

THE MECHANICS OF RENOWN;
OR, THE RISE OF A CELEBRITY CULTURE IN EARLY AMERICA

by

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------|--|
| AAS | American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts |
| BPL | Boston Public Library, Boston, Massachusetts |
| HRC | Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin |
| HSP | Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| HTC | Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts |
| LCP | Library Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| MoHs | Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri |

Introduction

This project began with a question. One afternoon in 2005, I asked anyone who would listen who they thought might have been the first celebrity. My adviser answered, “Good question.” She has had to listen to me talk about it ever since. Of course I was looking less for an actual name, than wondering about how to think about fame in its proper historical context. The question had emerged from a paper I was writing about a burlesque on the nineteenth-century actor Edwin Forrest’s most famous character, *Metamora*, written by Irish-American playwright John Brougham. In trying to find newspaper articles about Brougham’s *Metamora; or, the Last of the Pollywogs* (1848), I learned far more about the playwright’s vacations, friendships and his sarcastic, swearing pet parrot than I did about audience and critical response to his play.¹ Although my response now seems naïve, I was surprised to find such tabloidesque fascination with what seemed to me then to be trivial, if entertaining, details from the life of a man.

Intrigued, I wondered how far back I could go into newspaper archives and find similar stories about other famous people. I realized quickly that they went as far backwards in time as I could find newspapers extant. Such articles, however,

¹ Brougham had come to the United States in 1842, and became a member of William Evans Burton’s company. His most critically respected work, *London Assurance*, was written in collaboration with Dion Boucicault. Although he was certainly one of the most significant and recognizable figures of the nineteenth-century stage, he remains an understudied figure. See Rita M. Plotnicki, “John Brougham: The Aristophanes of American Burlesque,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* XII: 3 (1978): 422-431; Noah Brooks, *Life, Stories, and Poems of John Brougham* (1881); Dana Rahm Sutton, “John Brougham: The American Performance Career of an Irish Comedian, 1842-1880,” (PhD diss, City University of New York, 1999); David Stewart Hawes, “John Brougham as American Playwright and Man of the Theater,” (PhD diss, Stanford University, 1954).

were not exhaustively represented on the pages. Especially for the eighteenth century, I scanned issue after issue without finding a single story that I would consider celebrity fare. But they were there, continuously, if intermittently.

During this process of looking, I had made the first decision in the life of my dissertation, albeit unintentionally. I had determined the kinds of news I considered to be celebrity fare. Celebrity, as I understood it, was not simply public recognition. It included an interest in aspects of a well-known person's life that bore no obvious relationship to something they had done. Celebrity was a pet parrot in the life of a dramatist; or, the circulation of a miniature with Benjamin Franklin's visage painted on it in France.² It was the detailed reporting on the weight of English actor David Garrick's gallstones; or, an illustration of the order of the funerary procession to his burial.³ It could be an announcement in a Pittsfield, Massachusetts newspaper that a woman's group in Philadelphia had given temperance lecturer John B. Gough a silver goblet or that a botanist had named his most recent tulip Fanny Kemble.⁴ I found myself wanting to know why these articles were there, and what they revealed about my field of interest: culture, work, life and thought in Anglo-America. I began to think about celebrity as a category of storytelling, as a cultural node through which we can learn something about the valuation and role of the public individual in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

I also quickly learned that my project was part of a growing field of scholarly inquiry. The field of celebrity studies brings together academics and journalists from

² Franklin's celebrity reception in France has been a popular topic among scholars. For a summary discussion see Edmund Morgan's edited volume of Franklin's writings, *Not Your Usual Founding Father: Selected Readings from Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 232-241, or his biography of Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

³ Untitled, *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 1/ 21/1779.

⁴ Untitled, *Pittsfield Sun*, 4/10/1845.

many disciplines, although historians, until very recently, have not been well represented.⁵ In the fall of 2005, very early in my research, I presented the first paper using my dissertation materials at an event titled, “Celebrity Culture: An Interdisciplinary Conference” at the University of Paisley, in Scotland. As the only historian on the program, I found the diversity of projects incorporating celebrity exciting, yet I also found that few of the other scholars had clear ideas about the historical context of celebrity culture’s development, or considered historicity important for their inquiries. They seemed to take the intense interest in individual lives that characterizes contemporary celebrity culture for granted, or linked it unquestioningly to the rise of mass media in the twentieth century. Indeed, as the other presenters used celebrity culture as a tool for understanding news, politics, stardom, monarchy, television, the film industry and more in the present day or recent past, I began to think it was being used, in a sense, as a stand-in for the problematic terms, “mass culture” and “popular culture.” In trying to pull apart two related and intangible categories, we as a group had simply landed on another.

I think of mass culture as encompassing the physical media of cultural exchange on a large and dispersed scale as they came to displace localized forms of cultural production. In my period, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mass culture began to develop, for the first time, towards a complex system of commodities exchange. Michael Kammen has argued convincingly that mass culture is an anachronistic term for commercial forms before the twentieth century, but as he points out, the conditions of “massification” were in place much earlier. I choose to use it carefully because although it is imperfect, I believe it to be the

⁵ I look forward to the publication in May 2009 *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), edited by Tom Mole. Although largely the work of scholars in the field of literary studies, the volume has a decidedly historical focus.

clearest term for elaborating on this period and process of transformation in cultural exchange.⁶ Mass culture was the nationally and internationally circulated newspaper or periodical, the widely printed almanac or playbook, or the cigar box and lithograph ensconced with a celebrity image. Objects of mass culture were not only produced on a large scale for wide circulation, but called upon ideas, images and discourses with geographically and demographically dispersed relevance. Many were experimental in the period; more examples failed to turn a profit than succeeded. Popular culture, especially after the eighteenth century, is the terrain upon which consumers and audiences received and absorbed these kinds of objects into larger discourses, and their relationships with the world and people around them.

Neither of these definitions, however, are without problems, and rest upon several generations of inquiry among historians and scholars of cultural studies. It seems clear that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ways in which individuals engaged with the political and social world around them changed significantly, and so did the ways in which most people engaged with popular culture. Political revolutions, increased access to education and literacy, social and geographic mobility, and the industrialization of the modes and structures of production brought reform and transformation to much of Western Europe and populations of European descent, but to Scotland, England and Anglo-America especially. As scholars in the twentieth century attempted to understand these changes, several narratives emerged. The first narrative emphasized democratic

⁶ Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 9-17. Jay Cook also uses mass culture in his work in this way. See also James W. Cook, ed., *The Colossal P.T. Barnum Reader: Nothing Else Like It in the Universe* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 4-5.

shifts, tending towards greater inclusion and access. The second narrative lamented the destruction of older forms of popular culture, as capitalism disrupted and co-opted traditional and communal life, establishing hegemonic and exclusively commercial forms of expression.⁷

Stuart Hall's foundational essay, "Deconstructing the Popular," established the now accepted approach: both contentions are true. Whereas "popular culture" in earlier periods may have referred to forms of expression engaged in by people who systematically lacked political power and social prestige but who were in the majority, such a definition made little sense in an era during which more people were increasingly, if imperfectly, enfranchised and influential in the processes of social and commercial exchange. In a democratic society, popular culture and the objects of mass culture remained outside of state and governmental control, but the increasing reliance of all people on commercial systems of exchange gave capital tremendous power. Cultural producers, and their products, needed to turn a profit, and as audiences and observers became consumers, their options were limited. Although no one could escape the system, it was unclear just how it worked. Hall refused to believe that consumers were simply duped. Popular culture still had to appeal to the majority in ways that were "not purely manipulative," and early analyses revealed that people did not unquestioningly accept it, but rather found within it "elements of recognition and identification, something approaching a recreation of recognizable experiences and attitudes."⁸ Scholars have, since the

⁷ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) remains a foundational work for these kinds of inquiries, and the foundation of cultural history.

⁸ Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'," in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) 233. The importance of consumerism, culture and cultural production as collaborative is a much discussed and debated

publication of Hall's article, sought to recover these elements of recognition in popular culture, to understand just how forms of popular culture tied to capital and mass production work, and what they can reveal about the engagement of individuals in their own self and social governance and the experiences of their daily lives.⁹

Celebrity seems to be one of the things that emerged as we parsed out the complexities of capitalism and its relationship to lived experience. Celebrities are at the center of many of the popular forms of cultural production that we associate with contemporary every day life: music, television, motion pictures, journalism, the internet, advertising and more. Yet celebrity's role and the process of its creation remains little understood, and thus of only limited use in comprehending the shifting roles of popular and mass culture. I found myself wondering what we mean when we call someone a celebrity, or discuss celebrity culture. Both appear to be things that we know when we see them. Yet etymological research suggests that before the nineteenth century at least, no one could have seen a celebrity to know them. English speakers did not use "celebrity" in the way my first question posed it: as a concrete noun applying to a famous person.¹⁰ Instead, celebrity described the "due

theme in cultural studies; for a theoretical consideration from beyond the field of British cultural studies see Denning, "The End of Mass Culture." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 37 (Spring 1990), with responses by Janice Radway, Luisa Passerini, William Taylor, and Adelheid von Saldern, and "What's Wrong with Cultural Studies." *Politics and Culture* (2001: Issue 1). A slightly different version of his 1990 article was published as "The End of Mass Culture," in James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger, eds., *Modernity and Mass Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. See also, Michael Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* (New York: Verso, 2004).

⁹ Michael Denning's *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels in Working Class America* (New York: Verso, 1998) provides one of the best examples of this kind of history, and has been one of the most influential works for this project. See as well David Henkin's *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) and *Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

¹⁰ "Celebrity," *Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd Edition (Oxford University Press, 1989); This shift in a word's meaning—the application of celebrity to an individual—happened at a similar time in at

observance of a rite and ceremony” or a “condition of being much extolled.” That matters. Regardless of how long “fame” and “celebrity” have held significance in European, or European-derived cultures and public life, *human* celebrities are a much more recent invention.¹¹ They have a history, and a fairly modern one, that I wanted to learn and to tell. Thus, while I find it problematic to assert the novelty of celebrity for the late-twentieth century, I also disagree with fame and celebrity as features of some universal and, indeed, primordial human condition.¹²

Earlier scholars have discussed the rise of celebrities and the particular cultural phenomena that surround them, but have linked it to the emergence of cinema (more specifically in the decade between 1910 and 1920), the rise of Hollywood studios, and the construction of the star system in film.¹³ Others have pushed the apex of celebrity even closer to the present. Such theories assume that the publicity required for creating a celebrity demanded the centralized culture

least the French language as well. See Lenard R. Berlanstein, “Historicizing and Gendering Celebrity Culture: Famous Women in Nineteenth-Century France,” *Journal of Women’s History* 16.4 (Winter 2004): 65-92.

¹¹ I do not mean to suggest that I am the first person to recover this fact—I do, however, want to emphasize and explore more deeply than other works what this shift means in a wide cultural context. For other historical looks at celebrity, see Peter M. Briggs, “Laurence Sterne and Literary Celebrity in 1760,” *The Age of Johnson* 4 (1991): 251-73; Thomas N. Baker, *Sentiment & Celebrity: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Trials of Literary Fame* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), David Haven Blake, *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); I am looking forward to the forthcoming, *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Tom Mole, from Cambridge University Press, in May 2009.

¹² Braudy’s *Frenzy of Renown* can bear part of the blame for the idea that fame is a natural part of public life. He has argued compellingly that Alexander the Great was the first historical figure to put tremendous care into the construction of his personal fame. Yet historical memory is not the same as fame, nor is recognition the same as celebrity; 17, 29-36, 57.

¹³ See, for example, the section titled, “Fame—Remember My Name?: Histories of Stardom and Celebrity,” 127-188, in Sean Redmond and Su Holmes’s edited volume *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2007). It opens with Richard deCordova’s classic discussion, “The Emergence of the Star System in America,” which looks exclusively at the transformation of the motion picture in the early Twentieth century from a technological marvel into a film industry via the promotion of film actors into stars and celebrities. In reference to the rise of Hollywood studios, they had to create a product to compete with the popular French company Pathé, and they chose to do so through the marketing of individual names and faces. See Richard Abel, *The Red Rooster Scare: Making Cinema American* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

industries that emerged in the early twentieth century.¹⁴ This project will demonstrate the limitations of this argument. Celebrity at its origin was a far more complicated, decentralized and contingent production than this industrial narrative implies.¹⁵

It seemed significant that celebrities emerged before the rise of mass media, yet still they came into being during an important period of the expansion of print culture.¹⁶ Technological innovations in print and communications media contributed

¹⁴ Much of this work as it applied to celebrity has been informed by the acceptance, rejection or alteration of Theodore W. Adorno's concepts of the "culture industry," and "mass deception." Although less influential among Americanist historians since the 1990s, these ideas have been integral to celebrity studies and the many fields that contribute to it. The "culture industry," in Adorno's early conception referred to the field of production for modern culture. He argued that the methods for creation and dispersion of cultural products (at the time films, radio, newspapers and magazines) constituted "a system" plagued by sameness and uniformity. That system demanded obedience from producers and consumers and made each part of it subservient to the "absolute power of capitalism." It in effect destroyed possibilities for original, individual or localized forms of creative expression that did not take the culture industry as their source. He chose "industry" to suggest the uniform modes of production and distribution that characterized modern factories. Adorno and Horkheimer's larger work, *Dialectics of the Enlightenment*, expanded on the argument with its criticism of "mass culture." As the product of the culture industry, "mass culture" represented the collapsing of "traditional" high culture and "traditional" folk culture, while producing—in the words of historian Michael O'Malley—"a corporatized, homogenized product that infantilized its public." See Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Philosophische Fragmente*, known more popularly by its revised title, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1944; *Dialectics of the Enlightenment*, 1972); O'Malley, "Agendas for Cultural History," in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, 286. As Jay Cook has noted, Adorno himself significantly revised his ideas over time and in different contexts of scholarship and critical commentary, see "The Return of the Culture Industry" in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, 292-293. Jay Cook, "The Return of the Culture Industry" in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, 292-293.

¹⁵ I agree completely that the celebrity that emerged from television, film and specific entertainment industries dependent upon technology differed from nineteenth-century celebrity, yet I want to preserve it as a system and a concept with historical lineage and significance before the twentieth century. See P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), especially chapters 4, 5 and 6 for a look at celebrity's workings in these contemporary industries. For other looks at the particularities of twentieth and twenty-first century celebrity, see Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). Several readers on celebrity including both theoretical conceptions and case studies have been published recently. See Sean Redmond and Su Holmes, *Stardom and Celebrity: a Reader* (Sage Publications, 2007) for a near-exhaustive selection of the key texts in the field, divided into sections on theoretical antecedents, stardom, histories of fame, and the production of fame, representation and consumption. P. David Marshall has also edited a reader, *Celebrity Culture a Reader* (Routledge, 2006).

¹⁶ "Mass" and "media" are words fraught with meaning and potentials for anachronism. Here I mean them to suggest communications formats and technologies of the twentieth century that had the ability to reach large audiences with near simultaneity: the motion picture, the nationwide

to, but did not create the celebrity. People, through the events they enacted and the decisions they made, created the celebrity. They did so in related streams of countless happenings both deliberate and unintended, both in aggregate and individually, that coalesced in the late-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries. In the process, the etymology and the epistemology of celebrity shifted in at least three ways, which I will elaborate upon throughout this project. In the context of print culture, “the celebrity” first emerged as a moral touchstone, as a way for writers of newspapers and periodicals to investigate individual characters and public values by using the lives of famous men and women as examples. I will focus upon this aspect of celebrity’s development in the early pages of the dissertation, although it remains important throughout. By the mid-nineteenth century, this exploration of the public individual had developed into a broader system, which I call “celebrity culture.” Celebrity culture represented the commodification of the earlier investigations into the renowned, and the realization that these stories were useful objects for sale. Finally, celebrity culture itself emerged as a moral and commercial touchstone in broader discussions of the character of modern life, something that observers both on and off the printed page could investigate and use as a marker for discussing, judging and describing the world around them.

These shifts in semantics reflected a change in the space where and how, and upon what, celebrity was conferred. Rather than happening through ritual or ceremony, or by the action of a cleric or political official, celebrities and celebrity culture grew out of appearances on the theatrical or musical stage, at the lecture podium, at the scene of a crime, in a courtroom, or elsewhere through the extolling in

or international radio network, and nationwide or international newspapers and magazines. See Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (Basic Books, 2005).

public (or publicity) of these events. Rather than marking a space or a time, celebrity and celebrity culture marked a person. In a world with newspapers and periodicals, and dispersed populations with the need and desire to communicate with one another, the publicity that created the celebrity began to happen primarily through ever-more widely circulating print.¹⁷

Yet even as I began my inquiry into celebrity and print culture, it became apparent that I should expand my archive beyond print journalism to incorporate a wider variety of printed resources as well as visual and material artifacts. At least as soon as these figures, “the celebrities,” began appearing on the pages, other kinds of objects began to be associated with them. Artisans crafted miniatures and artists painted portraits with images of the famous upon them. Celebrities seemed to become promising vehicles for money-making by anyone who produced anything and with the growth of national and international commercial economies, they eventually saturated the markets. Critics, through newspapers, periodicals, lectures and sermons, lamented all of the above, and yet, because they did so publicly, even they contributed to the proliferation of celebrities.¹⁸ Criticism of celebrity, even at this early stage, was an essential feature of its reproduction and proliferation.

This project seeks to recover parts of the process of constructing the celebrity, the people involved, the decisions they made, and the multiple epistemological shifts towards celebrity culture in this early period. Each of these

¹⁷ P. David Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and their Readers* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Charles E. Clark and Richard D. Brown, “Periodicals and Politics,” in *A History of the Book in America, Volume 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. by Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (2000; University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 346-376; John Nerone, “Newspapers and the Public Sphere,” in *A History of the Book in America, Volume 3: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, ed. by Scott E. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 230-247; Starr, *The Creation of the Media*.

¹⁸ Peter Briggs noted this unintentional collaboration on celebrity in his article “Laurence Sterne and Literary Celebrity in 1760,” *Age of Johnson*.

elements comprised what I call the “mechanics of renown,” with deliberate reference to the double meaning of mechanics.¹⁹ The mechanics of renown are both the individual subjects and agents and the systems and structures that enabled, constructed and reproduced celebrity culture. I have chosen the reference to renown because, as Leo Braudy has shown us, the epistemology of fame has shifted several times historically, and the politics of personal renown have held significance for a much longer period than this dissertation covers.²⁰ Yet the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are defining moments in this larger history of renown, as fame and celebrity became linked with print, the public and the consumer marketplace in new and expansive ways.

In order to illuminate the processes involved in making and sustaining a celebrity as an individual in the public’s attention, I have chosen to focus upon particular figures, or mechanics, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that are emblematic, in different ways, of celebrity culture in the period. The dissertation opens with a close look at the lives of three famous figures who were not celebrities, but whose careers exemplified the discourse that would become celebrity culture in subsequent years. Anglican preacher George Whitefield (1714-1770) was a missionary whose work took him from Oxford, England to Savannah, Georgia and back again to Great Britain until he finally died in Newburyport, MA. One of the most famous and influential religious leaders of the eighteenth century, he enjoyed unprecedented print celebrity throughout the English speaking world, a fame

¹⁹ In choosing “mechanics” as part of my title, I did not consciously think of Michael Denning’s work *Mechanic Accents*, but I realize now that it must have played a role in my thinking about it. See also, Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

²⁰ Leo Braudy, *Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History* (1986; reprint Random House, 1997)

perhaps only matched in the careers of his two contemporaries, English actor David Garrick (1717-1779) and American printer, scientist and statesman Benjamin Franklin. Each of these men exemplifies a move towards the first shift in celebrity's meaning that I outline in this project, but in different ways as befit their professional and political roles. With the developments in journalism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the celebrated individual (eventually shortened to simply a *celebrity*) emerged in the texts as a vessel through which the news genre could explore, describe and question the private characters of public men.²¹ This aspect of celebrity of course remained important throughout my period of interest, and even as new celebrities emerged, Garrick, Whitefield and Franklin contributed to the discourse long after their deaths.

By the 1830s and 1840s in the United States, with the first etymological shift towards the celebrity as an individual complete, the mechanics of renown began another process of change and expansion. The American actor Edwin Forrest (1806-1872) and English actress Fanny Kemble (1809-1893) were among the first men and women (who were by this period increasingly represented in the pages of newspapers) to be called celebrities. They found themselves judged or measured according to the same questions of private character that were valued in eighteenth century texts. Yet celebrity stories were part of a growing and diversifying marketplace in print and popular culture. Forrest and Kemble traversed a far more complicated field, as their names and their fame increasingly resembled commodities and were subject to scandalous reporting and rumor mongering.

²¹ I say public *men* purposefully, because as I describe it in this early period celebrated women, such as the English actress Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), were treated very differently, and mostly excluded, from this discussion in the periodicals of the time.

During his first tour of the United States in 1842, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) confronted the early and developing American celebrity industry and chafed at what he perceived as its imposing control of his personal image and at times, his body, time and travel itinerary. Although he had come to the United States ostensibly to conduct research for his travel narrative, *American Notes for General Circulation*, Dickens had a second purpose in mind—to argue for international copyright agreements that would secure his financial stake in his writing if it was reprinted abroad. It was with great irony, then, that he discovered that in the expanding American popular culture, it was not just his writing, but indeed his whole career and personae that seemed up for grabs. He was not the only celebrity to experience this treatment in the period. Perhaps the nineteenth century's greatest celebrity, Jenny Lind (1820-1887) represents the apex of this early celebrity culture.²² With her career, the mechanics of renown were realized in every aspect of mass and popular culture. Her name, her personae and her American tour saturated the realms of mass culture—dominating newspapers, magazines, and concert halls while inspiring fashion, advertising and even the expansion of tourism and civic infrastructure.

Early celebrity encompassed more aspects of popular culture than entertainment and the arts. In the eighteenth century, George Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin became famous for their personalities and private characters, but did so through their involvement in religion and politics. In the mid-nineteenth century, Anglo-American temperance activist John B. Gough (1817-1886), the

²² For extensive work on the Lind tour see Bluford Adams, *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 41-74; Peter Buckley, "Chapter 6," "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York, 1820-1880," (PhD diss, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984); Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* (1973; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 111-142.

members of the abolitionist singing family the Hutchinsons, and Hungarian revolutionary Louis (Lajos) Kossuth (1802-1894) were celebrated reformers who moved many Americans to pledge money and energy to their causes. All, however, were plagued by celebrity culture's byproduct, scandal. Their careers give us the opportunity to look very closely at how fame was created, maintained and understood in the period, while affecting the broadest areas of American society.

Of course not all mechanics of renown were actually celebrated. When possible, I investigate the roles and responses of individuals who were employed in promoting or responding to celebrity. In particular, for example, I explore the professional practices of western theater managers Noah M. Ludlow and Sol Smith whose mid-nineteenth century partnership promoted the careers and booked the appearances of nearly every major celebrity. I draw from many letters and diaries penned by consumers of celebrity, but in particular from the diary of wealthy Philadelphian, Joseph Sill, who left a thirty-year account of his engagement with popular culture and celebrity.

The Field of Celebrity Studies

The rest of this introduction will situate the field of celebrity studies within broader discussions of popular and mass culture and cultural studies. Although "The Mechanics of Renown" gives more sustained attention to the historical context of celebrity culture's origins in the nineteenth century than any earlier work, as part of a larger field it depends upon previous contributions to celebrity studies. Even as the discipline of history has not taken a major role in deconstructing the celebrity and celebrity culture, one of the earliest projects to investigate the role of commodified renown in the modern period came from the pen of an historian, Daniel Boorstin.

Boorstin's 1961 work, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, remains a central text of the field. Boorstin's book of social and cultural criticism argued that twentieth-century media, through advertising and publicity, created events in which their reproduction or simulation as news became as, if not more, important and seemed more real, to individuals than the events themselves. Although the event, which he called the "pseudo-event" is planned, interest in it should appear natural and uncontrived. As an exercise in "self-fulfilling prophecy," the performance of interest by journalists and media personalities generates genuine public interest.²³ Writing in the 1960s, Boorstin cited the popularity of the television "quiz show" and its influence on the format of the Presidential election debates in that decade as an example of how contrived entertainment influenced social and political events. He lamented that profit, not measured and organic engagement with voters, motivated the organizers of and participants in the debates.²⁴

As frequent participants in pseudo-events and central characters in the news surrounding them, Boorstin argued that celebrities became in effect the human pseudo-event—public characters created for the purposes of publicity and profit. He described a celebrity as a "person known for his well knownness."²⁵ The representation of the celebrity and their activities is as important as their actual activities and whatever personality and characteristics they might possess in real time and space. Indeed, once a person becomes a celebrity, whatever they may

²³ Boorstin, *The Image; A Guide to Pseudo-Events in Americas* (Athenaeum, 1961), 12.

²⁴ Boorstin's work is emblematic of the lamentations of celebrity culture in contemporary context, but more recently Richard Schickel's *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity in America* (1985; Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000) and Rochelle Gurstein, *The Repeal of Reticence: America's Cultural and Legal Struggle Over Free Speech, Obscenity, Sexual Liberation, and Modern Art* (Hill and Wang, 1998) have continued the critical look at modern-day popular culture. Works on contemporary celebrity, including P. David Marshall's *Celebrity and Power* and Joshua Gamson's *Claims to Fame* identify this anxiety among commentators as a part of the general discourse of celebrity culture, even as it is posed as an outside criticism of it.

²⁵ Boorstin, *The Image*, 57, 45-76.

have done originally to gain public attention fades from significance and all subsequent appearances simply build off the face of their already being publicly known. I bring Boorstin into this discussion because, first of all, his work has been definitive for celebrity studies. You might say *The Image* has its own celebrity, because almost any scholarly work which deals with celebrity will cite his idea of being famous for being famous, no matter how minimally it engages with the actual complexity of Boorstin's argument.²⁶

I also mention Boorstin, however, because his narrative has the derivation of celebrity all wrong. As I will show in the coming pages, eighteenth and nineteenth century celebrities often did appear to be famous for being famous. After their initial appearances on the pages of newspapers and journals, witty anecdotes about their lives and encounters, news stories about their marriages, and advertisements for a variety of products did appear without any obvious connection to what they had done to earn their renown. Yet they did not saturate public life in the manner that Boorstin described for a very long time and they were not created for the sake of newspaper profits and commercial sales. At their origins the discourse remained very much connected to questions of their private (or personal) character and to ponderings upon the purpose and value of the individual in public. Celebrities were at the moment of their creation and for a long time after, individuals celebrated for what they could reveal about public and popular culture and its growing significance in everyday life. A compelling argument can be made that these conditions remain at the center of celebrity culture.

²⁶ Jonathan Alan Gray, et. al., *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 331; Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (Macmillan, 2001), 61; Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 483, and other disparate sources I have noticed over the years.

The event that is celebrity strikes at the heart of the questions that have surrounded the field of cultural studies. We cannot understand celebrity without asking about its relationship to popular and mass culture, to corporate and dispersed cultural production, and to individual and localized efforts, as well as to subjectivity, agency, and consumerism.²⁷ Who made Jenny Lind, the singer who drew the unprecedented crowds to her concerts, whose name graced race horses and potatoes, and who donated large amounts of money to charities wherever she appeared? Did she emerge from the woman who bore that name, or from the voice teachers who trained her, or perhaps from the first journalist who wrote about her? Was her persona the artistic creation of Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer, who initially penned her biography, which became the mythology surrounding her, or Bremer's English translator Mary Howitt?²⁸ Maybe her audiences or the many hundreds of thousands who read about Lind or purchased an object associated with her created her. When Jenny Lind came to the United States, was she the same figure as Europeans had seen, or a reproduction, slightly altered by Barnum to American tastes? Was the production of Jenny Lind as a celebrity organized and professional, or haphazard and spontaneous? Did it depend upon new methods of publicity or traditional ones writ large, using new technologies which were internationally dispersed? The progress of cultural studies would implicate each of these propositions. My task is to try and recover how they worked together.

²⁷ The importance of consumerism, culture and cultural production as collaborative is a much discussed and debated theme in cultural studies; for a theoretical consideration from the field of British cultural studies see Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing 'The Popular'," in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) and for the perspective of an historian on the American context Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (1987 ; 2nd edition, Verso, 1998).

²⁸ Fredrika Bremer, *Hemmet eller familje-sorger och fröjder* (Stockholm, 1840); transl. Mary Howitt, *The Home; or, Family Cares and Family Joys* (London, 1842).

Celebrity offers a particular window into the ways in which popular culture became part of culture industries by the later nineteenth century. Recent scholarship has shown us broader aspects of this historical process, the reorganization and industrialization of production and consumption, the development of “the popular” into a category of marketing, the spread of international, national and regional markets, and the professionalization of entertainment and journalism. We do not really know, however, how this transition worked. Why did people agree to become consumers, and to accept the depersonalization and outsourcing of so many aspects of their local and daily lives? As this dissertation reveals, at least part of this process can be explained by the transition of celebrity into a form of commodity. What had been a ritual, a way in which communities organized their world and recognized the outstanding elements within it, became expressed instead through the commercial market place, and through the buying and selling of relationships between consumers and celebrated individuals.

In his work on contemporary and recent celebrity culture, sociologist Joshua Gamson has shown how even in the present consumers are hardly duped by celebrity and celebrity events, but rather are complicit in their production. Because celebrity itself depends upon being well known, audiences select celebrities by showing up and by choosing to read, purchase and consume items related to them. Although consumers’ choices are limited they do exert influence—would-be celebrities, and their promoters, often fail. As Gamson has shown through his careful outlining of the professions and methods involved in producing the contemporary celebrity, the process has aspects of transparency, if one looks for them. He illuminates how in fact, this transparency is part of the industry. In Barnumesque fashion, it seems that the best way to “contain” skepticism about

events and personalities is to embrace the questioning, and to make obvious the forces of publicity that create celebrities.²⁹ One problem for those who live off of the proceeds of celebrity comes, of course, from the fact that consumers are not rational or transparent in their decision making. What worked to create one celebrity may not work to create another. Even as celebrity events are repetitive and contrived, novelty is still rewarded and sought after. I take from Gamson the confidence that celebrity can be examined, and revealed. The professions and the industries that he describes emerged, over a long period, out of the conditions this dissertation outlines. They developed out of the attempts of arbiters of celebrity to contain and direct the irrational decisions of consumers, to make the promotion and production of celebrity a predictable and profitable business.

We must remember that “the celebrity” preceded the culture industries that profited from it. The emergence of the celebrity before or in sync with the technologies of the culture industries in the nineteenth century makes that clear. Celebrities and celebrity culture were the products that generated their own industry’s formation. They came out of the merging patterns of communications, storytelling and the eighteenth-century conception of a new public individual with developing methods of journalism.³⁰ In their original form as topics of newspaper articles questioning the tenets of public character, celebrities were characters in their own sub-genre of what we now call the human-interest story. Human-interest stories

²⁹ Gamson, *Claims to Fame*, 12.

³⁰ In using journalism as a term for the eighteenth century, when it was not used for what Charles E. Clark describes as “the usually perishable kind of writing that reports or comments upon contemporary public affairs” until the early nineteenth century, I acknowledge some anachronism. But as I am not making an argument that depends upon the definition of journalism, I am going to take Clark’s own justification of the term as “handy, accurate, and understood by modern readers.” See Clark, “Early American Journalism: News and Opinion in the Popular Press,” in *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (2000; reprint Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 347-65, 347.

themselves were a product of the nineteenth century, and were at the center of the construction of an early form of mass journalism, the penny press in the 1830s.³¹ They continue today. As feature stories meant to inspire emotion, human-interest stories invoke interest or sympathy among readers for their subjects by highlighting the experiences of individuals. Their topics were not new in the nineteenth century, but their presentation—their obvious appeal to emotion, their inclusion of ever-more detail about individual lives and personalities, their increasing reputation on the pages and their move to the center of journalism, were innovative in the period. As I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation, celebrities were repeating characters in these types of stories, the central figures in human-interest journalism as a genre. Through the processes of circulation and elaboration that I explore mostly in the second half of the work, celebrities leapt from the pages and became cultural objects that populated every field of cultural production.

Celebrity Culture as a Sensational Public

I call the public of celebrity culture a “sensational public.” With this term I appeal not only to an extensive literature on the public, but also to writing on sensationalism. When I speak about the public in this context, I mean quite literally groups of people purchasing and reading newspapers, attending and talking about theatrical and lecture events, or otherwise observing and contributing to the

³¹ Betty Houchin Winfield and Janice Hume, “The American hero and the Evolution of the *Human Interest Story*,” *American Journalism* (Spring 1998), 79-99; Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), chap. 2; Gerald J. Baldasty, *The Commercialization of the News in the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

circulation of celebrities and celebrity products.³² Like they did with “celebrity,” the connotations of sensational shifted in the mid-nineteenth century. What, in eighteenth-century printed works had suggested primarily a response of or from the five senses, and also referred to philosophical theory arguing for sensation as the sole source of knowledge, came to apply to works of literature or art, as well as to people, actions and products that gave people an emotional response. In particular, sensational works were said to give rise to “violently exciting effects” or “great public

³² Celebrities exist as a creation in and of the public. Jürgen Habermas, argued in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), that there emerged in the eighteenth century a space, the public sphere, for rational, critical debate by free citizens about public life that mediated between a governmental sphere (modernizing state institutions) and a private sphere. While acknowledging its innovation, the neutrality of the public sphere in Habermas’s conception—its blindness as to how gender, class, race, and power work to create a public discourse that assumes bourgeois status, male gender and whiteness—has inspired historians and scholars in other fields to investigate other modes of address positioned as neither governmental nor domestic. Michael Warner has outlined three senses of “public” as a noun. Simply put, there is “the public,” by which a speaker or writer intends to speak of “a kind of social totality,” also called “the people.” Second, “a public” can refer to a concrete body or “audience,” present in visible space. Finally there is “a public” that comes to exist out of printed texts and their circulation. In this dissertation, and in Warner’s work, the final public has the most relevance although I will at times speak of publics in each context. Frequently, historically, the most recoverable public is the third, although it often includes claims to speak of, to, or for the first two types of publics. Building from his understanding of how publication and print culture worked in the eighteenth-century, Warner also comes at the question of the public through his work as a queer studies scholar. He argues that while the anonymity of the public sphere, and the way in which we often treat the “public” as almost a living being, can create the impression of a discrete consensus, those same conditions make it possible for dissenting streams—counterpublics—to enter the fray. It is important to note though, that counterpublics are not just alternative or parallel ones. They are made up by elements and intentions that differ from those salient in more general discourse. More so, they are always, explicitly or implicitly, aware of their subordinate status. Of course, not all variations on the public are counterpublics. In her recent book, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education and Public Life in America’s Republic*, Mary Kelley contributes to discussion of the public her conception of “civil society,” described as “any and all publics except those dedicated to the organized politics constituted in political parties and elections to local, state, and national office.” Within civil society she describes “gendered republicanism,” or the “discourse that took as its subject the role of women in the nation’s public life.” She looks at the role of women’s academies and seminaries in preparing young women for participation in the gendered republic. Rather than creating radical women’s rights activists (although that was possible, too) schools these sought to produce women who were content with taking different but active roles alongside men in creating the culture and public sphere of the New Republic. “Gendered republicanism” did not challenge the assumed universality of a white, male, bourgeois public, but existed alongside and within it, and may have at times facilitated it. The significance of these important notions of the public for my discussion of celebrity and celebrity culture revolves around how they point out the very many different ways individuals and publics can hail one another.

excitement and interest.”³³ The relationship of celebrity to the newer definition seems obvious. Absolutely the arrival of a celebrity, or of a product or publication associated with them, generated great public excitement. Demonstrations of enthusiasm ranged from the increasing abundance of news articles, to the proliferation for sale of thousands of hats, tulips or even food products associated with a book or person, to riots caused by something billed or understood as a celebrity event.³⁴

A celebrity exists, by definition and necessity, in public. I set aside a discrete public, the sensational public, to emphasize the particular effect of celebrities on public discourse that marked them as more than just well-known people, but as ones who additionally stimulated consumerism, enthusiasm, public debate and action among their celebrators. While many celebrities were in professions that necessitate public contact and interaction such as politics, performance, or authorship, that was not universally true, nor did being successful in a particular related profession guarantee someone celebrity. Celebrity came above and beyond the usual recognition attributed to the writer, performer, or politician—even a well-known one. In market terms, the sensationalism that delimits celebrity is the excess value of fame.³⁵

In studies of American literature and culture of the mid-nineteenth century, sensationalism has been previously understood as a contrast to sentimentalism. Shelley Streeby’s *American Sensations* identifies the two, as associated with reading

³³ “Sensational,” *Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd Edition (Oxford University Press, 1989).

