

\$1.00

# SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS BULLETIN

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VOL. XVII, NO. 3. YUBA CITY CALIFORNIA JULY 1978  
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MARYSVILLE THEATRE -- 1908 (COURTESY PACKARD LIBRARY)  
IN THIS ISSUE - HEDLEY HALL ON FRANK BACON BY CAROL WITHERINGTON

YCHS LIBRARY Recollections By N. Marie Burns Hyman

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWS BULLETIN

Vol. XVII, No. 3

July, 1978

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An index and file of all the past issues of the NEWS BULLETIN may be found in the Sutter County Library and in the Marysville City-County Library.

NOTE: THE OCTOBER ISSUE WILL INCLUDE AN ARTICLE BY H. W. HOFFMAN ON THE CALIFORNIA STAGE COMPANY AND SUTTER COUNTY DRAUGHT YARDS FOR THIS COMPANY; ALSO RECOLLECTIONS BY VERNA McLEAN SEXTON.

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SUMMER MEETING

The Society's regular quarterly meeting will be on Tuesday, July 18, 1978 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Memorial Museum. The program will be announced in the newspapers.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our April meeting brought so many interesting happenings, and I would like to share them briefly. First of all - the Yuba City Chante' appeared, and sang five or six different songs, most of which were arranged by Group Advisor Joanne Engle. What a lovely way to begin our program.

An appreciative "Thanks" regarding the many hours of service donated toward the production of the News Bulletin by specific persons was noted by Editor William Dawson. His message made us somewhat aware of the overwhelming amount of time put in each issue of the Bulletin by Editor Bill and Mrs. Dawson, as well.

Randy Schnabel reported on the apparent lack of storage area in the current museum building. With the evidence of constant thievery, and the continual donations of very valuable and pleasurable findings, "SPACE" becomes extremely necessary. As a "donation to get the ball rolling", the Schnabel family deposited in the Sutter County Historical Society Memorial Park-Museum Fund a check for \$500. In addition, the lovely table displays used for our pleasure, were donated by the Yuba City Floral and Gift Shop. As our meeting ended, each basket of flowers were auctioned, and an additional \$130 went directly to our building fund. So, -- we're off!!!

The highlight of the evening was keystone speaker, Dr. Joe Romney, of Cal. Poly, San Luis Obispo. By sharing some delightful experiences that he has had, he left us with interesting ways of preserving historical events through oral interviews. We, the SCHS, can do much in this field alone. To those of you who heard Dr. Romney speak, it would delight me to hear from you to let me know of your thoughts and responses, regarding this event, and the ideas presented there. For those not in attendance, I would also like to hear your ideas about any subjects of your preference that could be used in planning future events.

Thank you,

INDRA NASON

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NOTICE

To aid the proposed enlargement of facilities at the Sutter County Community Memorial Museum, as announced at the April meeting of the Sutter County Historical Society, donations to this special fund are being received.

Mrs. Wanda Rankin, treasurer of the Society, announced that donations received for this purpose will be maintained in a separate account called the Sutter County Historical Society Memorial Park and Museum fund, at the Bank of America, 777 Colusa Avenue, Yuba City, CA 95991. They may be sent to the bank or Wanda Rankin, treasurer.

At the annual SCHS dinner meeting (April 18) first donations were received for this project.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

We wish to announce that Mrs. Carol Withington has consented to be a member of our Bulletin Committee. A short introduction to her appears in this edition at the end of the feature article concerning Hedley Hall and Frank Bacon, p. 20.

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Democrat, February 9, 1916

Handsome Depot.

The handsome and commodious new depot being built at Sutter City by the N.E. Company will be finished sometime the latter part of this week said Superintendent J.B. Rowray... For some time, in fact ever since the line to Colusa was built, the people of Sutter City had nothing but a boxcar for a ticket office and depot. Later a better shed was built, but now that place will be graced with a handsome new depot.

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM NOTES  
Jean Gustin, Director

The museum's "Special Exhibits" program has been **very** popular with visitors. These loaned displays are changed every four to six weeks, and they provide an opportunity for the owners to share their collection or a group of items with the public. Often these displays attract first time visitors, school groups, or people with specialized interests to the museum.

There has been a great variety in "Special Exhibits" in three years. We consider each a mini-exhibit with "something to say." The "something" may, (as in the "Dr. Jacobs, Meridian Country Doctor" items), show things that belonged to a single family, to a particular area of the county, and to the old time practice of a profession. In "Victoriana" we attempted to give the feeling of Victorian life through a group of items unique to the whole era. Through a collection of like items (shells, Hummels, Christmas plates, crosses, etc.) the variety within a collection can be shown and contrasted. The theme, "Things Made of Wood," showed the old time use of wood for many things now made of other materials.

The advantage of the "Special Exhibits" program to the museum is that we are able to show items that we may never have in our permanent collection. We are also able to guarantee something "new" to see for repeat visitors. "Special Exhibits" flyers are sent to all schools, youth groups, and to the media. They are also posted in public areas in the county. We are anxious to continue this very interesting museum feature. If you have any suggestions for future displays, please contact the museum.

SUMMER - FALL SPECIAL EXHIBITS

July 8 - August 17, "Cast Iron Still Banks," loaned by Olga Messick.

August 18 - Sept. 28, "Cut Glass Heirlooms," loaned by members of the museum auxiliary.

September 29 - Oct. 26, "Old Norway," loaned by the Sons of Norway.

October 26 - Dec. 1, "Hopi Indian Arts and Crafts," loaned by Marian Behr.

December 2 - Jan. 5, "Model Trains," loaned by Bob McBratney.

