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THE DUCHESS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LOUISA LANE DREW

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THE DUCHESS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LOUISA LANE DREW

A Thesis Presented

by

Rivka Kelly

to

The Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences

of

The University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors
In Theatre

May, 2014

Dedication

This thesis is for my wonderful and supportive parents, whose gentle encouragement spurs me on yet reminds me that there are more important things in life than just a paper. Thanks Mom and Dad.

And for the Students, Faculty and Staff who have strongly influenced my time here, helping (and sometimes forcing) me to grow personally and academically. I'm especially grateful to Natalie for her example and encouragement, and Avery for his help in the process, and to every single person who listened to me whine about this project. I'm ultimately very glad I did it. .

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Chapter 1: Introduction And Historiography

In August 1861, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* announced that Mrs. John Drew had become the “lessee” of the city’s Arch Street Theatre. Drew, already a star of the stage, thus added to her responsibilities and began what would be a thirty-one year career working behind the scenes. The *Inquirer* caught the excitement of this inaugural moment with its description of all the new changes which theatre goers would see when they attended a performance during the newly dubbed “Mrs. John Drew’s Arch Street Theatre.” The owners and “lessee,” (Drew’s new title), had completed \$7000 worth of improvements, including separate ticket windows and new entrances to the family circle and amphitheater to reduce the problem of crowding. New seats, “nineteen inches in width, well stuffed, and properly numbered,” had been installed and the walls repapered. At the cost of \$150, a roof ventilator had been installed above the thousand-person amphitheater, or gallery, and danger from fire was reduced with the installation of hoses “at various points among the light scenery.” Three hundred women were employed to work in the wardrobe department. Four scene painters had been busy for many months. One set of stage furniture alone cost \$400. But the most dramatic change of all, proclaimed the *Inquirer*, was Drew’s appointment as the theatre’s new “Lessee.” The Arch Street Theatre had entered a new era.¹

Louisa Lane Drew’s appointment as the “lessee” not only began a new era in her career and that of the Arch Street Theatre. It also announced a transformation that was just getting underway in the theatre world more generally as “lessees” became managers

¹ “The Local Drama,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 26, 1861.

and theatres became businesses. Drew's influence on this transformation of the theatre's working life was recognized by her peers. In deference to her formidable skills, people began referring to "Mrs. John Drew, Lessee" as "the Duchess." When, on the opening night of the 1861 Philadelphia theatre season), Louisa Lane Drew took to the stage, as Lady Teazle in "The School for Scandal," she immediately captured the audience's attention and garnered praise for her performance.² To understand Drew's work behind the scenes it is important to examine moments like these in her long career on the stage. This thesis will examine Drew's journey in becoming "the Duchess," exploring the meanings this title had for Drew and those who worked with her, while examining her life within the larger historical context, as it relates to Drew's career as a pioneering female theatre manager.

By focusing on Drew, I wish to correct theatre histories that focus almost exclusively on male managers, such as Augustin Daly and J.W. Wallack. Like Drew, Daly and Wallack ran theatres under their own names. Daly's theatre was established in 1893 in London as a culmination of his long career in theatre.³ Wallack was a successful actor recognized in both America and England. He ran four different theatres during his long career, the most successful endeavor being his take over of Brougham's Lyceum in New York, appointing his sons John Lester and Charles as stage manager and treasurer, respectively. John Lester went on to follow his father into a successful career in theatrical

² *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 30, 1861

³ Walter Browne and F. A. Austin, *Who's Who On The Stage; The Dramatic Reference Book and Biographic al Dictionary of The Theatre* (New York: W. Browne & F.A. Austin, 1906), 184.

management.⁴ Drew was one of a select group of influential women theatre managers, which included Laura Keene and Catherine Sinclair, all of whom are largely ignored or marginalized by historians. Laura Keene was the first female manager in New York and managed a number of theatres before establishing her own theatre, The Laura Keene's Varieties, in 1855.⁵ Catherine Sinclair became a successful manager in San Francisco, and in 1853 leased the New Metropolitan Theatre.⁶ This thesis includes some background about these other female managers to enlarge our understanding of women's contributions to the history of theatre.⁷

While theatre histories often overlook or minimize the contributions of Louisa Lane Drew and other women to the transformation of the theatre world, there is one story in which Drew's name occurs with some frequency. Louisa Lane Drew is known as the matriarch of the Barrymore family. Drew's daughter Georgiana Emma Drew married Maurice Barrymore and they had three children: Lionel, Ethel and John Sidney Barrymore. Successive generations of the family included many actors. John Sidney Barrymore is the father of John Blyth Barrymore, the father of the current movie star and producer Drew Barrymore. Thus Drew Barrymore has followed in her great-great-

⁴ "Wallack, James William (1795–1864)," Nilanjana Banerji in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28549> (accessed April 16, 2014).

⁵ Jane Kathleen Curry, *Nineteenth Century American Woman Theatre Managers* (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 55.

⁶ Brenda Murphy, *The Cambridge Companion to American Women Playwrights* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1999), xxiii.

⁷ Brockett and Hildy's *The History of Theatre* is among the most popular general theatrical history textbooks used in college courses. It briefly mentions Drew and notes that her theatre "became famous throughout the United States for its fine company and the training it gave young actors." (325) The focus, however, is on her male counterparts. For example, the text claims that the "most of the significant contributions [to the theatre] between 1870 and 1895 came from managers who maintained permanent troupes. Of these, the most important were Edwin Booth, Augustin Daly, and Steele MacKaye." (328) Drew's permanent troupe was maintained concurrently with these men's.

grandmother's footsteps by working as both an actor and backstage in the theatrical world. An online search for "Louisa Lane Drew" results in a story that acclaims her as the matriarch of the Barrymore line and, maybe, a mention of her "managerial success."⁸ This thesis, as a work of historical recovery, seeks to invert this story, placing her influential work as a theatre manager before her status as the matriarch of a prominent theatre family. In so doing, it highlights her own career rather than her biological legacy.

Chapter One provides an introduction and a historiographical overview of theatre histories including Drew's career and the nineteenth-century theatre world, specifically in the context of Philadelphia. Chapter Two examines Drew's family background, education, early years in theatre, and the important influence of her mother. Drew's early years on the stage are contextualized in the larger history of the theatrical world of the 1820s. A larger theme of this chapter is migration. Drew moved from England to the United States and then to the West Indies as she and her family members achieved success on the stage, struggled with personal reversals, and sought new opportunities. Chapter Three begins in the 1830s, when Drew and her family again returned to the United States and follows their early struggles and eventual successes. This chapter focuses on Drew's growing influence in the theatre world. Chapter Four examines Drew's rise to stardom in Philadelphia. Much of this chapter focuses on Drew's increasingly complicated private life, including her marriages and children, in order to highlight how Drew was able to meet the social expectations for women while simultaneously pursuing an unusual career. Chapters Five and Six shift the focus to Drew's career at the Arch Street Theatre. Chapter Five provides a description of Philadelphia's evolving theatre scene, exploring the

⁸ "Louisa Lane (1820-1897)." National Women's History Museum. <https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/louisa-lane/> (accessed February 21, 2014).

changing notions of the manager's role and situating Drew within these changes. Chapter Six focuses more closely on Drew's management of the Arch Street Theatre, examines her relationship with its board of directors, and assesses her accomplishments as "The Duchess." The final chapter examines her legacy, and seeks to correct its place (and emphasis) in our modern consciousness.

Historiography

In my research I found that Louisa is most often remembered correctly for her managerial theatrical contributions in the introductory chapters of books on the Barrymores, and in specialty books about early American female managers. Among the important secondary sources for this essay is Mary M. Turner's *Forgotten Leading Ladies of the American Theatre: Lives of Eight Female Players, Playwrights, Directors, Managers and Activists of the Eighteenth, Ninetieth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, about eight American women who worked in different areas of the theatre world.⁹ Turner seeks to correct the forgotten influences of these eight women, who she argues had a lasting and influential impact on the future of theatre. Mrs. John Drew has a short chapter dedicated to her life. These women were actresses, playwrights, and managers. Jane Curry's book on *Nineteenth-Century American Women Theatre Managers*, seeks to use highly visible theatre manager's experiences and lives to illustrate both the theatrical world and the restrictions on and expectations of on women in the nineteenth-century.¹⁰ Faye Dudden's book *Women in the American Theatre: Actresses and Audiences 1790-*

⁹ Mary M. Turner, *Forgotten Leading Ladies of the American Theatre* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1990).

¹⁰ Jane Kathleen Curry, *Nineteenth Century American Woman Theatre Managers* (Westport: Praeger, 1994).

1870, while interesting is not particularly useful for this study.¹¹ As her subtitle indicates Dudden's focus is mainly on actresses and theatre audiences from 1790-1870. She examines the careers of Fanny Kemble, Charlotte Cushman, and Laura Keene, and only with Keene does she discuss the work of women as managers. Drew is mentioned once and only as "one of the most distinguished" female managers, and the matriarch of the Barrymore line. Drew's absence from Dudden's book is noticeable, because her book has a section on management but it only focuses on Laura Keene. Drew's life is examined in short essays like C. Lee Jenner's "The Duchess of Arch Street" in a *Performing Arts Resources* journal focused on the Drews and the Barrymores. Jenner outlines Drew's success as a manager and claims that the reason she has been forgotten from theatre history was because she found her success in Philadelphia rather than New York.¹²

The history of Philadelphia's theatrical scene has been examined in studies such as Susan G. Davis' *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia*.¹³ Davis examines Philadelphia's public culture, beginning in 1832 with the Washington Centennial. While Davis' work focuses more on the politics of street culture than the inside of theatres her work is useful in its description of pre-Civil War Philadelphia. Arthur Wilson's book *A History of the Philadelphia Theatre 1835-1855*, is a comprehensive list of the plays played at the theatres at the time in Philadelphia but does not go into any qualitative thought.¹⁴

¹¹ Faye E. Dudden, *Women in the American Theatre: Actresses and Audiences, 1790-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 124.

¹² C. Lee Jenner, "The Duchess of Arch Street: An Overview of Mrs. John Drew's Managerial Career," *Performing Arts Resources* 13 (1988): 29-43.

¹³ Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

¹⁴ Arthur Wilson, *A History of the Philadelphia Theatre, 1835 to 1855* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1935).

In the course of my research I discovered five dissertations related to Louisa Lane Drew and management at the time. Noreen Barnes's dissertation focuses almost entirely on Drew's performance career.¹⁵ Dorothy Stolp's dissertation gives an overall critical biography of Drew, arguing that all nineteenth-century managers are left out of theatre historian's work, and focusing on Drew's contributions in theatre throughout her life.¹⁶ Kathleen Morgan's dissertation focuses on female managers, including Drew, and the stock company system.¹⁷ Cynthia Gendrich's work outlines Drew's career and influence, with a main focus on the comedic aspect of her career.¹⁸ Finally, Brooke's dissertation on theatrical management at the time was useful in placing Drew within the larger context of managers, but doesn't mention Drew specifically.¹⁹

Primary sources used for this thesis include Louisa Lane Drew's posthumously published *Autobiographical Sketch*, in 1899, in which she focuses more on the talents of the individuals with whom she acted rather than the personal details of her own life.²⁰ Autobiographies by her son John Drew and Granddaughter Ethel Barrymore include personal memories of Louisa that have proved useful for this thesis.²¹

¹⁵Noreen Claire Barnes, *Actress of All Work: A Survey of the Performance Career of Louisa Lane Drew*. (PhD diss., Tufts University, Medford/Somerville, 1986).

¹⁶ Dorothy E. Stolp, *Mrs. John Drew, American Actress-Manager, 1820-1897*. (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, Louisiana, 1952).

¹⁷ Kathleen Anne Morgan, *Of Stars and Standards: Actress-Managers of Philadelphia and New York, 1855-1880*. (PhD diss., University of Illinois, Urbana, 1989).

¹⁸ Cynthia M. Gendrich, *Persona, Performance and Comedy: Patterns of Success and Accommodation in the Lives and Work of Mary Ann Vincent and Louisa Lane Drew*. (PhD diss., University of Missouri, Columbia, 1997).

¹⁹ Mona Rebecca Brookes, *Development of American Theatre Management Practices Between 1830 and 1896*. (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, Lubbock, 1981).

²⁰ Louisa Drew and Douglas Taylor, *Autobiographical Sketch of Mrs. John Drew* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899).

²¹ John Drew, *My Years on the Stage* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co, c. 1922).
Ethel Barrymore, *Memories: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper, 1955).

I also quote autobiographical articles by actors who worked with Drew, including Clara Morris' article "Where I first met Ellen Terry and Mrs. John Drew (A Dressing Room Reception)"²² and Frank Stull's "Where Famous Actors Learned Their Art."²³ Articles from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and other newspapers have been used to provide both contextual and specific information about Drew and the theatre world of Philadelphia.

²² Clara Morris, "Where I First Met Ellen Terry and Mrs. John Drew (A Dressing Room Reception)," *McClure's Magazine* (December 22, 1903), 204-211.

²³ Frank Stull, "Where Famous Actors Learned Their Art," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (March, 1905), 372-379.

