Professional Speaker (Minnesota)

Appendix F

Farmers' Institute Speeches

March 17, 1894³²³

Chas. W. Paris..... "Plowing, When and How for Various Crops."
Prof. W. C. Latta "Outlook for Young Men Educated for the Farm."
Hamilton Pursley..... "Gardening."
Isaac J. Smith..... "Feeding Cattle for the Market."
Ed T. Botkin "Testing and Setting of Eggs."
John T. Olver "Economy of Farm Labor."
Prof. Henry W. Bowers..... "Need of Educated Farmers."
Prof. W. C. Latta "Attractions of Rural Life."

March 16, 1895³²⁴

Samuel M. Cougill "To What Extent is the Farmer Responsible for the Lack of Prosperity?"
J. E. Hinshaw "The Care and Construction of Roads and Roadways."
C. W. Paris "Tile Drainage of Clay Soil."
Flora Meeks..... "Woman's Part on the Farm."
C. L. Hawkins "Farm Records."
Dr. L. N. Davis "How Better the Social Conditions of Farmers' Families."

March 21, 1896³²⁵

Prof. H. A. Huston "Comparative Feed Values of Corn and Cornstalks."
Mrs. John W. Diggs..... "The Care and Management of Poultry."
L. J. Hook "Farmer's Mutual Fire Insurance."
Dr. L. N. Davis "Practical View of Some of the Results of Modern Education on Farm Life."
M. F. Wood "The History and Relative Merit of the Duroc-Jersey Swine."
Prof. H. A. Huston "How Shall We Improve Our Soils?"
W. A. Vanpelt "Corn Culture."
Prof. H. A. Huston "State Experiment Station Work."
L. W. Green "The Comparative Value of Dairy and Beef."

³²³ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 23, 1894.

³²⁴ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 22, 1895.

³²⁵ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 27, 1896.

March 5, 1897³²⁶

J. W. Bradrick "Farm Dairying."
James Riley "The Improvement of Wheat."
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³²⁷ *Farmland Enterprise*, March 31, 1899.

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Curriculum Vitae

Rose Wernicke

Education

- Indiana University – Indianapolis, Indiana
 - Master of Arts – History, 2013
 - Thesis topic: “The Farmland Opera House: Culture, Identity, and the Corn Contest.”
- Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis – Indianapolis, Indiana
 - Associate of Science –Architectural Technology, May 2006
- Northern Illinois University - DeKalb, Illinois
 - Bachelor of Science – Accountancy, 1984

Affiliations

- Member, Indiana Landmarks
- Member, Indiana Historical Society
- Member, National Council on Public History

Experience

Indiana Supreme Court, Courts in the Classroom, Public History Intern

Duties include researching and writing about the Courtroom restoration and history and assisting with educational programs.

Indiana Historical Society, Public Programs Intern

Chose historic images and wrote descriptions for selected Indianapolis sites for Indy Talks event, participated on History Lab remodel team. Created a prototype exhibit for testing. Researched and prepared activities for Family Days including Winterfest, Museum Nights and Reconnecting to Our Waterways. Participated in Town Hall discussion series.

ARCHitecture trio, Inc., Architectural Drawing Specialist and ARCHtrio Accountant

Façade and Feasibility Studies: Researched history of the communities and individual properties, measured and prepared As-Built façade drawings, created proposed restoration drawings and narrative descriptions for the properties.

Construction Documents: Prepared documents for residential and commercial projects which involved collaborating with design teams, including architects, engineers, contractors, materials suppliers and clients. Completed Section 106 Documentation for Historic Preservation projects.

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Student Intern

Project: City Market Renovation Program – As Built Drawings

Millmaster Onyx Corporation, Financial Systems Manager

Southern New England Telephone Company, Manager Corporate Books

Centel Corporation, Senior Accountant