LIST OF DONORS TO THE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MUSEUM TRUST FUND  
Continued from the April, 1978 BULLETIN

Mr. & Mrs. R. A. Schnabel	in memory of Anne Kodama
Phydalia Wagner	in memory of John H. Wise
Verna Sexton	in memory of Margareta Sumner
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Jessamine G. Powell	in memory of James Eager
Harriett C. Harter	in memory of Verne Stafford
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Mr. & Mrs. George Briick	in memory of Neva Stillwell
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Jack & Helen Heenan & family	in memory of James H. Eager
James & Mary E. Spilman	in memory of H.L. Verne Stafford
Mrs. Virgil V. Walton	Out-right gift

Mr. & Mrs. Dick Brandt	in honor of Howard Harter on his Birthday
Adah R. Borchert	in memory of Henry Robey
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Alice A. Soderberg	in memory of May Belle Rice
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Mr. & Mrs. James M. McElroy Sr.	in memory of Bard Anderson
Robert & Marilyn Smith	in memory of Melissie F. Mitchell
Howard & Norma Harter	in memory of Chester Lathrop
Mr. & Mrs. W. R. Dawson	in memory of John Mercel Pennebaker

#### SUTTERANA

NOTE: Captain Sutter had returned from the California rebellion of 1844-45. He had led a company in support of the governor. He had been absent from the Fort for several months. In this letter dated June 28, 1845 he is describing conditions to the U.S. Consul at Monterey. We quote only part of the letter:

...."When I arrived here from the campagne I had to regulate a few disorders among some of the tribes: but in general they behalved themselves very well, and when the report of my dead came here, on the whole feather River and Sacramento was an awful mourning for me, and all was very sorrowful, as they look upon me now as their father and benefactor and Protector. When I arrived here a great many Chiefs and people visited me, to convince themselves that I am alive yet, this affection and gratitude of the poor Indians was very satisfactorely to me, particular when I learned how some ungrateful white men was on the point to act here, and wished very much that I would be dead, for have a chance to robe and plunder. It was heigh time that

arrived here...."

J. A. Sutter

The Larkin Papers  
Edited by George P. Hammond  
Vol 3, pp. 251-3.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marysville Appeal, September 8, 1864

Very Strange. -- The Express is much exercised about the stars and stripes, and pretends great reverences for the flag. If this is not all hypocrisy, why does not the editor raise the flag on the Express building on proper occasions and when loyal men raise theirs.

NOTE: The Express was one of the few pro-Confederate papers in California and never accepted the Civil War as a legitimate mission of the Lincoln administration.

Marysville Appeal, October 4, 1860

The Times very properly condemns the custom of shipping California flour to eastern markets without its bearing a California brand; thus seeking to palm it off as eastern flour, when it deserves to be sold on its own merits.

Democrat, February 11, 1916

Ad.

Saturday Specials

Shoulder Roast Pork, per lb.	10¢
Leg Roast Pork, per lb.	15¢

Today Only

Valley Meat Company



RECOLLECTIONS  
By Nora Marie Burns Hyman

Living with my grandmother, Honora Burns, in her home at the foot of the Buttes in Sutter County, at the turn of the century, I remember running through the spacious rooms, all thirteen of them, in the house on the ranch.

My grandmother loved beautiful things. At this period her home was considered a "show place." She was a very proud woman and enjoyed living in a genteel manner. Her silver was polished until it gleamed, her Irish linens were the finest. I still use her silver tea service, and I have, and use, some of her linens. On my dresser I have the scarf that my Aunt Mary Regina hem-stitched and embroidered before I was born in 1901.

Grandmother almost always kept a housekeeper, and in the busy season, a girl to assist her in the kitchen. She liked to live graciously but she never spent a nickel unless she got full value. She was a real business woman and could take her place with the best businessmen in Sutter County of that time.

THE COMPANION AND ASSISTANT

As my grandmother grew older, she grew heavier. She was less than five feet tall and plumper than plump. In those days women were "heavy set" or "fleshy". Grandmother could not have been called "heavy set," she was too short for that term. I suppose she was "fleshy" although I do not know how she gained so much weight. In the years we lived with her I never saw her eat large meals, but still there it was. There was always an abundance of food at the ranch, the cellar was full of everything good. Some

of the things were raised on the ranch and some bought.

I was a skinny little thing with black curly hair and loads of freckles. Starting at the age of six, I was like a companion to my grandmother. She would take me with her on trips as her companion, and a very necessary companion I was. Grandmother wore high-laced black shoes, as most women did at that time. Because of her weight, she was not able to bend down to lace and unlace her shoes. I remember when she took me with her to Sacramento for a few days. We stayed at a hotel which delighted me. I had never stayed in a hotel before and I was absolutely fascinated with the elevator, the first I had ever seen.

The first night of our trip it was my duty, of course, to unlace my grandmother's shoes. Being overanxious to be helpful and do my duty, I worked in great haste and got the first shoe off without any problem. Encouraged by my success, I worked even faster with the other shoe, ending up with a lot of very hard knots. The more I tried to undo them the tighter they got. Finally, Grandmother's patience gave out and she said, "Let it go." We went to bed, grandmother with her foot firmly laced into her shoe, hanging out the side of the bed. I do not know if she slept that night, but I slept as soundly as if I did not have a thing on my conscience. By morning grandmother's leg was popping over her shoe like a loaf of rising dough. She called in the maid and the shoe was finally removed. Grandmother was indisposed for a few days and was unable to leave her room. I had a grand time during this period of freedom. I rode up and down in the elevator and ate bananas. I loved bananas and I



NORA MARIE BURNS HYMAN  
AROUND 1920  
AGE 19 YEARS

At this time she was studying art at the old Hopkins School of Art in the old mansion where the Mark Hopkins Hotel stands today. Later she married Leon Hyman in old St. Mary's Catholic Church in San Francisco, where they have lived for many years.

remember eating a great many of them. I do not remember going to a restaurant or the hotel dining room. I just remember all those bananas.

Looking back on that night, we must have presented an amusing sight. The voluminous figure of grandmother, her leg hanging out from beneath the cover, and the skinny little kid lying beside her sound asleep, the one who had done all the damage, waiting to ride the elevator the next day.

#### THE INTRUDER

This is the only thing I remember about my sister, Bernice, when we lived on grandmother's ranch.

She was born on July 26, 1905. Everyone kept complaining about the heat. The adults kept saying, "You could fry an egg out in the sun today." I heard this said several times.

The doctor had gone and the nurse was having a little respite in the kitchen and visiting with her boyfriend. She set a pan of water in the center of the kitchen floor and let me jump in and out of it. This was great because Mama had never let me do this.

Finally the nurse said, "Would you like to see your new sister?" She dried me and put on a fresh smock. We went into the room where my mother was lying with the new baby in her arms. I went up and looked at the baby. She seemed to have on a lot of clothing, but what impressed me most was that she was wearing a knit cap. I thought, "What a silly thing she is, wearing a cap on what everyone agreed was the hottest day of the year." I took a step closer and I gave the baby a sharp slap across the face.

That ended the visit and I was hustled back to the kitchen. I felt terribly frustrated. I thought, "I must get even with someone." I picked up a safety pin and fastened it firmly on my toe, then I screamed. Nurse picked me up and put me on the sink. Everyone came running, they worked and I screamed. It hurt but I didn't care, I had the attention of all the family. I was four and a half years old and I remember that day very well.