Chapter 2: Background and Early Life

Early Life and Parents

Louisa Lane was born in London, England, in 1820.²⁴ She came from two generations of theatrical people. Her grandparents were Thomas Haycraft Lane and Louisa Rouse, both strolling players with a playhouse in Coventry (where Mr. Lane was Master of the Playhouse in 1731).²⁵ Louisa's father (their son) was Thomas Fredrick Lane (1796-1835) and her mother was Eliza Trenter (1796-1887), both actors on the English stage. Thomas Fredrick Lane followed in his parents' footsteps and was "an actor and stage manager of provincial fame."²⁶ Louisa's mother, Eliza Trenter was, in her youth (according to a highly complimentary *New York Times* article lauding her life), "one of the most beautiful women on the stage."²⁷ Louisa Drew, in her autobiography, calls her mother "a pretty woman and a sweet singer of ballads."²⁸

At twelve months, Louisa made her stage debut as a crying baby. As she tells the story in her autobiography, "my mother took me on the stage as a crying baby; but cry I would not, but at sight of the audience and the lights gave free vent to my delight and crowed aloud with joy."²⁹ Her affinity for the stage was clear. This anecdote is included in many biographical sketches of Drew: for instance, T. Alston Brown includes this quote

²⁴ H. L. Kleinfield, "Drew, Louisa Lane," ed. Edward T James, Janet Wilson James, and Paul S. Boyer. *Notable American Women, 1607-1950; A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 521-522.

²⁵ Sybil Rosenfeld, *Strolling Players and Drama in the Provinces 1660-1765* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 220.

²⁶ Kleinfield, 521.

²⁷ *New York Times*, March 6, 1887

²⁸ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 5.

²⁹ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 6.

and notes that she was nine months old at the time, indicating that this is not Drew's memory but is a story told to her (probably by her mother). This story demonstrates one of the problems in using an autobiography as a historical source for someone like Drew. I've been careful to clarify what is a memory or story and what can be verified in other sources. Brown also identifies the play as *Giovanni*. Brown's larger point about that story is captured in his statement, "all she had to do was cry, at which point she was not a success, This, I believe, is the only time in seventy and more years that this lady has failed to fulfill the requirements of the role assigned to her."³⁰

Louisa's theatrical career quickly bloomed and she grew into a famous and notable child star. She had a clear natural talent and by "the age of five she was sustaining regular roles in melodrama."³¹ Her autobiography seems to be the only documentation of her early roles on the stage but she mentions working with some famous actors on the English stage even from that early age. "I acted (?) all the 'children's' parts in the plays then usual-Damon's child-and had to be kept quiet with cherries before my last entrance, and then Mr. Macready's eyes frightened me into an awed silence."³² William Macready was, in the first half of the nineteenth century, "with one exception (Edmund Kean), foremost among English actors."³³

Being on the stage, even as a child, meant traveling. The next role mentioned in her autobiography is "in Liverpool, playing the brother of Frankenstein, who is killed by

³⁰ T. Alston Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," in *Famous American Actors of Today*, ed. Frederic Edward McKay, and Charles E.L. Wingate, (New York: Thomas Y Crowell & Co, 1896), 127.

³¹ Oral Sumner Coad and Edward Mims Jr., *The American Stage*, vol. 14, *The Pageant of America* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1929), 97.

³² Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 9. The "(?)" is hers.

³³ William Charles Macready and William Toynbee, *The Diaries of William Charles Macready, 1833-1851* (New York: B. Blom, 1912), xi.

the Monster of Frankenstein's creation, acted by... T. P. Cooke.”³⁴ Thomas Potter Cooke, a well-known actor and manager, was “uniquely celebrated as a hero of nautical melodrama.”³⁵ Drew’s mention of Macready, Cooke and others indicates her early exposure to talented actors and managers. From her experience to the theatrical influence in her own family and these men, Louisa Lane learned important skills she would use and combine with formidable initiative throughout her long career.

Education

Louisa Lane attended school in England only for a very brief period of time. Her education came almost entirely from acting, reading scripts, and interacting with people in the theatre world. Hollis Alpert in his book on the Barrymores states that Drew’s “formal education was neglected, amounted to a little more than a bit of tutoring now and then. Her childhood was spent either rehearsing or performing on the stage.”³⁶ Louisa describes herself as not educated “in the systematic interpretation of the word.” She describes her schooling as “from human nature and the people [she] met.” She said in an interview: “I do not remember when and how I learned to read, and as to writing I could never form a respectable looking letter according to the set copy types.... The first book I ever remember reading was Shakespeare, when I was eight years old.... Somehow I knew how to spell by instinct, and somehow that faculty has never deserted me.” She explains that there are other ways of learning besides from books: “There is such a great advantage in listening and picking up and listening. I used to listen to the conversation of all the clever people I met, and make it a point to remember all that I could in this way,

³⁴ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 10.

³⁵ Martin Banham, *The Cambridge Guide To Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1995), 241.

and as my experience has been very varied all over the country, I had rare opportunities for observation and improvement in that way.”³⁷ She also describes her education as being taught “from the open book of life.”³⁸ It is probably due to Drew’s lack of formal education that she discouraged actors from attending acting schools. She believed that “one must be content to commence at the lowest point of the ladder ... [and progress through] observation and study.” The best of all schools, she believed is “the theatre itself.”³⁹

America and her Stage Mother

When Louisa was six years old her father died and her mother Eliza struggled to support both herself and her daughter on the acting circuit in England.⁴⁰ In 1827, Louisa and Eliza moved to New York and Louisa, now seven years of age, made her American debut at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre.⁴¹ Her first role was as The Duke of York in Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. Junius Brutus Booth, known as “the elder Booth,” played Richard III.⁴² The elder booth was the father of John Wilkes Booth, the actor who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln, and Edwin Booth, the famous star, both of whom Louisa Lane Drew would later act with.

Eliza, in what was probably an attempt to improve her and her young daughter’s situation, married actor and manager John Kinlock.⁴³ Although not much is known about Kinlock, it is known that he took a very active role in managing young Louisa’s career.

³⁶ Hollis Alpert, *The Barrymores*, (New York: The Dial Press, 1964), 6.

³⁷ *The Daily Picayune*, March 27, 1894.

³⁸ Montrose Jonas Moses, *Famous Actor Families in America* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 169.

³⁹ *The Daily Picayune*, March 27, 1894.

⁴⁰ Turner, 47.

⁴¹ T. Allston Brown, *History of the American Stage* (New York: Blom, 1969) 105.

She later wrote that from the time of their marriage, “my parents' ambition was fixed for me. Miss Clara Fisher was then at the zenith of her attraction, and father determined that I should be a second ‘Clara.’”⁴⁴ In his determination, Kinlock was reacting to what the Barrymore biographer Hollis Alpert calls the “rage in America at that time for ‘infant prodigies’ of the stage.” Child actors “with the ability to mimic adult roles brought small fortunes to their sponsors.”⁴⁵

The bar set for Louisa was extremely high, because “the sensation of the day” was Clara Fisher. Fisher was one of the most acclaimed child stars in early American theatrical history, was described in 1919 as “one of the most bewitching specimens of feminine creation.”⁴⁶ Louisa Lane was not quite as successful as Clara Fisher, but one newspaper postulated that this wasn’t due to lesser talent. “On her arrival here Miss Clara Fisher was in full tide of sensational success. Her theatrical tours were a magnificent ovation. Miss Lane followed Miss Fisher’s representations from place to place with various success; but it may be fairly inferred, had Miss Lane’s first assays preceded those of the Fisher star, the results of the latter would have crowned the former’s brow.”⁴⁷ This was not the only newspaper that applauded Drew’s early American appearances. A reporter for the *New York Clipper* wrote in 1878, “Miss Louisa Lane, age eight, emerged as Little Pickle and proved herself the greatest prodigy of them all. She was the legitimate

⁴² Asia Booth Clarke, *The Elder and The Younger Booth* (Boston: J.R. Osgood and Co., 1882), 3.

⁴⁴ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 10.

⁴⁵ Alpert, 5.

⁴⁶ Arthur Hornblow, *A History of Theatre in America*, (Philadelphia & London: Lippincott, 1919), 89.

⁴⁷ Charles Durang, “History of the Philadelphia Stage,” *Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch*, December 2, 1860.

successor of the Clara Fisher of some years before.”⁴⁸ Louisa played Little Pickle, which had been one of Clara Fisher’s most prominent roles, in her New York debut at the Bowery Theatre.⁴⁹

Following her New York debut, Louisa’s stepfather took her to Baltimore, where she “appeared in *William Tell* as Albert, the boy who bravely allowed an apple to be shot from his head.”⁵⁰ She performed, for the first time, opposite Edwin Forrest, “the first American-born star.”⁵¹ Forrest, who acted successfully and to much acclaim for over forty years, was the son of German and Scottish immigrant parents who “feared he would die young of tuberculosis.”⁵² In 1820, at the age of fourteen he played his first role at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Forrest is noted for two things: First, it was his work on the stage convincing American audiences to accept and enjoy American actors as much as British actors, leading to the American “star” concept, and, second, he insisted that actors follow the written text to the word ... In this he contributed to the modern staging and quality of American theatre. He was best known for his ability to act Shakespeare, especially the tragic roles.

While not known for being a particularly warm or kind person, Forrest was apparently “so entranced with [Louisa’s] abilities that, at the close of their engagement he presented her with an engraved silver medal.”⁵³ Thus, while she didn’t ever quite match the reputation of Fisher, she found her own niche quite handily.

⁴⁸ “The Original Richelieu,” *New York Clipper*, May 11, 1878.

⁴⁹ Turner, 87.

⁵⁰ Alpert, 5.

⁵¹ Banham, 384.

⁵² Dale Shaw, *Titans of the American Stage*, (Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1971), 8.

⁵³ Turner, 87.

As a result of these roles and her acclaim, by age ten, Louisa Lane was deemed an “infant prodigy” who “specialized in protean parts.”⁵⁴ Notably, in 1828, at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, she played all five of the roles in the farce *Twelve Precisely*.⁵⁵ These were billed as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Matilda Mowbray | Miss Lane! |
| Master Hector Mowbray | Miss Lane!! |
| Master Connleton Mowbray | Miss Lane!!! |
| Master Foppington Mowbray | Miss Lane!!! ⁵⁶ |

In her autobiography she expresses positive feelings about these years of her life and , there is no evidence that she rebelled against her parents or the stage life itself. However she was unlikely to have been given much of a choice about whether or not to be on stage. Indeed, evidence shows that Louisa and Eliza got along well despite Eliza being a traditional “stage mother.”⁵⁷ Eliza’s role as a stage mother meant that she was responsible for everything from the practical matters such as money and scheduling to the emotional world in which her young daughter lived. This responsibility most likely led Eliza to be strict, pushy and forceful in general and especially in respect to her daughter’s life. Louisa would learn these talents from her mother and raise her own children as a “stage mother.”

Until the end of her life Louisa followed the dictates and standards set by her mother. Ethel Barrymore, granddaughter of Louisa Lane Drew, knew her great grandmother Eliza only when Eliza was in her nineties. Nevertheless, she made quite an

⁵⁴ Barry Witham, *Theatre in the United States: A Documentary History: 1750-1915 Theatre in the Colonies and United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 217.

⁵⁵ Turner, 86.

⁵⁶ John Kobler, *Damned in Paradise, The Life of John Barrymore* (New York: Athenaeum, 1977), 5.

impression and Ethel states that her great-grandmother Eliza inspired “unreasonable terror” in her and Ethel respected and feared her grandmother Louisa. Ethel also observed that even her formidable grandmother Louisa obeyed every wish and call of her own aging mother.⁵⁸

By the 1830s, American audiences’ interest in child actors had waned.⁵⁹ In any case Louisa was now twelve years of age, no longer young enough to be considered as such. Scholarship on child actors is very slim, despite the fact that children have acted on stage for many centuries. The only names or legacies having survived are those which went on to become adult stars. According to one of the few academic articles that I found on children in and attending the theatre, “by the start of the nineteenth century, the small bodies and ‘precocious’ talents of child actors attracted widespread admiration as ‘novelty’ objects.”⁶⁰ Louisa benefitted from the fact that child actors were commonly accepted on the stage when she began her career. It was not until 1876 that child actors came under attack “when the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children sought to ban performers under sixteen.”⁶¹

Travel to the West Indies

The brief instance where Louisa most likely played and enjoyed being a child without theatrical obligations occurred as an accident and a tragedy. Working to prolong

⁵⁷ The concept of a stage mother has, no doubt, existed for a long time. It was famously put on stage in the musical *Gypsy* by Arthur Laurents, which was very loosely based on a real woman see Noralee Frankel, *Stripping Gypsy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xiii.

⁵⁸ Margot Peters, *The House of Barrymore* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1990), 10.

⁵⁹ Turner, 87.

⁶⁰ Jeanne Klein, “Without Distinction of Age: The Pivotal Roles of Child Actors and Their Spectators in Nineteenth-Century Theatre,” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 36 (April 2012): 121.

Louisa's success as a child star, Kinlock decided to take his family on a tour abroad to the West Indies. Over the past few years, the family had expanded as Eliza Kinlock had given birth to three more girls. Adine was born in 1827, Georgiana Lydia in 1829, and Rosalie in 1830. Even though the youngest girl was only two months old, in November of 1830 they sailed to Jamaica.