³⁴ Although new in scale, the products associated with sensationalism were not themselves unprecedented, Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740), although significantly predating the culture of sensationalism I explore, inspired a variety of spin-off productions: fans, straw bonnets, teacups, waxworks, engravings, paintings. See Nelson, *Market Sentiments*, 217.

³⁵ Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Appadurai, ed., (Cambridge University Press, 1988): 3-63.

and writing in the 1840s, with growing divisions between “low” and “middlebrow” texts—both popular, but with the sentimentalism of domestic literature representing a middle-class aesthetic in contrast to sensationalism’s working-class one.³⁶ In sentimental writings, refinement and transcendence are admired and espoused. Sensationalism turns these goals upon their head, crafting stories celebrating materialism and the body, often unconcerned with the “open” didacticism that defined sentimentalism.³⁷ Certainly in broad strokes these distinctions are useful, but as Jane Tompkins demonstrated in her *Sensational Designs*, specific texts in the mid-nineteenth century often defied strict categorization and the characteristics of different genres can often be found in a single work.³⁸ The same can be said of celebrities and the culture surrounding them.

In the production of celebrity culture, the seemingly at-odds concepts of sensational and sentimental blurred. I will argue at various times for the association of celebrity with both. This effect was particularly enhanced given the variety of authors contributing to the production of a single celebrity persona. Joanne Dobson has argued that the sentimental text’s principal theme is the “desire for bonding,” in that it “celebrates human connection, both personal and communal.”³⁹ It was in many ways, this celebration and desire that sentimentalism represents, which contributed to the creation of the celebrity for admirers. Harnessed by commercial

³⁶ The difference between “high” and “low” culture is a field fraught with debate and discussion among scholars of nineteenth century art, literature, and performance. It is hardly one I can resolve in this introduction, although my dissertation will address the question in several ways throughout the text.

³⁷ Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 31; Jonathan Elmer, *Reading at the Social Limit: Affect, Mass Culture, Edgar Allan Poe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

³⁸ Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), introduction.

³⁹ Joanne Dobson, “Reclaiming Sentimental Literature,” *American Literature* 69:2 (1997): 263-88, 267, 266.

and creative figures, the celebrity was imagined into being by the celebrator and sold by a variety of literary contributors. That literature spanned the genres of newspaper, periodical, and book publication as well as manuscript letters, diaries, and poetry. The reader/celebrator was treated to occasional—frequent at times—glimpses into the “private” life of the celebrity, through scattered stories about the figures’ childhood, courtships, marriage, travels, family, wardrobe, attitudes, and lifestyle.

In my idea of the sensational public, I want to hold onto the earlier association of the sensational with knowledge gleaned from feeling, as well as the effects of sensationalism I have alluded to above. Often their admirers came to know celebrities only through an abstract feeling gained from reading and hearing about them, or less frequently, through seeing them from a distance on a stage or amidst a swarm of onlookers. Yet many felt as if they knew them very well, and pondered and discussed their lives in print, conversation, or their private diaries. The celebrity became what film and cultural critic Richard Schickel describes in its modern iteration as an “intimate stranger,” or a person that other people imagined they knew well although they had likely neither personally seen nor corresponded with them.⁴⁰ Yet it also infers a sense of awe surrounding celebrities, a kind of inexplicable attraction given the distance between them and their admirers. Contemporary scholarship on celebrity will often refer to this effect as one of charisma, with deliberate reference to Max Weber’s concept of it from his sociology of authority. Weber defined charisma as “a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural,

⁴⁰ Richard Schickel, *Intimate Strangers*, 1-22.

superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.”⁴¹ In the early-to mid-nineteenth century, I see this trait of celebrity culture described as genius.

In the mid-nineteenth century celebrity, the sensational desire for knowledge about others and the sentimental longing for human connection merged to create a publicly recognizable figure who seemed accessible to any consumer (in ways equally transcribed by and masking class and race). The figure was imbued with certain characteristics, often genius, talent, and beauty but also at times scandal, notoriety, and conflict. As much as in the workings of politics and in the intellectual, rational, and religious debates that characterize what we usually refer to as the public sphere, the sensational public built out of celebrity culture tells us much about the continually shifting and abstract definitions of value—moral, social, and commercial—in American cultural life. My dissertation will try to capture that scope of public sentiment and feeling, both as a commercial product and as something that real people created and to which they responded.

This project looks at celebrity from the late-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries, exploring the early transition from celebrated persons to celebrities and celebrity culture. I use the etymology of celebrity as an organizing principle driving my narrative, exploring how an array of famous individuals living between roughly 1770 and 1855 forged positions as celebrities and in the process invented and became the mechanics of renown. These mechanics of renown embraced professional and public activities reported in the popular press, but also

⁴¹ Max Weber, “The Nature of Charismatic Domination,” reprinted in *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, ed. by Sean Redmond and Su Holmes (Sage Publications Limited, 2007), 14.

cultivated relationships and friendships with admirers, journalists, merchants and political leaders both in their home countries and abroad.

In addition to the literatures on celebrity, sensationalism and sentimentalism described above, this project builds from and contributes to the work of cultural historians of theatrical, performance, material and print cultures. In the realm of theatre and performance history, “The Mechanics of Renown” advances understanding of the relationship between celebrity culture and the professional theater of the mid-nineteenth century. The development of the theatrical star system as a method of organizing the field through the promotion of particular actors and actresses as star players contributed much to celebrity through the focus upon particular stage personalities.⁴² Celebrity clearly already transcended the theatrical star system. The star system accredited with so much power in the period was itself indicative of a larger trend in public life. Celebrity and the tools of celebrity culture put fame and famous individuals at the center of many types of discourse. A central task of this project then is to explore the role of the celebrity as it surpassed and connected particular areas of American culture, from print culture to material culture, and from the construction of a nationally dispersed system of public theatricals to the expansion of social reform.

The next chapter, Chapter One, opens the discussion of historical celebrity with a look at the careers of the most celebrated figures of the eighteenth century, Benjamin Franklin, David Garrick, and George Whitefield. Their portrayal as

⁴² Francis Hodge, *Yankee Theatre: The Image of America on the Stage, 1820-1850* (University of Texas Press, 1964), 20-36; Walter J. Meserve, *Heralds of Promise: The Drama of the American People during the Age of Jackson, 1829-1849* (Greenwood Press, 1986); T. Allson Brown, *A History of the New York Stage*, 3 vols. (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1870); James C. Burge, *Lines of Business: Casting Practice and Policy in the American Theatre, 1752-1899* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986); L. W. Conolly, *Theatrical Touring and Founding in North America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982); George C. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (1888-1891).

repeating figures in the century's newspapers and magazines reflected the construction of personality, and celebrity, as a category of news and analysis in the expanding print culture of the period. The aspect of personality most important in this context was private character, by which I mean the men's possession of certain traits of civility. Through an analysis of the way in which eighteenth-century newspapers wrote about these men's embodiment of wit, charity, humility, and self-mastery or continence, Chapter One argues that their personae set the standard for measuring and discussing celebrity in the century to come, against which their successors in the sensational public would be compared. While remaining grounded historically in the eighteenth century, this chapter also looks forward to the memorialization of Franklin, Whitefield and Garrick in the nineteenth century. Fact and fiction had hardly mattered in the discourse surrounding these men during their lifetimes. Significantly, with no new news to report about them after their deaths, this detachment became even more pronounced as they became the stuff of anecdote and parable, used as illustration, models and type.

Early celebrities were print celebrities, and Chapter Two takes this aspect of renown into the middle years of the nineteenth century. Celebrity admirers learned about the objects of their fascination in different ways—through conversations, imagery and performance—but for the most part their personae circulated through and emerged from the pages of newspapers, and to a lesser extent, magazines. Behind the personae, the ruminations on character, genius and fame, lay decisions made by real people—the printers, promoters and celebrities themselves. Some options were heavily negotiated—such as the evaluation and selection of markets for celebrity, the wrangling over contract terms and the sharing of profits or losses. But the choices about where to put celebrity news on a page, how to write about a figure,

or when to include a story, also came out of individual promotional efforts within the limits of economy, technology, and accepted publishing patterns. In an unfamiliar, quickly changing and ever-growing market and commercial atmosphere, there emerged some predictability and pattern behind the seemingly random workings of success and failure. Chapter Two looks at those choices and their participation in the mechanics of renown, which transformed American celebrity from a character on a page to a larger cultural form and a major marketing force with a defining role in consumerism. By highlighting a particular facet of news reporting, it seeks as well to contribute to existing literatures on the construction and transformation of the newspaper in the nineteenth century, as well as to the systems of communication and professional development that emerged in the period.

In Chapter Three, I look more closely at mechanics in the first sense I highlighted earlier in this introduction—mechanics as individual actors and agents. The text moves to the exploration of personality and private lives that comprised celebrity personae in the sensational public and that in the nineteenth century created the impression that a reader could know a celebrity as one could know a friend or family member. Celebrities and their promoters profited from this interest, but especially in the early years the terms of the relationship between celebrity and admirer remained unclear. As public figures, celebrities were unique in that they were supported by the larger public, but were not obligated to them contractually beyond their paid performances and appearances. Their cultural role, however, did include a significant symbolic expectation that they would uphold more general social and moral values as well as respond to public demands. At times celebrities failed in this role. This failure could be a small one—such as a refusal to provide an

autograph or to engage with an admirer in person—or large, such as Edwin Forrest's role in the Astor Place Riot or his divorce trial in the late 1840s and early 1850s.

Despite the charismatic celebrity personalities and the print engagement with the details of their lives, the vast majority of Americans of course understood that celebrities were not their personal acquaintances or their friends. Still the relationships forged between celebrities and their admirers had important meaning for their lives and American culture. Celebrities inspired action, from the misleadingly mundane acts of buying a ticket or purchasing a consumer item to extreme behaviors, like mob action, because celebrity personae appealed powerfully to individual sentiment. From channeling anger to curiosity to enthusiasm to intimacy, celebrity culture offers us the opportunity to imagine how real individuals in the nineteenth century internalized the words of the press and stories of celebrity and translated them to their experiences of the world around them. Chapter Three reconstructs these processes and experiences through the use of private letters, the records of Western theater managers Noah M. Ludlow and Sol Smith, and a close reading of objects of material culture created during the Jenny Lind tour in the early 1850s.

Chapter Four looks at how celebrities were also constructed through actual physical movement around the country, and at the effects of their touring on the communities they visited and on the individuals who either saw or hoped to see them. Tours were a mixture of pseudo with actual event, as their promotion in the pages of newspapers proved as significant a part of the touring experience as the actual performances or encounters with celebrities off the stage or lecture podium. This chapter details the shifting meanings of itinerancy among performers and lecturers from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries. It explores the

meanings behind expanding circuits of travel by performers and renowned figures, through actress Fanny Kemble's long career and writer Charles Dickens's controversial tour in 1842 and reveals methods of developing professional management through the travels of the Hutchinson Family Singers. Reformers including the abolitionist Hutchinson Family but also the temperance activist John B. Gough experienced firsthand how political and social reform agendas sometimes influenced and divided itineraries along regional lines. Through the papers of western managers Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow, Chapter Four shows some of the processes behind organizing the tour in the nineteenth century, and looks at how performers and the developing professions in management and promotion depended upon an organized and transparent system of communications, the careful delineation of contracts, and the maintenance of friendships and relationships across long spans of distance but also time.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, looks at how in the nineteenth century celebrity sometimes became associated with explicit projects for social and political reform. Popularly marketed celebrities and the emerging major reform movements of the nineteenth century were introduced into American culture at precisely the same time, chiefly in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. From the start reform and celebrity were linked, and often mutually constitutive. The reform celebrity built upon the most palatable aspects of both reform and celebrity to create more congenial forms of both. Reform helped legitimize celebrity by lending to its consumption an air of social utility. Celebrities like John B. Gough and Frederick Douglass, who found fame by telling intimate details of their life stories in public, made it acceptable to print such details in mainstream press and publications. Similarly, the mechanics of celebrity smoothed the way for reforms and reformers, by providing for them

recognizable faces and infusing them with renewable interest, not to mention the possibilities for consistent and free publicity. Through their displays of respectability, entertainment and personality, celebrity reformers worked to make it congenial to bring both celebrities and reform into American lives and homes. This chapter takes a particularly close look at the career of John B. Gough, at the character of his appeal and at his role in the development of the sensational press and public.

As in every other aspect of celebrity, however, the terms for success in reform were unwritten and unclear. Some figures, like Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth, learned that while Americans might happily purchase tracts, hats, and tickets, an admiring public did not so easily lend political support. Chapter Five, in the first effort outside of political history to look closely at the tenure of Kossuth in the United States, also asks how individuals behind-the-scenes in the production of renown, were intimately involved in the mechanics of either lifting up or bringing down a celebrity figure. Within months of his arrival, because of his inability to satisfy both his own desires and the demands of his promoters and audiences, Kossuth, who initially had been greeted in the United States as a hero for democracy, fled under a pseudonym, mocked, reviled and ashamed.

Written from the perspective of an historian, "The Mechanics of Renown" brings together the divergent fields of the historiographies of print culture and journalism, performance, theatre and reform with the contemporary sociology of fame and media studies. I have written a work that I hope will contribute to each of these multiple fields, by filling in the gaps and increasing historical understanding about the nature and development of the celebrity since the eighteenth century. It explores points of continuity while also putting into historical context discrete moments in and facets of the construction of a cultural discourse that we now

understand as ubiquitous. Celebrity has a story that can be revealed by scholars in multiple disciplines, and that should not be the endeavor of any single field. I hope this project will provide a point of consensus for a continuing dialogue about the role of the renowned individual in American culture and daily life.

Chapter One

Constructing a Common Template: The Celebrated Print Careers of Benjamin Franklin, David Garrick and George Whitefield

As part of the bicentennial commemoration of the United States Constitution, the Congress passed an act in 1988 for the establishment of a “National Constitution Center” under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. The result, an architectural behemoth, sits at the north end of the Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia. Its purpose is to inform and educate the American people about their national form of government and about the history and significance of a single founding document.¹ The center opened in 2003 as a large and airy museum, filled with the very best interactive exhibits modern museum professionals could devise and a gift store of Americana that would make any marketing expert proud.

In a building constructed to commemorate a document Americans are taught to associate with abstract concepts of freedom, I thought mostly about the celebration of trade it protects. On one shelf of the gift shop where I spent much of my visit stood a “Founding Fathers” play set comprised of three smiling dolls. In this package, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson stood on absurdly large feet, dressed in bright eighteenth-century costumes and grasping the objects designers most associated with them. Washington held a flag. Jefferson waved a Declaration of Independence; and Franklin, of course, clutched a kite.² It

¹ U.S. Public Law 100-43, 100th Congress, 16 September 1988, *Constitution Heritage Act of 1988*.

² This was the setup, at least, on the particular day I visited the shop in July 2006. <http://www.toypresidents.com/abraham-lincoln-doll.html>. Accessed on August 5, 2007;

seems that in tandem with history books, the doll industry has had an important say in how we should remember the American past.

As I considered the set's meanings, I wondered about the arrangement, and the importance of Franklin's kite in American history. The kite tells us how to read the Benjamin Franklin doll, and signifies certain values for the consumer even the least bit knowledgeable about American history. Together the kite and Franklin symbolize progress and ingenuity. Standing together with Washington, Jefferson, the flag and the Declaration of Independence, they signify particularly an American history of these traits. There exists a large cache of possible understandings of the "Founding Fathers" play set from which to build, all of them resulting from a long history of merging prominent names, didacticism, and personality traits with material products and commodities in an attractive package for sale and consumption. Most significantly, though, the Franklin, Jefferson and Washington play set constitutes a political canon that resembles celebrity, through its producers' choice to use famous men to represent American Revolutionary history and values.

Yet Franklin's position within the set points to a period earlier than the Revolutionary era and to concepts beyond politics. His kite prompted me to imagine a different play set, only partly because Benjamin Franklin's electricity experiments significantly pre-dated the Revolutionary and Early National periods. This set would reveal a triumvirate of eighteenth-century men that their own contemporaries would more clearly have understood together. It would still include Franklin, but would stand him with English actor David Garrick and English reverend Dr. George Whitefield. The dolls would commemorate the emergence of a modern and trans-

<http://www.storyboardtoys.com/store/founding-fathers-doll-set.html>. Accessed on September 10, 2006.

Atlantic celebrity culture, a culture centered upon the marketing of personality, framed in the space of newspaper columns. During Franklin's lifetime, as well as for some time after, his renown came as much from what he shared with these two other well-known—and British—figures, as from his role as a revolutionary participant. Their careers reflected the shifting categories of renown and possibilities for recognition that characterized the English trans-Atlantic world, and they and those who celebrated them became the initial mechanics of celebrity renown.

Franklin, Garrick and Whitefield were famous for being famous. By that I mean, their names became so recognizable that stories circulated because their names were in them rather than because the stories were intrinsically interesting in and of themselves. This trait only increased their renown. Garrick and Whitefield become a part of speech other than a surname attached to a particular individual. Well into the nineteenth century, newspapers or magazines could refer to promising actors or religious leaders as “Garricks” or “Whitefields,” and readers must have understood the reference. References to “Dr. Franklin's” experiments or words of wisdom were so commonplace in newspapers throughout the century following his death that it is tempting to name them a genre of news column all of their own.

None of that suggests their fame was empty—on the contrary Franklin's, Whitefield's and Garrick's celebrities were rich with meaning. They initially earned their renown for their contributions to and innovations in social and cultural institutions increasingly given popular attention in the eighteenth century: Christian religion, the theatre, and scientific and political philosophy. Whitefield's outdoor field preaching, although not unheard of, broke new ground in the established churches of Britain and Anglo-America because his particularly charismatic style made news wherever texts circulated—and perhaps beyond. Garrick's mode of theatrical

performance laid the foundation for the natural school of acting that was in opposition to the neo-classical tradition of histrionics (before histrionic was an insult) more common in the period.³ His influence beyond the stage as well came from the circulation of his name in periodical literature at the time. Franklin first gained trans-Atlantic renown for his foundational work in electricity—an experiment that was copied at least as far away as St. Petersburg, Russia after being discussed in scientific journals that had circulated widely.⁴ Historians recognize many such innovative individuals in eighteenth-century Britain and Anglo-America, yet few of even their most accomplished contemporaries were as famous as they were during their lifetimes. In the more than two hundred years since their deaths, they have remained among the most eulogized, discussed and studied of eighteenth-century men.

Franklin's, Garrick's and Whitefield's careers were played out on the pages of contemporary journalism.⁵ Because periodicals including newspapers are mediated through the forum of printing, the stories and personae constructed in them are created through a complex web of decision making. In the eighteenth century, editors, printers and the figures in the news themselves were intrinsic to the creation of a new form. While nearly non-existent at the opening of the eighteenth century,

³ Grandiosity and melodrama characterize neoclassical theater. Rather than attempting to make the scenes on stage appear indistinguishable from offstage real life, actors used large gestures and facial expressions to represent moods and tone in a symbolic rather than realist fashion.

⁴ "Extract of a Letter from Moscow, Dated August 25," in the *Boston Weekly Newsletter*, 1/24/1754, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 3/5/1754, the *New York Mercury*, 3/18/1754. Mikhail Lomonosov, the founder of Moscow State University in 1755, got his start as a scientist trying to replicate Franklin's experiments in Russia. See Eufrosina Dvoichenko-Markoff, "Benjamin Franklin, the American Philosophical Society, and the Russian Academy of Science," *Proceedings: American Philosophical Society* 91, no. 3 (August, 1947), 250-257.

⁵ For an explanation of why I use journalism as a term in a discussion of eighteenth-century newspapers, see the introduction to this dissertation, fn 26, and Charles E. Clark, Clark, "Early American Journalism: News and Opinion in the Popular Press," in *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, ed. Hugh Amory and David D. Hall (2000; repr. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 347-65, 347.

the newspaper had become a “staple of the printing trade” by 1750.⁶ By 1790, newspapers likely made up almost eighty percent of total American publications to date. In form, the American newspaper took its influence from England, both in terms of its design as a newspaper and its content. Publishers always understood their productions as part of a larger discourse that complemented an oral circulation. The pages of eighteenth-century newspapers in the colonies and the metropol merged different forms of traditional literary and news culture, including reports on the travels of a royal governor, the happenings in court, the debut of an interesting play or book, and proclamations from the king, with essays on fashion, gender relationships, religion and politics.⁷ David P. Nord has shown, however, that New England colonists also looked to their own local traditions. He has argued, for example, that we need to consider the sermons and histories written by ministers as the first “news” reporting for the region.⁸ Certainly these influences are apparent. Still the news and essays in colonial papers were often copied or written in the style of prominent London periodicals, like the *Spectator*, *Tattler* and the *Gazette*. Charles E. Clark emphasizes that this “copying” did not reflect a lack of creativity or independent thought among American publishers, but rather part of an overt effort to connect American polite culture with culture abroad.⁹ Colonial newspapers published in foreign languages, including German, followed similar models. Throughout the empire, newspapers were increasingly understood as an important way to keep provincial Britons engaged in trans-Atlantic conversations.

⁶ Clark, “Early American Journalism,” in *Colonial Book*, 355.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and their Readers* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 31-64; Nord originally published this argument in a 1990 essay in the *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 9-38.

⁹ Clark, “Early American Journalism,” in *Colonial Book*, 355.

In general, early newspapers assumed the reader would require neither background nor explanation for most of their content, and thus kept their reporting terse on matters of politics, gossip, judicial action, and military and diplomatic activities. Instead they saved verbosity for belletristic and political essays.¹⁰ Very often keeping up with Garrick, Whitefield and Franklin landed in the category of gossip and as such much of the information we have about them written during their lifetimes took the form of short anecdotes and stories. But through piecing together these writings over many years and many different volumes, we can begin to see the men as characters in narratives of renown that ran through a geographically, chronologically and generically diverse range of periodicals.

Franklin, Garrick and Whitefield seem to have understood implicitly their place in these ongoing stories, and thus in a sense they were constant performers. The particular ways that their roles as moral thinker, player and preacher played out in print reflected the construction of public personality—eventually a celebrity—as one of the products of print culture. Performance of course defined Garrick’s profession as an actor. His innovative acting style brought changes to the stage that reflected larger eighteenth-century cultural concerns about deportment. As a “natural” actor, he was one of a class of thespians to introduce mimicry and a striving to stay in character throughout a play.¹¹ He endeavored to have his stage

¹⁰ Ibid, 348.

¹¹ Garrick’s biographer T. Davies termed him a “theatrical Newton” in the first volume of his *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick* (1780), 3. For a more contemporary analysis of Garrick’s innovations in acting see “The Revolution in Acting,” in Jean Benedetti, *David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre* (London: Methuen, 2001), 47-69. Recent histories of eighteenth-century theatrical tradition that discuss but go beyond Garrick’s role include Jane Moody and Daniel O’Quinn, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Michael Cordner and Peter Holland, eds., *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), and Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

appearances look unperformed—but this goal required that he concentrate heavily on performance from beginning to end. He also understood that to be truly successful, his reputation had to transcend the stage. Garrick maintained relationships with newspaper editors and publishers and carefully watched the coverage of his life and career in print.¹²

This fashioning of the natural self on stage and print mirrored the care other successful public figures gave to the representation of their private characters in public. It also reflected a more general eighteenth-century interest in fashioning an individual self as a route to financial and cultural success as well as religious transcendence.¹³ Benjamin Franklin in particular saw and embraced the potential *print* created for crafting a public life. He modeled and performed certain traits of sociability as part of his image as a self-made and exemplary gentleman. But he went a step further in making them part of a celebrated persona by ensuring that his autobiography, aphorisms, scientific experiments and much of his correspondence made it to ink on pages that would circulate throughout North America and Europe. Critics did not always appreciate behavior resembling acting outside of the theater.

¹² You can get an ample sense of Garrick's self-conscious self-fashioning from his letters to friends, colleagues and patrons during his lifetime. See David M. Little and George M. Kahrl, eds., *The Letters of David Garrick*, Vol. 1: Letters 1-332 (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963).

¹³ Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Ronald Huffman, Mechal Sobel and Fredrika J. Teute, *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). For earlier and English examples, see Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis, and Philippa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation, 1500–1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). For especially interesting discussion of how a later eighteenth-century woman understood this emerging trend as well, if not better than, these famous men, see Laura J. Rosenthal's discussion of Siddon's career in "The Sublime, the Beautiful, the Siddons," in Jessica Munns and Penny Richards, ed., *The Clothes that Wear Us: Essays on Dressing and Transgressing in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 56-79; 62-63.

Whitefield in particular faced criticism for making his sermons “too theatrical...for holy worship.”¹⁴ Yet he justified his style as serving in the greater religious good. He understood that he was competing with the theater for attendance, and needed to make his sermons as appealing as the performances people could see on the stages. Like both Garrick and Franklin, he also grasped the importance of combining his live appearances with a positive print reputation.¹⁵

David Garrick, Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield are unique. They were extraordinary not only in their time for their varied accomplishments and unusual careers, but in ours for their continued exceptionality and memorialization in historical representation. They were especially significant to the celebrity’s triumph of the modern public sphere. George Whitefield, David Garrick and Benjamin Franklin, were, and are of a particular type. In the English-speaking world, these men were the first non-royal figures to capture the sustained attention of trans-Atlantic metropolitan and colonial populations and the pens and printing presses of the writers and publishers who catered to them. Their careers produced reams of printed records and stockpiles of visual and material artifacts, generated over decades of continuing public interest. Their deaths, though separated by nearly twenty years, brought unprecedented deluges of eulogy in the newspapers and periodicals, reprinted between them and then repeated in the churches, coffeehouses, taverns and theatres of Britain and Anglo-America.

Of course according to the markers of celebrity culture set out in the introduction, Franklin, Garrick and Whitefield were not celebrities. No one would be called “a celebrity” for decades after these men died. Yet no nineteenth-century

¹⁴ Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, 46-47; Harry S. Stout, *Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 94.

¹⁵ Stout, *Divine Dramatist*.

celebrity, male or female, could avoid the legacy these celebrated men established. The image of the ideal public individual reflected in their continuous presence in print and the resonance of the public characters they developed worked as a template for discussing and judging the worthiness of the performers, writers and reformers who would find celebrity at least into the middle nineteenth century. It made them into moral touchstones. Questions of private character and public presence—or the importance of traits like self control, wit, humility and honesty embodied in a person's life off the page to their reputation on it—defined the dialogue. In the eighteenth century, a person's ability to perform that combination successfully was part of making their fame. Garrick, Whitefield, and Franklin flourished in that print environment. Yet during the middle of the nineteenth century, this context for celebrity began to transform, as a more openly critical, sensational and commodified celebrity culture emerged that surpassed the pages of print to encompass a much wider mass and popular culture. To understand how something could be altered and expanded, however, we need to know where it started. Therefore to understand the significance of the emerging celebrity culture of the nineteenth century, we need to reach back and begin with the careers of these three individuals.

Even as David Garrick, Benjamin Franklin, and George Whitefield grace the pages of scores of history books, and are often referred to as the earliest celebrities, the information about them written in newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books during their own lifetimes would hardly overwhelm a researcher. Yet the stories about them do yield more pages of notes and lists of references than other non-royal figures. What exists detailed their professional, religious, scientific and political endeavors, or reflected their participation in transferring the *belletristic* tradition of courtly culture onto the pages of a more democratic genre of newspaper and

periodical.¹⁶ It could include short paragraph anecdotes about a witty encounter or poetry about their virtues written by a correspondent. A reader learned about Garrick's stage productions, Franklin's inventions or political appointments, and Whitefield's progress in his preaching circuit, or the establishment of a religious charity. Pithy statements out of Garrick's stage epilogues, Whitefield's sermons or Franklin's publications appeared often in excerpted form, but hardly dominated the pages.

The nature of the writing about Franklin, Garrick and Whitefield entirely reflected the character of eighteenth-century publications. In the book trade, religious works were the most common and widely available. Works of history, humor and geography were also ordinary, represented in a variety of forms including chapbooks, jest books and almanacs. Biography as well grew more prevalent over the century.¹⁷ The same is true for pamphlets and broadsides, with an emphasis on political topics. Magazines encompassed all of the above as well as incorporating prose essays on questions of character, virtue and gender roles within families.¹⁸ Newspapers at times included short excerpts of any of the above, but concentrated on news about shipping, the economy and politics. Much of the space, however, within eighteenth century newspapers was devoted to advertising, which was in

¹⁶ David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (1990; reprint, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)

¹⁷ See John C. Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially the essays in Part I, "Literary Production and Dissemination: Changing Audiences and Emerging Media." For the circulation of work in the North American colonies in particular see the histories of various regional book trades in Amory and Hall, eds., *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*.

¹⁸ Amory and Hall, eds., *Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*; See especially Amory's "Reinventing the Colonial Book," 26-54.

accordance with their primary purpose as commercial documents, driven by the markets.¹⁹

Writers, editors, and publishers were self-conscious about their participation in an increasingly significant and geographically dispersed cultural, political and intellectual endeavor that depended on the print marketplace and capitalism. As such, a sustained survey of print culture in the eighteenth century, especially of those pieces of print that traveled across the Atlantic, gives the impression of witnessing an extended dialogue about the world—about history, ethics, religion, gender, materialism, the economy and culture. Newspapers circulated widely among private homes, businesses and coffeehouses, as well as between localities. Stories within them traveled equally or more widely, as editors rampantly reprinted articles copied from other sources. In the early eighteenth century, for example, a newspaper founded in Boston called the *Boston News-Letter* almost exclusively printed dispatches from London presses.²⁰ Thus the conversation circulated far beyond its origins, albeit transformed by context. As historian James Green noted about the *News-Letter*, the stories were always weeks and often months behind, thus reducing the element of simultaneity of reading experience that the broad circulation might otherwise suggest.²¹ Beyond that the disparate locations as well as levels of literacy and writing skills among readers meant there was little uniformity among them as to their participation in that dialogue. Some readers did become correspondents to the magazines and newspapers they read, chiming in on debates, or offering their take on a particular article or opinion expressed in the pages, but not

¹⁹ Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York: Guilford Press: 2002), 31-67.

²⁰ James N. Green, "The Book Trade in the Middle Colonies, 1680-1720," in *Colonial Book*, ed. Amory and Hall, 221-222.

²¹ *Ibid*, 222.

many. Still the words on the pages were meant to spark discussion, debate or at the very least thought.²²

Reading in the eighteenth century absolutely created an imagined community.²³ Readers could imagine themselves as part of the world, and come to believe they understood aspects of the wider world, about which facts, stories and details circulated in print. They could become informed about events, traditions, conflicts, and texts written in and about places they would never go. In a sense though, this shared history of and on the printed page only highlights all that was not shared. Although readers in the North American colonies as well as in Britain had access to similar genres of print by the mid-eighteenth century, this fact should not suggest uniformity in or volume of reception. Paradoxically, readers and England and Scotland lived in closer proximity to more print than New Englanders, but were not as literate a population. Readers in the southern colonies of British North America saw less print than those in England, Scotland and New England and were also less literate. The city had more available print than the country, and white men saw more print than black men as well as white and black women. Home inventories, book trade records, newspaper and magazine circulation accounts and bibliographies prove these points, but they cannot with great accuracy reveal the effect and impact of print culture among the larger populations of each locality. Work by historians and literary scholars including Margaret Spufford, Cathy Davidson and David Vincent illustrate the flexibility of the printed word and the variability of its

²² Edward H. Jacobs, "Buying into Classes: The Practice of Book Selection in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33:1 (Fall 1999): 43-64; Hugh Amory, "Chapter 3: Printing and Bookselling in New England, 1638-1713," 83-116, David D. Hall, "Chapter 4: Readers and Writers in Early New England," 117-150, and "Chapter 11," 377-403, in *Colonial Book*, ed. Amory and Hall.

²³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1991).

effects. A single printed item could circulate extensively through “renting” at bookstores, or exchange among friends. One reader, at a home, church, a workplace, a coffee house or a tavern, could read a text aloud to multiple listeners placed all along a spectrum of literacy.²⁴

Still, the sustained interest in Garrick, Whitefield and Franklin emerged mostly from the pages of periodicals, and in British North America more exclusively from newspapers. Until much later in their history, they are short on gossip. If individuals were mentioned at all, the following anecdote would be typical, “Mr. Whitefield, upon preaching...‘peace be unto you,’ took occasion to observe, that the most effectual way to put an end to all public riots and disturbances among the people, would be to have the peace of God in their hearts.”²⁵ Comments such as this one sometimes acted as social commentary. The quip came interspersed in reports of political bickering from London and may have been some printer’s or editor’s reflection on that. Given that the news from London came in date order, moving from stories from early April through late May, the quotation may have originated in some newspaper from May 8th (the date’s news within which it is sandwiched). Perhaps an editor in some original newspaper printed it to comment upon the news that survived in the Providence paper or perhaps that news had not made it into subsequent reprinting in other papers. Alternatively, perhaps the quotation itself was news, and originally printed shortly after Whitefield said it.

²⁴ Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Athens, GA, 1982); Cathy Davidson, ed., *Reading in America: Literary and Social History* (Baltimore, 1989); David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge, 1989); David Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

²⁵ “London,” *Providence (RI) Gazette and Country Journal*, 7/29/1769.

Editors only rarely commented openly upon a quotation or about other news in their papers, but still we must remember that choices were made about every aspect of a newspaper's construction. These short witty phrases were commonplace, and it seems like they were intended to spark thought or conversation, as well as reflections on their merits and suggestions, in the style of a coffeehouse or tavern debate. Because certain examples reoccur, it seems newspapers kept a running record of witticisms and interesting remarks from which to pull as necessary. Quips or phrases from Garrick's prologues often appeared in seemingly random order in the paper, but also typically in the poetry columns at the top left of the first or second pages. Franklin's aphorisms, taken from his almanacs, were also popular. The same texts repeated in newspapers across Britain and Anglo-America, as well as in different issues of the same newspapers over a period of years. They were of an edifying and expository style, but also performed a necessary function in that they could conveniently fill a gap in the page.

Pieces on Garrick, Franklin and Whitefield dominated this style of news writing and organization in the eighteenth century. Thus even as extended commentaries on particular individuals were much more common in later print forums that dedicated entire book series, periodical columns, and eventually a new genre of periodical publication to celebrities, enough material can be found to document Whitefield's, Garrick's and Franklin's significance to the eighteenth century and a nascent celebrity culture. Much has been written about them already, but more can be done to document the role they played as cultural figures, as personae circulating in a trans-Atlantic public and print discourse. They joined other figures that appeared more frequently in print over the century, including but not limited to the disreputable actor, the thief, the murderer, and the woman of debased

or threatened virtue.²⁶ In this context, the respectable player, preacher, and thinker represented alternative public figures, idealized exemplars of personal and public virtue. At the end of the century and after their deaths, this role became the dominant trait in Franklin's, Garrick's and Whitefield's personae, but it has its source in print coverage during their lifetimes.

Public Men, Personal Character

To be celebrated meant, and continues to mean, to be “much talked about, famed, renowned,” and that definition alone contains no moral assumptions.²⁷ Yet print discussions of celebrated figures in the eighteenth century hinged significantly on their reputation for private or personal character. Although there was no uniform system for evaluating character, certain concerns were represented most often in the discourse about celebrity. In talking about public men's private/personal character, I discuss how the sum of certain moral and mental qualities distinguishing an individual were displayed and represented in published writing about them. In particular, for these celebrated men courage (in the Kantian sense of self-mastery, self-discipline or continence), wit and humility played a significant role in their public lives. I emphasize private (or, often personal, in eighteenth-century sources) character, rather than just character, because an important part of celebrity culture at all points is the idea that observers and admirers have a complete and intimate understanding of their public men—that their representations on the page are true and complete representations of the man off the page. Many men and women in the

²⁶ Daniel A. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace: England, Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Culture, 1674-1860* (1993; reprinted Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

²⁷ “celebrated, *ppl. a.*” *The Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd Edition, 1989, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2000), <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50035291>>.

eighteenth century were of course successful in performing positive traits of public character. To be deemed respectable and deserving of celebrity, however, they also had to develop their talents out of a native genius, and to achieve civility, in the form of acceptance by an elevated class. These four traits—self-mastery or courage, wit, humility and genius—appeared again and again in discussions of sociability and the appropriation of civility and were necessary to creating an admirable and familiar public image.²⁸

Women as well as men were subjected to scrutiny of their private characters, but conditions predictably were differentiated by sex and gender. For men the traits of wit, courage and humility were closely tied to public achievements and paternalistic friendships, while for women the concern was more domestic—colored by their performances as daughter, wife and mother, and their reputation for chastity. Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), an English female actor in the late eighteenth century, was one of the first women to find respectability while still trodding the stage boards, and did so through an interesting twist on the manipulation of reputation that Garrick, Franklin and Whitefield had introduced earlier in the century.²⁹ Siddons did so through an emphasis on her domestic status as a wife and mother. She always appeared as “Mrs. Siddons” on *dramatis personae* and in most print forums. Biographies and tributes reported that she continued acting after marriage because she was the better actor than her husband, and thus the best source of support for

²⁸ Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America*; Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher, eds., *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1993); J.G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

²⁹ Sarah Siddons was the aunt of Fanny Kemble, an actress I will discuss in much more detail in later chapters.

her family of mostly daughters.³⁰ Her biographer, Thomas Campbell, described her as a woman who “doated [sic] on children” while another of her contemporaries, Horace Walpole, noted that Siddons declined invitations to “great dinners” because she preferred to take care of her family.³¹ Siddons took such care with her feminine reputation because women in public, especially those not of noble status, risked being painted as a “public woman”—a pejorative for prostitute.³²

Siddons correctly understood that traits of civility were understood differently by gender. Sexual behavior and domestic performance were hardly considered when evaluating a man’s character. Yet they were essential to evaluating a woman’s character, and were in and of themselves a topic of news. Caroline Gonda explored the question of female personal character in her treatment of eighteenth-century print discussions of three types of women she found receiving considerable attention in the pages: female parricides, reforming prostitutes and beautiful unmarried women. For the first two categories, Gonda argued, it was their perversion of domestic responsibility—the prostitutes’ sexual deviance and the murderess’s gruesome violation of their father-daughter relationship—that cast them into public consciousness. For the latter, a seemingly ideal trait—feminine beauty—

³⁰ Although it also worked to justify her continuing career as an actress, it is also true that the family did depend on her income. See Laura J. Rosenthal’s discussion of Siddon’s career in “The Sublime, the Beautiful, the Siddons,” in Munns and Richards, ed., *The Clothes that Wear Us*.