AUTHOR

Nora Marie Burns Hyman, daughter of Peter Burns, is a long-time resident of San Francisco but spent most of her childhood in Sutter County in the old Lang House. This home was shown in a picture in the admirable book, The Survivors, by Mary Jane Zall and Janet R. Sullivan and in a few Historical Society News Bulletins.

Encouraged by the interest shown by Mrs. Hyman in her letter to the Appeal Democrat complimenting the above book, our Bulletin committee asked her to write our first Recollection feature which she did for the January 1977 issue. This made hers the first response to our plea for word from the "Last Survivors", a phrase she coined in that letter.

Other information on her life may be found in an article written by her sister Bernice Burns Cheim on Peter Burns in the October 1976 issue of Sutter County Historical Society News Bulletin (pp. 28, 30, 31).

AN INTERVIEW WITH HEDLEY HALL

The Day He Met Frank Bacon

by

CAROL WITHINGTON

It was nearly midnight on June 10, 1904. A fire broke out in the Swain and Hudson's planing mill on the corner of D and First Streets in Marysville. According to the Sutter County Farmer, "though the laddies did noble work they were unable to keep the flame from destroying that structure as well as the theatre adjoining..."<sup>1</sup>

The paper added that:

The losses will approximate \$50,000, with a small insurance. The most regrettable feature of the fire is that the Marysville Theatre will probably not be rebuilt and<sub>2</sub> the firm of Swain and Hudson will retire from business.

The statement that another theatre would never replace the Marysville Theatre was merely an assumption on the part of the newspaper. Three years later, a new theatre to be known as the Atkins Theatre was built on the site of the old planing mill and the Elk's Home on the lot where the old theatre once stood.

According to the History of Yuba and Sutter Counties by Peter Delay, the citizens of Marysville gave Frank Atkins, Sr. a bonus to engage in the new enterprise in order that there might be a continuance of the theatricals to which they had become accustomed.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to that time, George William Hall (March 26, 1861 - September 16, 1935), the acting manager of the former Marysville Theatre had succeeded in bringing to the area many fine

attractions by presenting noted actors of that era before the patrons of his theatre. In order to continue with these theatrical presentations, a "handsome" new theatre was formally opened on January 20, 1908, with the superb comic opera "Woodland." The January 10, 1908 edition of the Sutter County Farmer described the new establishment as having a seating capacity of 512 on the lower floor, 600 in the balcony and ten boxes. It was noted that many Sutter residents attended the gala opening.<sup>4</sup>

On January 24, 1908 the paper added that the new theatre was one of the best on the coast and could accommodate any of the largest shows. The paper related that Manager Atkins had already booked many feature acts which included the "Red Feather" comic opera, the Gordon Minstrels, Anthony and Cleopatra and other fine shows.<sup>5</sup> Frank Bevan was appointed as Atkins' assistant manager and serving as one of the ushers was Hedley Hall.

According to Hall, many of the big names in the theatre played in Marysville. There were minstrel shows and big parades and Marysville was a "lively town." In those days the actors and actresses had no microphones. They had to be heard without this aid.

Within a year after the Atkins Theatre opened, Frank Bacon, native of Sutter County, appeared in his role as Sam Graham in "The Fortune Hunter." Hall recalled that George Cohan's sister Josephine, was also in the cast. This was the first occasion that Hall ever saw the actor who would later be highly acclaimed for the starring role in "Lightnin'."

Around 1921 Hedley Hall saw this famous play in the Fulton Theatre in New York. "It was a very funny play," recalled Hall who still remembered some of the scenes and lines especially the one recited by "Lightnin'" about the encounter with the bees.

One day, while walking up Broadway with a friend, Hedley Hall officially met Frank Bacon. After the usual introductions Hall remembered that Bacon kept looking at him as if he knew him. "I guess I resembled my father," stated Hall. As soon as Bacon learned that Hall was from Marysville, he asked if he were "G. Billie's" son. When Hedley Hall replied with a "yes," Bacon stated that if Hedley had met him earlier, he would be traveling with him in his play, "Lightnin'."

Soon after it was revealed in their conversation that Hedley's father, George W. Hall, known by many as "G. Billie" had kept Bacon and his family from starving to death years before. "He put his hand in his own pocket and helped us," Bacon related. "When we traveled in the stock companies (in the early 1900's), we always knew if we could make it to the Marysville Theatre, we would find a helping hand.

According to Hall, there was to be a scheduled parade to Penn Station for Frank Bacon at ~~the~~ closing of his play at the Fulton Theatre. "I want you in the line of march where I can see you," Bacon informed Hall that day of their meeting. Hall recalled being in the firstrow on the end. He saw Bacon and he waved to him. This was the last time Hedley Hall ever saw the famous actor. Bacon died the following year.

Years later, Bill Elleford, manager of a stock company that frequented Marysville contacted Hall. He wanted him to meet



Lloyd Bacon, Frank's son, who was then a movie director. "When I tell Lloyd who you are, he will put you in pictures," Elleford told Hall. The kindnesses of "G. Billie" had not been forgotten. Unfortunately, Elleford died within a few weeks following the conversation. Hedley Hall never met Floyd Bacon. "I would have liked to have met him" related Hall. "My whole life may have been changed.

The days of the traveling stock companies, the big parades and the wandering minstrel shows in the town of Marysville are of a bygone era. "Even the theatre will never be the same," reflected Hedley Hall amid his well-worn scrapbook of his own years in the world of theatre. But he has many golden memories that will not tarnish with time. Such as that day he met Frank Bacon while strolling with a friend up Broadway.

#### FRANK BACON: THE LEGEND OF "LIGHTNIN'"

The curtain rises. The opening scene depicts a room in a log cabin in Nevada near Lake Tahoe. There's an old bunk and rough table with a small China mug with drooping wild flowers.

The date is December 31, 1920. The anxious New York Broadway audience are not only on the threshold of a new year -- they are witnesses of an historic event. This is the 1,291st consecutive performance of the play, "Lightnin'."

There is a dialogue between two actors. Then a hush. He enters -- a little old man, shabbily dressed. He has a "slight and a very quiet jag. He carries a few honeysuckle shoots wrapped in a newspaper."<sup>6</sup> These will probably be added to the already drooping lot. The audience knows this character as

ADDS ---  
MARYSVILLE APPEAL

**Marysville Theatre**  
FRANK ATKINS, Prop.

ONE NIGHT,  
**Friday, March 19th**

IMPORT FROM THE VAN NESS,  
SAN FRANCISCO

**The Messrs. Shubert**

OFFER THE LATEST DALY'S  
THEATRE COMEDY.