Most likely Kinlock had heard of the opportunities available in Jamaica, and as work became scarcer for Louisa he decided to try their fortunes abroad. Theatre in Jamaica can be traced back to the 1650s, when England conquered the island which had previously been colonized by France. Then, "in 1733 an English company was successfully performing John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.... In 1812 a company arrived from Barbados, led by Charles Manning."⁶² They performed successfully there until Jamaican fever killed many members of the company. Kingston became the hub of theatre in Jamaica, "with one main theatre called the Kingston Theatre. In the early 1830s, the earlier Kingston theatre was still standing, and the theatre would have fit about 700."⁶³ Jamaica was actively reaching out, trying to attract talent, and it was not entirely uncommon for an American troupe to travel there although they often "left a member or two behind in a graveyard, and then sailed away."⁶⁴

The Kinlock voyage was "perilous and shipwrecked," and the passengers were stranded for six weeks. Turner, in her essay on Drew, speculates that perhaps these weeks were the only type of break or chance Louisa ever really had to play and be a normal

⁶¹ Klein, 128.

⁶² Banham,, 308.

⁶³ Errol Hill, *The Jamaican Stage, 1655-1900 Profile of a Colonial Theatre* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 42.

⁶⁴ Richardson Little Wright, *Revels in Jamaica, 1682-1838* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1937), 334.

child.⁶⁵ In her autobiography Louisa sounds almost positive, or perhaps nostalgic about the time: “When out about ten days we struck a hidden rock-a case of ignorant carelessness, I should think, as it was a most beautiful moonlight night.... In the morning we all got safely to shore, all our baggage with us; then the crew started to erect tents.... We were there six weeks, and I celebrated my eleventh birthday there.”⁶⁶

Once the family made it to Jamaica they had a very successful run until John Kinlock and the baby, Rosalie, died of yellow fever and Eliza fell very ill. Louisa wrote that her mother “had such a siege of illness as for a time to completely prostrate me [while trying to care for her].”⁶⁷ The remaining family stayed in Jamaica until Eliza had recovered when, hearing rumors of an insurrection, Eliza decided to return to America. They left Jamaica in 1832 and the rumblings proved correct – the slaves in Jamaica were freed in 1834.⁶⁸ At twelve Louisa was no longer a child star. She was entering her awkward teenage years, during which it became harder, although not impossible, to find work.

⁶⁵ Turner, 89.

⁶⁶ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 37.

⁶⁷ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 38.

⁶⁸ Hill, 42.

Chapter 3: Coming of Age – The Lean Years

When Eliza Kinlock and her three daughters returned to the states they were desperately in need of work and income. The following letter to the owners of the Walnut Theatre in Philadelphia details Eliza's plea for work:

--To Messrs. Forrest and Duffy

Gentlemen:

Myself and daughter arrived Sunday last from the West Indies, after a voyage of twenty-two days. I presume it is needless to mention Mr. Kinlock's death, as you have doubtless heard of it long before now. Me and Louisa are at liberty to take an engagement with you, Should there be a vacancy I should be most happy to treat with you – that of first singing or singing chamber-maids – indeed, a general round of business. As to Louisa you are aware of what she can do. Your answer by return will oblige your obedient and humble servant,

Eliza Kinlock.⁶⁹

The Walnut did not hire them and they struggled to find work until they found employment together at the Warren Theatre in Boston. Their joint salary was \$16 a week. Louisa later recalled that "I don't know how we lived; but mother was a splendid manager at that time, a marvelously industrious woman, and we all lived at "Ma" Lenthe's [a boarding house]."⁷⁰ Louisa and her mother were also supporting Louisa's two younger half-siblings, both of whom would appear on the stage at some point but who did not yet possess Louisa's particular talent. Perhaps it was during this time that Louisa Lane developed her understanding of money, a skill that would serve her very well as a manager later on in life.

⁶⁹ James Kotsilibas-Davis, *Good Times, Great Times, The Odyssey of Maurice Barrymore* (Garden City, NY.: Doubleday, 1997), 88.

⁷⁰ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 65.

Soon after, Louisa split from her mother and sisters for a brief time to act in Washington while the others went to Baltimore. There, as she writes, she got to meet President Jackson: “Mrs. Eaton took me to the President's Levee - General Jackson then filling the chair of state. She introduced me to him. He was very kind and sweet to me, kissed me, and said I was ‘a very pretty little girl.’ Need I say that I was a Jackson Democrat from that hour, and have remained one up to date?”⁷¹ She then rejoined her family, and they continued to travel the theatrical circuit, as was common for actors at the time to earn a living. Always looking for the next opportunity, and perhaps remembering fondly the success they had previously enjoyed, before John Kinlock fell ill, Eliza decided to return with her daughters to the West Indies. There was another shipwreck en route, and Louisa’s reminiscences of this one strikes a markedly less positive tone:

We were wrecked on a sand bar in Egg Harbor, West Indies, in the middle of a very stormy night.... Our rescue was somewhat perilous, as we went along the bowsprit with our feet on the rope below, and...[then] it was arranged that we should proceed to New York in a “wood boat” -that was, a vessel without any bulwarks, and loaded with wood for building. Into this we were packed, and finally arrived in New York.”

Louisa never traveled abroad again, and we can speculate that perhaps two shipwrecks dissuaded her from making any more long sea voyages, even though London would have likely welcomed her talents, as they had other actresses like Clara Fisher and Charlotte Cushman, later in her professional career.

Travel around America, however, was not something an actor could ever stop if they wanted to support themselves. *The New York Dramatic Mirror* made the following statement in regards to the impossibility of not traveling while pursuing a career in acting: “The actor has been a bird of passage since the earliest days of the acting drama.

⁷¹ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 46.

His existence is migratory: the very name of player is associated distinctively with the wandering habits of a bohemian.”⁷²

Louisa becomes Mrs. Henry Hunt

In 1835, Louisa was playing at the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans, where she met Henry Blaine Hunt, a tenor. Hunt was “enthralled” with Louisa and they married a year later. He was forty-six years old and she was only sixteen years of age.⁷³ Very little has been written about Louisa’s first husband, although one newspaper described him as “the best dressed actor” and as “invariably correct, consistent and spirited.”⁷⁴ Louisa only stated that he was “a very good singer, a nice actor, and a very handsome man of forty.”⁷⁵ Louisa’s obituary in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* describes him further.

Mr. Hunt possessed a fine voice and was in demand as the singing hero of the melodramas and light operas of the time. He was Francis Osbaldstone in Poccock’s Rob Roy, Harry Bertram in Guy Mannering and Sanford in Sweethearts and Wives. He had been a member of the fast set which had surrounded George the Fourth before his ascent to the throne, and was a gentleman of dashing manners and great animal spirits.⁷⁶

If this connection to royalty were true, it would help explain why the ever-vigilant Eliza Kinlock approved the marriage.⁷⁷ Her approval may also have hinged on the fact that he was in the theatre and could potentially further their careers. This, however, never happened. Louisa, now Mrs. Hunt, never left her mother. She simply added her husband to their travel plans. Louisa and her mother were, in fact, almost never separated throughout their lives, and this perhaps added to the strain of her young marriage.

⁷² Witham, 181

⁷³ Turner, 90.

⁷⁴ *The Louisiana Courier*, March 13, 1837.

⁷⁵ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 77.

⁷⁶ “Obituary of Mrs. Drew,” *The New York Dramatic Mirror*, Sept. 11, 1897, 15.

⁷⁷ This connection to royalty is also mentioned in Turner, but she provides no evidence.

Louisa's recognition and acclaim continued to grow, as evidenced in an 1837 article in the *Louisiana Courier*, which praised the then Mrs. Hunt.

We like to see Mrs. Hunt upon the stage. Unlike the generality of performers who tread its boards with a hackneyed and careless gait, she seems to acknowledge it as her appropriate sphere. She [has an] artless, untaught enthusiasm [and] love of her profession... [and the future will] in time, decorate her young brow with that brightest and most durable coronal of worth – public approval.⁷⁸

Louisa, with her mother and husband, continued to travel and perform constantly and when she was eighteen she again played opposite Edwin Forrest, this time as Lady Macbeth.⁷⁹ Forrest was famous for this his Macbeth, playing opposite many different leading ladies.

⁷⁸ *The Louisiana Courier*, April 4, 1837.

⁷⁹Turner, 90.

Chapter 4: A Star is Born

Returning to Philadelphia

In 1839, Louisa was again contracted at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, this time as the leading lady for the season, and she was paid the highest salary of any actress in America at the time, \$20 per week.⁸⁰ She continued to perform with Edwin Forrest in Philadelphia, and while watching Forrest, she noticed a development in his acting which she admired. “Forrest seemed to realize the necessity of repressing the excessive robustness that had somewhat marred his previous impersonations, and from that time he became more subdued and natural.”⁸¹ This ability to evaluate other actors’ work would serve her well when she later became a manager.

Louisa spent the next two seasons at Philadelphia’s Chestnut Street Theatre, acting with Tyrone Power. Power was born in Ireland and took to the stage when he was fourteen years old. “From 1826, he was London’s most popular enactor of comic Irish characters [and] between 1833 and 1841 he toured America three times.”⁸² Louisa describes him warmly: “He was a truly great actor in his line, and chose to be very agreeable during his last engagement.”⁸³ She managed to work with almost all of the great actors of the time, including Ellen Tree, Charles Matthews, Joseph Jefferson III, E. L. Davenport and his daughter, Fanny, Charlotte Cushman, William Florence, Julia Marlowe, J. W. Wallack, John Gilbert, Mary Ann Vincent and three of the Booths. Drew

⁸⁰ Turner, 90.

⁸¹ “Sixty Years on the Stage.” *Boston Evening Transcript*, September 22, 1890.

⁸² *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*, “Power, Tyrone.”

acted with John Wilkes Booth in the 1857-58 season, when he was acting under the name J. B. Wilkes to avoid comparisons to his famous family members. Fanny Davenport was, like Louisa, a child star. She got her breakout adult role with Drew at the Arch Street Theatre and went on to star in Augustin Daly's company before managing her own traveling company successfully for many years.⁸⁴ Julia Marlowe was a talented actress who became known for her ability to act Shakespearian roles and romantic melodrama. She was best known as Rosalind in *As You Like It* and Viola in *Twelfth Night*.⁸⁵

Charlotte Cushman, one of the many talented persons with whom Louisa worked, was a very prominent and famous actress both on the English and the American stage; she was also a theatre manager in Philadelphia, although she was not a successful one. George Odell, a theatre critic, called her the "greatest of [all] American actresses."⁸⁶ At the time she took over the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia in 1842, however, she was only twenty-six, and not yet the star she would become.⁸⁷ She struggled as a manager while trying to establish herself as an actress, failing to take on the extra duties of a manager, keep up her craft, and keep the respect of her actors. "Several of the company members apparently did not like to take instructions from a woman, especially one who was young and relatively inexperienced."⁸⁸

In contrast to Cushman, J. W. Wallack, with whom Louisa also worked, was someone she could emulate and he would become one of the most prominent and well-

⁸³ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 85.

⁸⁴ Alice M. Robinson, Vera Mowry Roberts, and Milly S. Barranger, *Notable Women in the American Theatre: a Biographical Dictionary* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 195.

⁸⁵ Robinson, 595.

⁸⁶ George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage Vol 7* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 313.

⁸⁷ Dudden, 123

⁸⁸ Curry, 20.

known theatre managers. James W. Wallack took over the Lyceum Theatre in New York in 1853 and renamed it Wallack's Lyceum. "From 1855 until the 1880s, Wallack's was the leading theatre in the United States."⁸⁹ J.W. Wallack and his son Lester Wallack went on to own and manage two more theatres in New York.⁹⁰

During this time Louisa was working primarily in Philadelphia, but also continuing to tour, always accompanied by her mother and half-sisters, Adina and Georgiana. Hunt accompanied her less and less frequently. By March of 1847 her marriage seems to have been over. She accepted a part at the St. Louis Theatre, but made no arrangements for Hunt to accompany her. Hunt began to travel with singer Mary Taylor and apparently for years after 1847 "everywhere Mary Taylor went, Henry Hunt was sure to go."⁹¹ Louisa and her husband divorced in 1847.

Louisa's Second and Third Marriages

Louisa makes no mention her divorce from Hunt in her autobiography or his death in 1854 and she discusses her next two marriages in only two sentences. "In 1848 I married Mr. George Mossop. He died a few months after in Albany, and in 1850 I was married to Mr. John Drew, although the marriage was not made public for some months, as I had several engagements to fulfill before I could join him."⁹² Louisa probably felt pressured to remarry very quickly, as divorce was something that was considered quite

⁸⁹ Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy, *History Of The Theatre* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2007), 325.

⁹⁰ William Packard, David Pickering, and Charlotte Savidge, eds., "Wallack's Theatre," *The Facts on File Dictionary of the Theatre* (New York: Facts on File, 1988), 532.

⁹¹ Barnes, 64.

⁹² Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 101.

scandalous at the time.⁹³ Louisa, who was always attracted to men who had abilities on the stage, may have found Mossop attractive due to the fact that “he could not speak without stuttering badly off the stage, although before the footlights his language was as smooth and flowing as that of an orator.”⁹⁴ Their marriage, according to anecdotal evidence, was not particularly harmonious and “when he drank himself to death in Albany, several months later, Louisa appeared more relieved than grieved.”⁹⁵ Now, however, she was a respectable widow rather than a scandalous divorcée.