³¹ Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons* (E. Wilson, 1834), 390; quoted in Roger Manvell, *Sarah Siddons: Portrait of an Actress* (Putnam, 1971); Rosenthal’s work on Siddons, “The Sublime, the Beautiful, the Siddons,” in Munns and Richards, eds., *The Clothes that Wear Us* looks in detail at her “maternal self-fashioning” through both her onstage portrayal of female characters and her management of her reputation off stage. Siddons’ innovative exploitation of gender difference, rather than an attempt to transcend it, made her career in a sense. See especially her discussion of how Siddons’ “nontraditional” interpretation of Lady Macbeth as a “delicate, hyper-feminine beauty” rather than the “unsexed’ creature” usually portrayed on stage illustrated gender difference rather than collapsed it as in previous interpretations, 74-76.

³² Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona O. Gallachoir, and Penny Warburton, eds., *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See especially Markman Ellis’s essay on women in coffee-houses and the section, “The Female Subject.”

descended into ridiculousness and corruption when a few young women attracted the attention of crowds and journalists simply because of their exceptional appearances.³³ Gonda's stories were passing examples, typologies that weaved in and out of print. Yet certain women celebrated at first for other reasons found themselves subjected to the standards set in print. Peg Woffington, an actress, and Jenny Cameron, a supporter of the royal "Young Pretender," found their sexual morality slurred many times, even as the men with whom they reportedly transgressed went unchallenged. This difference was typical men mostly were exempt from such aspersion. Although it was known widely that Garrick and Woffington had lived together in a sexual relationship outside of marriage and that Franklin recognized a son born out of wedlock, neither fact harmed the men's reputation.

Conceptions of the personal or private and its effect on social order had much to do with this early modern double standard. Personal character referred not to behaviors exhibited within a particular private space—like the home—but rather to traits an individual exhibited that had an influence on their public carriage and its influence, especially through the circulation of print. Garrick, Franklin and Whitefield were positive examples in the way it mattered for men. Their wit, self-mastery or discipline, genius, and humility were positive examples for male citizens and politicians in a public sphere of print imagined as dominated by white men.³⁴ They made for an interesting companion in a coffeehouse, salon or tavern debate. This

³³ Caroline Gonda, "Misses, Murderesses, and Magdalens," in Eger, ed., *Women, Writing, and the Public Sphere*, 53-74; see as well Munns and Richards' introduction to *The Clothes that Wear Us* for a discussion of the relationship to fashion and sensation produced by eighteenth-century clothing trends and their print reporting.

³⁴ I say imagined because of course we know that white men were in no way the exclusive consumers of print. See G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-century Britain* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Eger, ed., *Women, Writing, and the Public Sphere*.

appeal, their appeal, is at the essence of their celebrity. The marketing of their personal character, or what I will describe as transitioning in later chapters to a “commodified personality,” created the template for a celebrity culture that would saturate popular culture by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The language and model for this celebrity encounter with personal character conforms in interesting ways to the culture of *belles lettres*, taken out of the coffeehouse and salon and telescoped into print discourse. The idea that polite culture moved into a larger and more democratic public sphere in the mid- to late-eighteenth century holds a popular position in the historiography of print culture. David Shield’s *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters* recovers the role of a variety of social spaces concerned with building personal character, including salons, private societies, taverns and coffeehouses, in spreading ideas about free discourse and civility in British America. Michael Warner’s *Letters of the Republic* traces the influence of those developing concepts on republican thought and writing. For England, Markman Ellis’s cultural history of the coffeehouse further traces sociability emerging in the eighteenth century, by looking at the “convivial and conversational associations” marked by informal friendship, gossip and heterosocial contact in London.³⁵ Each of these histories looks at the implications of the traits of civility and political structures in British metropolitan and colonial contexts. Just as the coffeehouses served multiple functions in social interactions, so did the model of private character and sociability embodied within them have derivations beyond the political. The character traits admired in this forum of polite discourse would emerge in discourse surrounding celebrity.

³⁵ Markman Ellis, *The Coffeehouse: A Cultural History* (Phoenix, 2005).

If prominence and representation in print are ample indicators, few eighteenth-century figures male or female triumphed as completely in achieving public recognition for their personal character as George Whitefield, David Garrick and Benjamin Franklin. No other living individuals dominated the attention of eighteenth-century English-speaking writers and readers as consistently for as many years. Certain themes run consistently through the writings about the men, principally their mastery of the civil traits already mentioned several times in this chapter—wit, humility, courage/self-discipline and genius. That said, the figures were not identical in their representation or place in the discourse. On the contrary, as the player, thinker and preacher they seemed to embody different routes to a personality in consonance with civility.

Wit, defined here as cleverness and the ability to extemporaneously express oneself admirably, took a central role in Garrick's, Franklin's and Whitefield's triumphant sociabilities. Through the practiced use of it, the three men prevailed over critics and demonstrated a sense of humor and practical self awareness—additional traits admired in polite culture. Of the three men, Franklin's reputation for wit remains the most familiar to readers today. His aphorisms, particularly those from his *Poor Richard's* almanacs, are well known. Although he wrote sayings such as, "He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas," and other oft-quoted expressions under the pen name Richard Saunders, he also gained a reputation for eloquence in his own name. Franklin penned his "Apology for Printers" in 1731 as a response to criticism he witnessed early in his career as a printer. The famous "Apology" argued that a successful printer maintained disinterest and neutrality in political matters. In this way, he deftly associated his position as a printer with that of a gentleman, a trait that served him well later. At the same time, he complimented

his audience, stating that while editors were obligated by fairness to print all “contending Writers,” the discerning reader could certainly distinguish between them. He argued that “when truth and error have fair play, the former is always an overmatch for the latter.”³⁶ He thus aligned himself as a printer with the intellectual project of journalism and the enabling of civil society.

Whitefield and Garrick were similarly lauded for witty turns of phrase early in their careers, although their expressions have not become as commonplace or cliché. In the 1740s, a dispute arose between Whitefield and an Anglican minister, Alexander Garden. To Garden’s charge, that the “light and trifling tunes used in Whitefield’s church” were “too theatrical and gay for holy worship,” the latter reportedly responded, “Very true...but pray Sir, can you assign any good reason why the Devil should always be in possession of the best tunes?”³⁷ With his pithy response, the reverend used humor to subvert a common charge against his ministry: its apparent theatricality. He acknowledged that his appeal was performance based, arguing that he took a common sin—love of the theater—and redirected it to good use. He allied himself further with his admirers and congregants by being open about this relationship, and confessing his own youthful love for the theater that he had resisted only with divine assistance.³⁸

Garrick similarly mastered turning criticism to his benefit in witty turns of phrase. James Quin, another famous actor, responded jealously to reports of the

³⁶ For more on Benjamin Franklin’s contributions to journalism as a professional field, see Walter Isaacson’s popular biography, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003) and Gordon Wood’s, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

³⁷ “Anecdote,” *New York Journal and Daily Patriotic Register*, 11/14/1787; “Anecdote,” *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 12/17/1787; *Portsmouth New Hampshire Spy*, 12/17/1787; *Federal Gazette and Philadelphia Evening Post*, 5/16/1791; *Boston Herald of Freedom*, 6/14/1791; *Dunlap’s (Philadelphia) Daily Advertiser*, 6/1/1791; *Bennington Vermont Gazette*, 8/5/1796.

³⁸ Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, xix-xxii.

young actor's easy successes in the theater of the early 1740s. After seeing his performance of Richard III, the elder thespian stated that Garrick's style was a "new religion," like that of Whitefield, and that while he was presently garnering heavy praise and audience receipts, with time all "would come to church again." Garrick responded with the following, perhaps the first of his many celebrated epigrams,

Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
Complains that heresy infects the town;
That Whitefield-Garrick has misled the age,
And taints the found religion of the stage:
Schism, he cries, has turn'd the nation's brain;
But eyes will open, and to church again!
Thou great infallible, forbear to roar,
Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more;
When doctrines meet with gen'ral approbation,
It is not heresy but reformation.³⁹

With these lines, the actor accomplished much. First, well aware of Whitefield's successes in Britain and abroad, he embraced the association. At the same time, he slightly mocked his critic for making comparisons between the two. By referring to him with the loaded term "Pope," Garrick used Quin's own hyperbole to suggest that like the Catholic Church and Christianity, the latter had made an unjust claim of proprietorship over the rules of the stage.⁴⁰ Of course, he also subtly mocked Quin's equating of religion with theatricals. This framing allowed him to make an assertion that would in another context seem less than humble. He likened his intentions on the stage to "reformation" and declared his success which Quin called "heresy"—as rather "approbation," drawing on the multifold associations of the term with truth, goodness and approval. Finally, Garrick made a veiled claim for a democratic public

³⁹ Thomas Davies, *Memoirs of the life of David Garrick* (London, 1781), 50-51.

⁴⁰ I cannot positively discern whether Garrick meant this statement to be truly anti-Catholic. While certainly it was a common sentiment in England in the period and Garrick was the descendant of Huguenots, Garrick himself rarely professed any religious sentiment. This statement seems much more concerned with mocking Quin than making a statement about larger issues between Protestants and Catholics.

sphere. He announced in his final lines that the people's taste could be trusted, for what is generally liked must be generally good. His sentiment paralleled Franklin's statement in his "Apology for Printers," that given the chance, audiences could discern and evaluate material for themselves. According to Garrick's logic here, the epigram must be near genius, for it appeared in newspapers, magazine, memoirs, biographies and published collections of notable quotations for the next century and a half. Through their response to criticism, Franklin, Whitefield and Garrick deftly, self-consciously and carefully used wit to frame the character of their own careers.

As Poor Richard said, "Words may shew a man's wit but actions his meaning." Even in a print culture dependent upon brevity and compelling language, wit alone could not make a man's reputation for good personal character. A second trait, courage, in the form of self-mastery or self-discipline, further characterized Whitefield's, Franklin's and Garrick's personae. Their reputations and publicized actions centered on self control and consistency. Admirers celebrated Whitefield's ability and eagerness to preach continuously for hours without seeming unhampered by problems with scheduling, personal illness or the animosity of the representatives of official religion he encountered that would have exhausted most people. Several newspapers printed a description of him upon his first arrival in the North American British colonies in 1739 that praised his pulpit presence, stating, "Every Accent of his Voice, every Motion of his Body, Speaks, and both are natural and unaffected."⁴¹ To potential criticism of Whitefield's performance as studied rather than spontaneous, the author averred, "If his Delivery is the Product of Art, 'tis certainly the Perfection of it."⁴² Given the large crowds at his appearances—he had been rumored to speak to

⁴¹ "From the New York Gazette," *New England Weekly Journal (Boston, MA)*, 12/4/1739.

⁴² *Ibid.*

crowds of twenty-five thousand in Britain; and Benjamin Franklin calculated that some thirty thousand people stood within earshot of Whitefield's sermon one afternoon in Philadelphia—certainly performance and an ability to master his voice, body and stamina made possible his appeal.⁴³ Even if they were not convinced by his message, just this fact earned Whitefield the admiration of many writers and men (including Franklin himself).

Self discipline and mastery, of course, required an effort built on talent and study. Whitefield, Garrick and Franklin each developed their talents through studying carefully their professions and approaching their work with deliberation. Although known as a preacher who eschewed the confines of denomination, Whitefield had the most formal of Anglican educations. He prepared for his career at Pembroke College, Oxford as a scholarship recipient, and eventually earned deacons' and priests' orders. Garrick enjoyed years of education meant to prepare him for a career as a lawyer. The actor's biographer, Thomas Davies, credited his particular mastery of the theatrical arts with his status as one of the field's most educated men.⁴⁴ Davies wrote in 1781 that, "to venture half prepared, as some imprudent actors have done...was not Mr. Garrick's practice. He examined well his strength before he undertook any arduous task."⁴⁵ Upon determining to become an actor, the twenty-three-year-old Garrick spent most of the year 1740 studying, "the best characters of Shakespeare and [English] comic writers."⁴⁶ Although he had the least classical education of the three, Franklin similarly understood the route to

⁴³ Benjamin Franklin, "Chapter 10," *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, from the online archive, *Archiving Early America*, <http://www.earlyamerica.com/lives/franklin/chapt10/> (accessed on 1/1/2009).

⁴⁴ While Garrick is known for having molded his own career, and for having constructed himself as the century's national actor in the Shakespearean art of national theater, Thomas Davies' *Memoirs of the Life of David Garrick* (1781) solidified the way Garrick would be remembered.

⁴⁵ Davies, *Memoirs*, 60.

⁴⁶ Arthur Murphy, *The Life of David Garrick, Esq.* (London, 1801), 17-18.

becoming a self-fashioned figure in the eighteenth century, and his success came from his ability to thoroughly and successfully sell his own image as a self-made gentleman. Much of what we know about him, and much of his celebrity, in fact came from his autobiography and its portrait of his youth spent doggedly pursuing the traits of civility.

Because becoming a celebrated persona included much self promotion, Garrick, Whitefield and Franklin needed to temper their reputations with a display of humility. Their very visibility made them vulnerable to charges of greed, vanity and pretension. Very early in his career, Whitefield's supporters confronted doubts about the authenticity of his piety. The *New York Gazette* article cited above tempered its praise of his performance with a reference to his humble nature, stating that although he was always "*bold as a Lion*" in the "*Cause of God*," he was rather "meek as a *Lamb*, in his own Cause."⁴⁷ Whitefield consistently asked his audiences for donations to such causes as an orphan asylum he founded in Georgia, and some questioned his intentions. A letter to the *Boston Evening Post* in 1745 accused him of "getting as much money as he could," for himself, under the guise of supporting orphans. The paper, an ardent supporter of Whitefield, responded with the results of an inquiry run by the American pastor William Hobby. Hobby found that Whitefield not only did not embezzle funds, but that he took less money for his personal support out of the offerings given at his appearances than most pastors did from their local congregations.⁴⁸ His modest character and his lifestyle, then, reflected his humility at all points. Others pointed to sources beyond the pecuniary, noting his lack of desire for worldly praise, and his concentration on "*Christ and true Grace*

⁴⁷ "From the *New York Gazette*," *New England Weekly Journal* (Boston, MA), 12/4/1739.

⁴⁸ Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, 193; Boston printers Rogers and Fowle printed a pamphlet for circulation, this text then found its way into many newspapers.

alone,” that reflected a “peculiar Excellency in him.”⁴⁹ Newspapers reprinted these sentiments over and over again in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reflecting not just that Whitefield had properly mastered the role of a humble man of God during his lifetime, but that they remained a concern for generations of newspaper readers and writers.⁵⁰

Of the three men, the actor David Garrick faced the most consistent and plaguing criticism. His profession presupposed this risk, as actors and actresses were among the lesser esteemed of figures in British society. Fellow performers and disgruntled staff of his Drury Lane Theater charged him with jealousy and tyranny if he fired them or did not seem to regard their work highly enough. Playwrights whose pieces he rejected called him myopic. His friends responded passionately to such charges, defending his character and claiming that his accusers were motivated by self-interestedness, a particularly meaningful claim in this period. The actor tended to act behind the scenes to protect his reputation, as the mechanics of renown allowed him to, by submitting anonymous responses or using his influence to pressure editors.

When he did respond, he attempted to maintain his image of disinterest, fairness and humility. In a private letter to a friend, he wrote of one particular attack,

I was so charmed and raised with the power of his writing, that I really forgot that...I ought to have been alarmed....If he has attacked me merely because I am the Punch of the puppet-show, I shall not turn my back upon him, and salute him in Punch’s fashion, but make myself easy with this thought—that my situation made the attack necessary, and that it would have been a pity

⁴⁹ “To the Reverend Gentlemen at Boston,” *Boston (MA) Evening Post*, 2/4/1745.

⁵⁰ “Anecdote of Whitefield,” *Trenton Federalist*, 11/23/1807; “Mr. Whitefield,” *City of Washington Gazette*, 8/31/1818; “Character of Whitefield,” *North Star*, 9/7/1824; *Poughkeepsie (NY) Independence*, 2/27/1833. These newspapers represent an extremely limited selection of examples of nineteenth-century articles about Whitefield’s character. My observation is based upon my extensive research in the periodicals of the period.

that so much strong, high-coloured poetry should have been thrown away, either in justice or in friendship, to so insignificant a person as myself.⁵¹

By the time he wrote this letter, in addition to being the country's most famous and admired actor, Garrick was the manager of the most successful theater in England, and responsible for the careers and well-being of dozens of actors, playwrights and theater employees. He understood his position, and that it would make him vulnerable to anger and resentment. He also understood that any actor looking to succeed as he had would have to learn to manipulate the press and their own reputation through it. He knew that as a real actor who stood on the stage boards nightly but also as the subject of a name that circulated in the press and as a celebrated persona, he would take the position of "Punch in the puppet-show" for any one looking to supplant him as the country's lead actor. In any case, handled carefully, all of the attention had the potential to increase his wealth and public regard. Those who read or heard about his response would have likely admired his modesty, wisdom and restraint.

In no way am I suggesting that Garrick, Franklin and Whitefield were extraordinarily witty, courageous and humble men for their time. But they were portrayed, and sought to portray themselves, as such. The agents of print culture—editors, printers and interested politicians and entrepreneurs—employed these traits to describe characters worthy of public admiration. The actor, printer and preacher were already well known for their accomplishments when the celebration of their characters began. It worked to sustain and justify their public renown. Ultimately, these agents, among who they themselves were counted, used portrayals of

⁵¹ David Garrick to Robert Lloyd, ca. May 1761, reprinted in David M. Little and George M. Kahrl, eds., *The Letters of David Garrick*, Vol. 1: Letters 1-332 (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), 338-339.

personal character to explain how the men's native genius worked not just to their own but to the greater benefit of public and private good.

Eighteenth-century periodicals included as a regular feature poems of varying length that reflected on topics of public interest. Celebrated people, sometimes women but much more often men, often figured as the theme for these original and idiosyncratic works. Garrick, Franklin and Whitefield were among the more frequent subjects of lyrical tribute. Self-styled poets usually noted Garrick's genius for movement or expression, but also his dominance on the stage. They mused as well over his significance as an English actor and the seemingly effortless way in which his self disappeared into his characters. A Dublin poet appealed in one example to the goddess Nature to explain, "where the diff'rence lies, / Twixt the actor of an hour, And of life."⁵² The question has at least two interpretations. It asked how to recognize the difference between an actor who would enjoy short-term popularity and one who would continue to grow and contribute to the stage. Alternatively, it queried the difference between an actor who simply helped the audience pass the hour, and the actor who made time and the walls between acting and real life dissolve while on stage. "Dame Nature" responded that Garrick embodied both latter options, proclaiming, "In the force, the fire, the feature, / Usher'd from a feeling heart:/GARRICK is the child of Nature. / Mankind—only acts a part."⁵³ His power and endurance as an actor came from his apparent authenticity of sentiment, and his knowledge of natural expression. Where he supposedly became the part, others only "acted" it. Dame Nature even suggested that Garrick's onstage acting was truer to nature than "Mankind's" experience off stage. In one apparent contrast between

⁵² "The Stage, A Poem," *Dublin Journal*, 6/14/1746. Reprinted in *Gentleman's Magazine* XVI (February 1746): 104.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Garrick's self and newspaper representation, the poem, in calling him the "child of Nature," obscured the work the actor himself always emphasized went into his acting. Garrick's well-known piece, *An Essay on Acting*, described his acting method as "Scientifical," couched in years of study and analysis.⁵⁴ He crafted his characters from deliberate and practiced manipulation of physical and verbal expression, intended to display his command of self-awareness and continence. He stressed the work that went into appearing "natural." Offstage, however, on the pages of newspapers, the portrayal of Garrick as a natural-born genius endured.

Benjamin Franklin enjoyed similarly adulatory verse in the same period. Following his experiments with electricity, and the subsequent publication of his findings—along with a guide for constructing one's own lightning rod—writers effused over his self-discipline, genius and generosity. They marveled that not only had he conquered a fearsome natural force, but he had not sought to benefit from it personally. He did not seek a patent for his findings. The following poem, although verbose, captures much of the sentiment I found reflected in most examples,

Thine is the praise, with bolder flight to soar....
To dictate science with imperial nod....
And save not ruin by an *iron rod*....
This hour tremendous thunders strike my ear....
Bears, foxes, lynxes, seek the thickest brake....
At length, without on fear I view:
Sedate, composed, I hear the tempest rol,
Which once with terror shook my boding soul!
No fire I fear my dwelling shou'd invade....
The guardian point erected high in air....
With hallow'd wands strange circles once were made,
To gull an ign'rant crowd, the jugglers trade....
What these pretended, Franklin, thou hast wrought,
And truth is own'd what once was fiction thought....
O friend, at once to science, and to man,
Persue each noble and each gen-rous plan;
With all the bliss beneficence obtains,

⁵⁴ David Garrick, *An Essay on Acting* (London, 1844), 4.

Be thine whate'er from gratitude it gains,
Be thine those honours that are virtue's meed,
Whate'er to genius wisdom has decreed!
Accept this off'ring of an humble mind....⁵⁵

The verses opened with a declaration of the scientist/inventor's ingenuity. He had triumphed in scientific inquiry through personal boldness and courage. This freely shared accomplishment furthered civilization and the separation of human from beast. The writer wondered that while in the past he had scurried for cover from storms, trembling in fear like a bear, fox or lynx, now he could remain sedate and secure. Rather than hide from it, he could watch the storm from comfortably inside his home—the tempest's destructive power no longer threatened the structure. Further, because he freely released his working plan for lightning rods, Franklin undercut impostors who profited from fear by offering “pretended” solutions to lightning's dangers. The author closed with a plea for Franklin to continue his worthy experiments and declared that he fully deserved all the rewards his successes brought. Courage, boldness, humility, generosity and now celebrity—the author located nearly all the traits of civility, politeness and enlightened culture in the genius of Benjamin Franklin.

Newspapers recognized each man early in his career for the prospective influence of his genius. After Whitefield's graduation from Oxford, he began to preach and was ordained a deacon by the Gloucester Bishop in 1736 at the remarkably young age of twenty one. Given at St. Mary de Crypt in Gloucester, Whitefield's first public sermon confirmed his promise and lived up to the expectations of his elder peers. He preached about the “Nature and Necessity of Society in General and Religious Society in Particular.” In a journal entry written

⁵⁵ C.W., “to Benjamin Franklin Esq; of Philadelphia, on his Experiments and Discoveries in Electricity,” *Gentleman's Magazine* (Edinburgh) XXIV (February 1754): 88.

later, he reflected on this early success. He understood right away that his influence would depend upon word of mouth to draw an audience in the first place. He acknowledged that rather than faith, “[c]uriosity...drew a large congregation.” He felt intimidated and “awed” at first, but soon “was comforted with a heartfelt sense of the Divine presence.” Much as he defended his theatricality because it was directed toward God’s work, he accepted that his appeal came from his celebrity. He embraced it stating, “As I proceeded, I perceived the fire kindled.” Even still, he “heard that a complaint had been made to the Bishop that [he] drove fifteen mad.”⁵⁶ Yet, he had already shielded himself against that charge—he spoke to celebrate divinity, not himself, and God’s presence attended to his audience. He followed up on his initial success in Gloucester by preaching to overcrowded congregations throughout London and parishes outside the city. His sermons were so popular and tightly packed that a witness later claimed, “You might have walked on the people’s heads.”⁵⁷ The first newspaper reports on his doings in Britain spread to North American colonies as early as 1737. In June of 1737, British Americans anticipated his arrival on a mission to Christianize Georgia under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.⁵⁸ Once in Georgia, he expanded his missionizing plan to include building a home for orphans and a school for the many parentless or impoverished children he had encountered. Whitefield then returned to

⁵⁶ Quoted in Rev. John Gillies, *Memoirs of the Life of George Whitefield* (1772; New Haven, 1834), 19.

⁵⁷ J.C. Ryle, *A Sketch of the Life and Labors of George Whitefield* (New York: Anson D. Randolph, 1852), 13.

⁵⁸ Carson A. Ritchie, *Frontier Parish: An Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Anglican Church in America* (Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 1976), 95-127.

England with two goals in mind to help him with these plans. He wanted to obtain priests' orders and raise money to build the facilities and support a staff.⁵⁹

He accomplished both tasks easily and quickly, but a new challenge complicated his success. Even as he obtained his ordination as an Anglican priest, he found many London pulpits closed to him. His association with Wesley Methodism, despite his eventual split with it regarding the question of predestination, but also his high profile, made him a controversial figure within the established church. The church's attempts to quash his movement only speeded its success and popularity, as his reputation spread via newspaper articles and word of mouth. He responded to the church's antagonism to his preaching within its walls by preaching outdoors. Quickly the crowds grew to 20,000 and his fame continued to spread. Despite some official opposition, much of it London-based, ministers and lay leaders throughout Britain and British North America, impressed by his celebrated ability to draw and inspire large crowds, began inviting him to their communities.

In 1739, Calvinist Jonathan Edwards invited Whitefield to preach to his congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts. The language he used in his letter of invitation reflected some of the anxiety many religious leaders must have felt in acknowledging Whitefield's influence. He wrote to the famous preacher,

I hope it is not wholly from Curiosity that I desire to see and hear you....But...from what I have heard...you are one that has the Blessing of Heaven attending you wherever you go: and I have a great desire...that Such a Blessing as attends your Person and Labours may descend on this Town.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, Chapters 4 and 5.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Edwards, Northampton in New England to Rev. Sir (George Whitefield), 2/12/1739, printed in Henry Abelove, "Jonathan Edwards' Letter of invitation to George Whitefield," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29:3 (1972): 487-489, 488.

Edwards worried that it his own interest in Whitefield might have emerged from an inappropriate and sensational desire, but he felt it was worth indulging that weakness on the chance that his visit would bring a great blessing on his community. Of course, the willingness of men of Edwards' status and class to participate in the excitement surrounding Whitefield's preaching tours only increased his renown and gave his work an air of legitimacy. Perhaps his gift for oratory did come as a blessing from heaven, but his celebrity was human made. The coverage of his work in pamphlets and newspapers, as well as the circulation of his name and works in manuscript letters between religious leaders and far-flung families, or by word of mouth between travelers, gave him a degree of recognition achieved at a rate that only made sense in a milieu where words and names circulated at an increasing speed through land and sea travel, via paper and word of mouth.

Not every reader and correspondent in the mid-eighteenth century claimed to value the increased attention and print given over to the discussion of celebrated individuals. A letter to an eighteenth-century periodical lamented the attention given to David Garrick at least in print. Weighing in on an apparently ongoing dialogue in the paper "on the subject of Mr. Garrick's moral character," the writer insisted that he had no personal feelings about the actor; in fact, he was "totally disinterested...and...perfectly indifferent about [Garrick's] good or bad character."⁶¹ He just wanted the discussion itself to end because it did not belong in a serious work. He wished he could know its projected duration so that he could spare himself the expense of taking a newspaper for the time being.

⁶¹ Untitled, News clipping, nd, HTC. Although the clipping had no date, it likely came from the later years of his career, the 1760s or 1770s, since it referred to Garrick having had a "number of years, great wealth, great power, great influence" to his merit.

Nevertheless, since the paper persisted in publishing pieces about it, he offered his own opinion on the subject and his thoughts on how such a discussion should proceed. The letter referred to a recent charge that Garrick exhibited “avarice, envy, oppression and inhumanity.”⁶² These are old attacks in Garrick’s case. From the start of his rise to prominence he had been accused of caring for his own interests in the theater above and at the expense of others. The writer went on to claim that the actor’s advocates had thus far only responded that he was a “great actor.”⁶³ He argued that this fact, although undisputed, was no justification. He used strong language, intimating the claim was an insult to the intelligent reader, asking, “[w]ith what pretense to reason...can they think of imposing this defence as the vindication of *private character*?” and that “[i]n the course of a number of years, with great wealth, great power, great influence, and some *virtue*, a considerable number of meritorious actions must necessarily follow.”⁶⁴ His words made the subtle but significant claim that “private character” was defined by public acts, or even “a considerable number” of them. As he was a reasonable man, he asked not that Garrick’s friends go through the “extraordinary trouble of making out a *list* of ALL Mr. Garrick’s *good actions*,” he just requested that they “be so obliging as to take the trouble of naming *one*.”⁶⁵

Garrick’s friends could certainly have listed many more than one. Indeed, aware of the prejudices actors faced in English culture, Garrick had cultivated an image as a munificent gentleman throughout his career. He had founded and subsidized a charitable fund for actors and worked assiduously to promote

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Shakespeare and the English stage throughout Europe. Possibly the letter writer knew about none of these examples. More likely he understood that his words, once committed to print, would have the effect of raising doubt about Garrick's character. He also knew that the actor's friends would have to respond carefully to his challenge. They would not want to compromise his reputation for humility by coming across as too boastful about his charity. The mechanics of early celebrity were a complicated affair, built on carefully set rules of civil engagement and relationships and an emerging but unpredictable system of printing and newspaper circulation.

The Mechanics of Early Celebrity: From Public Death and Debated Memorial to Essentialized Models

When David Garrick died in late January 1779, writers of many kinds set about committing his memory to paper. Poets, news writers, soliloquists, and advertisers all sought to make their mark on culture via his passing. One magazine, London's *Literary Fly*, dedicated a full issue to remembering Garrick's value for the stage and for England. Without any irony whatsoever, and after spending pages lamenting it, the author of the *Fly* declared Garrick's death an opportunity to secure his journal for posterity. He rhapsodized that "the loose pages which compose this number at least...shall be preserved from oblivion, by...that immortal name Garrick."⁶⁶ Yet, the author assured his readers that it was an "honest desire to reward virtue and ability" that caused him to print his special issue. It was just luck, then, really that it also gave the pages possible value as a keepsake. Even in death, a famous person always had something to offer the mechanics of renown.

⁶⁶ *Literary Fly* I (January 30, 1779), 1.

Separated as Garrick's and Whitefield's deaths were by ten years, they set off similar waves of eulogy.⁶⁷ Within weeks of both men's deaths, newspapers throughout Britain and Anglo-America had reported on the events and covered the funerals. The funerals themselves were widely attended, with many more people trying to cram in than space could allow. Printers and publishers immediately offered memorial poetry and engraved portraits for sale, and within months, short biographies and retrospectives on their careers appeared. These products were advertised extensively.

Benjamin Franklin's death at the end of the century brought public mourning and a marketing boom on a grand scale, although more extensively at first in France than in the United States and Britain. The content of these varied tributes to Garrick's, Whitefield's, and Franklin's memories were as striking as their scope and scale. The men, usually adored but often criticized in life, were revered in death. This consistency in scale and form, however, does not reflect a more general homogeneity in how Garrick, Franklin and Whitefield were remembered, or in who remembered them. The texts of newspapers and biographies that celebrated the men revealed contestation over their memorialization, over how to and who should define their places in British and Anglo-American culture. In the nineteenth century especially, their memories became embroiled in larger questions about cultural hierarchy. Yet for Garrick and Whitefield the struggle began quite literally over their bodies, and spilled over into later years through biography and the manipulation of anecdotes and images in newspapers, periodicals, and other material efforts.

George Whitefield died in Newburyport, Massachusetts, the day after giving what proved to be his final sermon to its Presbyterian Congregation. Its members

⁶⁷ George Whitefield died in 1770; David Garrick in 1779 and Benjamin Franklin in 1790.

had his body prepared immediately for burial under the pulpit of its meetinghouse. A “great concourse” of people attended his funeral according to newspaper reports, but already a controversy was brewing over the treatment of his corpse. Upon hearing of Whitefield’s death, three competing groups set out for Newburyport to claim the body. A group of Boston “gentlemen” and a committee of “leading citizens” from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, managed to arrive before the funeral. Weeks later, representatives from Georgia arrived with a commission from their colonial legislature to remove the body for burial on the grounds adjoining his school for orphans. Each group claimed a compelling reason for burial rights, but in the end current possession persevered and Newburyport remained Whitefield’s resting place.

The newspapers contained little detail about the particular parties claiming the body, but their descriptions of the men as “leading citizens” and “gentlemen” is suggestive. Each group felt themselves capable of and entitled to speak to Whitefield’s memory and to assert his legacy as their own. The Boston delegation claimed to be acting according to Whitefield’s desires. Sympathetic newspapers in New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts contained some version of this report printed by a Portsmouth, New Hampshire paper, in response to Newburyport’s refusal to part with the body,

And this tho’ Mr. Smith, the Companion of Mr. Whitefield in his Life, and rightful Guardian of the Body, if there was any, intimated his knowledge of Mr. Whitefield’s Desire to be buried at Boston, and alleging that he could not answer any other Disposal of it, to his own Conscience, or to Mr. Whitefield’s Friends at Home.⁶⁸

Unfortunately for Mr. Smith and the Boston men, Whitefield had not left written instructions about his desires, and Smith’s word was simply not good enough for the

⁶⁸ “Boston,” *Portsmouth New Hampshire Gazette and Historical Chronicle*, 10/12/1770.

Newburyport congregation. The Presbyterians believed it was divine intervention—they stated that the minister had said numerous times during his last sermon that he should like to finish his work that day. Since God had answered his prayer while he was in their community, it clearly meant that Whitefield's body should remain with them. In any case, his body was not moving from its spot. The minister had never lived in either Boston or Newburyport—Georgia and his birthplace in Gloucester were the only places with which he maintained a consistent attachment.⁶⁹ Yet practically, these locations were too far from where he died to have any real chance at claiming his decomposing remains.

The Portsmouth representatives, however, made a very interesting claim. They said nothing about divine intervention, Whitefield's own desires, or a particular relationship to him during his lifetime. Instead, they argued that their community's wealth meant they could build and maintain the most elaborate tomb, one that would properly celebrate Whitefield's life and philosophy. It was a funny statement over the body of a man who deliberately lived simply, and who, despite his transatlantic popularity, took far less in personal income than most religious leaders. None of the newspapers that have survived, however, comment upon the presumptuousness of their claim, or question its appropriateness. It is simply one among the three failed attempts to remove Whitefield's body from Newburyport.