**GIRLS**

BY CLYDE FITCH

NEW YORK CAST AND PRO-  
DUCTION.

Prices - 50c to \$1.50

March 11, 1909

FOR THE LATEST  
**Motion Pictures**

ALWAYS VISIT THE  
**Grand Theater**  
Third and F Sts.  
Prices: 5 and 10 cents

**MARYSVILLE THEATRE**  
FRANK ATKINS, Manager

ONE BIG NIGHT  
**Monday, March 15**

**DAINTY FLORENCE GEAR**  
IN THE "SMART" MUSICAL PLAY  
**MARRYING MARY**  
MUSIC BY JULES HURRY

Biggest Song Show on  
the Road.

Prices: 50c to \$1.50

**CRITERION**  
Corner D and Second Streets.

LATEST  
**MOVING PICTURES**

—AND—  
**ILLUSTRATED SONGS**

ADMISSION  
Adults ..... 10 Cents  
Children ..... 5 Cents

OPEN EVENINGS — 6:30 TO 10:30

March 11, 1909

**MARYSVILLE THEATRE**

ONE NIGHT,  
THURSDAY, **March 11th**

Victor Herbert and Glen Macdonough's  
Greatest Musical Success of the Century

**BABES IN TOYLAND**

AN AUGMENTED ORCHESTRA  
Cast of 40 Singers and  
THE BEST SINGING CHORUS IN AMERICA  
PRODUCTION COMPLETE

18 Months in New York. 15 Months in Chicago

Prices: 50c to \$1.50

Beautiful Illustrated  
Lecture on  
**IRELAND**

REV. FATHER BRADY  
Wednesday, March 17

ST. JOSEPH'S HALL  
Tickets, 50c.

**GEM THEATRE**  
212 D STREET

LATEST  
Moving Pictures

Illustrated Songs

Chicago 10 Cents  
New York 15 Cents  
St. W. HARTMAN, Prop.

March 11, 1909

**Atkins Theatre**  
TODAY—MATINEE AND NIGHT

**HIPPODROME VAUDEVILLE**

GROTTI POPULAR ACCORDIONIST  
BUCKLEY & BUCKLEY DANCING AND SINGING NOVELTY

JESSIE POLLARD IN SONGS  
L. B. GROSS THE AVIATOR

REALART PICTURES—Presents

**BEBE DANIELS**

— IN —  
**Ducks and Drakes**

"NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY!"

She says, "You did so nicely and recklessly that I could almost  
be grateful to you." You tried not to get angry and you were  
disappointed at ever getting her to settle down and have the day  
that, being an efficient business man, he at last applied scientific  
principles to the task of taming Teddy in her castle's tower.

AND GOOD COMEDY

MATINEE 2 P. M. NIGHT 6 P. M. and 9:15 P. M.

March 20, 21

**LIBERTY THEATRE**  
Continuous—Opens at 1:30 P. M.

— TODAY —  
**Robert Warwick**

— IN —  
**"The Fourteenth Man"**

BEN TURPIN in "THE HERO"  
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

— MONDAY —  
HOWDINI in "THE TERROR ISLAND"  
Fourth Episode of "DARE DEVIL JACK"  
"COMEDY—"MAMA'S BOY"

**LYRIC THEATRE**  
CONTINUOUS—OPENS AT 12 M.

— TODAY —  
GRACE CUNARD in "THE DAUGHTER OF THE LAW"  
CHARLIE CHAPLIN in "ONE A. M."  
PATHE REVIEW

— TOMORROW —  
"HIS HOUR OF MANHOOD"  
COMEDY—"THE WAMPUN HUNTERS"

March 20, 21

**LIBERTY**  
15c 20c 10c  
Continuous 1 P. M. to 11 P. M.

Last Shows Today  
**JACK LEMMON** in  
"SHOOTING IRONS"

Tomorrow and Wednesday  
Gus Mesner and Marguerite Brody in  
"A THIEF IN THE DARK"

**SMITH'S THEATRE**  
212 D STREET

TONIGHT  
Richard Bartholomew in  
"THE DROP KICK"

TOMORROW  
Law Cody and  
Allison Pringle in  
"ADAM AND EVIL"

August 6, 1928

**NATIONAL TODAY**

**GLASS BOW**  
Red Hair

How She Is Again! The "it"  
girl with a that hair possess-  
ively, stopping high, wide  
and beautiful! You'll think  
with you when you see her  
dressed by every man in the  
neighborhood — and makes  
them like it!

**Smith's Cousin**  
The Best of Laughs

WARRANT COLOR NOVELTY  
"The Queen's Secret"

SAVE YOURSELF FROM BEING  
LAUGHED AT

August 6, 1928

**CRYSTAL THEATER**  
 515 D Street.  
**BOYLE BROS., Props.**

DEVOTED TO  
**High Class**  
**Vaudeville**  
 And Catering to  
**Ladies, Gentlemen and Children**

Change of Programme Every  
**Monday and Thursday.**

Ladies' Matinee Saturday and Sunday at  
 3 o'clock p. m.

**Admission - 20 cents**

March 1, 1907

**Grand Theater**

W. B. GROW - Proprietor  
 HARRY H. CLARK - Manager

One week, starting Monday,  
 Dec. 23, the big Popular Priced  
 Favorites,

**The Elleford Company**

Presenting a New Repertoire of Popular  
 Dramatic Success. Note the Big List.

Monday—The American Girl.  
 Tuesday—The Sign of the Four.  
 Wednesday—(Christmas) Matinee—A Big Comedy.  
 Wednesday Night—Hello Bill!  
 Thursday—The Princess of Patchou.  
 Friday—A Royal Reception, or Incog.  
 Saturday Matinee—A New Comedy.  
 Saturday Night—A Ragged Hero

A New Vaudeville Bill Between Acts  
 Headed by  
**The Osborn Children**

Not a dull moment. The same  
 Elleford prices:  
 —25c. 35c. 50c—

The sale of seats opens at Hor-  
 ning's on Thursday morning.