Louisa used her next marriage to further her career in a way the other two could not. Whether she was in love when she married John Drew is a question about which we can only speculate, though he did fit her type. He, like both of her previous husbands, was an Irish comedian. He, however, was eight years her junior and was, according to anecdotes, more interested in courting her sister. Turner claims that when “he came courting her sister Georgiana, Louisa refused his suit on the ground that Georgiana, nearly nineteen, was too young to marry ... two months later [Louisa] married John Drew.”⁹⁶ Some speculate that the daughter Georgiana would, years later, give birth to while touring abroad with John Drew was his child. Ethel Barrymore, granddaughter to Louisa and John, told the story that “’tis said Grandfather, [John Drew Sr.] had fallen in

⁹³ An example of how explosive a divorce could become, especially for an actor, is the well-publicized divorce between Edwin Forrest and Catherine Sinclair. Their divorce created “sensational headlines throughout the country.” (Johnson, 69) Sinclair actually used her infamy to her advantage when, in dire need of money, she decided to enter the theatrical world and banked on her notoriety to sell the first round of tickets until she could be noticed for her skills. She would go on to have a career both on stage and managing theatres, mostly in San Francisco. Curry points out that she is “often incorrectly cited as the first woman theatre manager.” (Curry, 7.) Curry states that the first female manager we know of is Margareta Sully West, who became manager of the Norfolk theatre in 1799 after her husband died. (Curry, 12). Claudia Durst Johnson, *American Actress: Perspective on the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1984).

⁹⁴ “Obituary of Mrs. John Drew,” *New York Dramatic Mirror*, September 11, 1897, 15.

⁹⁵ Turner, 91.

love with her and had wished to marry her. But my more forceful grandmother [Louisa Lane Drew] had said. ‘Nonsense!’ and married him herself.”⁹⁷ Whether or not the Drews were in love, Louisa was never the type to let an opportunity pass her by. John Kobler’s book about the Barrymores describes her as “a somewhat overpowering figure, ample and tending to masculinity, with a blunt chin and nose set in a round face. But intelligence, charm and an air of authority served her as well as beauty when it came to securing a husband.”⁹⁸ John Drew’s father managed New York’s small theatre, Niblo’s Garden.⁹⁹ In 1853, a theatrical review claimed Niblo’s held “the first rank among all the places of amusements...on the American continent.”¹⁰⁰ An association to this theatre must have appealed to Louisa.

Louisa’s Children

Between 1853 and 1856 Louisa gave birth to her three children, Louisa Eliza Drew, John Drew Jr., and Georgiana Drew.¹⁰¹ Louisa Lane Drew’s eldest child Louisa Eliza Drew never took up acting and married Charles Mendum, an actor, in Philadelphia in 1872. They had two children, Edmund, who did not become an actor, and Georgiana Drew Mendum, “whose career as an actress extended far into the twentieth century.”¹⁰² Louisa’s second child, John Drew Jr., debuted in the theatre his mother was managing at age eighteen. He was noticed by Agustin Daly, manager of The Fifth Avenue Theatre Company in New York, after which John Drew acted for Daly for many years. He would

⁹⁶ Turner, 90.

⁹⁷ Barrymore, 4.

⁹⁸ Kobler, 9.

⁹⁹ Banham, 308.

¹⁰⁰ Witham, 120.

¹⁰¹ Arthur Hornblow, *A History of Theatre in America* (Philadelphia & London: Lippincott, 1919), 84.

go on to become “a reigning star” and in 1892 worked for “the unheard of salary of \$500 per week.”¹⁰³ In 1880 he married actress Josephine Baker, whose parents had also been on the stage. John and Josephine’s daughter Louisa Alexa Drew became an actress as well, also married an actor, and gave birth to an actor-stage manager.

Louisa’s younger daughter, Georgiana Drew, made her stage debut in her mother’s theatre when she was fifteen. In 1876, at age twenty, she married Herbert Blythe, who had taken the stage name Maurice Barrymore. Legend has it that Mrs. John Drew discouraged her daughter from marrying Barrymore, but Georgiana was determined. They had three children—Lionel, Ethel and John, who were predominantly raised by their grandmother Mrs. John Drew, or “Mummum.” All three of them would make their fortunes on the stage and begin the ‘Barrymore Dynasty’ which continues today in both film and theatre.

Mrs. John Drew raised a fourth child, born while her husband was touring internationally, whom she claimed was adopted.¹⁰⁴ Her family, however, never believed this claim. Ethel Barrymore stated that “[Uncle] Sidney may not have been the son of John Drew, but he was indubitably the son of MRS. John Drew.”¹⁰⁵ James Kotsilibas-Davis, who wrote a biography on Maurice Barrymore, tells the following story:

It was unusual for Mrs. Drew to fraternize with young members of the company, particularly so to include them in family gatherings, but the handsome young imitator of Dickens was an exception. He spent a great deal of leisure time with his employer. ‘Robert Craig,’ she explained, ‘is one of the most talented young men I have ever met.’ During the season of 1867-68, Craig was abruptly asked to leave the Arch Street Company. Soon after, Mrs. Drew quit Philadelphia for a long rest in the country. She returned with a babe in arms, adopted, she said, and christened him Sidney White. Even when the child grew to be a mirror image of

¹⁰² Kotsilibas-Davis, 44.

¹⁰³ Banham, 308.

¹⁰⁴ Turner, 91.

¹⁰⁵ Barrymore, 4.

his adoptive mother, no one dared to question. Louisa Lane Drew was above reproach.¹⁰⁶

Sidney went on to become “a noted stage and vaudeville comedian” who often acted opposite Gladys Rankin, his wife.¹⁰⁷

Settling in Philadelphia

In August 1852, the Drews joined James Quinlan’s stock company at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Perhaps Louisa’s name recognition in Philadelphia prompted the Drew/Kinlock family to return there, although it was John Drew’s first time acting in Philadelphia. Before the season finished they moved to the Arch Street Theatre under the management of Thomas Hemphill: “Mr. and Mrs. John Drew opened at the Arch in the same play in which they first appeared at the Chestnut earlier in the season, *She Would And She Would Not*.”¹⁰⁸ A week after the Drews opened at the Arch a newspaper reported they were an “immense hit” and that the house was filled every night.¹⁰⁹ A short time later, William Wheatley became the acting manager of the Arch. Wheatley was someone with whom Mrs. Drew had acted multiple times. This was the beginning of a long-term relationship the Drews would have with The Arch Street Theatre in several capacities over the course of many years.

¹⁰⁶ Kotsilibas-Davis, 102.

¹⁰⁷ Banham, 309.

¹⁰⁸ Stolp, 209.

¹⁰⁹ *The Public Ledger*, February 28, 1853.

Chapter 5: The Arch Street Theatre

In 1853, with a growing family, the Drews needed stability and a larger income. This pressure may have led John Drew to join William Wheatley in taking over the lease of the Arch Street Theatre. Philadelphia, while not the urban hub or theatrical face at the level of New York, was evolving into a rich and influential city. “Between 1790 and 1860, Philadelphia shed its character as a center for the exchange of goods and money and became a powerful manufacturing metropolis ... Spurred by the construction of canals and railways.”¹¹⁰ As the city’s infrastructure developed, so did the theatrical amusements.

Philadelphia housed major theatres including, the Walnut Street Theatre (or American Theatre), the Chestnut Street Theatre and the Arch Street Theatre.¹¹¹ The Walnut Street Theatre, formerly the Olympic Theatre, is the only one of those major theatres that remains standing and in use as a theatre. It is currently the oldest theatre in America. The Walnut opened in 1809 as an equestrian circus, but by 1812 it was converted into a “legitimate theatre.” The Walnut was the “house to many firsts to the American theatre scene.” It was the first to install gas footlights in 1837, it was where Edwin Forrest made his stage debut in 1820, and in 1855 it was the first theatre to install air conditioning.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Tracy Davis, *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), 23.

¹¹¹ Wilson, 129.

¹¹² Walnut Street Theatre, “America’s Oldest Theatre, Philadelphia: The Walnut Street Theatre.” History | America’s Oldest Theatre, Philadelphia, Walnut Street - Walnut Street Theatre. <http://www.walnutstreettheatre.org/theatre/history.php> (accessed April 20, 2014).

The Chestnut Street Theatre, first known as The New Theatre, was built in 1793, four years after the laws in Philadelphia were repealed against acting.¹¹³ It was home of the first gas lighting in American theatre in 1816, and burnt down in 1820. When the theatre was rebuilt in 1822 it was renamed the Chestnut Street Theatre.¹¹⁴ It burnt to the ground again in 1856 and was not reopened until 1862 a few blocks away from its original location, under the management of William Wheatley. The Chestnut held its final performance in 1913.¹¹⁵

Theatrical Management At The Time

Theatrical management in the mid nineteenth century was not an occupation for the faint of heart, and while the rewards were high, so were the risks—and possibilities for mistakes. John Drew, for instance, only managed with Wheatley from 1853-1855. Louisa does not speak of why John’s partnership with Wheatley dissolved after just two seasons, but given that Wheatley stayed and managed successfully at the Arch it is reasonable to assume the fault lay with John. John tried management once more, a solo effort at the National Theatre in Philadelphia during the summer of 1857. “It was an April to August disaster, which sank most of the family property along with the theatre.”¹¹⁶ This experience, however, may have helped Louisa see what not to do when she would embark on own management activities.

¹¹³Thomas Clark Pollock, *The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1933), 45.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, *Philadelphia in 1830-1, or, A Brief Account Of The Various Institutions and Public Objects In This Metropolis Forming a Complete Guide for Strangers, And A Useful Compendium For The Inhabitants*, (Philadelphia: E.L. Carey and A. Hart, 1830), 139.

¹¹⁵ "Third Chestnut Street Theatre, 1211 Chestnut Street, 1898," ExplorePAHistory.com. <http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-D7B> (accessed April 18, 2014).

¹¹⁶ Jenner, 30.

In 1860, tired of domesticity, John Drew embarked on a worldwide tour.¹¹⁷ This tour would include California, Australia, England and Ireland; his sister-in-law, Georgiana Kinlock, and his seven-year-old daughter, Louisa, accompanied him.¹¹⁸ Louisa Lane Drew continued to perform at the Arch Street Theatre (now under the management of Wheatley and John Sleeper Clarke). Clarke was a very popular comedian in Philadelphia who had been good friends with Edwin Booth since childhood, and he married Booth's sister Asia in 1859. He and his brother-in-law Edwin Booth successfully managed the Walnut Street Theatre from 1865 to 1867.¹¹⁹

During the 1859-60 season, Louisa acted with the stock company and performed all the major roles opposite Edwin Booth. Louisa continued acting at The Arch through the last season of Wheatley and Clarke's management, the 1860-61 season. In this season, she would appear in more than sixty different roles.¹²⁰ This season was fraught with tension due to the beginnings of war developing, the final piece put on by the company that season was a play about war called *The Wars of Napoleon*.¹²¹

After the 1860-61 season, Wheatley and Clarke dissolved their partnership and Wheatley moved on to become manager of Niblo's Garden in New York City. Clarke went back to acting, reviving his career as a comedian both in America and England, and then returning to managing the Walnut Street Theatre. Bereft of successful managers they had previously, the board of directors made the decision to offer Louisa Lane Drew the position of Manager of The Arch Street Theatre. Offering a woman management was not without precedence in the theatre world, or indeed in Philadelphia, but no woman had the

¹¹⁷ Glenn Hughes, *History of the American Theatre, 1700-1950* (New York: S. French, 1951), 210.

¹¹⁸ Drew, *My Years on the Stage*, 23.

¹¹⁹ Davis, *America's Longest Run*, 134.

¹²⁰ Stolp, 69.

sort of tenure or success that Louisa would have. “Reportedly, Adam Everly, son of the board's president, suggested Drew for the job, pointing out her ‘experience, ability, good taste, and judgment’ and referring to Laura Keene's success in New York to counter any hesitation to leasing the theatre to a woman.”¹²² Laura Keene’s legacy has survived more prominently throughout theatrical histories than Louisa’s, perhaps in part due to the fact that Louisa was a much more private person, known for her reserve, whereas Keene, for her part, embraced celebrity.

Laura Keene

Laura Keene had the most colorful and illustrious career of any actress-manager in the late 1800s. She was also a notable example of how a determined female manager could persist in spite of male interference and condemnation, particularly strong in New York City. Keene, like Louisa, was born and began her career in England. Early in her life Keene was able to procure an acting position with Madame Vestris’ company. Madame Vestris was an English actress, singer, and theatre manager. She successfully managed the Covent Garden Theatre in London from 1839 to 1842 and the London Lyceum from 1847 to 1855, with her husband Charles James Mathews.¹²³ Working with Madame Vestris, Keene was given the opportunity to observe a successful businesswoman in theatre.¹²⁴ In 1852, Keene was noticed by New York manager J.W. Wallack, who offered her a position in his company. In America, she became a star almost immediately but Keene was not satisfied by her New York acclaim. She “wanted

¹²¹ *The Lorgnette*, April 17, 1861.

¹²² Curry, 84.