It would be fruitless today to evaluate the sincerity of any of these claims, and they surely were all interested in the economic benefits and renown that Whitefield's internment could bring to their community. Whitefield's celebrity status would certainly have benefited any church or town. Newburyport did in fact profit from it. One historian has claimed that Whitefield's death marked a coming-of-age moment

⁶⁹ Stout, *Divine Dramatist*.

for the small town, a moment during which it finally succeeded in asserting its economic position as a major New England port with its own cultural and financial elite. The church itself became a pilgrimage site for the religious faithful as well as the merely curious.⁷⁰ Even today, the Newburyport church's website advertises itself as Whitefield's burial site, including a cenotaph, "Whitefield's desk," and other artifacts in its virtual tour.⁷¹

The controversy over Whitefield's body reflected his significance as the first itinerant preacher of the eighteenth-century religious revivals in Britain and Anglo-America to reach such prominence. It shows, as well, how a celebrity that spanned great distances created new questions about negotiating relationships between the celebrated and their admirers. Parishioners and the converted in as far-flung places as Savannah (Georgia), Cambridge (Massachusetts), Edinburgh (Scotland), and Dublin (Ireland) believed their relationship with the reverend was an intimate one. It was a connection that had been forged through his bodily presence in their town and village, but also created and then maintained through the circulation of epistolary reports of his movements across geographic space. These reports came from the pages of newspapers but were also circulated among religious leaders, who were always essential in sustaining Whitefield's fame. His willingness to travel and to sacrifice his personal and family life made the people of the English-speaking world into his congregation. His very style of preaching worked to promote a personal connection between Whitefield and his many and diverse listeners. His sermons—

⁷⁰ John J. Currier, *The History of Newburyport, Massachusetts, 1764-1905*, Vol. I (1906: reprinted, Somersworth, NY: 1977), 266; Robert E. Cray, "Memorialization and Enshrinement: George Whitefield and Popular Religious Culture, 1770-1850," *Journal of the Early Republic* 10:3 (Autumn, 1990): 339-340.

⁷¹ "Virtual Tour," at http://www.oldsouthnbpt.org/virtual_tour.htm. Accessed 10/25/2006.

seemingly unscripted—privileged emotional appeals and personal reflections.⁷² Given the novelty and unfamiliarity of this style of sermonizing, the spectators inevitably felt their bond with Whitefield was special and even possibly unique to them. Thus, facing what seemed to be the premature conclusion to this relationship through Whitefield's sudden demise, it makes sense that several communities with any ability to make it happen would respond by seeking to make their union with the reverend permanent by possessing his physical remains. Whitefield also represented a wider Christian world unencumbered by denominational divisions, and his body would connect any community to that tradition which revival culture celebrated.⁷³

Just as the elite men of Newburyport, Portsmouth, Boston and Georgia claimed to speak for Whitefield or for his memory, voices emerged following Garrick's death contesting how those in possession of his body sought to memorialize him. Expecting a large crowd, his friends and family attempted to control the event by making it a ticketed affair.⁷⁴ Many of his non-elite admirers felt that they had a right to participate more fully in his memorial and considered the tickets an insult. The unrest spread so dramatically that a London newspaper reported that the Savoy Guard had to be brought in to contain the angry crowds before guests arrived, "A variety of disturbances happened by the misbehaviour of the populace, who thought though they were not possessed of tickets, they had an equal right to admittance." The article's author carefully separated himself from the "populace" by writing of them in the third person and citing them as "misbehaving"

⁷² Ibid, 38-42.

⁷³ Ibid, xiv, 94.

⁷⁴ I have not been able to determine whether tickets were sold or given out. I would imagine they were given out to close friends and important citizens. I would expect if they were sold, that I would have seen even more discussion about them, and some mention of price.

and disturbed. Yet he did have some sympathy for them, because his report made their claims articulate at least. He quoted a member of the misbehaving populace as having made the following statement, “Why have we not as much right to see Mr. Garrick lie in state....[T]he money from a fish woman, distman [sic], or chimney-sweep was as of much consequence to him as that which came from the pocket of a Duke, a Dutchess [sic], or even Majesty itself.” The member of the crowd articulated a politics of consumer entitlement—all purchases were equal and thus all purchasers should be equal in the eyes of a seller. Never mind that Garrick was a human being. He was also a commodity. He had been happy to let anyone admire him in life, why not as well in death? The crowd members argued that having profited from his public status in life, Garrick’s fate in a sense became entwined with the crowd’s. His family and friends were wrong to make his death private.

While this first newspaper seemed sympathetic to the crowd’s sentiment, if not its methods, another newspaper said much the opposite. It criticized the funeral for being too public. The *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* wrote about the event,

A less publick internment, with the attendance of Doctor Johnson, Mr. Colman, Mr. Burke, Mr. Dunning, and other literary characters, would have been more characteristical as well as a more handsome compliment to Mr. Garrick....⁷⁵

The first critic, the member of the crowd, had appealed to Garrick’s status as a box office draw—his attractiveness to theatergoers of all social and cultural statuses. The *Morning Chronicle* critic, however, ignored the actor’s profit motives and instead referred to his status as a major figure of the literary arts. He did not emphasize Garrick’s noble patronage—the dukes, duchesses, and majesty the crowd criticized,

⁷⁵ Untitled, *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 2/2/1779.

but rather his association with major English intellectual figures of the period—author Samuel Johnson, dramatist George Colman (the Elder), author, philosopher and statesman Edmund Burke, and jurist and politician John Dunning.⁷⁶ Whereas the crowd member focused on Garrick’s economic relationship to the public, the *Morning Chronicle* defined it differently. Garrick for it was part of the intellectual elite, a leading and representative literary character, not a commodity.

The article’s writer, however, did not dismiss Garrick’s importance to other areas of English life or his relationship with his audiences. He wrote that the money saved by sparing the large public event could have been used to honor another of Garrick’s commitments during his lifetime—charity, especially those connected with the art he loved. The money saved by a smaller memorial, he suggested “might... have provided of very essential service to distressed merit” had the organizers chosen to give it instead to “the two theatrical funds or some other charity.”⁷⁷ This approach emphasized Garrick’s role as a moral exemplar. Like the men in Newburyport who ignored claims by “Mr. Smith,” Whitefield’s closest companion that the reverend had wanted to be buried in Boston, this unnamed newspaper writer claimed a better knowledge of the appropriate legacy for Garrick than those who had been closest to him. While in Whitefield’s case it appears to have been a struggle between elites from different localities and in Garrick’s it appears to have been a conflict between cultural and social classes, both cases reveal a contestation over the meaning of celebrity relationships and the interpretation of their significance to time and place.

⁷⁶ I am confident that these are the men referred to by the author since I can confirm their association with Garrick at multiple points during his life.

⁷⁷ Untitled, *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 2/2/1779.

The nature of the men's relationship with their admirers in life seems to have influenced the disagreements after their death. Whitefield traveled constantly, and promised much at each place he landed. He likely never told anyone he would stay with them literally, but his sentiments, such as that he would like to finish his work where he stood, clearly suggested to some hearers a particular intimacy or preference for their location or community. Garrick had worked to establish himself as a gentleman through his relationships with members of noble and royal families, his patronage of the arts and charitable foundations, and his maintenance of a stately home and extensive staff as well as his participation in a culture of letters. Yet, unlike a complete gentleman, he remained dependent upon the average as well as the elite theatergoer. Unlike Franklin and despite several announcements, he never completely retired from the theater, but maintained his active position as England's foremost player and manager. These varied relationships between the admirers of Whitefield and Garrick made for varied claims upon them. The average member of an audience who saw either of them trod upon a stage or a pulpit could make a compelling case for maintaining an interest in what happened to the man's body and memory. This trait of ambivalence about what were rights and who had them when it came to celebrity remained a vibrant part of the discourse of celebrity culture as it developed in Britain and Anglo-America well into the nineteenth century.⁷⁸

Perhaps because Benjamin Franklin's celebrity had been far less attached to his actual body and its movements geographically, his executors managed a much more peaceful funeral and burial after his death in 1790. It included a public

⁷⁸ Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

visitation, reported to have had 20,000 attendees and a procession through Philadelphia, followed by a more private burial in Christ Church Burial Ground. Still, struggles over how his memory should be used eventually emerged. In the early days, months and years after his death, the French response actually exceeded that of the Americans.⁷⁹ The House of Representatives, at the urging of James Madison, crafted a tribute to the inventor/statesman, but the Senate did nothing. Indeed, John Adams hoped to quash the public's memory of Franklin. He resented the emphasis on Franklin's and Washington's roles in the Revolution at the expense of other men's already predominant less than a decade after the war ended. In a particularly prescient moment, he wrote to Benjamin Rush of his fear that,

The essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin's electrical Rod, smote the Earth and out sprung George Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod—and thence forward these two conducted all Policy, Negotiations, Legislatures and War.⁸⁰

No doubt Adams would not have enjoyed the “Founding Fathers” play set described in the introduction to this chapter. His sentiments and those of other writers who disagreed about the status of Franklin's character and appropriateness of his celebrity were part of a long-lasting discourse, but did nothing to quash the popular memorialization of the printer/statesman.

Nineteenth-century writers continued to ponder Franklin's character, but in contrast to eighteenth-century examples, they were far more concerned with questioning the degree to which he was pious. Unable to justify his deism with popular religious sentiment, certain newspapers as well as biographers returned over and over to vague examples of religious sentiment in his writings. They

⁷⁹ Wood, *Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, 234.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, 232. The text of the full letter is available in L. H. Butterfield's edited volume, *The Letters of Benjamin Rush* Vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 1207.

emphasized his friendship with Whitefield, but neglected the reverend's constant expressions of concern for Franklin's unredeemed soul. They quoted passages like the following from a letter of his as evidence of his piety, "I have received much kindness from men, to whom I shall never have an opportunity of making the least direct return; and numberless mercies from God, who is infinitely above being benefited by our services."⁸¹ This passage from a 1753 letter appears again and again in periodical literature throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁸²

Given the volume of writings by Franklin that did not credit God with his successes, some writers took exception to this selective use of his words in crafting his public memory. An 1806 newspaper included an article claiming that rather than being a Christian, Franklin was an "Infidel."⁸³ The author, "Philalethes," defined the term according to its typical meaning, as one who "does not believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to have been given by Divine inspiration." He made an unexpected point, however, in arguing that Franklin's non-belief did not detract from his memory. No one could doubt that the printer/statesman had been an "excellent political moralist." Even more significantly, Philalethes pointed out that British Governor Thomas Hutchinson, against whom Franklin had turned in the years leading up to the Revolution, evidently had been an excellent Christian. Yet no American would celebrate him as a great political leader. Franklin's memory, and his status as an American Founding Father, the writer argued, should not turn upon his religiosity, but rather upon the traits that had mattered for his reputation during

⁸¹ Benjamin Franklin, *Memoirs of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. by William Temple Franklin (M'Carty & Davis, 1834), 236; Benjamin Franklin Morris, *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* (G.W. Childs, 1864), 129.

⁸² For example, see "News/Opinion," *The Sentinel of Freedom*, 12/25/1804; "Moral Department, Franklin's Works," *Vermont Republican*, 3/1/1819; "Letter from Dr. Franklin to George Whitfield, Dated. Philadelphia, June 6, 1783," *Vermont Gazette*, 12/23/1828 and "Franklin's Faith," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4/27/1876.

⁸³ "Remarks on Dwight's Oration," *Northampton (MA) Republican Spy*, 1/28/1806.

his own lifetime—his wit, self-mastery, and humility (described by Philaethes as a character “true, honest and temperate”).

Questions over how to negotiate Whitefield’s and Garrick’s memory with a constantly changing popular culture lingered in the decades following their deaths. Into the 1830s and 1840s, writers debated over whether Garrick truly had been a generous man or rather had been tight with his money and professional help. Some anecdotes from biographers and contemporaries painted him as a man who had donated generously to charities while others suggested he frequently had refused to help worthy causes. Similarly, some claimed he had offered frequent advice and support to younger and struggling actors, while others said he had guarded his own fame and influence too closely, and at the expense of the profession. Secular and religious periodicals continued to argue over whether Whitefield had been an architect of modern religious devotion, or rather had been “all force and impetus” without inspiring lasting and meaningful commitment among his hearers. These questions remained salient because print discussions of Franklin’s, Whitefield’s and Garrick’s personalities persisted. The insults to their character slid into the background, however, as less-commonly reprinted alternatives to the celebratory versions of the lives and characters that had come to dominate the narratives.

The canonization of Benjamin Franklin, George Whitefield and David Garrick as early celebrities came out of this continuous celebration of their personal characters in popular print. Especially after they died and could neither travel nor speak for themselves, the focus of their renown shifted from their role as active players in the performance of their celebrity. Instead, they became essentialized models, pulled from a history of culture that idealized eighteenth-century political, theatrical and religious traditions. The language of their celebrity found its origins in

the writings from their own lifetimes, but took an almost mythological tone with the passage of time and the challenges to the dominant narratives faded from view. In addition to the shifting nature of the print evidence, a new market arose in material relics associated with the men. The material products available ranged from the common and cheap—easily copied engravings of their image—to the rare and expensive—an original Franklin invention, a letter written in Whitefield's hand, or an original promptbook of Garrick's with his notes and marginalia. These objects became part of the emerging celebrity culture, although their origins lay in more traditional and earlier popular cultures.

The postmortem adulation of Whitefield after his death had roots in centuries of religious history. But just as Whitefield had during his life eschewed the significance of the organized church to his message, the journalists and biographers who memorialized him questioned the ability of churchmen to correctly memorialize the evangelist. The *Gentleman's Magazine* published short editorial comments in its February 1771 "Catalogue of New Publications." In reference to Charles Wesley's "Elegy on the Death of the Late Rev. George Whitefield," the magazine remarked, "However Mr. Wesley's followers may esteem him as a Divine, he is certainly but a very indifferent Poet." The task of committing the reverend's memory to popular verse properly rested with more capable members of the literate class, as evidenced by the various *ex tempore* verses celebrating his life that circulated in the months after his death. Scores of examples appeared in periodicals across Britain and Anglo-America, but editors were particularly impressed with the contribution of an African slave in Boston, Phillis Wheatley. Her text was reprinted many times in different bindings throughout the century following his death and contributed to her own status as a minor celebrity. Writers privileged Whitefield's wittiness by

remembering his extemporaneous responses to criticism, his universality by recounting his conversions of poor, African and African-American souls and by rewriting his anti-denominationalism as “anti-Party” sentiment, his humility by reminding readers that he lived simply, and finally, his geniality by retracing his friendships spread over the English Atlantic world. These same themes persisted well into the nineteenth century, with an additional emphasis on his Franklinian rise from obscurity.

Nineteenth-century editors and writers continued to use anecdotes for didactic purposes as they had in the previous century. Now, however, they took more freedom with making editorial comments on the quoted material. Whitefield’s preaching against denominationalism provided an especial hook for commentary in a religious landscape increasingly characterized by fractured evangelical congregations. Editors turned to a popular sermon of Whitefield’s in which he dramatized a conversation with Abraham, during which he asked the patriarch, “Are there Methodists in Heaven?”⁸⁴ Upon hearing the response, “No,” Whitefield continued to list denominations with increasing tension, until finally he asked whether there were any Christians in heaven at all. Abraham answered, “Yes.” Whitefield then beseeched his hearers to forget denominational factionalism, and cried out, “Let us all be Christians.” The writer of the article concluded that these words spoken in the eighteenth century had even more meaning in the present, stating, “Let all who profess to be the disciples of Christ dispute no more about names and parties, but join in one formidable army under Christ.”⁸⁵ Several newspapers pointed out that while many Christian missionaries followed Whitefield’s model of Christian charity

⁸⁴ “Untitled,” *Bridgeton (NJ) Washington Whig*, 6/21/1819.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

and dedication without a strict definition of denomination, many more needed to take him as their example.

As with Franklin, Whitefield's memory and written words were flexible, open to interpretation and easily molded to a particular writer's model or message. And like newspaper publishers, Christian book publishers found Whitefield a rich source for their markets. A search in publication catalogs for the late-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries yields a plethora of materials on Whitefield. In 1812 and 1834, editions of Whitefield's "memoirs," originally compiled by John Gillies in 1772 and reprinted throughout the rest of the century, came out in revised form. The 1812 version included notes and comments by a "Mr. Seymour" of Philadelphia. The 1834 version further improved on the memoirs, making a tome out of a previously small work. The new publishers apparently felt that Gillies' book had been lacking, as it re-titled the new work with an almost derogatory reference to the old. Gillies seems to have thought that Whitefield's words spoke for themselves, or that readers could interpret them without much comment from him. Nineteenth-century critics believed differently. The title of Gillies' 1772 edition had been *Memoirs of the Life and Character of George Whitefield, M.A., Late Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Countess of Huntingdon; in Which Every Circumstance Worthy of Notice, Both in His Private and Public Character, is Recorded*. In 1834, the American publishers significantly dropped the reference to English nobility and character. They called the book instead, *Memoirs of Rev. George Whitefield, Revised and Corrected, with Large Additions and Improvements*. The "improvements" included significant commentary on his life and works and the "additions" were more of his sermons included in the appendices. The *Quarterly Christian Spectator* celebrated these contemporary attempts to contextualize Whitefield's life and message for nineteenth

century readers. A reviewer lamented that Gillies' original work had been sparse, calling it a "mere compilation of portions of his journals, and letters, with some additional remarks on his character and labors."⁸⁶

After the republication of and revisions to Gillies' *Memoirs* in 1834, several publishing houses reprinted Whitefield's sermons through many editions. Presses in the United States took up the *Christian Spectator's* call for improved biographies of the reverend, with several coming out in the decades following. Many of these works emphasized his piety while renewing the focus on the origins of his ministry. The editors' comments in the 1830s' editions of Gillies' memoir fashioned a heroic tale out of Whitefield's fatherless and impoverished childhood, making a model of the reverend for contemporary American children, and this trope became the dominant one for explaining his background. This particular version of Whitefield's life proved a popular one—one that was adopted by other writers throughout the century. Through this treatment, it seems obvious why the reverend and Benjamin Franklin had been such close friends. Their lives, as retold for public consumption, followed strikingly similar paths. Their stories also suggest just how carefully writers and editors used the memories of these celebrated men to further their own educational purposes, and to control the discourse of personality in print in the creation of celebrity culture.

One such story, printed in an inexpensive version via a mid-century newspaper's "Children's Department" column, emphasized the minister's diligence as a student. It retold a well-known part of Whitefield's history, emphasizing that, as the gifted but impoverished son of a widowed innkeeper, he had had to work as a servant for wealthier students to subsidize his Oxford education. He was very

⁸⁶ "George Whitefield's Memoirs," *The Quarterly Christian Spectator* 3 vol. 6 (1834): 88-117, 88.

popular with the other young men, until he had his conversion experience. After that, his fervent piety brought him into conflict with wealthier and less devout students. He ignored their “sneers” but in the process sacrificed the easy and popular route to success. As an adult, he came into conflict with the established and privileged churches of Britain and later the American colonies, but as the story went, he persevered and made an unprecedented success of his ministry. The article’s writer made sure that young readers could neither miss nor misinterpret the moral of Whitefield’s life story as he saw it, explaining, “Do your duty, let the consequences be what they may. Be industrious, be energetic. Don’t mind difficulties.” He asked readers to ask themselves, “If this poor boy could arise from the lowly position of bootblack to that of one of the most pious and eloquent preachers England ever produced, cannot you go and ‘do likewise?’” Replace the religious with literary and revolutionary pursuits, and substitute the lowly position of an exploited bootblack with an abused apprentice and you would have Benjamin Franklin’s life story. Both men rose up from humble origins to achieve great things in the eyes of their contemporaries. Both men were everymen, somehow extraordinary and yet ordinary and thus ideal models for youthful emulation.

Some writers expressed concern with preserving Whitefield’s fame so that his legacy and most important messages would not be lost to time. A biographer claimed, “There is not much to be learned from his sermons now. Their best maxims are *common-place* to us.”⁸⁷ Yet he explained that it was expressly because they had become so ordinary, so entrenched in nineteenth-century American life, that it

⁸⁷ The Life and Terms of George Whitefield,” *Portsmouth Journal*, 5/5/1838.

was important to remember how they had been “both new and strange things to the generality of his hearers” during his lifetime in order to maintain their resonance.⁸⁸

Newspaper, magazine and book writers returned to several fantastic stories about Whitefield to justify his memorialization, in addition to celebrating the commonsense messages of his theology. Works frequently compared Whitefield to Franklin and Garrick as well as to other revered men. One writer hoped to make the minister compelling to contemporary readers by musing that had he chosen the theater, “his matchless powers of action and elocution without doubt would have rivaled even Garrick’s fame.”⁸⁹ He pointed out that even the famous actor had admired Whitefield, stating once that he “would give a hundred guineas could he pronounce *Oh!*” as Whitefield uttered it.⁹⁰ David Hume “pronounced [Whitefield] the most eloquent preacher to whom he had ever listened” after hearing him in Edinburgh.”⁹¹ These allusions were meant to suggest more than that Whitefield had been a model for other respected eighteenth-century figures, but that his fame should transcend time.

Even the lowliest Christian could find inspiration in his example. Material culture reflected the multiple avenues available for expressing an affinity for a particular celebrated figure’s image, even for illiterate consumers. The newspapers intermittently reported on the appearance of medals cast with Whitefield’s images among the possessions of very poor folk—including one elderly unnamed African American man who claimed to have found comfort from the Whitefield medallion he had held for over forty years. Medallurgy was an important part of the culture of

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Anecdote of Whitefield [from the *Raleigh Star*],” *Boston (MA) Recorder*, 10/31/1818.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “Untitled,” *St. Louis Daily Reveille*, 1/17/1849.

memorialization in the period. Through it, even “an old Negro” could possess a little of Whitefield’s spirit.⁹²

Just as Whitefield’s close relationship with an English noble woman became less important to his reputation in print, certain elements in Garrick’s legacy were diminished—but for opposite effect, particularly the claims of the crowd to a popular share in his memory. Rather than promoting his natural style of acting or his appeal for England’s lower classes, the representation of Garrick in nineteenth-century England and the United States emphasized his memory as a genteel actor. His polished stage portrayals reflected his offstage morality, and his stable and loving home life showed his disdain for the baser “green room” lifestyle for which polite society reviled actors.

Even writers who celebrated his popular appeal in the immediate aftermath of his death suggested the ways in which later authors would set him apart. The following eulogy from an edition of the *Literary Fly* dedicated entirely to Garrick’s memory summarized the actor’s contributions to the English stage,

For you, ye sons and daughters of Amusement, natives of the same country which his genius polished and adorned—when next ye find yourselves within that mansion where his magic powers have given you such frequent pleasure—pause—repress your rising mirth, check the new-born smile. And you, ye children of Grief, who he so often cheated of your woes; who do not come to smile—all, all, look round, the mournful and the merry, join in the general sigh which breaks forth from the multitude as from one body, and ask yourselves—Where is Garrick?⁹³

This text painted Garrick as a national actor, particular to the British people—it emphasized that the actor and his audience were “natives of the same country” and that the survivors mourned him as “one body.” It reminded the readers of the gifts

⁹² “George Whitefield,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 9/21/1835.

⁹³ *Literary Fly* (January 30, 1779): 13.

the actor had bestowed upon them during his lifetime, and asked them to reflect for a moment on his absence. By asking, “Where is Garrick?” the author suggested that his absence left a gaping hole in theatrical culture but also kept open the possibility that it could be filled. Subsequent actors would reveal a variety of actors and critics in pursuit of this goal—the search for another Garrick. In the United States, theater critics understood Garrick the national actor as part of their heritage and as a model to which American actors could aspire.

This sought-after Garrick was not the genuine human Garrick, who concerned himself with audience receipts and battled with other actors and critics. This Garrick instead was a concept, a discursive vessel that represented a variety of characteristics critics and observers valued in theatrical culture. Newspaper accounts emphasized this intangible nature of the actor’s legacy with one writer’s musing that “All know Garrick but few know more than his name.” People, the phrase suggested, knew that Garrick had been an actor, but had lost the appreciation for his genius. A frequently reprinted anecdote suggested a reason for the obscurity of knowledge about the real man. As the story went, the actor once sat for a well-known painter, who tried for several hours to capture his likeness. As long as the artist kept his eyes on his subject, he felt his representation was true. But, if he looked away for even a moment, “he was surprised to find a new set of features very different from such as he had taken.”⁹⁴ Eventually the painter gave up in frustration. The story was likely not true. In any case, Garrick has been catalogued as one of the most painted men in all of English history, and perhaps the most frequently represented in the eighteenth century so it was hardly a representative

⁹⁴ Untitled, *Baltimore (MD) Commercial Gazette*, 11/16/1826.

experience for artists.⁹⁵ Instead the story represents his significance as England's transcendent star actor and gentleman. A single image or description could not capture his many roles—gentleman, Shakespearean scholar, devoted husband, paternalistic theater manager, philanthropist and actor. In the nineteenth century, the question of whether this legacy could be maintained by English actors or repeated by American ones took on great importance among stage critics.

Certain traits belonging to the eighteenth-century Garrick remained salient for his image in the nineteenth century. An especially popular example from early in the century emphasized both his wit and respectability. According to this tale, a clergyman once asked Garrick why congregants who were so seldom brought to tears during a sermon in a church often cried easily when part of the audience at a theater. He responded, "The reason...is obvious; we repeat a *fiction* as though it were a *truth*; you repeat a *truth* though it were a *fiction*."⁹⁶ Several stories have Garrick advising clergy on how to reach their audiences, emphasizing both his genius for oratory and his Christian morality, while also perhaps expressing a contemporary disdain for some kinds of ministry. Nineteenth-century newspapers also included examples whereby Garrick imparted wisdom, or stood as an example for moral behavior to other actors. In reprinting stories supposedly garnered from eighteenth-century sources, the journals gave the actor a sort of timeless relevance. Yet, unlike Whitefield and Franklin who were sold by editors and publishers as

⁹⁵ For a catalog of painted images of David Garrick, see *Catalogue of Engraved English Portraits in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum II* (London: British Museum, 1908-1925), 276-86. For a discussion of the significance of Garrick imagery in English art history, see Lance Bertelsen, "David Garrick and English Painting," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 11:3 (Spring, 1978): 308-24.

⁹⁶ Untitled, *American Advocate and Kennebec (ME) Advertiser*, 12/28/1816.

models for all people, this Garrick seems particularly genteel and unapproachable—his language and wit were sophisticated and entirely didactic.

Garrick became wrapped up in the stratification that characterized nineteenth-century culture. His association with Shakespearean acting and his aspirations to gentility made his memory part of the tension over the Bard's appropriate place in an emerging literary and theatrical canon divided between ideals of high, low and middle brow culture. Of course, as Lawrence Levine described in his work *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, this phenomenon was always more of an ideal than a reality. Highbrow, lowbrow and middlebrow venues and works of musical, theatrical and literary art were always more blended and diverse than portrayed in the rhetoric of criticism. But still, Garrick's image, especially as consecrated by highbrow Shakespearean theater, came to represent the division. A painting by late eighteenth-century artist George Carter, currently held by the Royal Shakespeare Gallery in Shakespeare's birthplace of Stratford, helped define the memory of Garrick as part of a national history. The image, titled *The Immortality of Garrick*, shows the actor's apotheosis by angels. A group of other well-known actors and dramatists appear before him in a crowd of mourners, but his gaze has already moved above and behind them, to where the Bard stands with the muses of Tragedy and Comedy, waiting to welcome him to the slopes of Parnassus. The painting's classical style suggested his place among the elite rather than the popular—categories that were themselves being articulated at the moment of Garrick's memorialization.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Geoffrey Ashton, "London and Stratford Theatrical Pictures," *The Burlington Magazine* (October 1981): 624-8.

Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Shakespeare transformed from a provincial to a national poet and playwright. Garrick played a key role in the expansion of his fame, as he assiduously promoted Shakespeare as the representative English poet among European theatrical figures, particularly in France and Italy, but by proxy also to Russians and Germans.⁹⁸ In creating an English national bard, Garrick simultaneously made himself the English national actor. Both Carter's painting and the *Literary Fly's* eulogy suggested that his memorialists had an interest in preserving that reputation. Critics and journalists followed their lead and at least into the nineteenth century continued to ask the question posed by the *Fly*, searching for Garrick in any new actor of promise, in theaters throughout Britain and the new United States. The moniker, of a new Garrick, or in the United States of an American Garrick, depended as much upon the performer's talent on stage as upon his genius for representation off stage, as a meritorious personal character.

Several American actors came close to possessing or possessed briefly the title of American Garrick. The first American star, Edwin Forrest, enjoyed frequent comparisons to Garrick early in his career. American critics adopted Garrick as a natural part of their heritage—the American stage was an English-speaking stage and they hoped that as the country had inherited and improved upon English political tradition, so too would it take over the best aspects of its theatrical life. In Baltimore in 1826, a critic writing as the “Ghost of Garrick” evaluated Forrest's performances and offered advice for removing artificiality from his characters.⁹⁹ Twenty years

⁹⁸ Ian McIntyre, *Garrick* (New York: Penguin Press, 1999), 3; Benedetti, *David Garrick*, 180-1.

⁹⁹ “A Glance at the Stage,” *Baltimore (MD) Patriot*, 11/1/1826.

later, in 1846, a southern paper celebrated Forrest as an exemplary man and actor, gushing that he had shown,

the truth that a great actor may be an irreproachable man; his private life...an example of those virtues which compel the respect even of that class disposed to look with disfavor on the profession of an actor—such an example as in the last century made Hannah More the personal friend of David Garrick.¹⁰⁰

Forrest embraced the association. He framed his first trip abroad as a search for his theatrical roots, boasting at a farewell dinner held in his honor in New York that he intended to improve his education by visiting the tomb of Garrick, “the pupil of Johnson, the companion of statesmen and wits.”¹⁰¹ He purchased Garrick memorabilia for his library and art collections, crafting a domestic image of himself as an inheritor of a celebrated theater history. He sought to model his career off the stage and in public on Garrick’s example, by founding a home for elderly actors that echoed the Dramatic Fund sponsored by Garrick at the end of his life.

Yet the scandals involving Forrest in the late 1840s and 1850s as well as his inconsistent reputation as a Shakespearean actor destroyed his reputation as the American Garrick. By the latter half of the century, actor Edwin Booth, who had inherited a rivalry with Forrest from his father, had become the American Garrick. Several critics considered that by the end of his career, Booth had even surpassed the English actor in his representation of Shakespeare’s characters. Material possessions with a theatrical history were always important among the collections of prominent actors, and Booth had one that carried with it important symbolism of his stage heritage. The people of Stratford-upon-Avon (later, Stratford) had supposedly given Garrick a box carved of wood during the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769. Local

¹⁰⁰ “Actors and Acting,” *Charleston (SC) Southern Patriot*, 11/7/1846.

¹⁰¹ “A Tribute to Forrest,” *Baltimore (MD) Patriot*, 8/2/1834.

lore held that Shakespeare had planted the mulberry tree from which the box was carved. The box contained within it the “freedoms” of the city.¹⁰² The title, along with one of Garrick’s most prized possessions, had finally transferred to an American.

Just as Garrick’s nineteenth-century memorialization emphasized his Englishness and the importance of having a national theater, the question of Franklin’s significance as an American icon became significant in his memorialization after death. Gordon Wood describes, in his *Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, how the image of Franklin as a self-made man and mechanic came to dominate his persona, and coexisted with the revolutionary mythology John Adams lamented. French writers had first celebrated Benjamin Franklin as the “Poor Richard moralist, the symbol of rustic democracy, and the simple backwoods philosopher” during his lifetime.¹⁰³ After Franklin’s death in 1790, American writers and publishers assumed this image as the nation’s own, girded by the expansive and often unauthorized re-publication of writings that fostered this vision. Societies of printers and mechanics took on the tenets of success Franklin forwarded in the *Autobiography*—now widely dispersed in many different print styles and editions—as ideally theirs, and ideally American. Rather than remembering the detached gentleman Franklin strove to be for much of his life, he became in print the champion of “middling Americans—tradesmen, artisans, farmers, proto-businessmen of all sorts.”¹⁰⁴ Through this recharacterization of Franklin and the similar reframing of Whitefield’s life in his nineteenth-century biographies, their similarities with Garrick

¹⁰² Isabelle Room Mann, “The Garrick Jubilee at Stratford-Upon-Avon,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 1:3 (July 1950): 129-134, 129.

¹⁰³ Gordon Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 175.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

that stood out in life, fell away in death. While Franklin and Whitefield became common men, Garrick only became more inaccessible to the crowds during the process of his memorialization.

Even as centuries have passed since the lives and deaths of these three men, the mechanics that brought Benjamin Franklin, David Garrick and George Whitefield fame and celebrity remain apparent. In the pages of newspapers, magazines and manuscript writings, the machinations of the men themselves and diverse writers, publishers, editors and printers to manipulate and control their public personae created a vision of how early British and Anglo-American print culture came to envision the role of a private but celebrated individual in public.

Even though these men are just three of the many public figures celebrated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, their exemplary careers emphasized an embodiment of particular character traits valued by their culture. In the nineteenth century, self-mastery, wit, humility and genius remained important measures of a man. Celebrated women, as well, began to question the restrictive boundaries of female fame that only a few of their eighteenth-century predecessors, such as actress Sarah Siddons, had managed to traverse successfully. For all celebrities, however, their failures proved as engaging as their triumphs and their market value as products on and off the page skyrocketed. In the nineteenth century, the processes of professionalization in the fields of journalism, publishing and entertainment transformed the face of celebrity from one concerned with the evaluation of character to one more interested in the sale of it in the production of a larger celebrity culture.

Chapter Two

The Template Reformed: Writing Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century

“The celebrated Ointment made by Dr. G.L. Roberts of Bridgport, England, called the POOR MAN’S FRIEND, [is] confidently recommended as an unfailing remedy for wounds of every description....

- “A Treasure for the Afflicted,” *National Gazette and Literary Register* 1/7/1830.¹

“The late M. Dumont, the celebrated jurist, and editor of the works of Mr. Bentham, was born at Geneva I 1759.”

- *National Gazette and Literary Register*, 1/7/1830.

American journalists in the first half of the nineteenth century found much to celebrate. From the work of a lawyer to a cure for scorbutic ulcers to a visit by a renowned actor, it seemed anything and everything saw the adjective “celebrated” set before it in the text of a newspaper. Readings by poets, sales of snuffboxes, demonstrations of eye drops and more were listed in an endless stream of events to be celebrated, so much so that the word’s meaning can easily be lost. Few advertising professionals and news page editors existed to note the overlapping terminology and declare it overused. Still, in applying the same word to a renowned individual as to a cure for itchy skin, advertisers and journalists were not being careless. Nor were they choosing to be ironic in conflating people and products. Word selection is not an empty choice. The men and women who wrote the text for newspaper advertisements and articles made decisions they hoped would sell more products and papers.

¹ Scorbutic ulcers referred to scurvy, piles to hemorrhoids, and chilblains to an irritation of the skin caused by mild frostbite and dampness.

In fact, these particular men and women were participating in an exceptional moment for the sale of things. In the first third of the nineteenth century, more people were buying and selling more things over greater distances than ever before. Those with something to sell were constantly seeking better and more efficient ways to do it.² That so many kinds of products were marked with a single word—“celebrated”—is significant. Advertisers for medicines wanted consumers to believe their products were reliable, trustworthy and tested. Suggesting their concoctions were widely known seemed to fit that need.

Calling a person celebrated meant something similar—it suggested the figure was well known and recognizable and thus previously vetted by print journalism. Yet during this period of celebrated snuff tobacco, skin ointments, and deceased lawyers, the adjective morphed into a noun in some situations. Famous people became just celebrities. After some time it would seem strange, suspicious even, to call something like a skin cream or a tobacco brand celebrated. Other institutions and adjectival phrases emerged for evaluating medicines and cosmetics. Professional organizations of doctors and pharmacists formed, and this particular language of popularity no longer appeared as often in medical advertisements. Celebrities, on the other hand, only appeared more prominently in the pages of popular journalism. They became a staple of the field. This change in terminology reflected journalism’s increasing professionalism and the standardization of the newspaper consumer’s expectations. It also marked a transition in the development of celebrity culture and the nature of commodified renown. Even more than they had been in the eighteenth century, celebrities became a part of the news genre and a

² Scott C. Martin, “Introduction; Toward a Cultural History of the Market Revolution,” in *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution in America, 1789-1860*, Martin, ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 1-12.

subgenre of the news.

Discussions of the characters of public men and increasingly, women, were part of a growing concern for establishing the socially responsible, aesthetically consistent and contextually reliable press. By exposing and evaluating the personalities of famous people, newspapers expanded their social capital and suggested it was possible for any individual to know another one, and to evaluate the renowned from a distance, via the kind of shared information only a newspaper could provide. Indeed in the context of getting to know a famous person, where the implications of their role often included exchanging money, ideas or votes, readers had the right and responsibility to evaluate them. As the most widely and commonly circulated print source, newspapers were the best source for doing so.