December 26, 1907

**MARYSVILLE THEATRE**  
 Tuesday Evening, October 27, 1908

**Richards & Pringle's Famous**  
**MINSTRELS**  
 (Direction Holland & Filkins)

PART I.  
**IN BOHEMIA**

Bohemia is not a place, it is an atmosphere.  
 'Subtle as electricity; changeable as a woman's smile.  
 —Harvey

Master of Ceremonies—Sidney Kirkpatrick

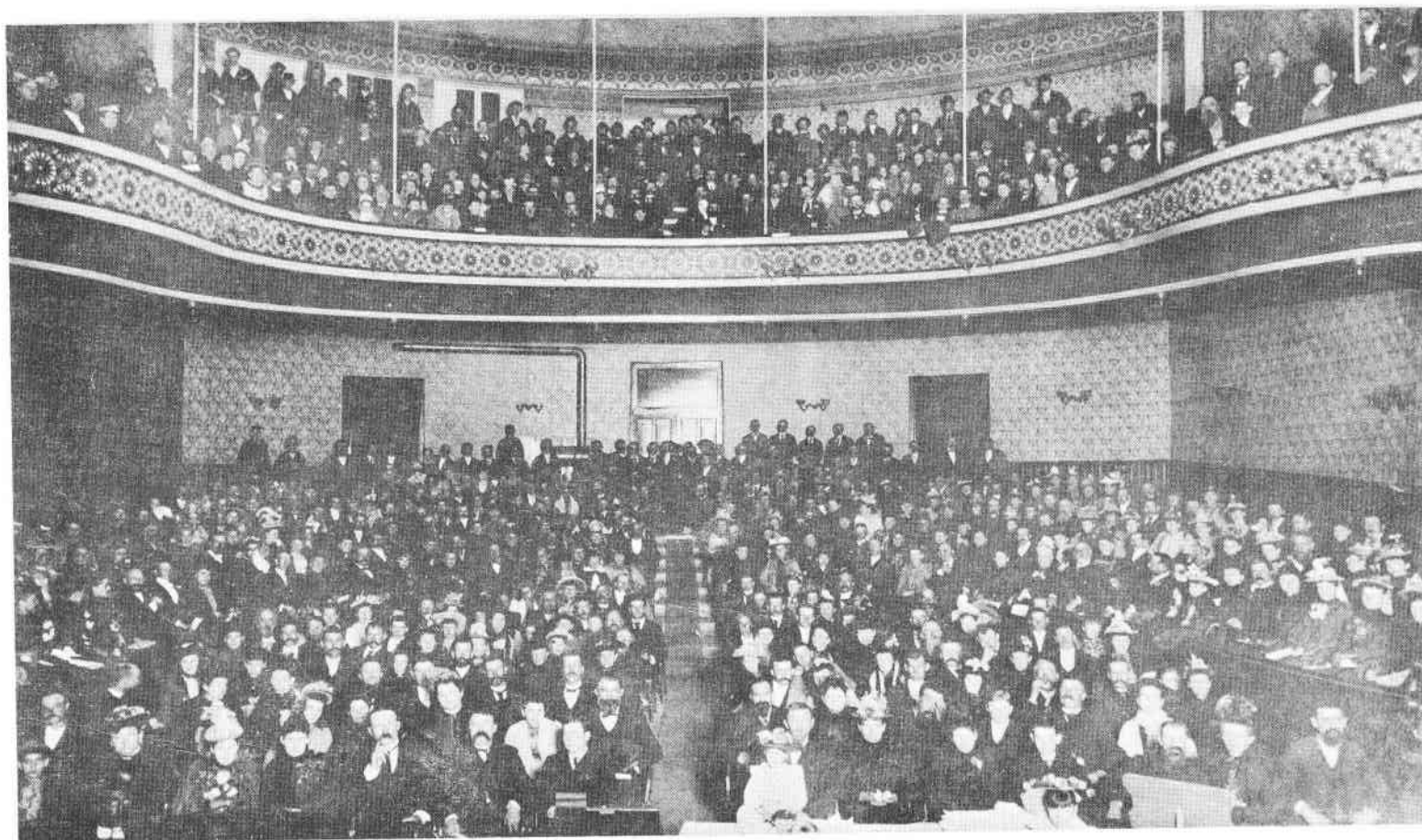
Tambos			Bo
Clarence Powell	}	Good	Pete Wo
Charles Wilson		Fellows	Whitney VI
Elmer Clay	}	All	Harry South



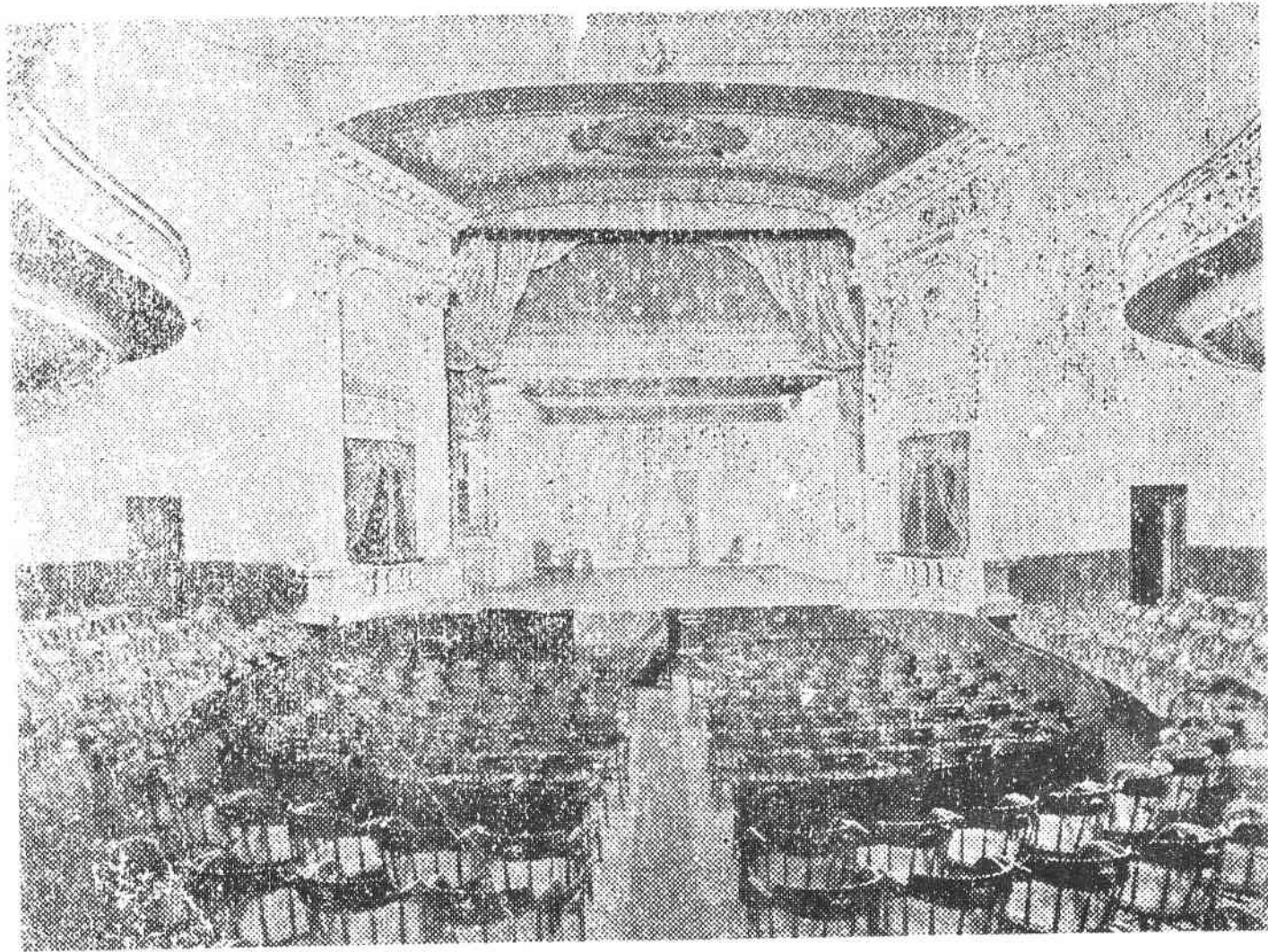
HEDLEY HALL  
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