¹²³ Banham, 1167.

¹²⁴ Johnson, 134.

[the] power and profits of theatrical management.”¹²⁵ Keene managed the Charles Street Theatre in Baltimore for a few months before traveling to San Francisco, where she managed two different theatres in six months. She then toured worldwide as an actress for a few years before returning to New York.

Keene managed to secure a lease for the New York Metropolitan Theatre in 1855, but “a running battle with [male] managers followed. They were inexperienced in dealing with a female competitor, particularly a newcomer who refused to defer to the theatrical establishment and who waged public wars against them in the newspaper columns.”¹²⁶ Public slandering of other theatres was an advertising technique that Keene would use throughout all of her managerial career. Her productions proved to be successes. After one year, however, her competition found a legal loophole and was able to remove her company from the Metropolitan.

Keene then opened her own theatre, The Laura Keene Varieties Theatre in New York.¹²⁷ From 1855 to 1865, she remained successful in the New York market, and then she began touring with her own company. Keene’s career was derailed on April 14th, 1865 at Ford’s Theatre in Washington D.C.. Her company was performing their most popular show, *Our American Cousin*. President Abraham Lincoln was in attendance that night, and an actor who was not a part of the company, John Wilkes Booth, the son of Junius Brutus Booth and brother of actor Edwin Booth, became infamous for his assassination of the president. Keene’s “reputation suffered irrevocable damage,” and she

¹²⁵ Dudden, 123.

¹²⁶ Johnson, 72.

¹²⁷ Brenda Murphy, *The Cambridge Companion to American Women Playwrights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), xxiii.

rarely made any public appearances again.¹²⁸ While Keene's career was over, her prominent, while still controversial, success helped other women, such as Louisa Lane Drew, get their own foothold in theatrical management.

Louisa Lane Drew Becomes a Manager

One advantage Drew had over Keene in her management career was the fact that cities outside of New York were more accepting of women managers. Louisa Lane Drew's success, however, was not merely because she was not in New York; her long tenure as manager of the Arch Street Theatre was due to her own ability, experience and vision as a theatrical artist.

John Drew, Louisa's husband, died soon after she took over management of The Arch, leaving her the sole supporter of their family. She sums up this experience in few words: "In 1860 it was proposed by the stockholders of the Arch that I should assume the management, and in 1861 the theatre was opened as Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre. It was a hard season to meet. I borrowed money every week to meet the salaries. Mr. Drew returned just after Christmas and acted one hundred nights, then went to New York on business, returned, and died, after three days' illness, in May, 1862."¹²⁹ Due to the short period of time in which all of this happened some authors have incorrectly stated that Mrs. John Drew took over management of the theatre because her husband died, as was most common for women in theatrical management at the time. Remarkably, however, she was offered the lease of the theatre not because of her husband but perhaps in spite of him, as he was never successful as a theatrical manager.

¹²⁸ Johnson, 142.

¹²⁹ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 110.

Chapter 6: Becoming the Duchess and Moving Behind the Scenes

Mrs. John Drew took over The Arch Street Theatre at a time of financial insolvency and the theatre did not even turn a profit in her first year. The fact that the board continued to trust her in spite of this and invest in the theatre's infrastructure, which, in turn, contributed to her success, was remarkable. "When she took over the Arch the property had depreciated greatly, and was mortgaged to the amount of twenty thousand dollars."¹³⁰ Throughout her long career as a manager, "Mrs. Drew's stockholders did not even advertise in the trade papers that the Arch Street lease was available. They seem never to have seriously considered an alternative to her management, despite the fact that she occasionally had poor seasons ... during which she could not make her rent payments."¹³¹ Mrs. Drew was not the first female manager in Philadelphia, but she was the first successful one.¹³² Biographer Jonas Moses called her "the first woman in America to enter the field of theatrical management on so large a scale."¹³³ Her authority and decisiveness led to the nickname "The Duchess."

¹³⁰ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," 131.

¹³¹ Rosemarie K. Bank, "Louisa Lane Drew at the Arch Street Theatre: Repertory and Actor Training in Nineteenth Century Philadelphia," *Theatre Studies* 24 (1978), 41.

¹³² Mary Elizabeth Maywood became manager in 1842 of the Chestnut Street Theatre. In that same year, the fiercely competitive Walnut Street Theatre, afraid that the novelty of a woman manager would draw crowds, appointed actress Charlotte Cushman as their manager. Both women lasted one year in management before giving it up, as it was unsuccessful for both of them. Curry, 20.

¹³³ Moses, 173

The Duchess

Louisa commanded her theatre by completely demanding hard work and respect from everyone working in her theatre. An actor in her company explained:

The Duchess' was the familiar sobriquet by which the members of the company permitted themselves to refer to Mrs. Drew-when she was not present. But they all sincerely liked her. Her manner was a blending of the kindness of Marie Antoinette with the imperiousness of Queen Elizabeth, and she was one of the best-hearted women in the business. As a manager she was absolutely just, and it was because she was so strict that she was able to maintain the discipline for which she was famous, and that too at a time [during the Civil War] when the supply of actors was far short of the demand.¹³⁴

Clara Morris, “one of the most popular performers of her time,” also described her respect for Mrs. Drew.¹³⁵ “She was always a wonderful disciplinarian....Some women descend to bullying to maintain their authority—not so Mrs. John Drew. Her armor was a certain chill austerity of manner, her weapon a sharp sarcasm, while her strength lay in her self-control, her self-respect.”¹³⁶

Louisa commanded respect both from her company and her family. Maurice Barrymore, her son-in-law, “actually addressed [her] as ‘Ma’am’ like British nobility.” Ethel Barrymore recalled in her own memoirs, “it seemed as though a red carpet should have been spread before her. When, in later years, I saw royalty abroad, nothing was a surprise to me—I had seen my grandmother.”¹³⁷ Louisa’s precocious daughter Georgiana,

¹³⁴ Stull, 377.

¹³⁵ Claudia Durst Johnson. "Morris, Clara"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/18/18-00869.html>; American National Biography Online Feb. 2000. (Accessed: March 29, 2014).

¹³⁶ Clara Morris, “The Dressing Room Reception Where I First Met Ellen Terry and Mrs. John Drew,” *McClure’s Magazine*, December 1903, 210.

¹³⁷ Barrymore, 8.

Ethel's mother, said, "I suppose [the title 'The Duchess'] is appropriate enough, but then who could possibly be Queen?"¹³⁸

Louisa demanded the same type of hard work from herself as she did from all others. In her first season as manager, for instance, she not only took on all her new duties, she also appeared in forty-two different acting roles.¹³⁹ Louisa "was never known to come to even the first rehearsal with the book of the play [and yet] she was always letter perfect."¹⁴⁰ Louisa was an effective and shrewd planner and as she began her time at the Arch she used her own name as an actress to draw crowds, but as the years progressed, she slowly removed herself from the stage, making her appearances more of a special occasion for the audience, thus uncoupling her theatre's success from her own.

Finances

Louisa Lane Drew had learned many lessons over her years on the stage working with both successful and unsuccessful companies. The most essential was about finances. The Arch Street Theatre was thirty-one years old and had proved very unprofitable for previous managers. After William B. Wood opened the Arch Street Theatre, he was financially ruined within three months.¹⁴¹ Various other managers tried their hand at management of the Arch, but few were successful. "According to one historian [many of the managers] found the Arch 'a morgue for theatrical hopes.'"¹⁴²

The Arch Street property was heavily mortgaged when Louisa took over its management. With time she would pay off the mortgage and leave a surplus to the

¹³⁸ Kostilibis-Davis, 102.

¹³⁹ Turner, 95.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, "Mrs. John Drew," 133.

¹⁴¹ Stolp, 274.

¹⁴² Stolp, 275.

stockholders—but that would not occur in her first season. She borrowed money every week of her first season to meet the salaries of her actors.¹⁴³ She kept the previous treasurer of the Arch, Joseph D. Murphy in his position when she took over the lease. Murphy began his career in the 1840s as a ballad singer with the Sable Harmonists. In 1860 Murphy retired from minstrelsy and began his fifteen years as the business manager of the Arch Street Theatre.”¹⁴⁴ The Arch Street Theatre, under Louisa’s management, became profitable when her husband returned from his tour abroad and starred at the Arch.

In the 1860s and 1870s theatres were moving from a benefit system to a salary system.¹⁴⁵ In the past, actors were paid primarily through the profits of particular ‘benefit’ performances. Louisa, however, had experienced a system of payment she liked better, in which after each performance, all the actors were paid a share of the total profits. At the time she was performing at the Peele’s Museum under manager E. N. Thayer. “[Each night a]fter the entertainment was over Mr. Thayer sat before the table on stage with the receipts of the night before him, and solemnly handed each person his or her share or shares in specie (and very welcome it was to all). This ceremony occurred nightly, and, unlike most ceremonials, never became tiresome.”¹⁴⁶ She used this type of payment method throughout her tenure as manager of the Arch. Drew personally distributed salaries every Saturday, and “she was able to claim she never failed to meet her payroll.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 110.

¹⁴⁴ Edward Le Roy Rice, *Monarchs of Minstrelsy, From "Daddy" Rice To Date*, (New York City: Kenny Publishing Co., 1910), 42.

¹⁴⁵ Brockett and Hildy, 333.

¹⁴⁶ Drew, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 90.

¹⁴⁷ Curry, 88.

The Arch was a financial success, for the most part, under the management of Drew. “Box office prices were low when compared with the costs of running a theatre whose rent alone was \$6200 per year. The prices ranged from a high of 50 cents for the Parquette through 37 ½ cents for the Dress Circle and a quarter for the Family Circle to just 15 cents for the Amphitheatre.”¹⁴⁸ Brown reported that the stock of the Arch Street, which had a par value of \$500 per share, grew to \$780 per share under her management.¹⁴⁹ By the third season of Drew’s management, the production value was raised to the point that she could now charge \$1 for orchestra seats.¹⁵⁰

Actors did not yet have a union, and therefore lacked the protection it would have provided. “They received no salary during rehearsal periods and were often stranded when productions closed on the road.”¹⁵¹ This instability would have made Drew’s Arch and other strong resident companies a much better bet for actors’ financial stability. Drew, also, rehearsed during the day and performed at night, meaning there was little to no time in which actors were not paid at all and just in rehearsal process. By 1895, all other theatres followed the system Drew had begun to implement, where benefits were abandoned in favor of salaries.¹⁵²

It is worth noting here that while acting was a precarious and hard business it was often a much better bet for earning money than other means of employment. In 1894, F. F. Mackay estimated that the average actor’s salary was \$35 dollars per week, which, for a typical season of twenty-five weeks, totaled an annual salary of \$875. In comparison, the approximate annual earnings of manufacturing employees were \$386 in 1894, and

¹⁴⁸ Turner, 96.

¹⁴⁹ Brown, “Mrs. John Drew,” 131.

¹⁵⁰ Jenner, 33.

¹⁵¹ Brockett and Hildy, 331.

clerical workers averaged \$728. Higher earners included postal workers at \$919 and ministers at \$824.¹⁵³ Acting, as long as the actor could avoid going too long without employment, could prove very lucrative. The Arch Street Theatre, in Drew's best year of management, paid a lead \$50 per week, a utility player \$12 per week and a star between \$300 and \$500 a week.

Louisa proved herself a shrewd manager. Because a theatre does not make profits without an audience, she was careful in the image she presented and how she marketed both herself and her theatre. "Mrs. Drew's popularity in Philadelphia, strengthened by her good relations with the newspapers and city leaders, made it easier for her to stay in business. She tended these relationships by offering her theatre and company for benefit nights for various local charities."¹⁵⁴ Drew was a respected member of the Church, and her morality was marketable. Interestingly, in 1869 she booked Lydia Thomson's (infamous) Burlesque Show to perform at the Arch, after the show made William Wheatly lots of money in New York. The Philadelphia newspapers and public were not pleased, to the point that one newspaper boycotted her entire next season.¹⁵⁵

Renovating the Arch Street Theatre

The Arch Street Theatre had undergone many renovations over the years. In 1852, Thomas J. Hemphill, manager for a year, renovated the house and transformed the pit into a parquet. When Mrs. John Drew took over the lease of the Arch Street, before she

¹⁵² Ibid, 331.

¹⁵³ Benjamin McArthur, *Actors and American Culture, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 24.

¹⁵⁴ Morgan, 55.

¹⁵⁵ Gendrich, 142.

even opened her first season—and while the theatre was still heavily mortgaged—she insisted on further renovations. An advertisement in *The Inquirer* lauded the alterations and improvements she had made in the theatre. The advertisement mentions new seats, new upholstering and curtain hanging, new painting and decorating and new chandeliers and gas fittings. It praises a new ventilator “producing a constant and agreeable coolness in the atmosphere of Theatre,” a new wardrobe, furniture, properties and new machinery.¹⁵⁶ Later reviewers exclaimed over the new and improved scenery: “In the point of scenery, no finer work has ever been placed upon the Philadelphia stage, the house being a perfect facsimile of those of the period.”¹⁵⁷ This refers to a play debuting in America for the first time, *The House on the Bridge of Notre Dame*. The next day the same newspaper claimed the show was “placed upon the stage with a perfectness of detail never before observed in this country.”¹⁵⁸

Louisa was very aware that fire was becoming a more and more serious problem for theatres as they incorporated gas lighting. In 1851 Barnum’s Museum, a theatre in Philadelphia, burned down and in 1854 Welch’s Amphitheatre, also in Philadelphia, was destroyed by fire.¹⁵⁹ During her first season as manager of the Arch, seven dancers were killed when a skirt caught fire from a gas flame at William Wheatley’s new Continental Theatre. Drew gave a benefit performance for the survivors of that fire soon after it occurred.¹⁶⁰ Wheatley had to close down his theatre later that year because the audience

¹⁵⁶ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 29, 1861.