The nineteenth-century celebrity embodied a variety of characters and characteristics. The historical record provided several contexts for this new creation in its American iteration.³ Most celebrities were performers of some kind—actors, singers, lecturers, musicians and dancers. Others were politicians and writers, or people who otherwise were unremarkable but encountered situations or conditions that brought them public attention. Public notice created celebrity, and was the single trait all celebrities shared. Everyone of course lived a portion of their lives in the elusive public, but, in the nineteenth century, very few found a public interested in reading about them. Certain themes, like talent, genius, and physical attractiveness stood out on the page, even as the exact nature of the relationship between the reading public and the men and women who read about them remained elusive. As

³ This shift in a word's meaning—the application of celebrity to an individual—happened at a similar time in at least the French language as well. See Lenard R. Berlanstein, "Historicizing and Gendering Celebrity Culture: Famous Women in Nineteenth-Century France," *Journal of Women's History* 16.4 (Winter 2004): 65-92.

a physical artifact, the particular form of the newspaper helps to tell the story. We can glean from its structure how and in what context readers encountered celebrities in print. We can see celebrities as some of the many characters in the multiple stories newspapers told about American life. These tales—loosely connected across time and space—narrated, ordered and made familiar the expanding consumer marketplace and contributed to the production of celebrity culture in the nineteenth century.

Reading Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century: A Look at Form and Function

Celebrity culture in the nineteenth century essentially consisted of a market in human qualities and personalities sold off the pages of print culture, with an eventual secondary market developing in objects, images and tourism. The earliest products, though, were printed and primarily intangible—information and stories about celebrities for consumers to read and discuss. In some cases, if a story particularly compelled them, they might buy a product or attend an event related to it. Those interested in the discourse of human qualities celebrated by an eighteenth-century culture of letters found the most accessible and common source for indulgence in the expanding marketplace for print. The slowly growing market in magazines and the rapidly increasing publication of books specialized in the sale of individual stories. Yet of all these sources, newspapers were by far the most prolific mechanics of celebrity production and the fashioning of celebrity culture.

Newspapers were, in the first place, simply more available than magazines. An estimated 650 weekly and sixty-five daily newspapers circulated in the United States in 1830—producing a total circulation of at least 57,000 newspapers per year for a population of around thirteen million people. By 1840, the number of

newspapers had increased staggeringly, whether measured in total numbers or per capita distribution. Daily circulation alone increased to around 300,000 for approximately seventeen million people.⁴ By contrast, Frank Mott estimated in his history of American magazines that there were fewer than one hundred periodicals “other than newspapers” in circulation in 1825 and only 600 in 1850.⁵ More significantly, news pages treated celebrities differently than did magazines. Magazines dealt more with established celebrities, including long biographical pieces and reviews; while newspapers reported the actions, travels and the everyday or weekly information that worked to make celebrities publicly known. Newspapers, in a sense then, created celebrities while magazines simply followed them and supplemented their existing fame.⁶

Newspapers have long been recognized for their important role in the history of politics, literacy, civility and civic culture. For many historians, newspapers and their stories are emblematic of a teleological narrative of increasing democracy and accessibility in American politics and culture through print culture, but also of the tensions inherent within it. Even as print became more accessible to more eyes and

⁴ Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978), 13-15.

⁵ Frank Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1930), 341-342.

⁶ This comparison in content, built mostly out of my own extensive observations reading as much periodical and newspaper material over my period of interest as I could, does not discount the significance of magazines in general, of course. *Godey's Lady's Book* undeniably served as a major contributor to print culture in the period with a circulation growing from 25,000 to 70,000 between 1840 and 1851, and then to 150,000 on the eve of the Civil War. Magazines like *Godey's* and its competitors were clearly important in the promotion of literature and poetry by American writers, and in the circulation of literacy and other facets of American culture across the United States. They semi-regularly included biographical pieces on established celebrities, especially women celebrities, like Fanny Kemble and Jenny Lind in the 1840s and 1850s. For more on *Godey's* and antebellum magazines, see Mary M. Cronin, “*Godey's Lady's Book*,” in Kathleen L. Endres and Therese L. Lueck, eds., *Women's Periodicals in the United States: Consumer Magazines* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 113-117; Kenneth Price and Susan Belasco Smith, eds., *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1995).

ears around the country, it did not bring an immediate increase in political rights and social power for disenfranchised groups.⁷ It did, however, offer many opportunities for expanding influence indirectly, as many of the underrepresented would learn. The former or runaway slave, the convict, the recovering drunkard and the beggar were only three personality types who found some ways to challenge established cultural authorities through telling their stories of woe.⁸ Sara Willis Parton used writing to challenge social and legal restrictions on women's independence, publishing her fictionalized autobiography *Ruth Hall* under the pseudonym Fanny Fern. In *Ruth Hall*, the widowed protagonist overcame the poverty and neglect imposed on her by uncaring and selfish family members to find success in newspaper and magazine writing.⁹ These stories of literacy and the publishing marketplace, however, took a broad array of printed products as their focus rather than looking in particular at the role of the newspaper.

Historians of journalism, coming out of the fields of journalism or communications, focus more closely on newspapers, and their particular interpretive value. Especially for scholars more engaged with recent trends in cultural and intellectual history, the shifting structure of the industry as well the formatting templates of the news pages and the relationship of writers to readers reflected the shifting meaning and significance of the news and newspapers in American life.¹⁰

⁷ Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic*; David Hall, "The Politics of Reading and Writing in Eighteenth-Century America," *Cultures of Print*, 151-168; David Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters*; Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

⁸ Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Thomas Augst, "Temperance, Mass Culture and the Romance of Experience," *American Literary History* 19:2 (2007): 297-323.

⁹ "Fanny Fern" (Sara Willis Parton), *Ruth Hall*, (Boston, 1854); Mary Kelley, "The Fanny Fern," in *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (1984; reprinted Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3-27.

¹⁰ David P. Nord, *Communities of Journalism*; Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*; Kevin

Celebrities, as a consistent source of news, advertising, and interest for nineteenth century readers, influenced and were influenced by the structural and linguistic form newspapers took on in the period. Isolating the place and use of celebrity on the page reveals much about the discourse and its role in print and popular culture in the period.

Celebrity news defied the divisions and categorizations that abound in discussions of nineteenth-century newspaper form and content. It can be found in titles associated with political, commercial, literary, theatrical and reform presses. Yet particular types of newspapers did contribute significantly to the tone of celebrity culture. Through their reliance on sensational and human-interest topics, the penny press and story paper helped to make explorations of character and personality an ever-more important part of news telling. The first penny press newspaper, Benjamin Day's *The New York Sun* was published in New York City in 1833, and overlapped with a peak period of growth for American celebrity culture, the 1830s through the 1850s. Its major contribution was to run stories more aligned with its readership's leisure activities than their professional or political ones. It included far fewer of the traditional commercial and political tracts typical of older dailies and weeklies.¹¹ The stories typical of the penny press, later described as "human-interest" stories, were designed for consumption, or entertainment, as much as for information and usefulness.¹² Penny-press editor James Gordon Bennett, of the *New York Herald*,

Barnhurst and John Nerone, *The Form of News*. In June 2008, I was privileged to attend the American Antiquarian Society Summer Seminar on the History of the Book, with the topic, "The Newspaper and the Culture of Print in the Early American Republic." I am grateful to the seminar leaders Professors David P. Nord and John Nerone as well as the other participants for helping me to develop many of the ideas in this chapter and the dissertation as a whole.

¹¹ Thomas C. Leonard, *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

¹² Hans Bergmann, *God in the Street: New York Writing from the Penny Press to Melville* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Susan Thompson, *Penny Press: The Origins of*

adopted interviews and first-hand observations as his primary sources of news gathering, and used these tactics with particular success in his coverage of prostitute Helen Jewett's murder in 1836.¹³ Out of this larger human-interest category, celebrity stories were only one type among many other smaller types. Indeed, unless a major event like the Astor Place riots or a visit from songstress Jenny Lind occurred to break up the normal pattern, stories about celebrated figures were given no special priority in the pages. Readers were as likely to find humorous stories about courtship, disturbing tales of suicide, or particularly strange reports about crime in its pages. The penny press, in its textual embodiment of cheap leisure and easy consumerism, provided an ideal conduit for celebrity as it moved toward the sensational tabloid culture of today.

The penny press, however, was just one of the period's contributions to national news networks. Innovations in papermaking made paper cheaper and more available to printers farther west and in rural localities. Distribution strategies like the expansion of postal routes and the founding of the Associated Press in 1846 all made the circulation of news easier and more efficient.¹⁴ The sheer number of all types of newspapers, as well as the circulation potential for individual papers, increased tremendously nationwide. The penny press, however, while it may have dawned in big cities on the East Coast in the 1830s, took much longer to rise in places western and smaller. More expensive subscription papers dominated the markets in these places where cheaper papers with circulation in the thousands

the Modern New Media, 1833-1861 (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2004); Karen Roggencamp, *Narrating the News: New Journalism and Literary Genre in Late Nineteenth-Century American Newspapers and Fiction* (Kent State University Press, 2005).

¹³ Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett* (New York City: Vintage Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Schudson, *Discovering the News*.

could not survive until much later, if ever.¹⁵ But smaller circulation newspapers and smaller cities and towns were not exempt from the revolution in news reporting that accompanied the penny press.

To understand the newspaper as a whole, in its form and function, the nameplate, also sometimes called the masthead, is often the first place to look. Particularly for the early period of American history, a newspaper's title, price and place of publication can reveal much about its audience and purpose. Michael Schudson has noticed that penny press papers tended to bear titles suggesting agency and intellectual independence, like *Critic*, *Herald*, or *Sun*, while more traditional papers bore names related to their function or partisan interest, like the *Commercial*, the *Mercantile*, or the *Whig*. Although this observation may be true for eastern examples, it proves less helpful outside of coastal metropolitan areas. In these contexts, it helps to understand the place of publication. Newspaper prices and titles corresponded much less predictably to content when one travels west and inland to explore the rise of newspaper and celebrity culture nationwide. *Whigs*, *Republicans*, and *Advertisers* remained well into the 1840s and 1850s, even as their political content and commercial roots became muted and made them indistinct from other titles.

In Nashville, Tennessee, the *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, published until 1834 as the *National Banner and Daily Advertiser*, blended the commercial and the political with human interest stories and tales about personalities, both celebrated and simply curious. The *National Banner* was an exceptionally

¹⁵ Andie Tucher, "An Extensive Republic: Newspapers and Periodicals," in *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation*, ed. by Robert Gross and Mary Kelley (forthcoming, University of North Carolina Press, 2009) and Thorin Richard Tritter, "Paper Profits in Public Service: Money Making in the New York City Newspaper Industry, 1830-1930," (Ph.D. diss, Columbia University, 2000), 60-70.

successful paper; by 1834 it was publishing its twenty-second volume. Although ostensibly aligned with a political party, the entire front page often featured consumer advertisements. The second page of a typical issue drawn from September 17th, 1834 included a circular from the Post Office about the abuse of franking privileges, a chapter of a serial extracted from *Waldie's Journal of Belles Lettres*, tips on preserving potatoes and turnips, and a reprint of an article from the *New York Courier & Enquirer* that discussed a 4th of July toast given in the *Banner's* own hometown of Nashville. Despite its reliance on advertising, the *National Banner* was not an inexpensive paper. A year's subscription to the daily press cost nearly eight dollars, payable in advance. An annual subscription to the tri-weekly edition cost five dollars, if paid in advance, six dollars if paid at the year's end. Although the eight dollar price made each issue only a few pennies a piece, the condition that the cheaper cost only applied if "paid in advance" annually, put the paper well out of the reach of most common laborers. Clearly, unlike with the penny press, each edition of the *National Banner* was not seen as an independent commodity that a person could buy on a whim if they had money in hand. Yet by 1834 its content (except around election season) was indistinguishable from many cheaper format papers. Stories about Fanny Kemble and Edwin Forrest appeared many times in the 1830s, along with standard human-interest fare.

The *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, by its title, promised to collect and disseminate the national news and political information its Nashville readers needed most. The pricing scheme could have only appealed to the city's prosperous, or at least most comfortably middle-class, citizens. Yet its pages showed that the editors were clearly aware of news coming out of the less expensive and more sensational news sources from the northern and eastern United States. It reprinted several

stories from the *New York Herald*, including one on the death of Matthias the Prophet, and the editors of the *Banner* sometimes commented on the character of the *Herald's* editor, once calling Bennett, “good natured, talented and facetious.”¹⁶ We can guess that poor, lower middling and working class Americans were not buying more expensive papers. Yet we cannot know exactly who consumed the cheaper ones—either through purchase or just by reading the stories available to be gleaned from them. Several scholars have shown that while the nineteenth century brought increasing refinement to middling and middle-class American homes, those same families engaged the emerging popular literature at its most and least savory.¹⁷ We likewise cannot assume that only those readers and publishers conveniently located in large cities, with large subscription bases nearby, desired the type of news popularized by the penny press. Newspapers circulated widely over the government subsidized postal networks in the early republic. Many papers, including the cheapest ones, were condensed and mailed in weekly versions to outlying states and communities.¹⁸ Many of those papers made it out of the post offices and into local taverns or homes, but most often newspaper writers and editors with an office close to or even attached to the post office incorporated them into the news they would compile for their local editions.

¹⁶ “Melancholy Fate of Matthias the Prophet,” *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, 9/18/1835; Untitled, *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, 11/4/1835.

¹⁷ Andie Tucher, *Froth & Scum: Truth, Beauty, Goodness and the Ax Murderer in America's First Mass Medium* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of California Press, 2000); Terence Whalen, *Edgar Allen Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1998).

¹⁸ David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Paul Starr, *Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

Newspapers with a mostly local circulation did not restrict themselves to local stories, or even to particular types of news, in the nineteenth century. Newspapers in smaller communities, then as now, in fact depended heavily upon larger ones for their texts, and worked as part of a national network of news exchange. Organizations like the Associated Press professionalized existing networks, through expanding and improving on them. This national network produced what we often call the mainstream news. While we usually define mainstream topically, thematically or politically, I want to emphasize geographical relationships and contingencies. “Stream” refers to how news circulated from one place to another through physical travel (even telegraphed news traveled across a wire); while, “main” suggests there were multiple routes, some more regular and regulated than others. I look in this work at any newspaper that may have traveled along, or taken its news from papers along, this mainstream.¹⁹ Papers that dealt in scandal and human interest almost exclusively—the penny press and story papers of the mid and late nineteenth century—we often put in a category of their own. An exploration, however, of the news that makes it from the coast to the inland and back again, revealed that in the nineteenth century readers and newspaper editors often and easily pulled stories out of their categorical contexts. When we look at what choices editors made when constructing their papers, we find that they pulled from several sources and types, both from inside and outside the major cultural centers, to produce a compilation of news. I am most interested in what stories made the trip along the mainstream, and where and how they were presented to a nationally dispersed audience.

¹⁹ A conversation with Professor David P. Nord helped me clarify my definition.

As the article about the 4th of July toast indicated, news from western inland towns like Nashville made it back to cultural centers like New York, and vice versa. The editors in Nashville were entertained by the fact that the New York paper had commented on a happening in their town, and commented on it in turn. Nineteenth century newspapers are full of unexpected examples of cultural and textual exchange such as that one. When it came to celebrated figures, the stories were equally occasional and thematically varied. Still, there were trends apparent. The pages consistently reported on when and where actors like Fanny Kemble and Edwin Forrest were appearing. In the 1840s, Frederick Douglass received much attention as well for his travels and publications. If a celebrity were unmarried, like Jenny Lind in the late 1840s and early 1850s, newspapers around the country—well before she was scheduled to appear in the U.S.—pondered her relationships with men, and announced several engagements later proven false. If a figure had an uncommon or questionable habit—such as Fanny Kemble did for horseback riding and walking out without male escort—that kind of news would certainly make the rounds of news networks. A rivalry between two celebrated figures, like American actor Edwin Forrest and the English star William Macready brought the occasional comment, or at least increased attention to their overlapping travels or performances. Newspaper exchange made these seemingly trivial details about the lives of a few men and women part of an ongoing cultural and informational network that made at least some parts of American popular culture uniform and recognizable wherever one traveled.

Dropping paper prices, flourishing exchange, and the growing prominence of human-interest style stories all affected how many papers were sold and how they were read. The structure of stories on the pages themselves, however, was equally

important for understanding the newspaper in the nineteenth century and the place of the celebrity in its pages. Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone have described newspapers published before the second half of the nineteenth century as “bookish” and “vernacular” with the news “unsegmented,” meaning that the distinction between stories, and also at times between the news, advertisements and notices was often unclear.²⁰ The *Rhode Island American, Statesman and Providence Gazette* from November 24th, 1829 (Figure 2.1 to Figure 2.4) exemplified a typical early to mid-nineteenth century newspaper. The printer used the space to the fullest—very little white space remained on the page, with the six columns divided only by a thin black line. Similar thin black lines divided the stories—showing some attempt to distinguish parts of the paper for the reader. These innovations differentiated the *Gazette* and other nineteenth-century newspapers from their eighteenth-century predecessors. These early distinctions on the page are matched by a differentiation between pages. The third page boasted obvious paid advertisements, demarcated with varied fonts and type sizes, as well as simple illustrations—buildings to indicate structures for sale and ships to advertise available space on passenger or cargo vessels.

²⁰ Barnhurst and Nerone, *Form of News*, 13.

MEMORIAL OF A MEMORIAL

The following memorial of the Irish people...

PROVIDENCE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1829.

REMARKS ON THE REPORT OF THE

Committee of the House of Commons...

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY

At the meeting of the House of Commons...

THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY

At the meeting of the House of Commons...

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Figure 2.4 Rhode Island American, 11/24/1829, p. 4

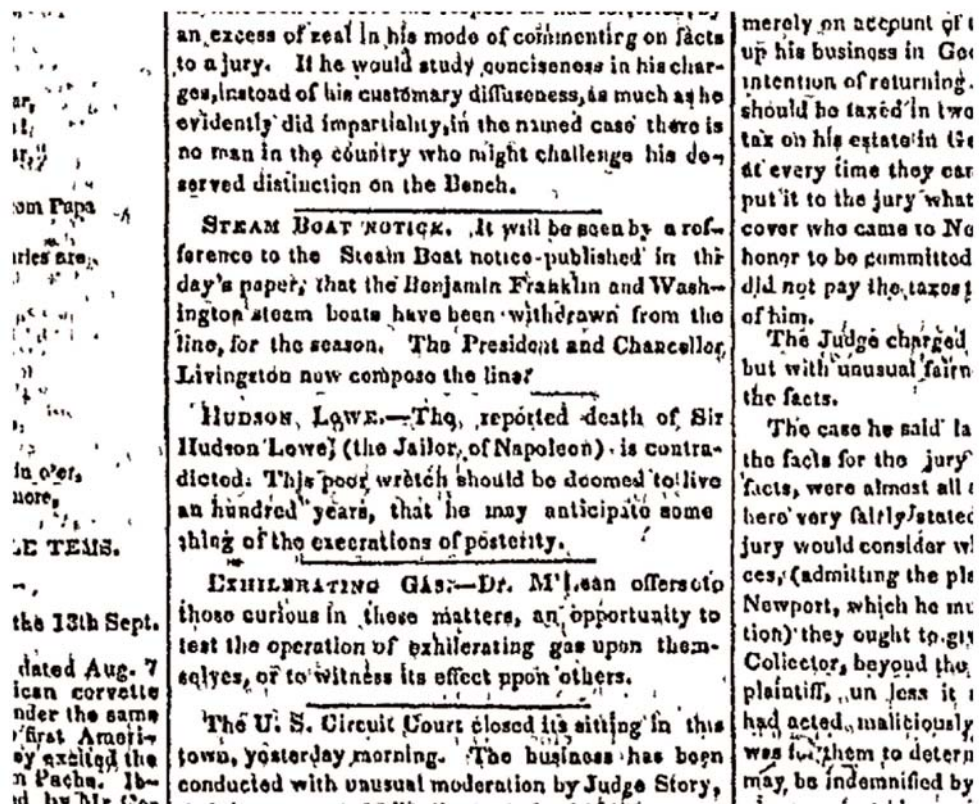


Figure 2.5 "Steam Boat Notice," *Rhode Island American*, 11/24/1829, p. 1

On the second column of the front page, however, the second item demarcated with a thin black line, is not a story, but rather a correction to a notice contained elsewhere. Titled, "Steam Boat Notice," (Figure 2.5) it came tucked between a longer story about a case before the Circuit Court, and an equally brief one about the rumored death of Hudson Lowe, the "Jailor [sic] of Napoleon." In an area of a newspaper modern readers would expect to find an important topical story, the editors engaged with an advertisement, asking readers to pay especial attention to a change in a steam boat line (In a nod to another aspect of early celebrity culture, the ships pulled from the line included the *Benjamin Franklin* and the *Washington*).

This still bookish vernacular paper certainly “underplayed categorization and hierarchy,” and reflected the pre-professional status of journalism. Newspapers in this period employed no independent page designers and editors in charge of the larger illustrative and aesthetic vision of the paper, but rather printers fit things where they could and worked from templates commanded by the limits of stereotypes and plates.²¹ Nerone and Barnhurst suggested that the pages of an early newspaper gave the impression of an “unmapped and perhaps unmappable” world. Spend enough time reading and watching these pages, however, and ways of mapping the pages and assimilating the news within them become clear.

In the same issue of the *Rhode Island American*, three columns over from the correction notice, there sat a piece about the death of Sam Patch, the famous stunt man and jumper of waterfalls. Just a year earlier from 6,000 to 10,000 people had reportedly watched Patch leap from Passaic Falls in Paterson, New Jersey (a story that itself warranted only a short article on the inner pages of a few newspapers).²² Yet the death of the man Paul E. Johnson has identified as one of the nineteenth-century’s most celebrated personalities garnered just a short article tucked between two political pieces.²³ This fact should not minimize our understanding of Patch’s significance to the era. His death made news in papers as far afield from places he had performed as Macon, Georgia, Washington, D.C., Raleigh, North Carolina, and Columbus, Georgia.²⁴ The short attention given to his death reflected rather the peculiarities of nineteenth-century news reporting. The format, with few or no

²¹ Barnhurst and Nerone, *Form of News*, 13-14.

²² “Domestic,” *New Hampshire Sentinel* (9/15/1828); Untitled, *Providence Patriot*, 8/9/1828.

²³ Paul E. Johnson, *Sam Patch: The Famous Jumper* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2004).

²⁴ “Death of Sam Patch,” *Portsmouth (NH) Journal of Literature and Politics*, 11/21/1829; “Sam Patch’s Death,” *Daily National Journal* (Washington, DC), 11/21/1829, “Sam Patch,” *Raleigh (NC) Star and North Carolina State Gazette*, 11/26/1829; “OcMulgee River,” *Macon Weekly Telegraph*, 12/5/1829.

headlines and only the barest distinctions between articles and sections, suggested that readers were meant to read the newspaper in whole, like a book. Not as a book, however. Readers likely scanned rather than read the whole, finishing much of the newspaper in a few sittings. Over time, in reading multiple issues, a reader must have become familiar with its particular editorial and printing idiosyncrasies. Stories about celebrities typically appeared in consistent places in particular newspapers. Yet as the seemingly misplaced notice about steamships indicated, skipping over sections of the newspaper could mean missing significant pieces of news. Someone interested in news about celebrated figures, then, might have quickly found the story about Sam Patch; while even the reader more interested in political and commercial news could not have helped seeing it since the placement was a pattern, not a rule. The story's indistinct assimilation reflected celebrity's importance, rather than its insignificance, to the page—its function as part of the developing narrative of news.

Newspaper editors and printers made choices about what stories to include, and when and where to include them. If we think of nineteenth-century newspapers as bookish in the consistent flow of text from one column and one page to the next and, and in their eventual development of a complex narrative about a particular time and place, I think of the people described within them as characters in that narrative. These characters gave the pages personality and diversionary interest between the important, but still sometimes dry commercial and political details. Among this ever-growing group of personalities, celebrities were the ones who repeated between many issues, alongside politicians and advertisers. Once established, they were recognizable and streamed in and out of the narrative over an extended period. Thus, although to the modern eye, their position in the text makes them seem

insignificant, they were in fact an important part of the newspaper structure as well as the larger cultural narrative created through newspapers.

A survey of news articles about actress Fanny Kemble from her debut in London until her death over sixty years later illustrated the role celebrities played in the structure of early to mid-nineteenth century newspapers, and how their role changed over time. I have chosen three representative newspapers to compare common formats from different periods. Each paper often carried news about celebrated figures in addition to political, commercial and other cultural information.

The first example (Figure 2.6) from November 1829 came from the same issue of the *Rhode Island American Statesman* that announced Sam Patch's death, and was published out of Providence.²⁵ The *American Statesman* was a successful and representative paper for a small but significant city, its extant issues ranging from 1809 to 1833. Like many other papers in the period, it had taken several steps towards professional journalism in the 1820s. It changed names, merged with other papers, and went through several owners and printers over the years. The 1829 title reflected its roots in at least three separate newspapers the *Rhode Island American*, the *Rhode Island Statesman* and the *Providence Gazette*, but the *American* had been the dominant party in the mergers. Earlier in the decade, the *American* had dropped "*General Advertiser*" from its title, going with professionalizing trends in newspaper publication and taking its place as a newspaper of record for a state capital—although its first page often still contained mostly advertisements. The collapsing of several papers into one, as well as the movement towards a more general title from an overtly commercial title or one specifically affiliated with a

²⁵ This is the same newspaper from Figures 2.1 through 2.4, but with a section of the page blown-up for easier reading.

political party, were typical changes as journalism became associated with the professions.

Transparency in production as well as the establishment of a newspaper as an independent commercial entity also typified the field in the mid-nineteenth century. The *American Statesman* had made several such moves over the course of the 1820s. In March 1827, the paper published notices of the “dissolution of a partnership” with a printing office, stating that it would now be printed in-house, under a publisher F.Y. Carlile. An in-house printed newspaper clearly aimed to be a more independent and permanent institution. B. F. Hallett appeared as the first named editor in the *American Statesman*’s colophon in April 1827, and he remained in the 1829 issue I will examine here.²⁶ This addition of Hallett’s name reflected the newspaper’s increasing transparency. Whether the editor was new to the paper or not when his name first appeared in April 1827, he and the publisher were now making it clear to their readers who, and how many, professional men were involved in the newspaper’s construction.²⁷ By 1829, the paper had two publishers—Carlile, and J. C. Parmenter, in addition to its editor. The changing staff, as well, while the paper published consistently, reflected another subtle shift towards professional journalism—the paper existed as its own entity, rather than dying with one particular party’s death, financial collapse, or decision to move on to something else.

²⁶ Colophon, *Rhode Island American and Providence Gazette*, 4/3/1827.

²⁷ This information comes from my examination of the newspaper’s issues published between January 1824 and January 1828. The most complete run of *The Rhode Island American*, in its multiple iterations, is housed at the AAS.

PROVIDENCE.
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1829.

THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS will commence its November Term in this town, to-morrow, and probably continue in session, several weeks. It is said to be an ill wind that blows no where, and truly the recent whirlwinds that have swept so many into profligacy, have blown a goodly number of business into the hands of the lawyers. Whether the fees will be considerable, amid the wreck, is another question. It is a melancholy fact, however, that the records of the Court in this County this year within the memory of man, had so many cases entered on its docket, at one Term, as at the present. The whole number of Declarations filed was 1207; with 23 Bank processes, and five appeals, amounting in all to 1245. Of this number we understand that about 500 have been answered, and will be contested, so that added to the cases continued from last Term, there will be a long list for the Court to get over. About 600 of the cases are those in which no defence is made, and many of this description have been settled.

The Court should come prepared with a good stock of patience, and we trust they will not, as on some former occasions, attempt to imitate Judge Story's manner of disposing of business when he happens to be on one of his velocity Circuits.

Of the declarations filed at the present Term, 214 were by twelve of our Attorneys; six of that number having filed 610. The usual number of actions at the November Term in this County, is about 800. The great increase at the present Term has been caused by the numerous accounts in the hands of Assignees.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.—We learn from the Journal that the Fire Wardens of the town have appointed a Committee to procure another Hydrant, to be located North of Market Square. Engine No. 2 is to be removed further North.

We also understand that the subject of preserving the organization of the fire companies, is under consideration. The mischievous attacks upon the Militia system, by some overwise members of our General Assembly, and the expectation that fines will be abolished, have, we are told, already had the effect to diminish several fire companies in this town. Should the Legislature go the length proposed, we shall have to resort to voluntary associations for protection against fire.

The privileges of a freeman in this town, are now merely nominal. His expenses are about equal to the present militia fines and his duties much more arduous than training once a year. The jury exemption is of very little consequence, from the circumstance that out of about 300 freemen in this town there are not over seventy-five who are freeholders and consequently liable to be drawn as jurors. The militia fine is all that operates upon those who require such considerations, to keep the fire department up. We doubt not, however, that a large portion of our young men would take a pride in belonging to the Fire department independent of any pecuniary exemption, if they could feel that they were recognized as citizens; and that some honor was attached to the office; for instance, give the right of voting, at least in the choice of Firewardens. Something must be done by the Legislature, or we must have an appeal to the public spirit of our citizens, and every class in the community must unite in voluntary associations to keep up the efficient part of the Fire department. If there are no privileges to be attached to a freeman, let us think the office honorable by the standing of those who take a pride in performing its duties. It must be a strange falling off in the spirit of the citizens of this town, if there cannot be found men enough to man our engines, though public good be the only incentive.

RETTING.—A correspondent in Smithfield expresses his agreeable astonishment at having attended a

POPULARITY OF THE GOVERNOR.—The Editor of the Patriot, in the short space of a fortnight, has discovered that the present Governor of Rhode Island is popular in this State. As he has not, to our knowledge, visited the country since he came among us, he must have drawn this inference from the supposed popularity of that individual in this town. It would be better informed on this subject if he would apply to the Commissioners of side walks, or consult the returns of votes given not long ago, when even Mr Wheeler Martin, though brought forward in last, obtained more votes than did his Excellency James Fenner.

If the Patriot will point out a single act in the official life of Governor Fenner, which had the advantage of improvement, learning, good government or liberal and enlightened views for its object, we will agree to applaud it to the very echo. If there is one man in this State, more than another, who has sought to establish those hereditary distinctions, and exclusive privileges which are at variance with Republican feelings, that individual is our present Chief Magistrate.

When the Editor of the Patriot becomes better acquainted with the extent of the Governor's popularity here, we will then refer him to the Country. We will with great pleasure give of proceeds for him, letters of introduction to forty-five members of the General Assembly, a large majority of them substantial Farmers, who have raised "Democratic Turnips" ever since the days of Tom Jefferson. These gentlemen, from the country parts of the State, met together at South Kingstown, last month, for the very purpose of considering the popularity of the present Chief Magistrate of the State, and there was but one opinion among them, which was that Mr Fenner was not sufficiently popular to be a reliable candidate next spring for the office he now holds as an inheritance, a part of his father's estate, rather than a reward for public services, or personal merit.

MISS FANNY KEMBLE, a young and lovely daughter of Charles Kemble, bids fair to restore to this stage the honours her celebrated relative Mrs. Siddons, once conferred upon it. She had performed but six nights, and in that short period had produced a decided sensation. A London paper has the following paragraph.

Covent Garden Theatre.—A house crowded in all parts, presenting a most brilliant display of rank and fashion, attended the repetition of *Romeo and Juliet* last night. We regret to see that Miss Kemble suffers dreadfully from a cough; nothing, we should think, but an anxious desire to avoid so great a public disappointment, has prevented her retiring for a few nights. During the performance of the last scene on Friday, an accidental interruption of its usual business presented an emergency out of which the genius of this extraordinary young lady, created one of the most effective points ever witnessed upon the stage. Mr. Abbott had dropped the dagger at a distant part of the stage, and where she has to threaten the Friar with using it, she rushed from the body and brought back the weapon with a terrible energy of manner, which spoke but despair, more eloquently than all the language of the scene. The natural beauty of this action was felt by every one; but those who say, in consummate art in a girl thus reading the stage for the sixth time, were equally filled with admiration and astonishment. That which first sprang from accident was last night repeated by design; and so powerful is its effect in heightening the passion of the scene, that we should think it will henceforward remain an integral part of its action.

The attraction of Miss Kemble in *Juliet*, we believe, is without a parallel in theatrical history. The first three evenings, including the extraordinary excitement of her first appearance, were prodigious, and yet the last three have surpassed them by nearly one hundred pounds. This is the best prognostic that can be pronounced on this highly talented young lady. Already have the public complimented her by presents of great value and in various forms. A venerable Nobleman, and one of the large contributors to the subscription in aid of the Covent Garden Performance, has enclosed to her, in a very complimentary letter, a draft for one hundred guineas.

LATEST FROM EUROPE.
The Boston papers of Saturday contain dates from Liverpool papers, by the Boston, to the 23d ult. and

Figure 2.6 Fanny Kemble's Debut, Rhode Island American, 11/24/1829

Hallett's, Parmenter's and Carlile's paper, *The Rhode Island American Statesman*, included a broad swath of news in its task of keeping its readers in tune with the wider world. In doing so, it often reported on the theatrical events in England or elsewhere in the United States. The November 24th, 1829 issue included one of the earliest extant articles about Fanny Kemble in the United States (Figure 2.6). The story, on the fourth page and tucked between pieces titled the "Popularity of the Governor" and the "Latest from Europe," announced that "MISS FANNY KEMBLE, a young and lovely daughter of Charles Kemble, bid fair to restore to the stage the honours her celebrated relative Mrs. Siddons once conferred upon it."²⁸ Fanny Kemble (1809-1893) came to the public's attention with an extraordinary background, by any estimation. Her grandfather, Roger Kemble (1721-1802), had been a strolling player and manager of David Garrick's generation. Although he had never reached great fame and celebrity, he was well known. Of his twelve children, at least five became actors of some renown while one of his daughters was a novelist, known as Ann Hatton, or Ann of Swansea. Of the five children who followed in their father's profession, three, Charles (Fanny's father), John Philip, and Sarah (who performed under her married name Siddons), were among the most famous English performers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yet the newspaper explained nothing about her family history to its readers, though the details were so important to understanding why her debut was significant and interesting, with its readers. The editor must not have felt it was necessary. The

²⁸ "MISS FANNY KEMBLE," *Rhode Island American Statesman*, 11/24/1829. Kemble quickly became a favorite topic of news from England. Within weeks, several newspapers included the *Rhode Island American*, included follow-up stories describing how Kemble's acting company had honored her with a gold bracelet, or how she was being feted by elite Londoners, for her many accomplishments. For typical examples in representative papers see the *Providence (RI) Patriot*, 12/2/1829, *Baltimore Patriot*, 11/26/1829 and *The New-York (NY) Morning Herald*, 3/6/1830.

structure and the text of the article announcing Fanny Kemble's stage debut reflected how entrenched her family's celebrity already was in the public's imagination, and the ease with which she took her place.

Although the printer and editor of the *Rhode Island American* tucked the story of Fanny's first public performance away between two longer ones, the paper included some distinction between them to guide the reader, including the use of small capital letters for Fanny Kemble's name. Each story on the page began similarly, with some having a piece of text separated from the first sentence by a dash, but still in small capitals. The one article with a headline "The Latest from Europe," introduced a selection of news pieces relating to Europe. It seems that, like with the other story on the page in which small capital letters highlighted the first words of the article ("The Court of Common Pleas"), it just worked out conveniently that "Miss Fanny Kemble," was both the opening phrase and a piece of information that would catch an interested reader's eye. Introducing the article that way was a space-saving, but significant, decision. The editor Hallett could have chosen to include a new and separate phrase—perhaps an illustrative "Another Kemble trods the stage" or a brief "Theatre" to match the brevity of "Knitting" in another column. Instead he rather assumed that the existing text would suffice. "Kemble" was a familiar name, while "Miss Fanny" suggested someone new and compelling to readers. Despite some attempt at differentiation, however, the article still blended in with the others and required the reader to scan the entire page as the stories glided smoothly from one to the next.

The article's text continued to assume that readers would recognize and understand how to navigate the newspaper's form, content and language. The article made several suppositions that both affirmed the Kemble family's established

and continuing role as characters in popular culture as well as the importance of trans-Atlantic relationships for English speakers and readers. Although Fanny's father, actor Charles Kemble, had yet to appear on U.S. boards, the writer assumed the reader would know him well enough to be interested in his daughter's career debut. The article makes a similar assumption about her aunt Sarah Siddons. Even though Mrs. Siddons had retired from the stage twelve years earlier, both the original writer of the article and whoever chose to include it in the *Rhode Island American* in its current form, expected readers to understand the reference to her and to the "honours" she had conferred upon the English stage.

The Kembles were often called the royalty of the English stage—a roughly linguistic category that would include the American stage for at least several more years. English-born actors prevailed over American-born actors until late in the nineteenth century. This dominance extended to dramaturgy, with American-born writers struggling to get recognition and compensation for their work. Rumors had circulated for decades that an important Kemble would perform in the United States. At least one lesser member of the family, and a few people just going by the surname Kemble, had in fact come to the former colonies. But as of the late-1820s, none of the successful members had performed across the Atlantic, and there was as yet no concrete reason to expect that Fanny or Charles would make the trip. Nor would many of the readers have expected to travel to England in their lifetime to see her perform. And yet, the reviews of her performances are often detailed, giving the readers vicarious knowledge of her and of what it meant to be an accomplished woman and performer in England. The stories are part of the construction of a broader cultural narrative of the theater and of increasingly familiar celebrity figures, even across broad spans of time and space. Just as travel narratives of the age

could be used to guide virtual travelers as well as actual ones, these articles could guide readers through the experience of knowing a noteworthy person or recognizing an extraordinary performance even if they would likely never see either one for themselves.