MR. HALL, AS DR. ENGEL  
in the light opera,  
"THE STUDENT PRINCE"  
MELBOURNE, 1927  
(Courtesy of H. Hall)





FLASHLIGHT of OLD MARYSVILLE THEATRE—ON 1st AND D STREET ABOUT 1902 OR 1903  
(Commonly Called "OPERA HOUSE" ) G. Billy Hall's Minstrels (Courtesy Mary Aaron Museum)



(Courtesy of Hedley Hall)

FRANK BACON  
"LIGHTNIN"

Born 1864-Died 1922

Photo-John Leith Lewin  
from book  
"American Theatre 100  
Years 1860-1960"  
by Daniel Blum



## Marysville Theatre

FRANK ATKINS, Prop and Mgr.  
First and D Streets Phone Red 706

### HOUSE STAFF

WM. GERN.....Musical Director  
WADE H. COPELIN...Stage Manager  
SAM ARMSTRONG .....Electrician  
CLYDE ATKINS .....Head Usher

### RULES OF THIS THEATRE

Any complaints will be appreciated by the management if reported at the box office.

Parties finding articles in the theatre please turn them in to the box office.

Under the new law Ladies and Gentlemen are politely requested to remove their hats on taking their seats.

Gentlemen will please refrain from expectorating on the floor, as it is against the law.

Peanuts are absolutely prohibited in this Theatre.

A. W. GLUCKMAN, PUBLISHER  
P. O. Box 276, Marysville, Cal.

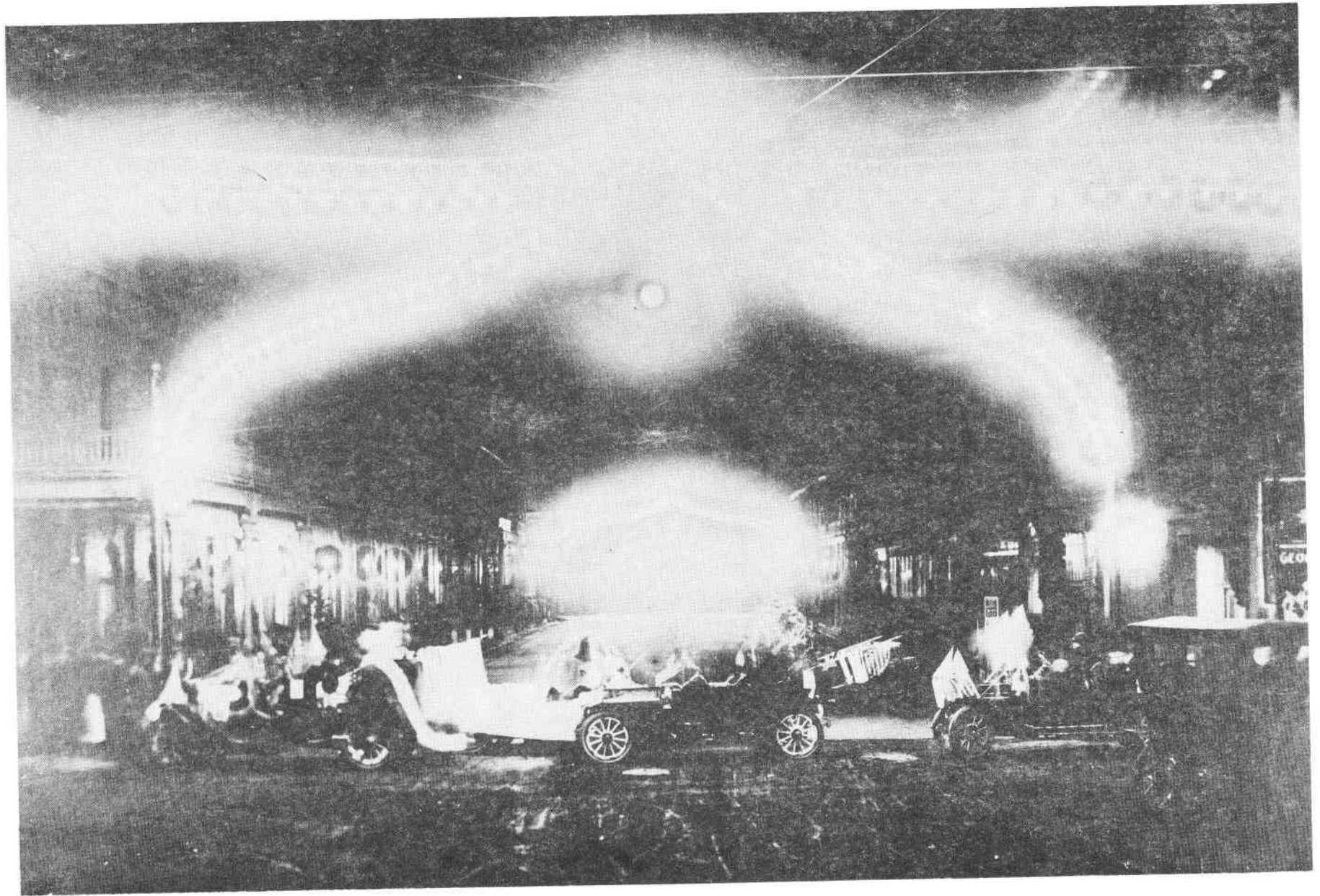
### PROGRAM INSERT

Courtesy of Mary Aaron Museum  
from a scrapbook belonging to a  
member of the Hall family.