¹⁵⁷ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 4, 1861.

¹⁵⁸ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5, 1861.

¹⁵⁹ J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884), 980

¹⁶⁰ Stolp, 284.

was too afraid to attend in large enough numbers. Louisa advertised that her theatre was fireproofed as a way to reassure and draw in more audience members.

Despite this remodeling, Louisa knew her theatre needed more work, and a year later, in 1863, she convinced the owners to set aside \$20,000 to gut and entirely rebuild the theatre; the renovation actually cost more than planned. As part of this renovation, Drew had the bar removed and announced that “no improper characters will be admitted,” (thereby banning the prostitutes) which encouraged female audience members to attend her theatre, opening up her audience base. Her stage became the second largest in Philadelphia and the old stage machinery was completely replaced. These renovations, along with her change in rehearsal policies, allowed her theatre to thrive.¹⁶¹

Changing The Rehearsal Process and Becoming a ‘Trainer to Actors’

At the time Louisa began managing, rehearsals were not common practice in the theatre. She quickly instituted them, and whether it was because she wanted them as an actor herself or that she wanted more control of her productions, the result was a better and more finished theatrical product. Up to now, The Walnut Street Theatre was still putting on shows with the old star system and almost no rehearsal time. As one of the company members describes this era, “one got a general idea of the exits, entrances, and mise en scene with the injunction to give the star center of the stage and keep out of his way. A few rehearsals with speeches tattled off, stage business agreed upon, and we were ready for performance.” He described “the poor devil of the stage manager, who was sure to let something go wrong, and in consequence be hauled over the coals by the star.” As

¹⁶¹ Morgan, 40.

was common with these few rehearsals, “first nights were visitations of terror.”¹⁶² At the Arch Street, however, things were quite different. Rehearsals began promptly at 10:00AM and the actors rehearsed for four hours. The afternoons were for the actors to study and for Louisa to “go over the books, sign bills, and inspect her theatre to insure that her high standards were being met.”¹⁶³

Louisa developed such routines in her theatre, about which her children and grandchildren would later write. Ethel, in remembering her grandmother, said: “I never met anyone who had quite the amazing force without effort that [she did]...She would go over books, listen to reports, sign documents and inspect things with that regal manner which betokens state affairs.”¹⁶⁴ She enforced a dress code and expectations all through the ranks, down to her backstage personnel who “were dressed in white coveralls and wore felt slippers while the play was going on.”¹⁶⁵ No one defied her and, as actress Clara Morris put it, he “would have been a rarely reckless actor who had ventured to question the authority of ‘The Duchess’ in her own bailiwick.”¹⁶⁶

Louisa expected the best and she had a theatrical way of expressing her dissatisfaction with a performance:

Mrs. Drew had a way of putting up for a long time with things that she felt should be remedied; but, little by little, as her patience ebbed, her silence would become more pronounced, like the lull before the storm; then, some day, upon arriving at the theatre, she would walk into the box office and don a certain red shawl which she kept in reserve as one of the most impressive pieces of stage property in the house. It fittingly reflected her mood. So long as that shawl was in evidence, all the people of the Arch, from stage carpenter to leading man, realized that

¹⁶² Otis Skinner, quoted in Jack Poggi, *Theatre in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), 210.

¹⁶³ Turner, 94.

¹⁶⁴ Barrymore, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Turner, 94.

¹⁶⁶ Morris, 210.

perfection in the performance of duty was the smallest return they could give for their salaries.¹⁶⁷

The quality of her own work and the level of quality she demanded from others would become a great part of her fame and legacy. Drew's Arch Street Theatre became known as a place for actors to train, and refine their craft. This training, however, may not have been purely by choice. While managers like Daly were able to dole out larger salaries to retain established actors, the Arch Street Theatre had to make due with a smaller budget. To get a good company, therefore, Louisa had to put time and energy into training those who worked for her and the turnover rate was high as the gifted ones were often snagged by Daly and others.¹⁶⁸ "The careful attention she paid to training actors was mostly due to necessity, for the supply of actors was low when Drew began her management, and throughout the years she lost many of her better players to New York management."¹⁶⁹ Drew, however, never begrudged Daly his success, and in fact remained a regular correspondent of Daly's as a manager, as they visited and traveled to each other's theatres.¹⁷⁰

She expected actors to learn their lines correctly and in a timely manner, something common in theatre today, but a practice that was not then the standard. "Mrs. Drew developed a stock company at the Arch Street Theatre that not only was famous throughout the country, but also served as a training school for some of the best actors of later years."¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Stull, 373.

¹⁶⁸ Jenner, 35.

¹⁶⁹ Curry, 86.

¹⁷⁰ Louisa Lane Drew to Augustin Daly, *Autograph letters signed from Louisa (Lane) Drew to various people [manuscript], 1870?-1897* (Washington DC: Folger Library).

¹⁷¹ Coad, 198.

New Works

Louisa Drew knew that she needed her theatre to stand out if she was to draw in audiences. One of the ways she chose to accomplish this goal was to incorporate new works into the Arch Street repertoire. In her very first season as manager of the Arch she premiered a new play called *Jeannette*, which was very favorably received by audiences. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reviewer wrote to acknowledge the “success of one of our most eminent and talented ladies—Mrs. John Drew, an artiste of rare merit.” The article went on to state that Drew “possesses, with her brilliant talents, a fine business tact and judgment almost unequaled, especially in the dramatic world.”¹⁷² These works, while premiering in Philadelphia, often came from Wallack’s in New York. Drew had an arrangement with Lester Wallack to “view new pieces in his theatre and to purchase the rights of production for Philadelphia from him.”¹⁷³ Drew was “unafraid of the untried (in plays or actors) ... she had a knack for picking plays that went over well.”¹⁷⁴ When she judged these plays she would consider not only her Philadelphia audience, but also if her Arch Street company could perform it well.¹⁷⁵ New works gave her a competitive advantage over the other theatres competing for an audience in Philadelphia.

Resident Stock System

For the first fifteen years, during the most successful time of her management, Louisa Drew maintained a resident stock company. The role of a manager under this system encompassed many discrete jobs including “director, producer, casting agent,

¹⁷² *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 24, 1861.

¹⁷³ Morgan, 52.

¹⁷⁴ Weldon B. Durham, *American Theatre Companies 1749-1887* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 60.

designer, and actor, with duties as diplomat, financier, and confidant.”¹⁷⁶ Her performances used the general stock of actors she had procured for the season, and she brought in guest stars to appear with them including Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, and Louisa’s husband John Drew. Within this resident system Louisa was a ‘trainer to actors’ and what is currently called a ‘director’. She had an ability with “picturization and movement.”¹⁷⁷

Prior to the 1870s, almost all theatres around the country acted with a resident stock company system. The better stock companies of the nineteenth century, like Drew’s, had permanent theatrical homes and their seasons usually ran for forty weeks. They often would produce an astounding number of plays. The Boston Museum, in the 1851-52 season, for example, produced 140 different plays.¹⁷⁸ Gradually the resident stock company system broke down as stars became more and more prevalent and audience demand increased. When stars began forming their own combination companies the classic stock system came to an end.¹⁷⁹ Louisa held out against the combination system for as long as she could but by 1880 she had to give in to audience demands to retain her audience.

Combination System

A combination system was one in which stars brought groups of supporting players around to theatres with them, negating the need for the stock company for which

¹⁷⁵ Bank, 40.

¹⁷⁶ Turner, 93.

¹⁷⁷ Durham, 61.

¹⁷⁸ McArthur, 5.

¹⁷⁹ Turner, 93.

Drew was known.¹⁸⁰ Previously, stars traveled on their own and joined the local resident companies for a few productions. The combination companies might use a few local actors but usually they toured as a full group. As a result, managers became “mere landlords” of their theatres, renting them out to these combination companies.¹⁸¹ When Drew disbanded her resident company she remained the manager on record but spent much of her time touring.

Louisa’s Final Years

After making her company a combination company in 1876, Louisa went on tour with Joseph Jefferson as Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*. *The Rivals* toured every season for the next twelve years, and covered 27,000 miles.¹⁸² Mrs. Malaprop became Louisa’s most celebrated role.¹⁸³ Business at the Arch grew increasingly sporadic while she was away and, despite her acquiescing to audience demands for a combination system, Drew was never able to draw the same type of profits or interest that she had had with her resident company. In 1892, Drew “with great reluctance, informed the board of directors of the Arch that she was relinquishing the lease.”¹⁸⁴ She bluntly stated that she “gave up the management of the theatre because it ceased to be profitable.”¹⁸⁵

Louisa tried touring again with her son Sidney, but that venture was not successful. She then retreated to her son John’s apartment in New York for a while, and her granddaughter Ethel Barrymore came with her. Ethel remembers that her

¹⁸⁰ Ron Engle and Tice L. Miller, *The American Stage: Social and Economic Issues from the Colonial Period to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 43.

¹⁸¹ Brockett and Hildy, 328.

¹⁸² Turner, 98.

¹⁸³ Packard, 149.

¹⁸⁴ Turner, 99.

grandmother, even in her later years, was still “very reticent, a person of absolutely enormous dignity and silences.” Louisa, however, was uncomfortable and “unhappy being dependent for the first time in her life [and it was] all very tragic for her because she had been such a commanding person with everyone’s life in her hands for so many years.”¹⁸⁶

That said, Drew was never one to leave the stage for long, and in 1896 she rejoined Jefferson in a tour of *The Rivals*. Although they played a grueling schedule of twenty-seven cities in as many days, the seventy-six-year-old woman never complained. She died a year later, in August 1897 at age seventy-seven. She had been on the stage for the better part of seventy-six of those seventy-seven years.¹⁸⁷ She left behind a story of tremendous accomplishment.

¹⁸⁵ *The Dramatic Mirror*, January 5, 1895.

¹⁸⁶ Barrymore, 43.

¹⁸⁷ Turner, 100.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Final Thoughts

I encountered Louisa Lane Drew because I wanted to find out when and how women started managing theatres. In the course of that research, I found some amazing and influential women, with a few specific books focusing on them. These books point out, and I confirmed with further research, that these women's histories have suffered scholarly neglect and their stories are not fully included in general theatrical history books. I never would have found information about or learned about Drew if I had not been looking specifically for women managers. Theatre often reflects society in both on stage works and attitudes, making it an effective lens through which to analyze general attitudes in society. Theatre is willing to push societal norms and expectations, particularly because audiences love viewing the sensational. The fact that women began managing theatres early in American history, therefore, is not surprising. That these women are not included or remembered by many historical scholars, therefore, shows a serious neglect and important gap that I wish to help correct with this thesis.

I chose to focus specifically on one manager, Louisa Lane Drew, in part because she was the most successful female manager of the nineteenth century. While there were others, who also suffer scholarly neglect, including Laura Keene and Catherine Sinclair, Drew's success in theatrical management was unprecedented. Keene is, by far, the best known of that century, but mostly for her infamous nature and choices, rather than her managerial success. Drew, in contrast, was an intensely private person. This made researching her life that much more challenging.

As I explored Drew as an amazing manager and influential woman however, I consistently found references of her more often as the matriarch of the Barrymore line, rather than remembrances of what she, herself, contributed to the theatre. While she was responsible for pushing her children and grand-children into the theatre, helping to establish the illustrious and famous family in theatre and film, her contributions to the theatre were much bigger than just her ability to birth and be a “stage mother” to her children.

There is no one part of Louisa Lane Drew’s career that makes her “an example of the highest achievement in theatre management.”¹⁸⁸ Her influence is most wide spread in those she trained, the actors that worked under her while she managed the Arch Street Theatre. Her institution of a regular and intensive rehearsal process was something that would become the standard, a way for actors to refine their crafts. Drew’s ability to manage the finances of her theatre and the salaries of her actors, her understanding of the type of shows that would appeal to the Philadelphia theatre-goers, were all part of what made her uniquely successful in her role as manager. This thesis aims to shed light on an influential women whose contributions to theatre have not stood the tests of time or been remembered in general scholarly work.

¹⁸⁸ Curry, 89.