The second article from Fanny Kemble's career (Figure 2.7), pulled from the *Washington D.C. Daily Globe*, of August 31st, 1850, resembled in style the *American Statesman's* article of twenty-one years previous. Nor had the template of a typical newspaper changed significantly, although it was now eight rather than four pages long. It included in its colophon the name of two men, as publisher and editor. The columns were long, broken up with only the barest of headlining. As a newspaper of record for a political town, political news and announcements filled much of the pages, but since the newspaper also claimed to be an agricultural and literary journal, it included many other kinds of news. Like the *American's* article on Kemble's debut, the *Daily Globe's* article came from an outside source, a piece of correspondence picked from a letter or another newspaper. The same article repeated in other newspapers around the country, from the nearby *Baltimore Sun* to the distant *Daily Ohio Statesman* and *Savannah (GA) Republican*.²⁹ In the *Globe*, this story sat between discussions of Parliament and coffee in a section titled "England." The header format differed a bit from the earlier article. Instead of being in small capital letters, the article opened with an italicized "*Mrs. Butler*," that sat next to, but not as part of, the article's text. But even that form existed in other examples in the 1820s. Again the editor assumed the reader had prior knowledge of the characters. Fanny Kemble had married an American man, Pierce Butler, in 1834, but divorced him in 1849. The article readers' were expected to know Mrs. Butler's

²⁹ *Baltimore Sun*, 8/12/1850; *Daily Ohio Statesman*, 8/16/1850; *Savannah Republican*, 8/28/1850.

history, as it referred to her family name without explanation and called her “Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler” only within the text. “Butler” served to draw the readers’ attention and to signal that the article would be about the woman and actress known previously as “Kemble.”



Figure 2.7 “Mrs. Butler,” *Washington D.C. Daily Globe*, of August 31st, 1850

The article again referred to an event in England rather than in the United States. Kemble was in the middle of a performance series of Shakespearean readings in cities around Great Britain. But by 1850, of course, some Americans had seen Kemble in person once or several times. They had reason to expect she might give those same readings in the U.S. cities. They had likely followed her marriage, her travels, the births of her children, and eventually her divorce. In addition to the vicarious experience of a reader lacking any personal experience with the celebrated figure, then, some newspaper consumers read for information that would enhance their own experience of having seen her as well their knowledge and connection with an internationally recognized celebrity. One article about a celebrity could satisfy the motivations of readers with a variety of expectations and experiences.

municipal elections.

FRANCES KEMBLE DEAD.

The Great Actress Dead at an Advanced Age.

LONDON, Jan. 13.—Frances Anne Kemble (Mrs. Pierce Butler), the well-known actress, died today.

Miss Kemble had been ill but a short time. Her condition was not regarded as serious, and her death was unexpected. The remains will be interred in Kensal Green cemetery, where the body of Mrs. Kemble's father is buried.

Frances Anne Kemble, better known as Fanny Kemble, was born in Newmarket, London, November 27, 1809, and was the third child of Charles Kemble, the brother of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons. Her father was an actor and she accompanied him to the United States in September, 1832. She first appeared in America in "Faust" at the old park theater in New York City, September 15, 1832. Her appearance was a great success. She then toured the states as Juliet, in Sheridan Knowles' play of "The Hunchback." Miss Kemble made her first appearance on the stage in London in 1829. She took the part of Juliet, her father playing Romeo. Sheridan Knowles wrote for her next his masterpiece, "The Hunchback," which she long ago made famous. When in America she married Pierce Butler, a wealthy young man of Philadelphia and a large slave owner. She did not know he was a slave owner and when she accompanied her husband south she saw his slaves, many of whom, she said in her diary, could not stand for pain. She was an anti-slavery of the most pronounced type, and this caused her to separate from her husband. She retired with her children, after the separation, to Lenox, Mass. Her diary on slavery, her letters to the London Times and her account of early theatrical trials in the United States have been published.

The resolution named the committee. Senator Telford moved to amend by providing that the president appoint committee. Over under the rule.

Gray offered a resolution that the secretary of state furnish the senate with amount expended by the legislature ten years ago. Carried.

Mr. Moore introduced a resolution calling for an itemized statement of money expended by the Nebraska World's fair commission. Adopted.

A labor conflict resolution was laid over under the rule.

Senator Darner, chairman of committee on committees, reported the findings of said committee. Over one day under the rule.

in the house.

There were several vacant seats when the house was called to order. Chaplain Hill remembered the absentees in his prayer as well as the visitors present and the families left at home. Roll call showed but sixty-six members present. Feiton of York moved that further reading of the journal be dispensed with. Carried. The clerk read a number of new bills and bills upon a second reading.

At the afternoon session Keckley of York offered a resolution providing for the appointment of a committee of five to investigate the state officers, in order to determine if the charges against the integrity of some state officials are true. Oakley of Lancaster moved to adopt the resolution. Hort of Folk suggested that it should be a joint committee. Keckley amended his resolution, giving the committee power to send for papers and persons. The resolution was adopted.

Elder of Clay offered a resolution to allow each member ten cents postage stamps per day. Felton of Kuchulu moved to lay the resolution on the table, but Keckley saved a vote by raising the point that Elder's resolution was unconstitutional. The speaker sustained the point of order, and the members will now pay for their stamps as well as their newspapers.

Woods, Independent, of Sheridan, called

forty-seven, per eight hours at undry, and every business is the common are affected

—GROW

MURKIN, Ind.; workmen's strike worse. No car business materially interfered with of the strike.

—AM

Pierre Crotty, Folk; he was in Ireland and years.

Count Johann, upper house of committee, sold third story wigs.

The steamer, the Mississippi, burned at Padua about \$30,000, E. W. Dent, island row, and business, has been agent of the preliminary of Coffeyville for Kas. He was term of the district murder.

The French steamer to Havre, effect Villa Franca, select storm. The her crew of thirty

George A. Starance broker of N an indictment for is charged with refusing on the Assurance Lloyd The Columbia with \$2,000,000

Figure 2.8 "Francis Kemble Dead," *Omaha (NE) Morning World Herald*, 1/17/1893

As the market in newspaper readership increased and changed, the format of the news on the pages continued to shift. Celebrity news transformed along with it. Early to mid-nineteenth century newspapers, in their "bookish" design meant to be read as a whole, were sold and likely experienced as a single commodity. Later newspapers, with their evolving segmentation and the development of different sections for readers with different interests in politics, editorial, fashion, sports, and more, were distinctly structured as a collection of separate interests. The final article in my selection on Fanny Kemble's career (Figure 2.8) is from 1893, and included here although chronologically beyond my period of interest for the sake of comparison. It opened with a near-modern headline in all capital letters, "FRANCES KEMBLE DEAD," that heralded major news in distinction to the stories next to it which, while all headlined, were not so boldly printed.

This template marked a break with the earlier bookish formatting, as well as a shift in the relationship between celebrities and newspapers. Rather than assuming that consumers would read the entire newspaper, it provided clear markers for distinguishing and choosing between articles. The standfirst line gave the reader the article's key information, that she was a great actress who had lived a long life. The reader could either continue for more detailed information, or would at least know the generalities if she came up in conversation. The article, as well, came in two parts. The first gave the briefest details of her death and burial, while the second included biographical information. The readers, then could choose to stop reading if they either already knew her background or if they did not care to know more. This article followed the modern journalistic principle of giving the reader what they wanted and what they most needed to know as quickly as possible, as opposed to an eighteenth and earlier nineteenth century article which pieced information together much more casually and with less practiced regularity. I am not saying there were no principles in journalism earlier, but that a professional structure was emerging, one supplemented by clearly defined standards and eventually circulated, for example, through professional journalism programs in universities.³⁰

In a sense, with such a clear route through and between articles, each one worked as a separate commodity and advertisement for the paper. Celebrities would benefit from this changing template, and contributed to it. As each article in a newspaper began to function as a sort of independent commodity, stories about celebrities were one important type among them. In the early to mid-nineteenth

³⁰ William David Sloan, *Makers of the Media Mind: Journalism Educators and their Ideas* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990); Steve Weinberg, *A Journalism of Humanity: A Candid History of the World's First Journalism School* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2008).

century, only advertisements warranted such careful distinction, through the use of simple imagery like the ship or building mentioned above and the earliest printed headlines and standfirsts. As a celebrity, and one of the most prolific of the nineteenth century, Kemble herself made the transition from a character in the discourse of newspapers to a character of independent sale value. Her relationship to her family is underplayed in the text as was her role in the story of the English and American stages. Her life story, instead, took precedence, with an emphasis on her feelings about slavery and the sad tale of her marriage and divorce. With the changing template of the newspaper came a changing structure of the news, and the men and women who appeared within it. Eventually celebrity stories moved into special sections of the newspaper, the “style,” “lifestyle,” or “society” pages, and even out of the newspaper, except in the case of the most celebrated stories, into a specialty periodical.³¹

Although the description above of newspapers and celebrity culture emphasized their casual and inconsistent order, the changes that occurred in the relationship between them in the nineteenth century were not always informal and happenstance. Especially early on, journalism and promotion were almost indistinguishable. Both depended upon traditional relationships between public figures and the producers of newspapers that changed with the mechanics of professionalization. Actors since at least David Garrick had maintained friendships and professional ties with newspaper publishers. Just as men and women became publicly known professional editors and publishers via the publication of their names upon colophons, so too did a professional class of promoters emerge when they

³¹ For a brief history of different sections and pages in newspapers from the perspective of the history of communications and media, see Nerone and Barnhurst, *Form of News*, 219-256.

called themselves such and established firms, with agents dispersed around the country and even into Europe. P.T. Barnum was only the most famous of many.

Promoters advanced and protected their celebrity wares along ever more complicated trans-national and trans-Atlantic circuits of transportation and communication. It was their job to promote the qualities of celebrity, to make images sell with little apparent public effort from the figures themselves. Chapter Four will explore in more detail aspects of celebrity promotion off the pages of newspapers—the celebrity tours and the relationships between celebrities themselves and professional managers and promoters. But it is worth delving into the professionalization of entertainment here as it related to journalism. Even if newspaper writers, editors and publishers were not explicitly involved in the marketing of celebrities, the benefits to their papers and careers were obvious.

The field itself was wrapped up in the developing market around personality. Only slowly and rarely did nineteenth-century newspapers attribute their articles to particular authors. When they did create a class of professional journalists, some of them became celebrated. Margaret Fuller, for example, became extraordinarily well known as a journalist. She began as an editor at *The Dial*, a transcendentalist magazine with a small circulation and small profits. She later moved on to write as a literary critic for Horace Greeley's much more commercially successful *New York Tribune*, and became especially famous for her coverage of the Italian revolution. Greeley had a knack for spotting talented writers and making them his correspondents—he briefly employed Karl Marx in the early 1850s. Fuller adopted the *New York Herald's* successful tactic of interviewing and employing first-hand observations in her writings as a correspondent, but she put it to more lofty uses, by seeking out renowned European public intellectuals, including George Sand and

Thomas Carlyle. She soon became a celebrated figure herself, with newspapers around the country pondering her travels, her relationships and her advocacy of women's rights.³²

The relationship between journalism and celebrity promotion is hardly clear. Although Fuller, for example, promoted the names of Sand and Carlyle in the United States, she received her compensation from the *Herald*, not from them or their management. Further, given the typical lack of bylines or other forms of crediting in the newspapers of the age, we cannot trace the authors of the short pieces most typical of celebrity culture, or even sketch out their origins as news. "Puffs" or the promotion of an act or product in articles, were a long accepted, if mocked, part of newspaper publishing. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 1779 play, *The Critic; or, a Tragedy Rehearsed* included a character Mr. Puff, who described himself as a "practitioner in panegyric...a professor in the art of puffery" who outlined several ways to advertise, from the obvious to the oblique. Other than through language and assumption though, it is often hard to distinguish a piece of puffery on a page, or to learn exactly how it came to be there.

Yet sometimes the artifacts of professionalization have made it possible to trace the connections. In 1850, for example, just in time for the arrival of the opera singer Jenny Lind for her American tour, the music critic Charles Rosenberg published his *Jenny Lind: Her Life, Her Struggles, and her Triumphs*. Rosenberg acknowledged that he had received support and information courtesy of Lind's manager, P.T. Barnum—in fact his book opens with a letter from Barnum affirming the work's authenticity. He later published an expansion on the work, written while

³² Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life Volume II: The Public Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Julia Ward Howe, *Margaret Fuller* (Classic Textbooks, 1883).

he toured with Lind. Individual pieces from it often preceded Lind's visit to a town, or followed after her departure. These articles were often sponsored by Lind's promotional team. N. P. Willis similarly published the *Memoranda of the Life of Jenny Lind* relying heavily upon journalism, including many articles simply reprinted from his own *Home Journal*. Both Willis' and Rosenberg's books were clearly a part of the extensive promotional mechanisms involved in molding and profiting from Lind's American celebrity.³³

As Lind's American manager, Barnum may have personally done the most to bring "Lindomania" across the water from Europe to the United States, but he depended on the implicit as well as formal support of U.S. newspapers. Americans had been introduced to Lind years before she arrived in the country, as her name began to filter into reports from Europe as early as 1845.³⁴ The first suggestion that she might visit the United States appeared in the summer of 1847, while she toured in England.³⁵ Barnum profited off the work begun by newspapers in publicizing her name and persona, and he indirectly rewarded them later through paid advertisements or by sending along information about Lind that he and publishers knew would work to induce sales.

It makes logical sense that a promoter would rely on widely circulated newspapers as part of his business strategy. Entertainers and newspapers had long shared historical relationships—it was only as the fields professionalized that it became necessary to distance themselves and create formal relationships solidified

³³ Bluford Adams, *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 41-74; Peter Buckley, "Chapter 6," "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York, 1820-1880," (PhD diss, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1984); Neil Harris, *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum* (1973; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 111-142.

³⁴ "Theatricals, & c.," *The New York Weekly Herald*, 4/19/1845.

³⁵ "Theatrical Attractions," *The Baltimore Sun*, 6/15/1847.

with long-term advertising contracts. In the mid-nineteenth century, one well-known New York actor, John Brougham, and probably many others, moved between professional roles as players and journalists. Brougham wrote for several newspapers and started his own periodical, *Diogenes, Hys Lantern*, in the early 1850s. Barnum participated in the founding of New York's failed *Illustrated News*, and had been friendly with the proprietor of its successful follow-up, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* since the mid-1840s. In the western theatrical circuit, well-known managers Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow not only subscribed to multiple newspapers from the east, but maintained partial ownership in several papers in cities where they held interest in theaters. Smith began this practice early in his career. He wrote to his partner Ludlow two years after the founding of the management firm that he had spent \$3,000—three times the amount the partners had invested initially in their own firm—for a “silent partnership” in the Mobile, Alabama *Mercantile Advertiser*.³⁶ Presumably that guaranteed a positive print reception of their stage shows and companies. Temperance activists and abolitionists also took to journalism as a model for circulating ideas and lecturers easily, by founding newspapers doubling as advocacy journals.³⁷ In each of these fields, journalism was an obvious promotional choice.

In the mid-nineteenth century, celebrity and the culture industries surrounding them, which were integral to the shifting nature of popular culture in the period,

³⁶ Sol Smith to Noah M. Ludlow, March 28, 1837, Sol Smith Collection, MoHS; See as well Sol Smith and Noah M. Ludlow, “Articles of Co-partnership,” June 2, 1835, Box 1, Sol Smith Collection, MoHS.

³⁷ Thomas Augst, “Temperance, Mass Culture, and the Romance of Experience,” *American Literary History* 19:2 (Spring, 2007): 297-323; Frances Foster Smith, “A Narrative of the Interesting Origins and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture,” *American Literary History* 17:4 (2005): 714-740; Timothy Shortell, “The Rhetoric of Black Abolitionism,” *Social Science History* 28:1 (Spring 2004): 75-109; David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

remained incipient. The connections I have outlined were only slowly made formal, and there long remained inconsistencies between places but also between how people worked and interacted in their fields. The celebrity was only just emerging as part of the news cycle, a developing character in the growing and standardizing reams of pages. The structure of the newspaper and the field of journalism can tell a part of the story in the patterns for treating the celebrity on the page and its context. But to understand the developing prototype of the celebrity and the development of celebrity culture in the United States, we must look inside the text, at more of the content and language of the stories that comprised it.

The Invention of “A” Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century

Antebellum American newspapers reflected many things, but among them the struggle to understand what it meant to be a politically unified United States, and whether that should and could include the construction of a unified and representative popular culture. This peculiarly nineteenth-century concern played out in art, literature and the theatre.³⁸ Newspapers were an important conduit for these conversations, because they provided an ideal place for representatives of diverse interests to come together, discuss, advertise and circulate ideas across great distances. They, along with more broadly defined “formal, public, printed communications,” helped to build communities, as David Nord has argued, from the national to most local of levels. Nord has extended Benedict Andersen’s “imagined communities” paradigm to explore ways different types of communal identity within

³⁸ Catherine Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic: Cultivating Forms of Citizenship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Joseph Ellis, *After the Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1979); David Grimsted, “A National Drama,” in *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

and beyond the national have been formed and sustained through print—or even how local identities have been telescoped outward and imagined as national ones—i.e., the framing of an agrarian mythology and small-town life as the American way.³⁹

Communities can be built from shared locations, but even more so out of shared dependencies, sentiments, interests, and sympathies. The press made it possible to link those and build communities across long distances. Connections facilitated by the press in the nineteenth century informed and sustained dispersed ideological communities, such as political parties, ethnic and religious groups, and reform movements and organizations, which helped to construct the broad popular culture and gave the impression of broad inclusion and representativeness. Bonds created in a social context rich with circulating newspapers could bypass physical and even social divides that might be obvious in person, making individuals feel closer to someone at a distance than they might feel to an actual neighbor, if that person seemed to share more common sentiments and interests. These types of shared knowledge gained through reading were ideal for the creation of national and reforming or political communities, but also for market expansion. Even as individuals could be made to think of themselves as citizens and activists through visions of the world portrayed by print media, those pictures could also compel them to become consumers of similar products. Especially if those consumers sympathized with other people through reading, they would likely appreciate commodities associated with famous individuals, particularly those with whom they

³⁹ David P. Nord, *Communities of Journalism*. Trish Loughran, in *The Republic of Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), has noted that in addition to creating communities, the mechanics of print could divide them. She argues that in the absence of a “national” print culture” before the 1840s, different ideas of the American nation had thrived, but that efforts to create one after that point exposed differences and opened potentials for conflict.

shared a cultural, political, or reforming interest. Consumption of similar products could also foster the idea that readers and buyers across great distances had uniform understandings of and perspectives on the world.

The newspapers themselves were commodities, as were the stories reported within them. Celebrated individuals were not a new creation in the nineteenth century. The Kemble and Siddons family and sensational figures like Sam Patch were familiar in English and American culture, as were older celebrated names, such as David Garrick and Benjamin Franklin. Still, as newspapers increased in production and circulation, so too did the imagined world created by them increase in scope and range, as did the variety of products available for sale. Figures that began as a diversionary way to fill the page, a comment on cultural forms like the theatre, or a lesson in human behavior and character, became cultural products in their own right. The markets in entertainment, the touring of celebrated individuals, and tangible products including clothing, decorative arts, and furniture embraced celebrity as a tool for increasing profits and influence. With an eye towards George Whitefield's Anglo-Atlantic ministry in the eighteenth century, even reform movements and religious groups took advantage of celebrity to further their influence. Each of these examples had a value of their own, but their producers turned to the newspaper as a primary mechanic of their renown—as the way to advertise and make their wares commonly known beyond the bounds of a single city or state.

Since at least the mid-eighteenth century, reputable and disreputable people had resided together on the pages of public print. Newspapers, but also other forms of print, were used to publicize the scandalous behaviors of actors, criminals, prostitutes and various other social types alongside the triumphs of men and women

like George Whitefield, Franklin, Garrick and Sarah Siddons.⁴⁰ The discourse around celebrity shifted in the nineteenth century to include more than rhetorical posturing but also concerns with visual consistency and commercial appeal. Framed as human-interest stories highlighting successes and failures but also personal struggles and frailties, celebrity reporting constructed a narrative of an imagined community with celebrities as its central citizens.

Even as newspapers around the country were individual enterprises with local editors, publishers and printers, the writing within them varied little stylistically. Many of the articles were duplicated and reprinted around the country, as well as from English papers published in Great Britain. Thus, not just the facts and details, but the language used to describe celebrated figures had a consistency that eventually defined the discourse around them. Certain words and modes of reporting repeated throughout the genre of the celebrity article in the nineteenth century. The articles set figures like Jenny Lind, Fanny Kemble, Edwin Forrest and Charles Dickens apart for certain extraordinary traits, like genius and talent; but also for ordinary ones amplified, such as humor or humility. Part of their appeal, however, came from their appearing familiar and approachable, as members of an imagined community. Thus news articles often described certain normal experiences among people, such as life cycle events, illnesses, and encounters as they pertained to a celebrity's daily life. For example, some writers lauded Edwin Forrest as a genius while others eventually doubted his talent. Yet, after his mother died, even newspapers that had published reviews doubting his aptitude for acting, now circulated articles praising his

⁴⁰ Daniel A. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace*; Caroline Gonda, "Misses, Murderesses, and Magdalenes," in Eger, ed., *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere*, 53-74.

attachment to his mother as having been “of the strongest character.”⁴¹

As newspaper writers tried to describe the appeal of the figures they eventually deemed celebrities, they often said that they possessed genius, or took the same shorthand route they had with celebrity, and just called them geniuses. Outside of its historical context, this term masks as much as it reveals about the nature of historical celebrity. Genius, like celebrity, had an historically particular usage.⁴² In the context of how nineteenth-century newspapers used genius, they followed a Romantic definition and one influenced by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Kant's definition of genius closely resembled our contemporary conception, in that he argued that geniuses had the ability to spontaneously grasp concepts that others would have to work to learn. For Kant, originality was the core of genius. Schopenhauer further described genius as the dominance of intellect over will and self-interest. The genius could produce works of pure aesthetic value, without concern for and corruption by worldly interests.

Elements of the sublime predominated in this Romantic definition of genius. It could not be measured as it is in the present, through testing, or improved upon, through educational tracking. James Russell Lowell's (1819-1891) statement that “talent is that which is in man's power: genius is that in whose power man is” expressed the awe that surrounded genius.⁴³ Forces beyond their control inspired geniuses and drove them to perform, tipping the scales of the Romantic tension

⁴¹ Untitled, *Barre (MA) Gazette*, 7/9/1847.

⁴² Hans Jurgens Eysenck, *Genius: The Natural History of Creativity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: Published by the University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, 2006), 64.

⁴³ “Genius,” *New International Encyclopedia* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1906).

between rationalism and emotion. Those who observed genius similarly lacked the capacity to understand it or to resist its appeal. The average newspaper reader, of course, was not reading Schopenhauer or Kant, or even necessarily Lowell. Popular print sources captured the ideas, upon which the Romantic era philosophers and poets had expounded.

Newspapers celebrated genius as a sort of special force, something that was channeled through rather than possessed by particular figures. Journalists often described the ways performers affected their audiences as instances of genius. One critic explained that when Edwin Forrest performed, “with one bound he went straight to the hearts of his audiences, and established between them and himself that electric current the secret spring of which is true genius.”⁴⁴ Writers were at pains to describe genius, but they knew it when they saw it. Genius was something that audiences *felt* when they saw Forrest act, a kind of current between them. In many cases, genius as described in newspapers sounded like physical or even sexual attraction. Fanny Kemble also possessed, or was possessed by genius, in the words of some writers. Early in her career, an article announcing her marriage to slaveholder Pierce Butler, encapsulated her genius for its readers. Its author described her as a social polymath, writing that,

She was a genius, the child of enthusiasm—the favourite of the graces. She wrote—she talked—she rode on horseback....She was a wit—a scholar...a poetess and a philosopher....[C]ivilization was her native country; and wherever talent and genius flourished, there was her home.⁴⁵

As a figure surrounded by “enthusiasm,” indeed the “child” of it, her persona contained a spark of divinity—the presence of a “supernatural inspiration, prophetic or poetic frenzy,” in one sense of genius now archaic but current at the time. Again,

⁴⁴ “Revival of the Legitimate Drama—Re-entrée of Mr. Forrest,” *New York Herald*, 9/11/1860.

⁴⁵ “Fanny Kemble's Last Scene,” *Baltimore (MD) Patriot*, 6/11/1834.”

the effect on the observer was almost physical. The writer emphasized that it was not just her acting that “roused the general enthusiasms,” but everything about her, all of her separate “marks of genius.”⁴⁶ Writing about Kemble’s acting, in its appeal to a spectrum of emotional responses, aptly filled the demand for sensationalism in newspapers at the time. Yet it did so through the sentimental language of refinement and transcendence.

In a nod to genius’s gendered dimensions, the article described Fanny Kemble in the past tense, more in the language of a eulogy than a marriage announcement. Genius was a connection between a public figure and their audience, not a sustainable trait for the wife of a private citizen like Butler. Kemble would have to retire and sever her connection with the public, the article assumed, stating, “The whisper went round town, that the most celebrated histrionic genius was no more.”⁴⁷ Later, when Kemble and Butler divorced, newspaper writers blamed her inability to surrender her will and genius to her husband, and suggested that both parties had been foolish to think she could be a successful wife. Newspapers never questioned her sexual, but rather just her intellectual, fidelity. They stated bluntly, and repeated for the rest of Kemble’s life, that a woman possessed by histrionic genius could never be entirely feminine, or belong in body and mind to a single man.⁴⁸

Genius, in this manner, could only be celebrated, not measured. Figures either had it or they did not—“it” being some all important but ultimately intangible

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Theodore Sedgwick went so far as to call Kemble’s mind “masculine.” See Deidre David’s recent biography of Kemble for a discussion of Kemble’s portrayal as masculine by her contemporaries, both newspaper writers and those who knew her personally; *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 119-121.

and indefinable quality that made them appeal to readers and audiences. Especially in the twentieth century, “it” became sexualized, and more blatantly described as physical attraction. That suggestion already existed in the crescendo of the writers’ descriptions of Kemble’s and Forrest’s effect on their audiences described above. Yet in accordance with nineteenth century public standards, however, mainstream newspapers writers would not have used sexual language to describe such figures.⁴⁹ Instead, they pulled from their lexicon of available terminology and called it genius.

Given the gravity of discussions of genius and the attempts to define it by philosophers including Kant and Schopenhauer, my description of genius’s relationship to celebrity might seem flippant. Newspapers, however, used it so enthusiastically and capriciously that its significance cannot be ignored. It worked as a part of the system of puffery and mutual promotion that existed between newspapers, publishers and entertainment managers. Certainly, however, at least some writers meant it in all seriousness, and were struggling to define crowd and consumer behaviors—the massing of audiences to certain events and excitement around certain figures but not others—as well as their own sentiments. Later, when critics became more actively critical of celebrity culture (certainly some skeptics existed already), the inability to define exactly what made a celebrity appealing to audiences became a mark of indiscretion and gullibility among readers and consumers. The professionalization of the fields of journalism, criticism, entertainment and the theater demanded apparent integrity as well as intellectual

⁴⁹ It is not that sexuality was absent from American print culture, but rather that explicit references were not part of mainstream texts. Indeed, it long has been present within the discourse, via subversive texts and those who wished to regulate them. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz opens her work *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (Knopf, 2002) with the observation that, “Since colonial times Americans have worried about what their neighbors read about sex.”

and financial detachment from the forces of promotion.

As part of these processes of professionalization, a figure could become a victim of their own genius when their fallibility collided with expectations. Questions about whether celebrities deserved their public recognition have been a part of celebrity culture from its inception. Very early on, figures with no professional claim to renown achieved celebrity. Well known as the center of fashionable London during the English regency (1810-1820), Beau Brummell (1778-1840), who has been featured as a favorite figure in several histories of celebrity culture and stardom, is an example of ephemeral and image-based celebrity.⁵⁰ Canonized for the generations by Balzac's *Traité de la vie élégante* in the 1830s and Arthur Conan Doyle's 1896 novel, *Rodney Stone*, Brummell was already a familiar name in British and American newspapers. A reputed master of self-marketing he won free wardrobes plus compensation from London's clothiers by offering his body as a site of marketing. Brummell and the London clothiers shielded their relationship—the tailors sewed compensation into the suit pockets so that no one would see money exchanged. He would wear the suits, so that other men, inspired by his style, would purchase copies of them. As the story went, when Brummell inevitably aged and his physical attractiveness declined, his lack of any other productive skills and stable income destroyed his reputation. He died in exile in France, having lost favor with the royals and having accrued much debt.

His career captured the trajectory of celebrity discourse as a modern concern. As a figure devoid of any marketable talent except for physical beauty and an ability to charm a royal court, Brummell turned that into his trade. He embodied fashion

⁵⁰ Rhonda K. Garelick, *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siecle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Ian Kelly, *Beau Brummell: The Ultimate Man of Style* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

and marketing, and made his clothing and appearance into a livelihood. His career captured the essence of Leo Braudy's idea, popularly cited by academics and journalists, that celebrities are the modern royalty. For a short time, Brummell's influence on court behavior may well have trumped the royals. Observed from this perspective, the logic of celebrity seems circular. Early celebrities were indeed recognizable because they were written about because they were recognizable. In other words, they were "well known for [their] well knownness."⁵¹

Yet what may have appeared as sudden or inexplicable attention paid to certain individuals instead reflected an ongoing dialogue among newspapers and their readers about contemporary life and culture. Beau Brummell was an exception to the normal celebrity discourse. Most celebrated figures in the period began not as royal courtiers, but as actors, writers, politicians and reformers with a more than symbolic or temporary relationship to the public. The mechanics of celebrity may be subtle, but they are not magical. Most celebrities of the period were not just Romantic geniuses, "it" men and women, whose appeal was undeniable but also unclear. Talent as well, or some kind of marketable skill, also mattered, though not every article featured a discussion of it.

Fanny Kemble and Edwin Forrest and other figures were described as geniuses, but also as talented individuals. The terms as used in the nineteenth century are easily confused, but the discourse of celebrity included subtle and important differences. The author who eulogized Kemble's genius after her marriage also lauded her "theatrical talents," even as he stated that these alone were not enough to garner the degree of praise she had received. Talent appeared with the same general meaning for which we typically would use it today, "a special or natural

⁵¹ Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*, 46.

ability or aptitude...a natural capacity for success in some department of mental or physical activity.”⁵² Kemble, the child of a theatrical family, had honed her talents through observation and study. Talent impressed, as in Charles Dickens’s “talent of exact observation,” but did not move a crowd to hysteria or adoration.⁵³ For each of the major celebrities covered here, public interest began with an examination or comment upon their talent for their profession, whether it was in the fields of entertainment, reform, lecturing, and even politics. In the nineteenth century, only a few figures achieved a lasting celebrity, and none besides Brummell on a national or international scale, if they were not part of a profession founded on public appearance.

Early articles about Fanny Kemble focused on her acting, and compared her skills to those of her elder family members as well as Americans on stage. Newspapers established her as a person of interest because she was an emerging talent and part of a traditional stage family long before they took to reporting on her love life, wardrobe, or challenges to gender norms. An article, published in several American papers after her 1829 London stage debut, declared “[her] to be an equal, if not a superior to any female who had yet appeared.”⁵⁴ Over her long career, the newspapers returned again and again to her professional talent and its development. The *Nashville Banner and Whig* and other papers in 1834, declared that her gift lay in her mastery of many characters and ranges of feeling. Stressing that they had “watched the improvement of this talented young lady with considerable anxiety,” they marveled that she not only had maintained her early spark (the touch of genius),

⁵² “talent, n,” *The Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁵³ “Boz,” *Madisonian for the Country*, 9/15/1838.

⁵⁴ “Two Days Later From London,” *Baltimore Patriot*, 11/26/1829; also *The Providence Patriot & Columbian Phenix*, 12/2/1829.

but that in the years since her debut, she had “infinitely surpassed the degree of talent” she had shown early on.⁵⁵ When Kemble moved her performances from the stage to the more cultivated reading rooms of the 1840s and 1850s, critics continued to marvel at her abilities and to laud her increased talents. Over time she had managed to master not just Shakespeare's female characters and most popular roles, but she had learned to re-enact all of his works alone at a table, using just her voice.

Beyond just documenting their individual appeal to audiences and their contributions to their professions, newspapers in the mid-nineteenth century were concerned with how celebrities reflected or represented national character and citizenship. Kemble spent much of her career in the United States. After her marriage to Pierce Butler and the births of their daughters, newspapers took a particular interest in her as an adopted American celebrity. Even still, she remained an English actress. Discussion of Kemble's career, talents, and travels enabled American readers to fashion themselves and their stage as part of an imagined cosmopolitan milieu. In the mid-nineteenth century, especially after 1820, newspaper editors began campaigning to make the conversation multi-sided by promoting American talent. In October of 1826, the *Baltimore Patriot* encouraged its readers to attend the Theater when Edwin Forrest performed, stating, “Let it be remembered that in attending the Theater this evening, *native talent* will be supported.”⁵⁶ This statement was not just about encouraging patriotism, but was also part of a marketing strategy. Other actors on the stage at the time were also native-born Americans, so theatergoers could have supported native talent almost

⁵⁵ “Miss Fanny Kemble,” 4/19/1834.

⁵⁶ “Mr. Edwin Forrest,” *Baltimore Patriot*, 10/23/1826.

any night. But in contrast to them, Forrest had successfully made his citizenship part of his persona, and would manage to become one of the United States' first international stars via his status as an *American* talent.

Not all reporting on celebrity, of course, boasted such lofty concerns as the exploration of talent and genius or the transnational contributions of an American culture. In the 1840s, as American theaters professionalized and the most successful actors and managers became quite rich, articles discussing their wealth became part of the discussion of their careers. Newspapers followed the construction of Forrest's Riverdale mansion, Fonthill, describing its architectural style and extravagance. The *Berkshire County Whig* further reported in 1845 that Edwin Forrest's had amassed wealth rivaling English stars, with a fortune worth more than \$100,000 in stocks and real estate alone.⁵⁷ Celebrities were public creations, personae that existed because print media created them through stretching the limits of public knowledge. According to one definition, to celebrate means to extol praises. Another definition, however, is just simply to make something publicly known. Almost any piece about a celebrated figure could generate interest, and provide good fodder for filling a news page. Interest might be critical as well as complimentary. Such criticism could range from the repetition of rumors and gossip to the reporting on major scandals drawn from celebrities' private lives.⁵⁸

Even as Charles Dickens enjoyed much praise for his talent and genius as a writer in the early 1840s, newspapers latched onto a piece of arbitrary and meaningless gossip and reprinted it around the country. In the summer of 1840, the American press began circulating rumors that Dickens had gone insane. The

⁵⁷ Untitled, *Berkshire County Whig*, 10/16/1845.

⁵⁸ Chapter Three discusses the role of celebrity scandal in more depth, exploring its role and effects on the relationships between celebrities, their admirers, and their critics.

articles claimed that “the editor of the *N.Y. Mirror* had received a private letter” confirming it. Weeks later, several sources reported that the rumor had been a mistake. The *Rhode Island Republican* explained,

The report of Boz's madness originated, it appeared, from a pun. Dickens has a raven....A friend, who had been visiting him...afterwards informed a mutual acquaintance that Boz was *raven* mad. The mutual friend understood it *raving* mad, and started off to communicate the lamentable intelligence to all his acquaintance.⁵⁹

It might be easy to understand why American readers would have an interest in stories from Dickens's loquacious friend. Dickens was a best-selling author in Britain as well as in the United States by the early 1840s. American newspapers, magazines and printers had reprinted his books and stories with avidity and had garnered high profits.

Complementing these sales of his works, American papers had been printing stories about Dickens as a personality for at least a year. In July 1830, several notices publicizing his most recent works included a description of Dickens's “ample forehead,” “lovely wife,” and “two charming children,” while also lauding him as “entirely self-made.” “Moral worth...genius...[and] industry” had defined his early career, the report continued.⁶⁰ Very soon, texts referred more to the Dickens's persona—his appearance, personality, private life, and witty conversations—than to his writings. Diverse engravings of varying quality circulated for purchase and trade, and were also advertised in newspapers. The vary multiplicity of images in circulation became a story in itself.