LOOKING NORTH ON D STREET AND FIRST-----ABOUT 1910  
EARLY MARYSVILLE THEATRE ON THE RIGHT  
(note old Presbyterian Church and Streetcar) (Courtesy Packard Library)





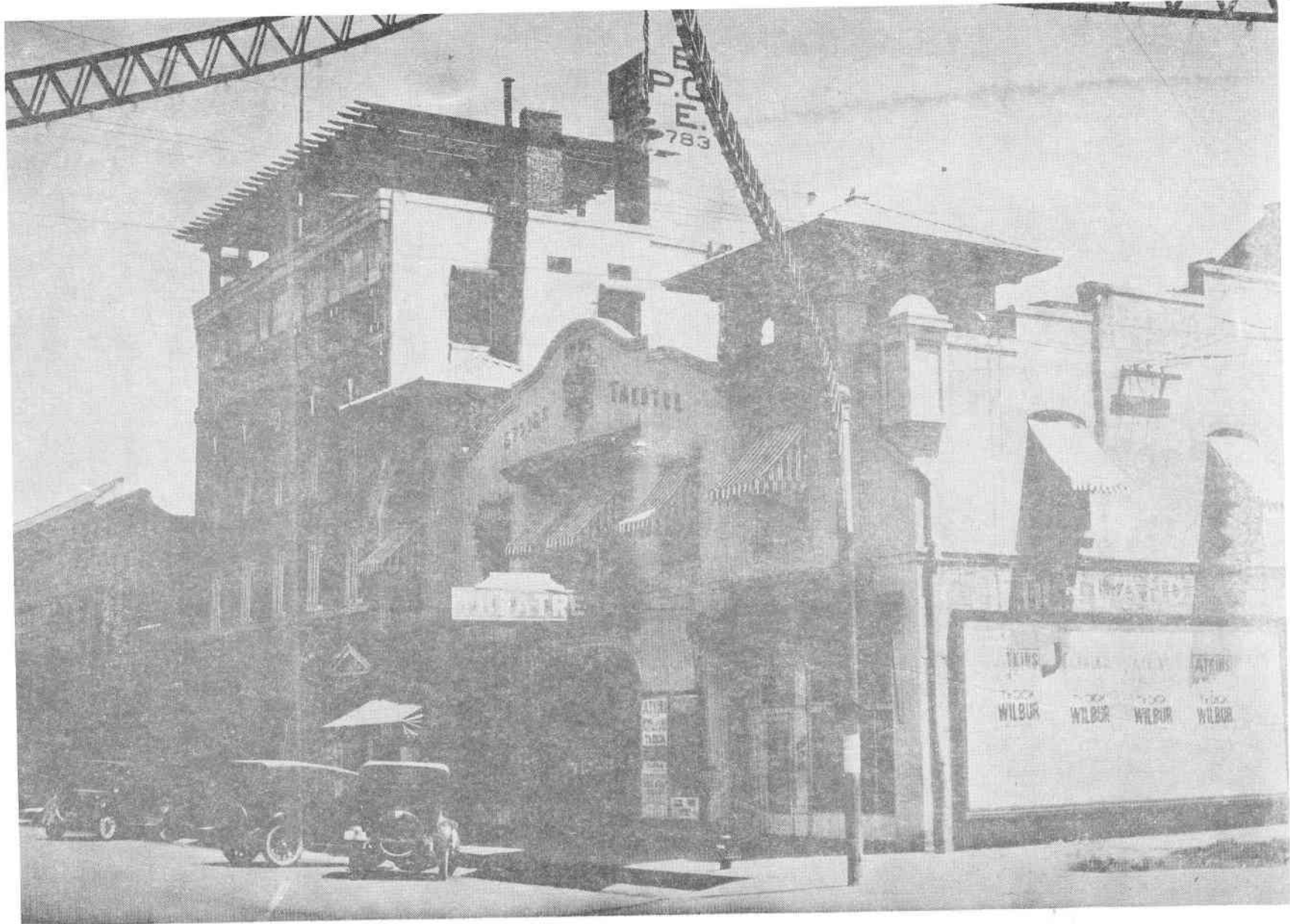
MARYSVILLE THEATRE (at right)

LOOKING NORTH ON D STREET AT 1st.

SHOWING NIGHT LIGHTS OF ARCHES AT INTERSECTIONS 1st-5th

A parade of cars in the 1910's

(Courtesy of Mary Aaron Museum)



ATKINS THEATRE--EAST CORNER--D AT FIRST STREET, NEXT TO ELKS CLUB AND ROBINSONS PAINT STORE  
ABOUT 1920 (Theatre was formerly known as Marysville Theatre)



MYSTIC THEATRE—408 3rd STREET MARYSVILLE—Believed to be the first Movie House (Courtesy of Herb Hurlbert)



(Courtesy of Herb Hurlbert)

"Lightnin' Bill Jones." Sutter County residents remember him as their own Frank Bacon.

Bacon was born on January 16, 1864, near Bogue Station on a ranch adjoining the farm of John Q. Lisle. According to the History of Yuba and Sutter Counties by Peter J. Delay, his father, Lydall Bacon crossed the plains from Kentucky with the Lisle family in 1852. Mary Lehella Lisle, who was only 12 years old at that time, eventually married Jesse Albert Stoker. Lydall Bacon later married her aunt, Lehella Jane McGrew.<sup>7</sup>

During the ensuing years, young Bacon attended schools in San Jose. He left his schooling at the age of 14, however, but he had a variety of careers. He engaged in such endeavors as shepherding, photography, journalism and even became a candidate for the California Legislature.<sup>8</sup> However, his real love was acting and he made his first stage appearance at the Garden Theatre in San Jose in 1890. His first part was that of Sample Switchell in the old melodrama, "Ten Nights in a Barroom."

According to Gene Garliepp, a former Yuba City resident now residing in Loomis, it was actually Bessie, Bacon's wife, who urged him into show business. Just before the turn of the century, Garliepp added that Bacon was in partnership with Garliepp's father in a printing business in Mountain View. Later on, Bacon, who became a prune rancher, spent a vigorous life "see-sawing" between his Mountain View ranch and his theatrical work in the East.

He played in "stock companies" and performed in more than 600 parts. At one time, Bacon was one of the leading members of

the Elleford Company which presented plays in Marysville. In fact he is listed among the names of the great stars who appeared in Marysville on the inside cover of Hedley Hall's scraproom on display in the Mary Aaron Museum in Marysville.