Appendix: Timeline

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Selected Events in Louisa Drew's Life</u> | <u>Selected Theatre Events in America</u> | <u>Selected Historical/Cultural Events in America</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1820 | Louisa was born in London England | | |
| 1821 | | | James Monroe was reelected president |
| 1822 | | | |
| 1823 | | | In his annual address to Congress, President Monroe declared that the American continents are henceforth off-limits for further colonization by European powers |
| 1824 | | | |
| 1825 | | | John Quincy Adams became president |
| 1826 | | <p>English star William Charles Macready first appeared in the United States</p> <p>Bowery Theatre opened in New York in October (as New York Theatre)</p> <p>Gas lighting installed in New York theatres.</p> | <p>John Adams died</p> <p>Thomas Jefferson died</p> |
| 1827 | Louisa arrived in America, and made her debut at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia | <p>James Kirke Paulding made an early plea for "American" drama in American Quarterly Review (June).</p> <p>London-born actress Clara Fisher made her triumphant debut at New York's Park Theatre.</p> | |

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Selected Events in Louisa Drew's Life</u> | <u>Selected Theatre Events in America</u> | <u>Selected Historical/Cultural Events in America</u> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1828 | <p>Louisa made her New York Debut at the Bowery.</p> <p>Eliza (Louisa's mother) married John Kinlock</p> | <p>Philadelphia's Arch Street Theatre opened under William B. Wood</p> <p>The first stage version of <i>Rip Van Winkle</i> premiered Albany, 28 May, with Thomas Flynn in title role. The Bowery Theatre burnt down for the first time (of six)</p> | <p>Workingmen's Party established in Philadelphia in reaction to Jeffersonian Republican's policies (it spread to thirty three cities).</p> <p>Construction began on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the first public railroad in the U.S.</p> |
| 1829 | <p>Louisa had her first benefit performance in <i>Dr. Pangloss</i>.</p> <p>Louisa performed at the Arch Street Theatre for the first time.</p> | | <p>Andrew Jackson became president</p> |
| 1830 | <p>Louisa's sister Georgiana Kinlock was born</p> <p>The Kinlock/Lane family sailed to Jamaica</p> | <p>Thomas S. Hamblin secured the lease of the Bowery Theatre and controlled its operation for the next twenty years.</p> <p>Harry Isherwood, with company of Joseph Jefferson I, emerged as an early American scenic designer.</p> | <p>Poet Emily Dickinson was born.</p> <p>South Carolina Canal and Railroad offered the first regular steam railway service.</p> <p>U.S. population reaches 12.9 million, including 3.5 million black slaves.</p> |

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Selected Events in Louisa Drew's Life</u> | <u>Selected Theatre Events in America</u> | <u>Selected Historical/Cultural Events in America</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1831 | John Kinlock, Louisa's step-father died in Jamaica | <p>William Chapman's "Floating Palace or Theatre," the first intentionally designed showboat, was launched in Pittsburgh.</p> <p>Weekly <i>The Spirit of the Times</i> was founded in New York; it featured sporting and theatrical news (lasted until 1902).</p> <p>Living pictures (or <i>tableaux vivants</i>) were introduced to New York stage by Ada Adams Barrymore</p> | |
| 1832 | | <p>The Boston Academy of Music was founded.</p> <p>Dunlap's <i>History of the American Theatre</i> was published.</p> <p>Charles and Fanny Kemble first appeared at the Park Theatre.</p> <p>Actor William Warren Jr. debuted at the Arch Street Theatre</p> | <p>First horse trolley ran in New York City.</p> <p>Jackson was reelected; vetoes U.S. Bank.</p> <p>There were Cholera epidemics in major American cities</p> |
| 1833 | Louisa joined the stock company of the Bowery Theatre | <p>Italian Opera House opened in New York; opera failed, and venue became the National Theatre.</p> <p>Irish actor Tyrone Power first appeared in United States, (and settled there in 1840)</p> <p>Edwin Booth was born in Maryland</p> | <p>American Antislavery Society was formed by William Lloyd Garrison</p> <p>The first penny daily newspapers served as step toward mass-oriented publications.</p> <p>Oberlin College (Ohio) was founded; it became the first coeducational college in 1838.</p> |

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Selected Events in Louisa Drew's Life</u> | <u>Selected Theatre Events in America</u> | <u>Selected Historical/Cultural Events in America</u> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1834 | | Josephine Clifton, who debuted in 1831 at the Bowery, became the first American actress to star in London. English actor William E. Burton made his American debut at Philadelphia's Arch Street Theatre. | |
| 1835 | | Caldwell opened St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans. | Mark Twain was born. Second Seminole War (to 1842). Fire in New York destroyed 674 buildings |
| 1836 | Louisa married Henry B. Hunt | Charlotte Cushman debuted as Lady Macbeth in New Orleans, followed by New York debut at Bowery Theatre. E. L. Davenport debuted in Providence, Rhode Island. | The Alamo fell in March; Santa Anna was defeated in April at San Jacinto; Texas declared independence. |
| 1837 | | The first recorded theatre activities in Chicago. | Major financial crash (panic of 1837) Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered "The American Scholar" address at Harvard, calling for intellectual independence from Europe, the past, and obstacles to originality. First U.S. women's college, Mount Holyoke, founded in Massachusetts. |
| 1838 | Louisa was engaged for a season as the Leading Lady at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia for | William E. Burton became manager of Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theatre, (remained until 1848). | |

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| | \$20/week. | | |
| 1839 | Louisa appeared at the Walnut Street Theatre as Mrs. Hunt | | |
| 1840 | | The first recorded use of "vaudeville" in United States in Boston when "Vaudeville Saloon" advertised a variety program. Ethelbert A. Marshall began theatrical empire with Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. | U.S. population at 17 million (90% rural). U.S. railroad tracks at 3,328 miles (compared to 1,818 in all of Europe). |
| 1841 | Louisa was a member of the company at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. | Actress-playwright Anna Cora Mowatt began her performance career with readings in Boston. | William Henry Harrison died a month after election as president; succeeded by John Tyler. State fair tradition began in Syracuse, N.Y. |
| 1842 | | Charlotte Cushman became manager (till 1843) of Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre. Steele Mackaye was born | Western settlement was facilitated by the opening of the Oregon Trail. |

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| 1843 | <p>Louisa opened the season at the Arch with J. W. Wallack, Henry Hunt, and her half-sister Georgiana Kinlock.</p> <p>By the end of this year Louisa could be considered a “well known actress on the New York Stage.”</p> | <p>The Virginia Minstrels debuted in New York, staging first true minstrel show.</p> <p>The first Matinee performance was recorded in New York City</p> <p>William Charles Macready first appeared in the U.S.</p> | |
| 1844 | | <p>An infamous rivalry between American actor, Edwin Forrest and British star, William Macready began.</p> | <p>Samuel F. B. Morse perfected the telegraph and the first telegraph line strung between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore.</p> |
| 1845 | | <p>Anna Cora Mowatt's <i>Fashion</i> opens at New York Park Theatre</p> <p>The second Bowery Theatre increased capacity from 3,500 to 4,000. Then burnt down and was rebuilt.</p> | <p>James Polk became president</p> <p>Southern Baptist Convention split over slavery and doctrinal and procedural disputes from General Convention.</p> <p>Fire in New York City burnt over 1,000 buildings.</p> |
| 1846 | <p>Louisa acted opposite E. L. Davenport at the Old Bowery Theatre</p> | <p><i>King John</i> and <i>Richard III</i>, presented as part of Charles Kean's 1845-46 tour, introduced historical accuracy in scenery and costume in the U.S.</p> | |

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| 1847 | <p>Louisa divorced Hunt</p> <p>Louisa appeared in Chicago at John B. Rice's theatre.</p> | <p>J. B. Rice constructed the first permanent theatre in Chicago.</p> <p>Lester Wallack debuted at the Broadway Theatre.</p> <p>Palmo's Opera House introduced "living pictures" featuring scantily clad women and the production was shut down by New York officials.</p> | <p>Michigan abolished the death penalty, the first state to do so.</p> <p>Frederick Douglass began an abolitionist newspaper (the <i>North Star</i>).</p> |
| 1848 | <p>Louisa appeared at the St. Charles Street Theatre in New Orleans.</p> <p>Louisa married George Mossop</p> | <p>Macready toured the United States and competition with Forrest escalated into class as well as nationalistic conflict.</p> <p>The first known theatre in California was converted from a Monterey lodging house.</p> <p>The Park Theatre burnt down</p> | <p>Gold discovered in California</p> <p>"Bloomer" trousers for women were introduced by Amelia Bloomer.</p> <p>Women's Rights Convention happened at Seneca Falls, New York.</p> <p>New York passed legislation allowing married women to own real estate.</p> |
| 1849 | <p>Louisa's husband George Mossop died.</p> | <p>The Astor Place Opera. House Riot (10 May), marked the culmination of Macready-Forrest feud, and led to fragmentation of stage entertainment into more obviously popular and elitist forms.</p> <p>Edwin Booth debuted in Boston as Tressel in <i>Richard III</i>.</p> | <p>Zachary Taylor became president</p> <p>Edgar Allan Poe died</p> <p>California Gold Rush was underway</p> |

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| 1850 | Louisa married John Drew | Comedian-pantomime artist George L. Fox managed the National Theatre, New York, until 1858. San Francisco hosted its first professional performance As many as fifty theatre companies existed throughout the country. | Millard Fillmore became president. Nathaniel Hawthorne's <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> was published. First national women's rights convention was held in Worcester, Massachusetts. New York's population reached 700,000. |
| 1851 | | Burton produced first Shakespeare at his New York theatre (<i>The Winters Tale</i>) Infamous divorce trial of Edwin Forrest and Catherine Sinclair | <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> by Harriet Beecher Stowe was published as serial Herman Melville's <i>Moby Dick</i> was published |
| 1852 | Louisa gave birth to her older daughter, Louisa. Louisa became a member of the Chestnut Street Theatre. | Wallack's Lyceum Theatre (originally John Brougham's Broadway) opened under James W. Wallack. J. B. Booth gave his final performance at the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans. Died soon after. The first "Concert Hall" opened in Seattle, Washington. | School attendance was mandated in Massachusetts. Pennsylvania Railroad completed track linking Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. |

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| 1853 | <p>Louisa gave birth to her son, John Drew</p> <p>Louisa's husband, John Drew, became a co-manager of the Arch Street Theatre for two years.</p> | <p>Metropolitan Theatre, San Francisco, opened under Catherine Sinclair.</p> <p>Edwin Booth appeared as Hamlet for first time.</p> <p><i>The New York Clipper</i> founded by Frank Queen began publication as sporting and theatrical paper</p> <p>Philadelphia's first all-minstrel theatre was built by Sam Sanford</p> | <p>Free Soil Party founded; it was against extension of slavery into the territories.</p> |
| 1854 | <p>Louisa's ex-husband Hunt died.</p> | <p>The Boston Theatre opened in Boston on Washington Street.</p> <p>Academy of Music opened in New York.</p> <p>John Wilkes Booth debuted at the Charles Street Theatre in Baltimore as Richard in <i>Richard III</i>.</p> <p>Anna Cora Mowatt made last appearance as Pauline at Niblo's Garden.</p> | <p>The Republican Party was established by former Whigs, Free Soilers, and antislavery Democrats.</p> <p>Kansas-Nebraska Act led to fights over the legality of slavery in western territories.</p> |
| 1855 | <p>Louisa's mother, Eliza, died.</p> | <p>Actress-manager Laura Keene opened Laura Keene's Varieties Theatre in New York, followed in 1856 by the New Theatre.</p> | |

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| 1856 | Louisa gave birth to her younger daughter, Georgiana Emma Drew. | The First American copyright law gave authors the sole right to print, publish, act, perform, and present own plays | James Buchanan became president. Railroad service was extended to Chicago. |
| 1857 | | Edwin Booth's New York debut at Briton's Chambers Street Theatre. | U.S. Supreme Court in <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> legalized slavery in U.S. territories; found 1820-21 Missouri Compromise unconstitutional. |
| 1858 | William Wheatley and John S. Clarke became lessees of the Arch Street Theatre (And Louisa acted under them). | Laura Keene first produced English playwright Tom Taylor's <i>Our American Cousin</i> in New York (The play she was most famous for, and the one she was playing in when Lincoln was assassinated) | Minnesota was admitted as thirty-second state. |
| 1859 | | First dramatic agency was likely founded in New York. | First sleeping car in a train was introduced for passenger service. Oregon was admitted as the thirty-third state. |
| 1860 | | Boucicault's <i>The Colleen Bawn</i> was performed at Laura Keene's Theatre, with John Drew. Second Wallack's Theatre opened; it remained a brilliant stock theatre until renamed The Star in 1881. | Frederick Douglass emerged as the abolitionist leader. Democratic Party split into pro-slavery and compromise factions. Lincoln was nominated by Republicans. U.S. population was 31.4 million (New York over 800,000; Philadelphia exceeded 500,000). |

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| 1861 | Louisa became manager of the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia | <p>Brigham Young erected the Salt Lake Theatre in Utah.</p> <p>Brooklyn Academy of Music opened the first theatre on Montague Street.</p> <p>Edwin Booth began his first English tour.</p> <p>John T. Ford built Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.</p> <p>New Wallack's Theatre opened in New York City.</p> <p>Actress Clara Morris began her apprenticeship at John Ellsler's theatre in Cleveland</p> | <p>Abraham Lincoln became president.</p> <p>The Civil War began</p> |
| 1862 | Louisa's husband, John Drew, died. | <p>Agustin Daly's first play <i>Leah, the Forsaken</i> was presented at Howard Athenaeum in Boston and later at Niblo's Garden.</p> <p>Fanny Davenport had her adult stage debut at Niblo's Garden Theatre.</p> <p>William Wheatley became manager of New York's Niblo's Garden.</p> | <p>John D. Rockefeller invested in what became Standard Oil Company.</p> <p>Richard Gatling invented the first machine gun.</p> |
| 1863 | | <p>Charles W. Witham began his career (in Boston) as scenic artist and became the most prominent designer of the century.</p> <p>Mrs. John Wood became manager of</p> | <p>Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.</p> <p>The Battle of Gettysburg</p> <p>National banking system was established.</p> |