Yet the story of Dickens as either “raven” or “raving” mad suggested far more than simply an interest in a favored author's mental health, or his choice of an animal

⁵⁹ “Boz's Madness,” 8/26/1840.

⁶⁰ “Charles Dickens,” *Southern Patriot*, 7/23/1839.

companion. The question and its style of reporting were emblematic of celebrity culture. Veracity was beside the point. Instead the surviving details revealed the inchoate boundaries between public and private information as well as between gossip and news when it came to celebrities. Even as the papers constructed an image of Dickens as a private man, living in domestic harmony with a wife, children, a pet bird and a network of friends who visited him, they made that picture of him public and complicated it. News sources reported first apparently, that Dickens was insane, and printed the correction a few weeks later.⁶¹ Inevitably, some readers saw the first report without catching the conclusion, while others read the follow up without having seen the first piece. The editors, however, were likely unworried about contiguity. Either version could stand alone as a brief piece of interest or linguistic humor—the retraction thus doing as much if not more to raise questions about Dickens’s sanity than the initial source. His sanity, however, might not have been the readership’s primary concern. Interest in celebrities’ private lives and characters did not simply center on facts.

Charles Dickens had become a figurehead for an emerging culture of style. He was, for the moment, a person of fashion. For the nineteenth century and Dickens, fashionable culture concerned not only his clothing and lifestyle, but also his participation in a community of literary intellectuals. Unlike Beau Brummell, Dickens was an icon with ostensibly more substance, or with a reason for his fame, because of his publications. Yet given the relative abundance of newspapers as compared to books in the early 1840s, it was possible that more people had read about Dickens than had read Dickens. Sales of his books were likely helped by the reporting on his lifestyle and family, while interest in his life and activities increased

⁶¹ See for example, the *Haverhill Gazette*, 7/4/1840.

with the popularity of his books. Certainly the same could have been true for other celebrities in the era. The circulation of their names far exceeded that of their bodies, making it far more likely that a person would have read or heard about them, than that they would have seen them.

The form and style of the narrative questioning Dickens's sanity influenced its appeal. The articles about it claimed as their source a "private letter," received by the editor of the *New York Mirror*, also a public man. Nothing mentioned whether the editor was the letter's intended recipient. Even still, its origins in private life suggested not only its reliability as a source but also offered a hint at Dickens's network of intimate friends, and at the relationships that connected readers, writers and newspapers. Theoretically, as few as two or three degrees of separation divided the audience and the celebrated author, giving the impression of a fair degree of familiarity between them. The reporting obscured the actual geographic, social and cultural separation between Dickens, a by-then wealthy and prominent man, and a wide array of differently positioned subjects who might have read about him in the presses.⁶²

Dickens's raven did not produce a scandal, only rumors. Although scandals were by no means unimportant to celebrity culture in the nineteenth century, most stories did not take that tone and they did not define the genre. Even while temperance activist John Gough's rumored lapses, Forrest's and Kemble's divorces, and the riots at Astor Place dominated reporting over periods of weeks, less fraught diversions were far more characteristic of the pages. Journalists spent much more time pondering whether Fanny Kemble would reappear on the stage boards and discussing the Hutchinson family singers' European concert tours than delving into

⁶² Henkin, *The Postal Age*.

their respective family crises. Giving public figures' privacy in such matters was overwhelmingly the rule.

Even as celebrities had to have genius, talent, wealth and style, they still needed to be approachable for the public to maintain an interest. An equally important role of celebrity culture then, was to make the figures into characters to which a consumer could relate. The anecdote, a humorous or parabolic story about a celebrity's experience, or an encounter with a celebrity, often functioned to humanize admired figures, to cultivate an interest in the celebrity as someone with whom you might want to be friends. A tale circulated in the mid-1840s, for example, about a meeting between Edwin Forrest and another man, who later became an "eminent" judge. Years earlier, "when they were both young and unknown to fame," they had roomed overnight in the same room in an inn. When morning came, neither got up, and instead alternately stared at one another or napped until noon. Finally, Forrest demanded to know why the man had not gotten out of bed. The man commanded the same of the actor, who admitted that he did not have a shirt but had not wanted to expose his poverty. According to the story, the future judge responded by leaping "greyhoundlike" from bed and exclaiming, "Why did'nt [sic] you say so before—*that is precisely my predicament.*"⁶³ It does not matter here whether the story was true. The characters could have been anonymous and still it would have been a funny lesson about pride and vanity. Yet, with the additional information about the men's future success and renown, it took on significance beyond humor and didactics. It explored the ordinary traits that made up celebrity men—a merging of the normal with the extraordinary. Many of the readers, perhaps, could have related to the two men's sentiments. Far fewer could boast of having overcome it to

⁶³ "A Good Anecdote," *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 12/4/1845.

reach their level of wealth and accomplishment. For the moment, however, they could have imagined two men just like them who had found themselves in an embarrassing situation. The story circulated widely over a number of years.

News, of course, had always been a fluid category. Most newspapers had long fulfilled more explicitly commercial obligations—reporting on the arrivals and departures of ships and new products, with an additional discussion of politics. As newspapers increased in circulation, their scope and appeal similarly expanded. They began to earn an increasing reputation as a reflection of happenings in the wider world—with certain figures playing lead roles. Criminals, victims, government officials, trades people and politicians formed frequent types but they were always changing. Certain celebrities and types of celebrities, however, were consistent players in the text of print culture. As figures of talent, genius, and fashion, they represented a conduit for readers to imagine that they understood a world of democratic opportunity, increasingly framed in the newspapers as accessible, even as it was cosmopolitan and diverse.

The confluence of multiple diversionary stories about celebrities, as well as listings of their professional engagements and their collections of admirable and remarkable traits, made up much of the text of celebrity culture as it emerged in the early to mid-nineteenth century. It helped to mold celebrities into “intimate strangers,” to use a term film critic Richard Schickel has coined for twentieth-century celebrities, but that nevertheless has a resonance here. “Intimate” reflects the knowledge admirers and critics garnered about the most celebrated individuals of their time, and the feeling it could produce that one knew and understood them as private individuals. “Strangers,” however, reminds us that the relationship was only

textual, more like one a reader shares with a character in a book. Because the names and stories in the newspapers, however, corresponded to the identities of real people living in the world, the potential existed for strange and meaningful encounters between the celebrities and those who read about them. The following chapter will explore some of those meetings, on and off the page, and how they convinced people to act and respond to what they saw in celebrity culture.

Chapter Three

A Sensational Trade: Celebrity Admiration and the Market in Public Expectations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

When Charles Dickens arrived in New York City in February of 1842, the city toasted him with an elaborate reception dubbed by newspapers, “The Boz Ball.” Hosted at the Park Theater, by the “citizens of New York,” there was space for 3,000 attendees.¹ A committee had arranged for various entertainments, including dancing and twelve “tableaux vivants” representing scenes from Dickens’s works.² Elaborate floral arrangements, portraits and statues festooned the entire theater, including each lobby, hall, saloon, box seat and green room, with a bust of Dickens’s head “surmounted by an eagle holding a laurel wreath” as the central ornament.³ Guests came dressed in grand style, with one newspaper reporting that the crowds “glittering with silks and jewels...and sparkling with animation” significantly added to the “impressiveness of the occasion.”⁴ Papers around the Northeast and in more far-flung American cities were abuzz with the story of the Boz Ball in the days before and after; first, describing in detail the rumored arrangements and then, afterwards, their results.⁵

¹ Untitled, *Berkshire County Whig*, 2/10/1842.

² Ibid.

³ “From the New-York Evening Post, Feb. 15, The Boz Ball,” *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, 2/24/1842.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For additional historical accounts of the Boz Ball, see Philip Hone’s diary edited by Bayard Tuckerman, *The Diary of Philip Hone* (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1889) and N. P. Willis, et al, *Account of the Ball Given in Honor of Charles Dickens: Extra, From the New York Aurora* (Published by private print by the Torch Press, 1908). For historiographical accounts, see Michael Batterberry and Ariane Batterberry, *On the Town in New York* (New York: Routledge, 1998) and Juliet John, “A Body without a Head: The Idea of Mass Culture in Dickens’s *American Notes*,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 12, no. 2 (August 2007): 173-202.

The proprietors of the theater did not provide the venue and decorations free of charge. A committee of prominent New Yorkers arranged for restaurateur Thomas Downing to prepare oysters and an army of paid workers to execute the festivities, which bore a heavy admission's price of five dollars per "lady and gentleman."⁶ Some papers reported that the tickets were being hawked for as high as fifteen or twenty dollars apiece, with one even going to "an exquisite" for fifty dollars.⁷ Clearly, only the most comfortable New Yorkers could afford to welcome Dickens and his wife in this grand manner. The less affluent were not excluded from celebrating the author's arrival, however, nor did the proprietors of the Park miss a chance to profit further from the event. The theater re-enacted the Boz Ball on-stage in the following days, leaving up the decorations and selling tickets at a reduced price.⁸ Dickens was invited to attend as an audience member.

Despite the enthusiasm exhibited by his hosts, the author found the festivities less than enthralling. He begged off attending the virtual event at the Park Theatre, claiming a sore throat. And then, although he spent many words describing American manners in his *American Notes for General Circulation*, he did not mention the hospitality New Yorkers had displayed at the Boz Ball or its theatrical re-creation. The author wanted, he claimed, simply to travel in the United States as a tourist, getting to know the people in their everyday lives and activities, without all the trappings of celebrity encompassed by staged public appearances, parades, parties, and festivals.⁹ His wife fell ill in New York City, from exhaustion some claimed,

⁶ "The Boz Ball," *Farmer's Cabinet*, 2/11/1842.

⁷ Untitled, *Macon (GA) Weekly Telegraph*, 3/8/1842.

⁸ "The New Yorkers," *Baltimore (MD) Sun*, 2/14/1842.

⁹ "Pennsylvania," *Farmer's Cabinet*, 2/25/1842.

following the elaborate circuit of appearances.¹⁰ When they did finally commence their travels around the country, the couple followed a schedule privileging the west and south over the northeast and refused invitations for repeat Boz Balls in other cities, much to the chagrin of prominent eastern Americans who had been waiting to fête him.¹¹

Yet when the need suited him, Dickens happily claimed his status as a celebrity. He tried to wield his influence in a series of lectures that argued for an international copyright statute to protect the rights of both American and British authors.¹² He first alluded to the cause during speeches given at his welcome dinners in Boston, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut (before he had traveled to New York City and experienced the Boz Ball), and continued to mention it in his travels west.¹³ He also circulated a letter signed by other British authors pleading for his cause. Newspapers were mixed in their response to his plea, some considering it theft to reprint an author's work without compensation, others thinking that

¹⁰ Dickens also told his admirer Philadelphia merchant Joseph Sill in person that his wife's illness had forced him to refuse many invitations and dramatically shorten his visits in certain cities; see Joseph Sill, March 8, 1842, Diaries, Volume 8, HSP.

¹¹ "Mr. and Mrs. Dickens," *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, 3/10/1842.

¹² For a discussion of Dickens's and the debate over instituting an international copyright, see James Barnes, *Free Trade in Books: A Study of the London Book Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: The Life of Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Gerhard Joseph, "Charles Dickens: International Copyright, and the Discretionary Silence of *Martin Chuzzlewit*," in Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds., *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 259-270, Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 109-132; Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), Jerome Meckier, "Introduction," *Innocent Abroad: Charles Dickens's American Engagements* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 1990);

¹³ "International Copyright," *Barre (MA) Gazette*, 2/18/1842; For the text of Dickens's speech, see Charles Dickens, "Speech: February 7, 1842," in *Speeches: Literary and Social* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 9-11.

international copyright laws would only hurt American newspapers and publishers.¹⁴ A third group felt it was presumptuous for Dickens, as an outsider, to speak about American laws and business practices at all. The editors of the Washington D.C. newspaper the *Madisonian* strongly disagreed with that statement, reminding readers that Dickens was not just a celebrity, but he was also a respected author and contributor to a transatlantic community of letters. Just because Americans had “made his whole life among [them] an incessant show and continuous blaze of publicity,” that did not mean he should be similarly superficial, and “speak only of the color of the wine or juiciness of the streak” at the elaborate events thrown in his honor.¹⁵ As an accomplished author and member of a literary community that transcended borders, the article argued that Dickens had the right and an obligation to speak to a matter that concerned “the whole body of literary men.”¹⁶ In addition to reflecting political differences between Dickens and disappointed Americans, the disagreement over Dickens’s obligations during his American tour—both his rejections of invitations to be honored at public events and his determination to advocate for his cause regardless of possible damage to his reputation—spoke to dissension over the functions and obligations of celebrity as well as the mechanics of the developing culture of celebrity.

¹⁴ The *Barre Gazette*, for example, argued that it was “disgraceful to our country that its booksellers should be allowed to seize upon the products of other men’s minds and make money out of the labor of other men’s heads and hands,” “*International Copyright*,” *Barre (MA) Gazette*, 2/18/1842; The *Pennsylvanian* out of Philadelphia simply felt that international copyright was a good idea whose time had not yet come, stating, “When it is so manifestly our interest to make the proposed arrangement with our transatlantic friend, that no one will deny the fact, then no doubt we shall have an international copyright law,” but for the moment, American literature and American publishing “struggle against the most depressing circumstances,” and the reprinting trade was the only way for them to be profitable, “*International Copyright*,” 5/11/1842; The *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, by way of contrast, felt that Dickens had fooled and abused the Americans’ hospitality, “Boz,” 8/11/1842. On the political economy of reprinting, see McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting*, 76-102.

¹⁵ “*International Copyright*,” *The Madisonian* (Washington, DC), 3/5/1842.

¹⁶ “Mr. Dickens on International Copyright,” *The Madisonian*, 3/3/1842

Celebrity had become a staple of American culture by the 1840s. For years Americans had gushed and gossiped over the lives and careers of celebrated performers, politicians and writers. Charles Dickens's refusal to cooperate with the plans his admirers had made in various cities, revealed that the mechanics of renown were as yet an incomplete site of negotiation in popular culture. The men and women who honored Dickens with elaborate receptions or who complained about his stand on international copyright sought to control the terms of their relationship with the author and his work. For them, the arrival of the respected author was an opportunity to display their community's wealth, to influence what he might say about them in future writings, or simply to feel connected to a cosmopolitan community of letters. For the author, it was a research trip, and such a scripted tour would ruin his plans to represent Americans in their normal behaviors and surroundings.

Thus the expectations between celebrities and their admirers and those who wanted to market them were not always in consonance with one another. Celebrity in the mid-nineteenth century was a commodity, and just like with any purchasable product, each consumer could use and interpret it differently.¹⁷ Yet celebrities themselves were also private individuals with plans of their own. The expanding market place of print that profited off selling stories about celebrity lives by constructing characters for readers whom they could understand, relate to, and also judge, created an expectation of fellowship and even intimacy between the figures

¹⁷ Similarly, many scholars of contemporary mass media have posited that readers and audiences had highly diverse responses to texts that demand to be read in certain ways. Janice Radway, "What's the Matter with Reception Study? Some Thoughts on the Disciplinary Origins, Conceptual Constraints, and Persistent Viability of a Paradigm," 327-353 and Toby Miller, "The Reception Deception," 353-370 in *New Directions in American Reception Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); David Morely, *The "Nationwide" Audience: Structure and Decoding* (London: BFI, 1980) and Ien Ang, *Living Room Wars: Rethinking Media Audiences for a Postmodern World* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

and their observers. Just as in any relationship, they carried different meanings and significance for everyone involved. Yet because these relationships were mediated through the forum of print and the lens of performance, these differences were amplified. Managers could make obvious demands from an actor, writer or lecturer with whom they had signed a contract—and those professionals could in turn make demands from them. But the men and women who purchased tickets to see, or bought a product associated with a celebrity, or even those who just read articles and came to admire them, also developed expectations. These expectations mostly concerned the production of high-quality performances and shows, but especially given the ruminations on personality that distinguished celebrity reporting in the period, a figure's success or failure to live up to the model of character and genius espoused in the press did much to define their relationship to the public. The market in celebrity was in effect one that sold sensation.¹⁸ Consumers bought into it because they felt something, but they responded to those feelings in any number of ways. In the presence of celebrity, admirers and observers expressed a broad range

¹⁸ The study of sensation contrasted with sentiment among the reading public has long been the focus of literary scholars studying nineteenth-century fiction. See Jesse Aleman and Shelley Streeby, "Introduction," *Empire and the Literature of Sensation: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), xiii-xxx. Aleman and Streeby describe "sensational literature" as similar to sentimental fiction in that they both "emphasize thrills, shock, and horror more than virtuous and socially redemptive feelings," sentimentalism did so to "elicit emotions in order to regulate them" (xvii). Richard Brodhead has argued that sentimental fiction appealed to readers "already possessing, or newly aspiring to, or at least mentally identifying with, the leisured, child-centered home of middle-class life," while sensational literature targeted, "farm boys, soldiers, German and Irish immigrants, and men and women of a newly solidifying working class," *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 79. At least in my study of newspapers, I cannot find such smooth divisions between readerships or article types. Sensational articles selling scandal and sentimental articles selling stories of triumph over hardship coexist on the same page, or even share protagonists at different times or in the hands of different printers. Nor can I so easily discern between a didactic message in one or an entertainment goal in another. See also, Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America* (London and New York: Verso, 1987).

of emotions spanning from desire to disappointment, and from admiration to anger. They bought and sold, read and wrote, and emulated but also judged.

Indeed celebrities were uniquely public figures, supported by but without any official obligations to the larger public beyond their contractual commitments to perform or make paid appearances. Their cultural role, however, included symbolic obligations to reflect or uphold more general social and moral values and to respond to public demands. No primer existed of course detailing these roles and responsibilities, other than the general tone of reporting about celebrated individuals and the critical words of news editors. The relationship between the people and their celebrities is something to be gleaned from surviving documents, from the newspapers, magazines and objects of material culture as well as from letters and diaries left behind. Most readers of course understood that stories and rumors circulated in newspapers and periodicals about celebrities were only such, and did not make them into the figures' personal acquaintances. Still the relationships between celebrities and their admirers had important meaning for individual lives and American culture.¹⁹ As I will show in this chapter, they inspired action, for example, the mundane act of buying a ticket to a Jenny Lind performance or a consumer product named after her, to the slightly more significant decision to travel to a different city to see that performance or to purchase an expensive celebrity artifact associated with her. At an extreme, discourse around celebrities could instigate mob action such as happened with the Astor Place Riot in May 1849, because celebrity personae successfully appealed to individual sentiments. From channeling anger to

¹⁹ For the contemporary moment, film critic Richard Schickel has done a remarkable job discerning the ways individuals respond to fame, and my own thoughts on this question have been significantly influenced by his trade book *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity* (New York: Ivan R. Dee, 2000).

curiosity to enthusiasm to intimacy, the construction of celebrity culture that this discourse represents offers us the opportunity to imagine how real individuals in the nineteenth century internalized the words of the press and the stories of celebrity and translated them to their experience of the world around them.

Celebrity Sensations, Act I: Edwin Forrest's Early Career and the Astor Place Riot

Most often the stories of celebrity lives and events glide through the newspapers and magazines without obvious sensation. A quick scan of newspapers on an average day in 1849 might reveal that Jenny Lind had donated to an orphanage in Manchester, that Fanny Kemble was considering a series of Shakespearean readings in Boston, or that John B. Gough would be lecturing in Saratoga Springs. If we clipped these articles out and created scrapbooks (as some of their greatest admirers did), they would mostly contain litanies of such repetitive details.²⁰ For the most part the pages would reflect an orderly world of performances and public appearances, illustrated by thoughtful discussions of a figure's style and talent and poetic rhapsodizing on the role of genius.²¹

Every once in awhile, though, a flood of articles about an exceptional incident would punctuate the narrative. A divorce, a death, a marriage, or a violent act would

²⁰ Ellen Gruber Garvey has described scrap booking as "homemade historiography" with a variety of purposes. Scrapbooks circulated among family members, members of social movements, and to one's future self. As personal records of reading, scrapbooks can be understood as a form of autobiography. They can also be seen as evidence of compilers and readers "asserting their way into the press" and modes of circulation, reordering and cataloging texts in an attempt to critique and manage interpretations either for others or their own later use; "The Power of Recirculation: Scrapbooks and the Reception of the Nineteenth-Century Press," in Philip Goldstein and James L. Machor, eds., *New Directions in American Reception Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 211-232. Also, P. P. Buckler and C.K. Leeper, "An Antebellum Woman's Scrapbook as Autobiographical Composition," *Journal of American Culture* 14:1 (1991): 1-8; Ellen Gruber Garvey, "Scissorizing and Scrapbooks: Nineteenth Century Reading, Remaking, and Recirculating," *New Media, 1740-1915* ed. by Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 207-228; Juliana M. Kuipers, "Scrapbooks: Intrinsic Value and Material Culture," *Journal of Archival Organization* 2:3 (October 2004): 83-91.

²¹ See Chapter Two of this work for more on the meaning of genius in the period.

break up the calm order of celebrity reporting. These moments yielded debates over the relationships between celebrities, their admirers and the public. They provided an illuminating opportunity to explore the workings of celebrity and the expectations to which celebrities were held by certain observers. But we must also remember that scandals were not at all typical in nineteenth century newspapers, and thus they should be viewed through the lens of what more commonly characterized the construction of celebrities in the presses.²²

In the nineteenth century, few celebrity scandals overshadowed the drama of the Astor Place Riot and the Forrest divorce trial in 1849 and 1850.²³ Both events not coincidentally involved one celebrity figure—the actor Edwin Forrest. Forrest's career and life engendered a mixed history in the period. When he first rose to prominence in the early 1820s, critics and audiences had high hopes for his potential to end the much lamented and written about American subservience to the English stage.²⁴ But by the mid-1840s, divisions had emerged in American newspapers as

²² For more on the scandalous side of celebrity in the period see Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett: The Life and Death of a Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: Knopf, 1998); Patricia Cline Cohen, Helen Horowitz and Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); the chapters on the Forrest divorce trial in Thomas Nelson Baker, *Sentiment and Celebrity: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Trials of Literary Fame* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

²³ For a more detailed look at the Astor Place Riot, see Peter George Buckley, "To the Opera House: Culture and Society in New York City, 1820-1860," (PhD Dissertation, SUNY Stony Brook, 1984); Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 63-70; Nigel Cliff, *The Shakespeare Riots: Revenge, Drama, and Death in Nineteenth-Century America* (Random house, 2007).

²⁴ Although now over forty years old in its original publication, David Grimsted's chapter, "American Playwrights: In Search of a National Drama" in *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (1968; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 137-170, still provides one of the more in-depth and sophisticated explorations of this issue for the theater. Scott C. Martin speaks in particular about the political and social implications of Forrest's career in, "Interpreting *Metamora*: Nationalism, Theater, Jacksonian Indian Policy," *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution in America, 1789-1860*, ed. by Martin (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 247-276. See also Joseph Roach, "The Emergence of the American Actor," *The Cambridge History of American Theater*, ed. by Don B. Wilmet and Christopher

to whether or not he had achieved his promise as an actor and celebrated personality. No one could argue with his domestic box office successes. His wealth was unparalleled among other native-born American performers, and his performances nearly always sold well.²⁵ American newspapers, however, disagreed as to the extent of his talent, or, perhaps more importantly, over whether he had lived up to the incredible expectations thrust upon him to represent a specifically "American" theater. His role in a riot resulting in at least twenty-five deaths and a very public divorce trial only capped a decade in which his position was already unsettled in American print and theatrical cultures.

American newspaper writers and editors imbued Forrest's career with national significance from his earliest appearances as a star. In the 1820s, theater critics typically lauded both Forrest's talent and his birth to an American family in Philadelphia. "S." a writer for the *Baltimore Patriot* took a usual tone in his promotion of Forrest's benefit in their city in October 1826. He emphasized the actor's youth, declaring him "but in the dawn of [his] dramatic career."²⁶ Already able to conquer many "arduous characters" at only twenty years old, the journalist predicted that "with study and application...his meridian" eventually "could be without rival on any boards."²⁷ S. enthusiastically noted that for this reason going to the theater could be

William Edgar (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 338-372. For movements engaged in establishing a particular American literature in the early republic see Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic: Cultivating Forums of Citizenship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, 2007).

²⁵ Although his physical acting style and the significance of his portrayal of Metamora have been popular topics of study in recent decades, no complete study of Forrest's life and career have been published since Richard Moody's *Edwin Forrest: First Star of the American Stage* (Knopf, 1960). Several biographers took Forrest as their topic in the nineteenth century, at least two of them Lawrence Barrett (*Edwin Forrest*, 1882) and James Rees (*The Life of Edwin Forrest with Reminiscences and Personal Recollections*, 1874), were friends of his during his lifetime.

²⁶ "Mr. Edwin Forrest," *Baltimore (MD) Patriot*, 10/23/1826.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

an act of patriotism, asking his readers to remember “that in attending the Theatre this evening *native talent* will be supported.”²⁸ Forrest was hardly the only native-born American actor performing in the period, but newspaper appraisals of his talent continually returned to that fact as a definitional one for his career and his importance to the field.²⁹

By the early 1830s, American newspapers regularly referred to Forrest as “the American Tragedian,” a title which the actor enthusiastically embraced.³⁰ Under the auspices of improving the American theatrical field in general, he sponsored several writing contests as part of a search for exceptional native dramaturgy. These contests, always demanding topics on American themes, produced some of the first works written in the United States to be performed abroad, including *Metamora; or, the Last of the Wampanoags* by John Augustus Stone and the *Gladiator* by Robert Montgomery Bird.³¹ Typically the plays selected as winners highlighted Forrest’s particular physical prowess.³² He owned the rights to these plays, and other than the initial prize, gave very little money back to their authors. Only later, however, did newspapers come to criticize these limits on his dramatic patronage. Early on, most newspapers promoted the contests as part of the American Tragedian’s devotion to

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The enthusiasm regarding Forrest’s native birth had a complicated history, tied up in both the emerging role of political theories of nativism, which would come to play in the Astor Place riot, and a concern among certain American elites that the United States become an equal player in English speaking belletristic civil society. See Kaplan, *Men of Letters in the Early Republic*.

³⁰ Although newspapers at the time and histories including Forrest since have often referred to him as the first American star, or first American tragedian, he was only the most successful and long-lasting figure to bear that title. John Howard Payne was likely the first American theatrical star to have a successful career in the United States. See Grace Overmyer, *America’s First Hamlet* (1957; reprint Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975).

³¹ Untitled, *Salem Gazette*, 11/25/1828; “Incentive to Genius,” *Village Register and Norfolk County Advertiser*, 11/27/1828; “Prize Tragedy,” *Baltimore Patriot*, 10/27/1829; On the significance of *Metamora* as a theatrical work see Gordon Mitchell Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

³² “Park Theatre,” *Providence Patriot & Columbian Phenix*, 12/30/1829; “Metamora,” *Baltimore (MD) Patriot*, 4/30/1842.

his profession and his nation.³³

Enthusiasm for Forrest in the public press, however, did include some self-conscious reflection on the part of the writers. Four days following the *Baltimore Patriot's* promotion of the actor's benefit in 1826, it began printing a series called, "A Glance at the Green Room," authored by the "Ghost of Garrick." The "Ghost" admitted his bias, writing that a "pride not unmingled with patriotic sentiment" inspired him to support the young actor.³⁴ The critic clearly had some knowledge of theater history—since he knew of Garrick and chose to evaluate Forrest in his name. But he did not elaborate on why Garrick, who had been an Englishman, would have a *patriotic* interest in an American actor's successes, nor did he make claims about performance style that allied him with any particular school of criticism.³⁵ It is thus not clear whether the writer meant to claim Garrick's spirit as an American one or to evaluate Forrest based on certain standards, or whether the long-deceased English actor was just a natural choice for someone claiming theatrical knowledge and authority. Similarly, newspaper writers rarely were explicit about their stake in the search for domestic talent in the 1820s, whether it was part of promoting the United States' participation in a trans-Atlantic culture of letters, or whether it emerged from a desire to expand American economic self-sufficiency, or even to demonstrate an American superiority.³⁶ The political affiliations of the *Baltimore Patriot* and its editor

³³ In an early review, the *Baltimore (MD) Patriot* effused, "Mr. Forrest has shewn himself to be a true American and as such a true friend of the American system, "Mr. Forrest and Metamora," *Baltimore Patriot*, 6/9/1830; the *Eastern Argus Semi-Weekly* mused that by June of 1831, *Metamora's* success had already inspired numerous American-written productions in cities around the country, "American Dramatic Literature," 6/3/1831.

³⁴ "A Glance at the Green Room, No. 1," *Baltimore (MD) Patriot*, 10/27/1826.

³⁵ He may very well not have had one. Theatre historiography on "schools of acting" in the 19th-century United States has yet to offer clear delineations, although Garff B. Wilson's *History of American Acting* (Bloomington: Indianapolis University Press, 1966) comes close.

³⁶ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Ray Allen Billington, *The Origins of Nativism in*

Isaac Munroe could provide some clues in its case. Munroe had founded the newspaper with the support of prominent Democratic-Republicans in 1814, making it a partisan newspaper. Yet earlier in 1826, the *Patriot* had declared its independence from any political party, although its editor preserved a personal affiliation with the National Republicans and later the Whigs.³⁷ Munroe likely would have had an interest in Forrest's talents, then, as part of the construction of an independent American economy and the celebration of the republic's potential as an admired cultural force abroad. But in these early days of Forrest's career, a newspaper with Democratic and nativist interests was as likely to declare its support in similar terms for the actor.³⁸ There were no clear political interests invested in his initial success.

Yet, despite this enthusiasm for Forrest's citizenship, tensions were already emerging about his talent as an actor. A tall man with a large frame, Forrest cultivated his muscular build and chose roles that called upon him to display the size of his arms and legs. By the middle of 1827, some critics were claiming that he relied too much on this physical power and appeal without seeking to improve himself otherwise as an intellectual actor. In fact, one reviewer wrote that he had "heard that Forrest was indolent" and that, instead of working to improve his

the United States, 1800-1844 (1933; Arno Press, 1974); D T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1988);

³⁷ *The Baltimore Patriot*, 1/1/1826; John Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore: Being a Complete History of "Baltimore Town" and Baltimore City from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Turnbull Bros., 1874), 90; Clarence Saunders Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers* Vol. 1 (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1917), 226, 245.

³⁸ *The Albany Microscope*, for example, a paper affiliated with the Jacksonian Democratic party, also reviewed Forrest especially well early in his career.; "Edwin Forrest," *The Albany Microscope*, 1/11/1834. The *Baltimore Patriot* actually reprinted this article on 1/18/1834 with no editorial comment. At least on this point, two newspapers that would have passionately criticized one another during election season could agree. See William E. Rowley, "The Albany Microscope: A Gadfly for Jacksonian Democracy," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* Vol 88 (1990), 173.

acquired skills, “he trusted too much to his talents.”³⁹ He imbued this possible character flaw with more than a theatrical significance, continuing “If it be true...we...regret it,” because “his country expects much of him.”⁴⁰ In these early years of Forrest’s career, many critics were enthusiastic about his potential, but some argued against lauding him with an uncritical eye. His natural genius, they claimed, still needed cultivation, honed by learning and skill. After all, it would certainly not benefit a nascent American drama—whatever its benefits—for the country’s greatest star to be an empty shell, and for him to remain the actor he had been in his twenties even as his career matured. Integral, then, to newspaper discussions of Forrest’s character and his role as an American star had been a discourse of expectations and the possibility that he would fail to meet his potential and thereby disappoint his admirers.

As an enthusiastic consumer of celebrity culture and a self-proclaimed avid newspaper reader and theatregoer, Philadelphia merchant Joseph Sill (1801-1854) absorbed much of this discourse on acting through his dedicated attendance at the theater and attention to the language and substance of criticism in printed reviews. In extant albums spanning twenty years of his life, Sill recorded his impressions of dozens of nights at the theater, as well as responded in some way to most of the celebrity scandals and events of the 1830s through the 1850s.⁴¹ His intensive interest and participation in the larger discourse of celebrity represented the

³⁹ “The Theater,” *Providence Patriot and Columbian Phoenix*, 6/20/1827.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ In a topic for another project, I happened by chance upon Sill’s journals. They had been organized by the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania under the category of Philadelphia businessman, and all the keywords for searching him were related to business, politics and philanthropy, although in truth he mostly discussed the arts and personal family topics in the pages of the journals. Sill’s diaries have not been explored much by historians, but some information about his life can be found in Henry Simpson’s *The Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, Now Deceased* (W. Brotherhead, 1859), 888-890.

etymological as well as the epistemological expansion of celebrity from a character in the news to a larger piece of a popular culture that occurred during his lifetime. A native of England, he had moved to the United States at eighteen years old and according to Philadelphia city directories he owned a “fancy store” or “fancy dry goods” store at various addresses on Chestnut throughout this period. Although he had little formal education following his father’s death when he was twelve years old, he clearly considered himself of an independent and self-educated merchant class.⁴² His language reflected his familiarity with popular newspaper criticism, but also that he thought of himself as more than a casual consumer but rather as a participant in an extended journalistic community. His journals reveal that he responded to articles with which he disagreed at least twice with letters to editors of newspapers he read.⁴³ He commented in his journal upon Forrest’s performances as well as events involving him many times throughout the years.

Sill shared the concerns aired by the Baltimore newspaper about Forrest, writing in 1832 that he did not understand the enthusiasm theater critics and his fellow audience members felt for the American Tragedian. In a review of a performance of *Orralloosa* starring Forrest, the merchant reflected on the historical accuracy of the play, and felt that the characters “were well drawn” and the “Scenery & Decorations were splendid.” About the show’s star, however, he mused, “I cannot feel that interest in the performances of Forrest that others feel – he never awakens those intense emotions which are excited only by natural actions – he is altogether too boisterous & artificial.”⁴⁴ Perhaps Sill’s own status as a foreign-born observer influenced his feelings, making the nativist rhetoric surrounding the actor less

⁴² Ibid, 889.

⁴³ Joseph Sill, October 29, 1842, Diaries, Vol 4, LCP Manuscripts.

⁴⁴ Joseph Sill, October 12, 1832, Diaries, Vol 1, LCP Manuscripts.

compelling. It also marks his attachment to the natural style associated with Garrick, as opposed to a histrionic form more commonly accomplished by actors and seen on stages. Yet Sill was not alone in his feelings, which were reflected by several American journalists. They, however, were not in the majority. Forrest's star remained on the rise in this period, but already he represented the different ways that observers could understand and connect with celebrity.

Forrest dominated the American theater well into the 1830s, and building upon this success in 1836 he played at Drury Lane in London. This first English tour made respectable profits at the box offices. Again demonstrating the personal stakes involved in the culture of celebrity, Joseph Sill took a particular interest in the response of his homeland to this native of his adopted city. He wrote an uncommonly long passage in his diary responding to reviews in English newspapers. He was gratified that audiences had "greeted [him] very warmly" and that newspapers had reviewed him well as a "Melo-Dramatic Actor," although like Sill himself, they seemed to "doubt his capability as a Tragedian."⁴⁵ Despite these typical misgivings on the part of critics, audiences at his London shows were impressive. Forrest returned to the United States even wealthier and more triumphant than when he had left. He impressed the English with his "irreproachable" private character, and also wooed and married Catherine Sinclair, the "amiable and accomplished" daughter of a celebrated British musician.⁴⁶ Unlike

⁴⁵ Joseph Sill, December 2, 1836, Diaries, Vol 2, LCP Manuscripts. In other words, Sill and the critics felt Forrest did fine with less-refined roles including the American-written plays he sponsored, but was not up for the task of Shakespeare's heroes.

⁴⁶ For more on the response of the English to Forrest's British tour, see Joseph Sill, December 2, 1836, Diaries, Vol 2, LCP Manuscripts. For an account of his wedding to Catherine Sinclair, see "Matrimony Notices," *Richmond (VA) Enquirer*, 8/22/1837. Catherine Sinclair Forrest's life is not a well-researched one. For some places to start in exploring her see Anne Rubenstein, "Catherine Sinclair," *European Immigrant Women in the United States: A Biographical Dictionary*, ed. by Judy Barrett Litoff (Taylor & Francis, 1994), 283-285.

other American-born figures that had seen their star fall quickly once they traveled abroad, upon his return to the States his successes at the box office only multiplied.⁴⁷

Interest by journalists in Forrest's private life and personal character also increased. Near the end of his life, the actor was known to joke that anyone wanting information about his early years should ask certain publishers, because they usually knew more about him than he did.⁴⁸ His physique, his homes, his marriage, his reading tastes, and his aversion to the carousing associated with actors and the green room were all topics of interest in the press. Although most Americans had long ignored Yale President Timothy Dwight's 1794 statement that "playgoing" put an audience member's immortal soul at risk, they did not always shy away from applying the criticism to the players themselves.⁴⁹ Yet Forrest, like many of the theater's most prominent members, was exempt somewhat from that. Had he remained simply an actor, he might have retained widespread admiration as an American Tragedian. Increasingly, however, it seemed impossible for a truly great celebrity to remain simply one thing as celebrity culture came to saturate much of public life.