Following the great San Francisco earthquake, Bacon was engaged by Cohan and Harris. For three years he toured as Sam Graham in "The Fortune Hunter."

It was during a time in his life, when he was a photographer in Napa, that Bacon got his idea for his play "Lightnin'" from Wall Kennedy, a Napa Jailer.

Kennedy, it seems, was quite a story teller and one of his famous "yarns" was about his bees. Once he was supposedly attacked by Indians on the plains, and he simply "turned the bees loose on them" The Indians "skee-daddled."

In his play, however, Bacon changed the version somewhat by telling a sheriff that he used to be in the bee business. "Why I drove a swarm of bees across the plains in the dead of winter and never lost a bee." "Got stung twice," the play reads. "I got enough," retorted the sheriff and promptly stormed out of the room.<sup>9</sup>

"Lightnin'" was written by Bacon in collaboration with Winchell Smith. There was quite a happy audience on August 26, 1918, when the play, consisting of a prologue and three acts, was presented at the Gaiety Theatre in New York.

According to John Chapman of the New York News, "Lightnin'" Bill Jones, being a shiftless lover, was not unlike Rip Van Winkle..."

He added that:

As in so many of our lifetime hits, a simple virtue and a true heart win out over greed and deceit. What makes "Lightnin'" hold up so well is that there is plenty of plot involving several well-known characters. The Nevada-California border setting, besides making the play a pleasant Western, minus cowboys, miners, or shooting, is interesting even now for its divorce-plot possibilities.<sup>10</sup>

"Lightnin'" has been included among the "golden fourteen" that have managed to ring up the biggest grosses at the country's box offices.

Bacon headed the cast of 25 members which also included his wife, Bessie, Ralph Morgan, Paul Stanton, Beatrice Nichols, and Jessie Pringle in some of the key parts.

According to area newspapers, more than 100,000 people turned out during the historic running of "Lightnin'" in 1920. Bacon was accorded one of the greatest ovations ever received by any actor. He was escorted by Mayor Hylan of New York, and Woodrow Wilson sent his regrets at being absent for the occasion.

Ironically, Bacon had carried this very play in his pocket for ten years before he could locate a producer. He spent a "lifetime" in order to reach the pinnacle of success, but this lasted only four years before his death.

The late Sada Welschke, former actress and dancer who resided in Chico, knew Bacon personally. She recalled that towards the end of his career, he had to be led on and off the wings. "He never forgot his lines," she added.

According to Garliepp, Bacon and his wife and son Lloyd, would often come back to Mountain View to put on benefit plays for the clubs in town. However, his unsatisfied ambition was to

bring his famous play back to California especially to Marysville, the town he remembered with fondness.

The final curtain on his colorful life was brought down in Chicago on November 19, 1922. His wife and daughter, Mrs. Matthew Allen, who had been playing in a second "Lightnin'" Company, were at his bedside. His son was not in attendance, but he, too, eventually became involved in the world of theatre in keeping with the Bacon tradition.

Tremendously popular among the stage folk, the first news of his death came to Broadway when George M. Cohan announced it to 1,500 members of the Friars Club. He asked that all present should stand and spend a minute in silent prayer for this famous character actor. Messages of condolences poured in from all parts of the country.

And while the theatrical world of the East conducted memorial services, the Marysville Rotary Club also adjourned in respect to Bacon's memory. A eulogy was delivered by Ray Manwell, district attorney and father of Edmund Manwell, Superior Court Judge.<sup>11</sup>

Two years later, Mrs. Bacon visited the old homestead in Sutter County and met several of his relatives. She was enroute to Mountain View and accompanying her were three of her granddaughters, her sister-in-law, Emma Bacon Graebe, and son and a Mr. Rice, company manager for "Lightnin'."

According to the July 4, 1924, Sutter County Farmer, A. A. McMullen, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce conducted the party to the Stoker ranch near Harkey Corners, formerly the Bacon ranch. Here Mrs. Graebe visited with her cousin, Mary Lisle Stoker, and



Alice Best Stoker, a near neighbor to the Bacon family in the early days.

During their stay, the visitors were shown a collection of photographs of the Bacon family which have since been destroyed during the 1955 flood. Mrs. Stoker also produced a letter in appreciation of Bacon which was written by a Sutter County resident. According to the newspaper account, this letter recounted the history of the family from the early days when they left Kentucky until Bacon's untimely death.

The newspaper further added that Mrs. Bacon was "much affected when reading the letter and expressed her appreciation of the visit to his birthplace and meeting his relatives and old friends."<sup>12</sup>

Dorothy Hodges, daughter of Mary Stoker, who resides in Yuba City, vaguely remembers this important visit. All she recalls is that she wore a new dress for this special occasion.

The loss of Frank Bacon in the world of theatre was probably best expressed by Mayor Hylan of New York when he said that "the theatrical profession and the theatre-loving public have lost an artist whose place will not soon be filled."<sup>13</sup>

#### SOURCES

1. Sutter County Farmer, June 10, 1904.
2. Ibid.
3. History of Yuba and Sutter Counties, by Peter J. Delay, 1924.
4. Sutter County Farmer, January 10, 1908.
5. Ibid.
6. S.R.O., compiled by Bennett Cerf and Van H. Cartmell, New York; Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1944, p. 451.
7. History of Yuba and Sutter Counties, by Peter J. Delay, 1924.

8. S.R.O., p. 915.
9. Ibid., p. 450.
10. Ibid., p. XV.
11. Sutter County Farmer, November, 1922.
12. Ibid., July 4, 1924.
13. Sutter County Farmer, November, 1922.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the workers at the Sutter and Yuba County Libraries and the Mary Aaron and the Community Memorial Museums for their able assistance in helping me prepare my articles. A special "thanks" also goes to the Morning Herald newspaper for giving me the opportunity to submit monthly articles on Sutter County pioneers such as Frank Bacon.

Most of all, I will always be appreciative of Hedley Hall for his time granted me during the interview. His recollections of both the early-day theatre activity in Marysville and Frank Bacon will always be invaluable.

#### THE AUTHOR

A native of Paradise, the author has resided in the area since 1960 when she obtained a teaching position at Wheatland Union High School in the business department. She taught in that school for nearly 13 years and is currently working part time as a reporter for the Morning Herald.

Her husband, Roger Withington, is originally from Wisconsin and is an Assistant Transportation Engineer at Cal-Trans. The couple have one daughter, Melynie Gaye, age 4 1/2 who attends Lucille's Preschool in Yuba City.