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| | | Olympic Theatre (for three years). | |
| 1864 | The newly dubbed "Mrs. John Drew's Arch Street Theatre" opened with renovations and audience ticket price was increased. | Booth brothers (Junius Jr., Edwin, John Wilkes) appeared together for only time in careers in <i>Julius Caesar</i> in New York Augustin Daly began his career as theatre critic (continued until 1867) Edwin Booth began 100-night run of <i>Hamlet</i> and managed the first Winter Garden Theatre until 1867. Lester Wallack became head of Wallack's Theatre upon death of James W. Wallack. | Lincoln was reelected president. Cheyenne and Arapaho families were slaughtered by Colonel John Chivington at Sand Creek, Colorado. |
| 1865 | | Actor John Wilkes Booth assassinated President Lincoln during a performance of <i>Our American Cousin</i> . Laura Keane was the leading lady. Barnum's American Museum burnt down and was rebuilt. | Robert E. Lee and the Confederate armies surrender. Civil War ends. Union: almost 360,000 dead; Confederacy: about 258,000. Abraham Lincoln assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Washington, D.C.'s Ford's Theatre. Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. Andrew Johnson became president Ku Klux Klan began. |

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| 1866 | The Arch Street opened without a stage manager, with Louisa presumably filling in. | Thalian Dramatic Association was founded at Brown University (one of earliest student producing groups). Fourteenth Street Theatre opened as the Theatre Françoise in New York City. Forrest (on decline) made a grand tour of California. | Race riots occurred in southern cities Winchester repeating rifle was introduced. |
| 1867 | | Daly's famous melodrama <i>Under the Gaslight</i> opened at the New York Theatre. Winter Garden Theatre was destroyed by fire. | Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts. United States purchased Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million. The first practical typewriter was made. |
| 1868 | | Lydia Thompson and her British Blondes appeared in New York; it helped to combine burlesque with pulchritude in tights (leads to "leg show"). Barnum's New American Museum burnt down. | President Johnson was impeached. Ku Klux Klan terrorized blacks and supporters of Reconstruction. Fourteenth Amendment to U.S. Constitution is ratified. |

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| 1869 | | <p>Booth's Theatre, New York, opened with <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>.</p> <p>Augustin Daly assumed management of the Fifth Avenue Theatre. Daly presented his first Shakespeare production, <i>Twelfth Night</i>.</p> <p>Sam Lucas initiated his long career as a distinguished black performer.</p> <p>Actor-playwright Steele MacKaye studied in Paris with Francois Delsarte.</p> | <p>Ulysses S. Grant was elected president.</p> <p>Susan B. Anthony became the president of the National Woman Suffrage Association (organized by Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton).</p> <p>The transcontinental railroad was completed.</p> <p>The first processed-food factory opened by Henry J. Heinz.</p> <p>The Fifteenth Amendment was ratified.</p> |
| 1870 | The Arch delayed its season opening show to allow a pre-season engagement to Lydia Thomson's Burlesque Company. | <p>Kate Claxton (called "the Sarah Bernhardt of America") began her acting career with Lotta Crabtree.</p> <p>Drama critic L. Clarke Davis became the editor of <i>The Philadelphia Inquirer</i>.</p> | |
| 1871 | | The first Union Square Theatre was built. | <p>The Great Chicago Fire, one of the worst in U.S. history, destroyed much of the city.</p> <p>U.S. federal prison system was created.</p> |
| 1872 | Louisa's daughter Georgiana made her debut at the Arch Street Theatre | A. M. Palmer began his long career as a prominent New York producer | <p>Ulysses S. Grant reelected president.</p> <p>Boston fire burnt almost 1,000 buildings.</p> |

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| 1873 | Louisa's son John Drew made his acting debut at the Arch Street Theatre. | <p>Washington, D.C.'s National Theatre burnt down and was reopened (the fourth version).</p> <p>The First documented comic sketch was seen on the vaudeville stage (John and Maggie Fielding).</p> <p>Edwin Booth lost his theatre after bankruptcy.</p> <p>Augustin Daly opened New Fifth Avenue Theatre after the old one burned down</p> | <p>A major business recession followed the failure of Jay Cooke and Co. investment banking house.</p> <p>The first public school kindergarten was established in Missouri.</p> |
| 1874 | | <p>Edward E. Rice and J. C. Goodwin's <i>Evangeline</i> was the first show billed as a "musical comedy"</p> <p>Daly produced <i>Love's Labours Lost</i> for first time in New York.</p> | <p>Philadelphia opened the first American public zoo.</p> <p>The Michigan Supreme Court upholds taxes for public high schools.</p> |
| 1875 | Louisa's son, John Drew, joined Daly's company. | <p>Machinery was built to handle complex stagecraft and sets.</p> <p>Directors began to appear, taking the places of actors and managers who were multitasking.</p> | <p>Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, guaranteeing blacks equal rights in public places and the right to serve on juries.</p> |

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| 1876 | <p>Louisa caved to the demands of the time and dropped her stock company in favor of a combination house.</p> <p>Louisa's daughter Georgie married Maurice Barrymore.</p> | <p>Nearly 100 companies were on the road for the 1876-77 season.</p> <p>Augustin Daly's <i>Pique</i> helped establish Fanny Davenport as a serious actress.</p> <p>The Broad Street Theatre opened in Philadelphia.</p> | <p>The Telephone was patented by Alexander Graham Bell.</p> |
| 1877 | | | <p>Rutherford B. Hayes became president</p> <p>Thomas Alva Edison invented the phonograph.</p> |
| 1878 | <p>Louisa's grandson Lionel Barrymore was born.</p> | <p>Gilbert and Sullivan's work was established in New York with a successful <i>HMS Pinafore</i> production.</p> | <p>The Edison Electric Light Co. opened.</p> <p>Yellow fever epidemic killed about 14,000 in the southern U.S.</p> |
| 1879 | <p>Louisa's granddaughter Ethel Barrymore was born.</p> | <p>Daly opened Daly's Theatre (formerly Wood's Museum)</p> <p><i>Dramatic Mirror</i> was founded as the <i>New York Mirror</i>.</p> | <p>First U.S. automobile patent was granted to George B. Selden.</p> <p>Frank W Woolworth opened his first successful 5-and-10-cent store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.</p> |

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| 1880 | | <p>Sarah Bernhardt had her U.S. debut at Booth's Theatre.</p> <p>Steele MacKaye's <i>Hazel Kirke</i> began a 486-performance run at the Madison Square.</p> <p>P. T. Barnum joined up with James A. Bailey to found the Barnum and Bailey Circus.</p> <p>Daly begins series starring "Big Four": Ada Rehan, John Drew, Mrs. Gilbert, and James Lewis.</p> | <p>The Northern Pacific Railroad was completed.</p> <p>The first wireless telephone message was transmitted by Bell.</p> <p>Andrew Carnegie began establishing libraries.</p> <p>New York streets were first lit by electricity.</p> |
| 1881 | | <p>Tony Pastor's Fourteenth Street Theatre opened (considered by some the birthplace of true vaudeville).</p> <p>Pastor attracted women to his "high class" clean variety shows by giving away sewing kits and dress patterns.</p> <p>Wallack's Theatre was renamed the Star.</p> | <p>James A. Garfield was inaugurated president, but assassinated in September. Chester A. Arthur succeeded him.</p> <p>First halftone photographs appeared in newspapers (first in <i>New York Daily Graphic</i>).</p> <p>Labor leader Samuel Gompers founded Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions.</p> |
| 1882 | Louisa's grandson John Barrymore was born. | <p>David Belasco became manager of Madison Square.</p> <p>Actors' Fund of America was founded to assist aged and needy actors.</p> | |

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| 1883 | The Arch reported a yearly profit of \$20,000. | Abbey brought English actors Henry Irving and Ellen Terry and the Lyceum Company to the United States for the first of eight tours | Brooklyn Bridge was built over New York's East River. |
| 1884 | | Augustin Daly toured his company to London - he was the first American to do so. The American Academy of Dramatic Arts was founded as the Lyceum Theatre School of Acting. | The first modern metal-frame skyscraper is erected: Chicago's ten-story Home Insurance Building. Inventor Hiram Maxim invented the recoil operated Maxim machine gun, the first successful automatic machine gun. |
| 1885 | | The Fifth Washington, D.C., National Theatre was built (same structure stands today). | Mark Twain published <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> . |
| 1886 | Louisa's (adopted) son Sidney Drew's play <i>Odd To Say The Least Of It</i> , debuted at the Arch. | | The Statue of Liberty was revealed in New York. Coca-Cola and Dr. Pepper were introduced. |
| 1887 | Drew appeared in New York at the Bowery Street Theatre in <i>The Rivals</i> supported by her son Sidney Drew and her daughter Georgiana Drew Barrymore. | B. F. Keith and E. F. Albee presented their first complete variety shows. | |

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| 1888 | | <p>Augustin Daly produces <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> at Stratford-upon-Avon in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre.</p> <p>Wallack's old theatre Oater (renamed Palmer's) opened.</p> <p>Edwin Booth founded the best-known U.S. theatrical club, The Players, in New York</p> <p>Maurice Barrymore starred in <i>Captain Swift</i>.</p> | Eastman Kodak introduced a portable twenty-five-dollar camera. |
| 1889 | Seventeen other theatres in Philadelphia were now competing for the audience of the Arch. | New technology allowed Charles Bernard's <i>The County Fair</i> at New York's Union Square Theatre to climax with a horse race. | <p>Benjamin Harrison became president.</p> <p>I. M. Singer manufactured an electric sewing machine.</p> |
| 1890 | | <p>Actors began to hire agents</p> <p><i>Margaret Fleming</i>, by James A. Heme, was produced in Boston, the first American "problem play" in the Ibsen tradition.</p> | <p>The Electric Chair was used for death penalty in United States for the first time.</p> <p>Wyoming became the first state to allow women to vote.</p> <p>More than 300 Sioux were massacred at Wounded Knee.</p> <p>Ellis Island opened for the processing of newly arrived immigrants.</p> |

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| 1891 | | <p>Edwin Booth and Lotta Crabtree retired.</p> <p>The current Broadway tryout system pioneered at the Boston Theatre with Charles Hoyt's <i>A Trip to Chinatown</i>. (It had 657 consecutive performances)</p> | Carnegie Hall opened on West 57th Street |
| 1892 | Louisa gave up management of the Arch, and it ceased to be a leading theatrical establishment. It steadily declined until the owners decided to raze it. | Yiddish actor Jacob Adler starred in Jacob Gordin's <i>The Jewish King Lear</i> . | The first Ferris Wheel was built for the Chicago World's Fair. |
| 1893 | | <p>Steele MacKaye's colossal theatre experiment, the Spectatorium, failed in Chicago.</p> <p>Augustin Daly opened Daly's Theatre in London.</p> | <p>Grover Cleveland was reelected president.</p> <p>Henry Ford road-tested his first automobile.</p> |
| 1894 | Ethel Barrymore made her debut on the stage in <i>The Rivals</i> . | <p>Richard Mansfield introduced Bernard Shaw to the United States: <i>Arms and the Man</i>.</p> <p>Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske stars as Nora in Ibsen's <i>A Doll's House</i>, bringing his work to the U.S. stage successfully for the first time.</p> | <p>The first Hershey chocolate bar was sold.</p> <p>Sears Roebuck mail-order service began.</p> |

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| 1895 | | <p>The first films were seen as vaudeville (most often used as "chasers," or dumb acts at end of bills).</p> <p>Harry Houdini gained prominence as escapologist.</p> | <p>The first U.S. automobile company was founded by Charles Duryea.</p> <p>Gillette developed the safety razor</p> |
| 1896 | | <p>New York now had seven vaudeville theatres.</p> <p>The Actors' Society was founded but was unsuccessful in gaining a standard contract.</p> <p>The Kliegl brothers' theatrical lighting company was founded.</p> | <p>In <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>, U.S. Supreme Court upheld separate accommodations for races on railroads.</p> <p>Adolph S. Ochs bought failing <i>New York Times</i> and turned it into successful paper.</p> |
| 1897 | Louisa died in Westchester, NY. | <p>Elsie Janis debuted (one of the biggest stars in vaudeville).</p> <p>Gaslight-illuminated marquees were created by Strauss Signs.</p> | <p>William McKinley was inaugurated president.</p> <p>The Boston subway opened.</p> |
| 1898 | | <p>The Klondike gold rush reopened many West Coast theatres.</p> | <p>U.S. gained control of The Philippines and Cuba.</p> <p>The Klondike gold rush began</p> |
| 1899 | <i>Autobiographical Sketch of Mrs. John Drew</i> was published posthumously | <p>Percy Williams built vaudeville theatre the Orpheum in New York</p> | <p>The Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools for whites and blacks are legal.</p> |

The majority of this information is credited to Wilmeth and Bigsby's *The Cambridge History of American Theatre*.

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