Late in the 1830s, a foray into politics complicated his reputation in newspapers and made previously subtle concerns about his character more

⁴⁷ Actor John Howard Payne, for example, had much success in his early acting career, but was unsuccessful on his tour to England. He returned home to the United States, and finding himself progressively less popular as an actor, embarked on a different, more consistently successful career as a writer and composer. See Grace Overmyer, *America's First Hamlet* (1957; reprint Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975).

⁴⁸ James Rees, *The Life of Edwin Forrest, With Reminiscences and Personal Recollections* (Philadelphia, 1874), 21.

⁴⁹ Timothy Dwight, *An Essay on the Stage* (Middletown, CT, 1824). I have more than once seen a reference to Dwight having made the statement in 1824, which would have been impossible since he died in 1817, although it has thus also been misattributed to his son, also named Timothy Dwight and also a Yale President. The error must come from this printing of his "essay on the stage"

prominent. It also brought a backlash in print against the expanding role of celebrity in American culture. In 1838, he allied himself publicly with the Democratic Party. He gave his first political speech on July 4th of that year at a church in New York City. "Noah," a correspondent to the *Hudson River Chronicle*, described the speech's message as "ultra-LoCo Focosim, double-distilled."⁵⁰ He found it particularly disturbing because the actor's talent for histrionics and stage craft moved many people in the audience, and he worried they might adopt a radical Democratic agenda based more on emotional response than reasoned judgment. Following this speech, the *Hudson River Chronicle* became just one of many newspapers whose pages were critical of Forrest as an actor and a man. An article published in late July 1838 praised Forrest's physical powers, but dismissed him as an "imitator, a copyist" on the stage. Worse, the paper derided his private character, calling him "vain," "corrupt" and ungrateful for the "liberality of his countrymen." Few writers would be so vehement in their dislike of Forrest, but certainly after the late 1830s, the actor's popularity split more clearly along party lines.⁵¹ Late in 1838, when the Democratic Party in New York City nominated Forrest for Congress, the unaffiliated but Whig-leaning *Farmer's Cabinet* called the nomination of a "play actor...irresponsible."⁵² By way of contrast, the openly Whig paper, *The Portsmouth Journal of Literature & Politics* had more to say, remarking sarcastically that if Forrest won the nomination

⁵⁰ "For the Chronicle," *Hudson River Chronicle*, 7/10/1838; The Locofocos were a faction of the Democratic party in existence from roughly 1835 through the 1840s. The faction was originally called the Equal Rights Party. Locofocos generally supported free trade, increased specie circulation, legal protection for labor unions, financial speculation and state banks.

⁵¹ To establish this interpretation, I divided newspapers with discernable political leanings and a consistent attitude towards Edwin Forrest in the late 1830s through the 1840s, with some exceptions in individual articles, by affiliation, and discovered that divisions between moderate and extreme affiliation with either the Democrats or the Whigs correlated with a newspaper's portrayal of Forrest. See *Barre Gazette*, *Pittsfield Sun*, *Berkshire County Whig*, *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, *Morning News*, *Hudson River Chronicle*, *St. Louis Reveille*, *The Rockford Forum*, *The Pennsylvanian*.

⁵² Untitled, *Farmer's Cabinet*, 10/26/1838;

and the election he could, “act...on the Congressional boards in the day time and on the Thespian in the evening, thus reversing the usual order of the proceeding by letting the Farce precede the Tragedy.”⁵³ The Democratic *Baltimore Sun*, on the other hand, lauded Forrest’s move into politics, and joyfully told opposition papers that they could put the news “in [their] pipe and smoke it.”⁵⁴ When disagreement over Forrest’s talents and the appropriateness of his participation in politics continued into the 1840s, the *Baltimore Sun* weighed in again, stating defensively that Forrest apparently had been “born on the wrong side of the Atlantic for his great merits to be fully discovered by Americans.”⁵⁵ At least among newspaper editors, Forrest’s following had begun to take on a divisive and partisan tone.

The *Providence Patriot and Columbian Phenix* had noted in 1827 that Forrest’s popularity hinged on the expectations put upon him as a native son by American newspapers and audiences. Yet the fairly benign but escalating disagreements over his talent, genius and character that began in the 1830s did not have a measurable effect on his wealth and ability to draw large audiences (except perhaps to improve his appeal by making his name more familiar). As early as 1833, several newspapers had speculated that the thespian already boasted “a fortune of one hundred thousand dollars.”⁵⁶ Twelve years later, and only shortly after the country began its recovery from a profound depression, the *Berkshire County Whig* estimated that Forrest’s assets in stocks and real estate *alone* amounted to that

⁵³ “Novel Nomination for Congress!” 10/20/1838. In nineteenth-century theaters, the evening’s entertainments included a variety of performances. Often the longer piece, a drama, was followed by a comical shorter piece, a burlesque or a farce.

⁵⁴ “News for the Gothamites,” *Baltimore Sun*, 6/18/1838.

⁵⁵ “Mr. Edwin Forrest,” *Baltimore Sun*, 10/23/1845.

⁵⁶ “Things in General,” reprinted from the *Boston Atlas* in the *Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics*, 7/20/1833.

much.⁵⁷ Theater managers in the east and west continued to find Forrest a boon to their often-struggling theaters. The relationship between a celebrity figure's popularity and the discourse around their character in newspapers was clearly shifting. Rather than character being at the center of discussion of a famous figure's public role, it became just another trait of the much larger market in personality. Still, the charges laid out by the *Baltimore Patriot* that those who disliked Forrest were lacking in patriotism, set an important precedent for the future tone of debate over the actor's talents.

Thus far these arguments in the newspapers were minor events in the career of Edwin Forrest, and yet they were enough to make the man feel besieged. His friend and biographer James Rees remarked that at the peak of his fame in the late 1830s through the early 1840s, the actor refused to associate with the "oyster critics' of the press," reflecting a growing animosity between the actor and those who criticized him publicly.⁵⁸ The decreasing universality of admiration for Forrest had very little effect on his popularity with audiences, but his biographers affirm that as a man he took challenges to his acting talent and his political partisanship very personally.⁵⁹

Yet, the growing criticism of Forrest also illuminated the changing contours of celebrity and its connection with popular culture. During the late 1840s and into the early 1850s, when Forrest could have been enjoying his status as a mature thespian and the dominant American actor, he instead treated the public to two tremendous scandals that contributed to and opened the way for a more expansive dispute over the role of celebrity and celebrities in American culture. His divorce from Catherine

⁵⁷ Untitled, *Berkshire County Whig*, 10/16/1845.

⁵⁸ James Rees, *The Life of Edwin Forrest* (T.B. Peterson, 1874), 175.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*; Lawrence Barrett, *Edwin Forrest* (Boston, 1882).

Sinclair Forrest and his role in the Astor Place Riot of May 1849 exposed fissures internationally in terms of Anglo-American relations but also divisions among Americans along roughly hewn social class lines.⁶⁰ Both events came in the wake of his disappointing professional tour of Britain from 1845 to 1847. Forrest blamed fellow Shakespearean actor William Macready for his uncharacteristically weak box office returns in British theaters. When invitations to dinners and receptions hosted by British acting elite were not forthcoming, he considered the snubbing Macready's doing.⁶¹ Following that trip, Macready himself toured the United States during the 1848-1849 theatrical season. Forrest pursued the Englishman around the country, playing on competing stages and relishing the positive reviews and higher ticket sales, but also publishing several cards attacking Macready's character even after the English actor ceased to respond to them.⁶² In response to Macready's statement, given on a Philadelphia stage, that "he had never entertained towards [Forrest] a feeling of unkindness," Forrest responded in print with a "card" to the *Philadelphia Ledger*, calling his rival a liar suffering from a "narrow envious mind" and "selfish fears."⁶³ Even as Forrest claimed to dislike "oyster critics" and the press, he was happy to use them when he thought they could be to his advantage. He well understood the workings of renown in the period.

This rivalry traveled the United States for months, visiting St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore and Philadelphia. Finally the two actors landed in New York

⁶⁰ Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

⁶¹ Richard Moody, *Edwin Forrest, First Star of the American Stage* (Knopf, 1960).

⁶² Western theatrical managers Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow followed the receipts of the Macready/Forrest rivalry closely in theaters around the country. Professional acquaintance and friend C.A. Logan, for example, wrote to Sol Smith that in Cincinnati, Ohio, Macready "averaged \$100 less than Forrest for the first seven nights—but [manager] Bates made money by him nonetheless;" see C.A. Logan, Cincinnati to Sol Smith, April 22, 1849, Sol Smith Collection, MoHS.

⁶³ "The Sun," *Baltimore Sun*, 11/23/1848.

City in May of 1849. The Opera House at Astor Place booked Macready, and the Broadway Theater responded with a concurrent listing with Forrest. Not coincidentally, these two theaters were the focus of an ongoing transformation in American theatrical culture, as historian Lawrence Levine noted in *Highbrow/Lowbrow*. The proprietors of the Opera House had designed it specifically as a refined alternative to the standard nineteenth-century American theater in which white members of the middle and upper classes were mixed with prostitutes, African Americans, and manual laborers in divided sections of the same building, while the entertainments combined blackface minstrelsy and the occasional animal act with Shakespeare. The Astor Place Opera house began to introduce more expensive seating to shut out certain classes, while reforming the stage performances to emphasize dramas and works more recognized for literary merit.⁶⁴

Although in other cities around the country Forrest and Macready would often play on the same stages, the class divisions and larger market in New York City brought to the forefront of debate a tone that had always existed under the rivalry's surface. The nativist assertion that Macready, as an English man, was associated with effeminacy and attempts by owners and managers of theaters like the Opera House to "aristocratize the pit" while Forrest, a democrat and an American, represented manliness, national independence, and the hard-working classes, was at the heart of the conflict resulting in the Astor Place Riot. The onstage rivalry culminated in the streets on May 10, 1847, when a crowd mobbed the Opera House.

⁶⁴ Peter George Buckley, "'To the Opera House:' Culture and Society in New York City, 1820-1860," (PhD Dissertation, SUNY Stony Brook, 1984); Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 63-70; David Grimsted's chapter, "American Playwrights: In Search of a National Drama" in *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (1968; Berkeley: University of California Press. 1987),

Violence erupted between the police and the militia (who had been called in anticipation of the violence), resulting in some twenty-two deaths and 150 injuries.⁶⁵ The riot has been explained as simultaneously a “struggle for power and cultural authority” between arbiters, producers and consumers of popular entertainment venues, and a reflection of, and catalyst for, the class conflict that would divide the country in the coming years.⁶⁶

Individual observer, Joseph Sill, by now a wealthy man able to afford private boxes at the theater, confirmed these stakes involved in the conflict between Macready and Forest, and provides a view of how at least one theatergoer was aware of, and invested in, the ongoing affair. The Philadelphia merchant attended the theater at Astor Place on the night of May 10th, and described his experience in a passage that opened incongruously with, “Fine Weather! I was in N. York all day.” Despite the casual opening, he was clearly familiar with and concerned about the Forrest and Macready rivalry before he attended that night. He understood the significance of the event, and its political as well as theatrical causes, describing the deliberate “attempt made by the friends of Forrest to create a riot.”⁶⁷ Because he wanted to record very carefully how the events unfolded from his perspective, and perhaps to downplay the representativeness of the mob, he separated carefully the violence outside from the performance he witnessed inside. Although the evening began somewhat chaotically inside the theater, Sill noted that by the third act the police had emptied the theater of most of the rioters, and that from then until the end of the show he and his friend could hear the play quite clearly. As he sat watching a

⁶⁵ Peter Buckley, “To the Opera House,” (PhD dissertation).

⁶⁶ Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 68; Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

⁶⁷ Joseph Sill, May 10, 1849, Diaries, Vol 8, LCP Manuscripts.

performance he claimed to enjoy, the mobbing outside continued, and “large Stones & Brick-bats” came through the window. Here he acknowledged that it was far from an ideal evening at the theater, as he complained that although he sat in a “private Box,” a stone “hit [him] on the hand...and very nearly touched [his] head.” This object was not the only one he saw do damage inside the theater, as he exclaimed, “A previous Stone broke a part of the Chandelier!”⁶⁸

What is remarkable about Joseph Sill’s account of the riot for celebrity culture, is how deeply invested he was in the event and its interpretation. Sill emphasized that the mob was in the minority, asserting that “Mr. Macready was supported by 9/10th inside, & opposed only by about 1/10th.”⁶⁹ He called the opposition “evidently vulgar people.”⁷⁰ Despite knowing that a crowd was expected to oppose Macready’s performance, and realizing very well that his “people” at home in Philadelphia would be “uneasy about [him],” he attended the theater that evening.⁷¹ Even after seeing a chandelier nearly broken and being hit with a stone himself, he stayed seated and quiet throughout the show and was careful in his diary account to spend time giving mob crowd had failed in at least one object: “we heard Mr. Macready very distinctly until the end of the Play.” The passion of “the friends of Forrest” and the ability of the most vocal among them to stir up a crowd for their cause supports the narrative of a “struggle for power and cultural authority.”⁷² Joseph Sill also felt passionately, but about the other side. His earlier discussions of the theater demonstrated that he preferred Macready’s style to Forrest’s, criticizing the latter’s “bombastic” style. In a much earlier passage from 1832, he had displayed his admiration of the English

⁶⁸ Joseph Sill, May 11, 1849, Diaries, Vol 8, LCP Manuscripts.

⁶⁹ Joseph Sill, May 10, 1849, Diaries, Vol 8, LCP Manuscripts.

⁷⁰ Joseph Sill, May 11, 1849, Diaries, Vol 8, LCP Manuscripts.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 68.

actor's more refined stage presence.⁷³ These broad and deeply significant cultural divisions found expression in a fight between two actors—a dispute newspapers at the time called “absurd and incredible” as well as “paltry,” despite the obvious passions involved.⁷⁴

It must be understood, then, as an ironic success for the mechanics of renown. The emerging celebrity culture industries had managed to make a personal grudge into a marketing tool. The comedian Cornelius Logan, who made his career acting and managing theaters in the south and west, wrote to his colleague Sol Smith about the rivalry in April 1849, noting that in a Cincinnati theater the manager Bates had done well by the rivalry through scheduling them on succeeding weeks.⁷⁵ Edwin Forrest deliberately followed Macready around the country, to places with multiple venues or even just one major theater, forcing audiences sometimes to choose between them on a particular night—but also implicitly suggesting that they could alternate between them and decide for themselves whom they preferred. Editors published stories about the rivalry in the same issues as advertisements for their respective shows, both anticipating and creating interest. Although it cannot be said that the actors, their agents, or newspaper editors purposefully instigated violence, certainly their efforts to so neatly align the two men's identities with divergent political positions, and the coincidence of the riot with their appearances, revealed the power of the marketing tools already in place to inspire strong emotions.⁷⁶ In an ever-expanding market, the cultivation of rivalries, disagreements

⁷³ Joseph Sill, December 17, 1832, Diaries, Vol 1, LCP Manuscripts.

⁷⁴ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 65.

⁷⁵ C.A. Logan, Cincinnati, to Sol Smith, 4/22/1849, Sol Smith Collection, MoHS.

⁷⁶ With the exception of dime novel author, journalist and publisher E. Z. C. Judson (Ned Buntline) who was tried for instigating the riot and spent time in prison for it. Buntline had long nurtured an affiliation with nativism, and had been the writer of several of the cards, bills, and broadsheets

and divided constituencies provided ample capital for the managers of renown and became a permanent facet of celebrity culture.

The riot occupied the pages in newspapers across the nation for weeks, but Edwin Forrest's reputation remained basically unchanged. Those newspapers who criticized him before, continued to after, while those who had admired him before, found reason afterwards to blame other parties for the violence. The riot began with headlines printed in all capital letters and punctuated by exclamation points and generated much interest for a short time, but then died out without inspiring sustained national introspection on the pages of periodicals. Forrest himself did not respond publicly to the riot, while Macready donated money to the families of the survivors and expressed his regret over the events.⁷⁷ The event, and Forrest's part in it, was rarely mentioned again in consort with the actor's name until it came up in obituaries following his death in 1872. The riot and his rivalry with Macready could have become just a footnote to his career. But his own behavior and its portrayal in the press during his divorce proceedings which followed shortly after these events solidified his association with unruly behavior and street violence. It also kept explorations of class division as well as the disappointments and excesses of elite and celebrity culture going in newspapers around the country.

Celebrity Sensations, Act II: The Divorce

In contrast to reporting on the riot, the coverage of Edwin Forrest's divorce began quietly and turned into a public firestorm in print. Newspapers on the east

that circulated in New York City riling up passions for Forrest and against Macready. See Richard Moody, *The Astor Place Riot* (Indiana University Press, 1958) and David M. Henkin, *City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York* (New York: Columbia University Press), 85-89; Jay Monaghan, *The Great Rascal: The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952).

⁷⁷ Untitled, *Saint Louis Daily Reveille*, 6/1/1849.

coast actually announced Catherine's and Edwin's separation before the riot, in brief articles assigning no cause to the troubles. The *Barre Gazette* in Massachusetts reported it on May 11th, 1849, the morning after the riot but before the news could have reached the city and made it into print. In western newspapers, including the *St. Louis Republican* and the *Rockford (IL) Forum*, the divorce and riot shared a newspaper debut. The coincidence of these events could not have escaped readers' attention, and could not have been good for Edwin Forrest's already struggling reputation for personal character, although it did not hurt his economic successes as an actor.

From the start, "public opinion" as reflected in mainstream newspapers seemed to favor Catherine Sinclair Forrest over Edwin Forrest. The *Brunswick*, from Brunswick, Missouri, reprinted an article its editor found in the *Buffalo (NY) Express*, which linked their separation to "the mania developed in his mind against persons of a purely English origin." Never mind that Catherine was actually Scottish—to a "monomaniac" such as Edwin, the article's author suggested, the difference was insignificant, even for "the partner of his bosom, a most affectionate & accomplished lady." Just weeks after the public announcement of their separation, some writers and editors had begun to mold a narrative out of the divorce that complemented existing narratives around Forrest's character and politics. Building off the history of Forrest's rivalry with Macready and his association with nativism, but also making reference to the negative reviews of Forrest's acting as bombastic and unrefined, they counterpoised "Mrs. F.," a "pure-minded, high-toned, and exemplary woman" with "his capricious tyranny, and the perpetual outbreak of his

diabolical temper.”⁷⁸ Just as newspapers had done with the Forrest-Macready rivalry, they turned the Forrest divorce into a dispute with social, political and cultural, rather than simply personal, differences at its origins.

Catherine largely had stayed out of the newspapers since her marriage, so journalists had to familiarize their reading and the sensational public with her character and life as it had developed after 1836. The *Barre Gazette* described her as a “lady of talent and beauty,” but pointed to a deep sadness—she had been the mother of four children, none of whom survived infancy.⁷⁹ The *Boston Atlas* and other papers stated that until the winter of 1848 the couple had lived together happily. They emphasized that the divisions had arisen so quickly between the couple that Edwin’s demand for a divorce actually had taken Catherine by surprise. Most descriptions assigned no immediate cause for the trouble, but implicitly looked to the husband. They reported that Edwin had returned home in December 1848, in the midst of his competitive run around the country with Macready and, displaying “a most unhappy state of mind,” had demanded a separation.⁸⁰ “Immediate friends” had tried to intercede on Catherine’s behalf, but “[h]e was not to be interrogated...and he...accomplished his object [the separation].”⁸¹ Newspaper reporting, then, immediately and firmly established the breakup of the marriage as his doing rather than hers.

Edwin wanted a quiet divorce, settled through the closed doors of the Pennsylvania legislature on his terms.⁸² As a native Pennsylvanian, he had some

⁷⁸ “Mrs. Forrest,” *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 6/14/1849.

⁷⁹ “Separation of Edwin Forrest from his Wife,” *Barre (MA) Gazette*, 5/11/1849.

⁸⁰ “Separation of Edwin Forrest form his Wife,” *Boston Atlas*, reprinted in the *Barre Gazette*, 5/11/1849.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² According to Norma Basch’s history of American divorce, many famous couples sought

claim for pursuing his divorce in that state. Yet, as Norma Basch's history of American divorce has revealed, wealthy and powerful men looking to divorce their wives before the twentieth century overwhelmingly did so in states with legislative divorce. Critics of divorce laws in the period argued that legislative divorce favored "wealth" and "connections"—two things that Edwin had plenty of, but that Catherine lacked, especially in Pennsylvania.⁸³ Certainly his lawyers were aware of the favorable conditions offered in his home state over his adopted home of New York.

Although it made sense on the one hand for Edwin and his lawyers to pursue legislative divorce if it privileged wealth and power, they had not anticipated another, even stronger, issue with the process. Richard Chused's study of nineteenth-century divorce found that contrary to Forrest's team's expectations, women actually persevered more frequently in legislative cases because male legislators were sympathetic to their gendered stories of victimization and misfortune.⁸⁴ Edwin brought up a bill of divorce in Pennsylvania in early 1850, but it was rejected after Catherine, through her lawyers, responded to the petition with evidence that New York should take jurisdiction in the case. Catherine and her lawyers argued that as a couple, they had lived in New York City for most of their marriage and that most of their mutual friends lived in that city. Taking the role of a willing and submissive *feme covert*, Catherine argued that she had "no pecuniary means to follow Mr. Forrest into another state." She successfully played to emotion and to her status as a defenseless woman in a foreign country, claiming that she could not come to

divorces in Pennsylvania because the state's laws accorded the most privacy to the proceedings; *Framing American Divorce: From the Revolutionary Generation to the Victorians* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 50-55.

⁸³ Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 51-52.

⁸⁴ Richard H. Chused, *Private Acts in Public Places: A Social History of Divorce in the Formative Era of American Family Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 51.

Harrisburg to contest the divorce, because being “[f]ar from [her] native land and only male relation, [she] had no protector to accompany [her].”⁸⁵ Given the course that the case would take, it is important that from the very start Catherine, with the advice of her friends and lawyers, played the role of an obedient wife and vulnerable woman. The Pennsylvania legislature denied Edwin’s request for a divorce in that state, and news of their respective pleas and the eventual decision circulated in newspapers around the country.⁸⁶ In this particular case, gendered expectations won out over the privileges of wealth.

In New York, the divorce had to pass through the courts, rather than the legislature, which meant a public trial. Catherine brought a petition for divorce against Edwin in New York in November of 1851.⁸⁷ Earlier, in his petition to the Pennsylvania Senate, Edwin had charged his wife with having committed adultery with seven men.⁸⁸ Donning the mantle of a dutiful wife, Catherine had explained in her response to the Pennsylvania legislature that this charge was the only one that could have convinced her to oppose her husband’s wishes, and to disavow him publicly. In her application for divorce in New York she countered that he, not she, had broken the bonds of their marriage. During the trial, specific charges of adultery were made against both Catherine and Edwin, with each party naming names. Witnesses for Edwin (mostly servants still employed by him, as many sources noted) claimed that during her husband’s frequent trips out of town, Catherine had hosted

⁸⁵ “Mrs. Forrest’s Reply to Mr. Forrest’s Petition for a Divorce,” *Boston (MA) Daily Atlas*, 3/12/1850.

⁸⁶ “Harrisburg,” *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, 4/18/1850; “Forrest Divorce Case,” *Barre (MA) Patriot*, 4/5/1850; “Edwin Forrest,” *Rockford (IL) Forum*, 4/10/1850.

⁸⁷ “The Forrest Divorce Case,” *Barre (MA) Patriot*, 11/21/1851.

⁸⁸ “Forrest Divorce Case,” *Barre (MA) Patriot*, 8/23/1850.

parties for members of New York's cultural and social elite.⁸⁹ These parties, they charged, had often descended into drunkenness and debauchery. Such details, the public nature of a trial by jury and the charges of sexual misconduct, received much attention from journalists.

Divorce in the mid-nineteenth century was in any situation a sensational affair. In the absence of no-fault decrees, someone had to take the blame, and be punished. Thus every case included a tale of either a husband's or a wife's failure to meet cultural expectations and social obligations, through abandonment, cruelty, or adultery. A divorce provided all the good elements of a drama, in a variety of combinations, and stories of marital strife sold well in pamphlets produced from court documents and fictional novels.⁹⁰ The Forrest case must have been especially appealing, as it had each of the required elements, with the additional lure of fame and wealth attached to it. The avidity with which journalists and publishers in the eastern United States pursued the Forrest divorce story has been much covered in historiography, but western newspapers followed the divorce as well, with as much attention to the order of events if not the details, and judged the parties involved equally if not more harshly.⁹¹

Still the publicity paid to the Forrest case was not inevitable. Another highly

⁸⁹ Thomas Nelson Baker, *Sentiment & Celebrity: Nathaniel Parker Willis and the Trials of Celebrity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 143.

⁹⁰ Norma Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 224. James Harwood Barnett, *Divorce and the American Novel, 1858-1937: A Study in Literary Reflections of Social Influences* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968); and Warren French, "Timothy Shay Arthur's Divorce Fiction," *Texas University Studies in English* 33 (1954): 90-96.

⁹¹ Thomas Nelson Baker, *Sentiment and Celebrity*; Ginger Strand, "'My Noble Spartacus': Edwin Forrest and Masculinity on the Nineteenth-Century Stage," in *Passing Performances: Queer Readings of Leading Players in American Theater History*, ed. by Robert A. Schanke and Kim Marra (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 19-40. See coverage in the *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, the *Saint Louis (MO) Daily Reveille*, and the *Rockford (IL) Forum*, around important dates in the case: Forrest's assault of N. P. Willis in the summer of 1850, and after the trial's conclusion in New York in the spring of 1852.

publicized divorce—Fanny Kemble Butler’s—while certainly written about in the press, simply did not provoke the same sensation. In fact at its conclusion, the same newspapers reported the decision, while asserting that it would keep the details out of their publications out of regard for the family’s privacy.⁹² As historian Thomas Baker has shown, both Forrests were too closely associated with New York journalists, especially the verbose N. P. Willis, to keep their developing story out of the papers, as the details affected many of them, or their families, personally. Furthermore, Edwin, especially, did himself “no favors” if he truly meant to keep publicity at a minimum, when on several occasions, he accosted his wife’s friends and even her legal counsel on public streets or omnibuses.⁹³ A few papers reported that one morning en route to the trial, Edwin had encountered Catherine and spouted vulgarities at her.⁹⁴ Unlike the Forrests, the Butlers did not publicly or verbally slander one another. They produced statements for their divorce proceedings in the Philadelphia legislature, documents that were then published as part of public record. Yet even in those pages the charges made were circumspect, and certainly never salacious, as were those made in the Forrest case.⁹⁵

After losing his attempt at more private divorce proceedings in Pennsylvania, Edwin himself may have destroyed any possibility that his domestic strife would fade from public attention. In the summer of 1850, he beat the famous writer N. P. Willis with a whip in New York City’s Washington Square. Not only did he attack another recognizable man on a public street, but he did so in a heavily trafficked area—a

⁹² For example, the *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 8/9/1849.

⁹³ Thomas Nelson Baker, *Sentiment and Celebrity*, 137.

⁹⁴ *New York Herald*, 9/13/1850; *New York Herald*, November 29, 1850; *New York Herald*, December 22, 1850.

⁹⁵ This, despite the fact that Fanny Kemble’s surviving letters suggest that Pierce Butler did conduct an extramarital affair. See Catherine Clinton, *Fanny Kemble’s Civil Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 133-135.

square populated by vendors and shoppers—while yelling that the man had seduced his wife. Perhaps the location and timing was accidental. Perhaps Edwin, believing he had been cuckolded multiple times and having just recently lost the chance to divorce his wife on his terms, did just lose his temper when he happened to see Willis. But the *Barre Patriot* mocked him for his actions, noting, “Mr. Edwin Forrest, having tried and failed to get a divorce from his wife, has succeeded in knocking down N. P. Willis.”⁹⁶ Whatever his intentions, it was a victory that few in the press would applaud. Many newspapers reporting on the event assumed he did it to gain publicity, and ostensibly, sympathy.

Forrest’s old enemy, *The Hudson River Chronicle*, leaped on the incident, declaring it a thinly veiled and misguided attempt to turn public opinion in his favor. The *Chronicle* did not question a man’s right to seek vengeance on his wife’s seducer, but rather noted that it looked “a little suspicious, that after sleeping over this injury to his domestic peace for so long a time, he should, at this late day, attempt to vindicate his honor.” The actor had presumably known of his wife’s adultery for years and had seen Willis many times before this incident. Further, the author of this particular article wondered why “if all the persons referred to in the testimony of his servants, are guilty,” the actor had chosen to attack Willis, “who compared to himself...is but a pigmy [sic] to a giant.”⁹⁷ If he aimed to eventually serve all the guilty men “alike,” the *Chronicle* mused that he “had entered upon a laborious undertaking, as they embraced the strength of the theatrical and literary force of the country.” The writer, though, assumed that Edwin had singled out Willis alone for his violent revenge, and thus concluded that, “To select Willis, the most

⁹⁶ “N. P. Willis Knocked Down,” *Barre (MA) Patriot*, 6/21/1850.

⁹⁷ Willis had been weakened by “rheumatic pleurisy” in 1848; Thomas Nelson Baker, *Sentiment & Celebrity*, 130.

feeble and least offending of all the accused, is cowardly in the extreme.”⁹⁸ The *Chronicle*, and other critics, would repeatedly refer to Edwin’s attack with words like “brutal” and “cowardly”—words meant to challenge his claim to manliness and civility. But especially in the case of a man like Edwin Forrest, who had built his career off of his cultivation of manliness and physical strength, the focus on his perversion of those traits was meant as a direct challenge to his reputation and character. Newspapers increasingly displayed impatience with, and suspicion about, Forrest’s motives. When he followed up on this incident with others showing his lack of restraint—his verbal attacks on his soon-to-be-ex wife and her lawyers—he in effect did as much as any over-eager reporter to turn the divorce into a circus on New York City streets.⁹⁹ Yet Norma Basch has noted, while his antics failed to gain the support of newspaper editors, they did motivate a good number of men off the street to cheer him on from the audience at court.¹⁰⁰ Nor did his audiences at the theater suffer a bit during the public trial. Perhaps a circus is what he sought.

Ultimately, however, none of Edwin Forrest’s accusations were proven in court. The jury, on the other hand, after a more than thirty-day trial, declared him guilty of adultery. They further granted Catherine \$3,000 per year in alimony, and the right to remarry, which they denied to Edwin. Catherine’s friends and her lawyer had accomplished their object in the courtroom, painting her as a wronged wife, a true woman and a much aggrieved victim. Edwin refused to acquiesce to the jury’s decision and continued to fight it for eighteen years.

In consonance with the shifting public criticism of Forrest, Joseph Sill’s private

⁹⁸ “Edwin Forrest and N. P. Willis,” *Hudson River Chronicle*, 6/25/1850.

⁹⁹ “Case of Catherine N. Forrest, Plaintiff, Against Edwin Forrest, Defendant,” (New York City: S. N., 1863).

¹⁰⁰ Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 173-175.

response to Forrest had grown increasingly harsh over the years. In 1836, even as he criticized Forrest's acting, he had complimented his character, writing,

when we consider that he has raised himself from the lowest ranks of Society, and is self-taught, he merits great regard; and what is still more honorable to him is the fact that his private character is irreproachable, and that he has proven an affectionate Son, who has always been watchful of the happiness and interest of his aged Mother.¹⁰¹

Increasingly, however, over the course of the 1840s and especially after the divorce and riot, Sill's disdain for Forrest as a man as well as an actor was apparent. The signs are subtle, such as in one passage from 1853, where he put Forrest's name in quotes ('Forrest') and wrote that he was "not pleased" with the actor's "continual" misinterpretations of Hamlet.¹⁰² This dismissive criticism differed in character from the 1830s when he called Forrest "boisterous" and seemed more inclined to forgive him and hope for his improvement. In an additional sign that Joseph Sill, at least, had decided against Edwin Forrest, when Catherine Sinclair Forrest came to Philadelphia after the divorce on an acting tour meant to secure her financial independence, the merchant tried to attend the theater on most of the nights she appeared.¹⁰³ He declared her "beautiful" and was sure that if she followed through on her professional career, she would shortly be "an excellent actress."¹⁰⁴ In striking contrast to his ever-decreasing estimation of Edwin Forrest's talents, when Catherine returned to Philadelphia six months after her debut, Sill declared happily that he was "much pleased," to find her "much improved."¹⁰⁵ In contrast to the disappointment he felt in Edwin, Catherine seemed to be living up to her potential in at least Sill's

¹⁰¹ Joseph Sill, December 2, 1836, Diaries, Vol 2, HSP Manuscripts.

¹⁰² Joseph Sill, May 11, 1853, Diaries, Vol 10, HSP Manuscripts.

¹⁰³ Joseph Sill, March 22, March 25, April 1, 1852 and October 7, 1852, Diaries, Vol 10, HSP Manuscripts.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Sill, March 25, 1852, Diaries, Vol 10, HSP Manuscripts.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

eyes.

Sill was perhaps an exceptional observer, since he had never enjoyed Forrest's talents as an actor. Yet even as one of the more genteel observers of Forrest, he had prior to the Astor Place Riot and the divorce trial, balanced that criticism with an appreciation for his character as a man. His disappointment in Forrest's later career, his equation of Forrest and the rioters he called "brutal" and "vulgar" by calling them "friends," and his feelings of "continually" not being pleased with his acting, reflected that by the 1850s, Joseph Sill was finished with the American tragedian. It is also the narrative of one man's personal interest and response to celebrity, and his use of celebrity culture to articulate his own social status and class loyalties.

At the origins of Forrest's celebrity, journalists, theater managers and Forrest himself had understood his career as wrapped up in a project of national consensus—the creation of a theater and a class of actors particularly American. Yet the nature of celebrity demanded that his character be on display, and audiences and admirers had to be willing to buy his brand of personality. The masculinity and physicality Forrest displayed on the stage, and then translated to the streets and courtroom simply did not provide a product with unified national appeal. It exemplified the multiple discourses now available in a growing and shifting culture of celebrity, which now offered many different examples of celebrity personality to admire and adopt.

Although his own personal wealth continued to grow and he commanded large audiences until his death in 1872, Forrest's reputation and character in the mainstream press were forever tarnished. In his obituary, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* acknowledged that while he had been important to theatrical history and that, "at one

time it seemed as though he were the magnet that compelled the intellectual world,” ultimately his career had proven to be a disappointment in that realm. It summed up his life with references to the Astor Place Riot and his divorce trial, musing that, “Perhaps no man who ever trod the stage—certainly none who ever trod the stage of this country—provoked so much criticism, animosity, [and] personal bitterness...as Forrest.”¹⁰⁶ Clearly Forrest had come a long way in his lifetime from his early reviews, when newspapers had spoken hopefully of his country’s high expectations and his potential to be “without meridian” on stage boards anywhere.

Celebrity Sensations, Act III: Regional Divisions and the Emergence of a Consistent Criticism of Celebrity Reporting

Although Edwin Forrest’s divorce and his role in the Astor Place Riot reflected his own personal failures and multiplied the already existing blemishes on his character, condemnations from the press did not center entirely upon him. The coverage of the Forrest divorce trial exacerbated and revealed deeply held disagreements over the purpose of news reporting, the character of certain editors, and the mission of newspapers themselves. The *Brunswicker* out of Brunswick, Missouri printed a comment that must have reflected the feelings of many, calling the divorce trial, “a foul...blot on the pages of most eastern newspapers.”¹⁰⁷ The *National Police Gazette* printed trial transcripts, which were full of tales of adultery, promiscuous parties, drunkenness, and cross-class sexual encounters. Editors of outlying papers expected that from the *Gazette* or the *National Herald*. But other mainstream newspapers also printed these details and even parts of the transcripts, disappointing editors striving for a higher standard of morality reflected in the pages

¹⁰⁶ “Obituary: Edwin Forrest,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 12/13/1872.

¹⁰⁷ Untitled, *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 2/7/1852.

of journalism. Such a debate became a constant part of celebrity culture and its reporting. Edwin Forrest's lawyers had tried and failed to paint Catherine as a serial adulteress, disrespectful of her husband and dismissive of her marriage vows, and to make these details publicly known. But the details were so raunchy, and the betrayals so grand, that some journalists began to question the effects of the trial on its participants and observers.

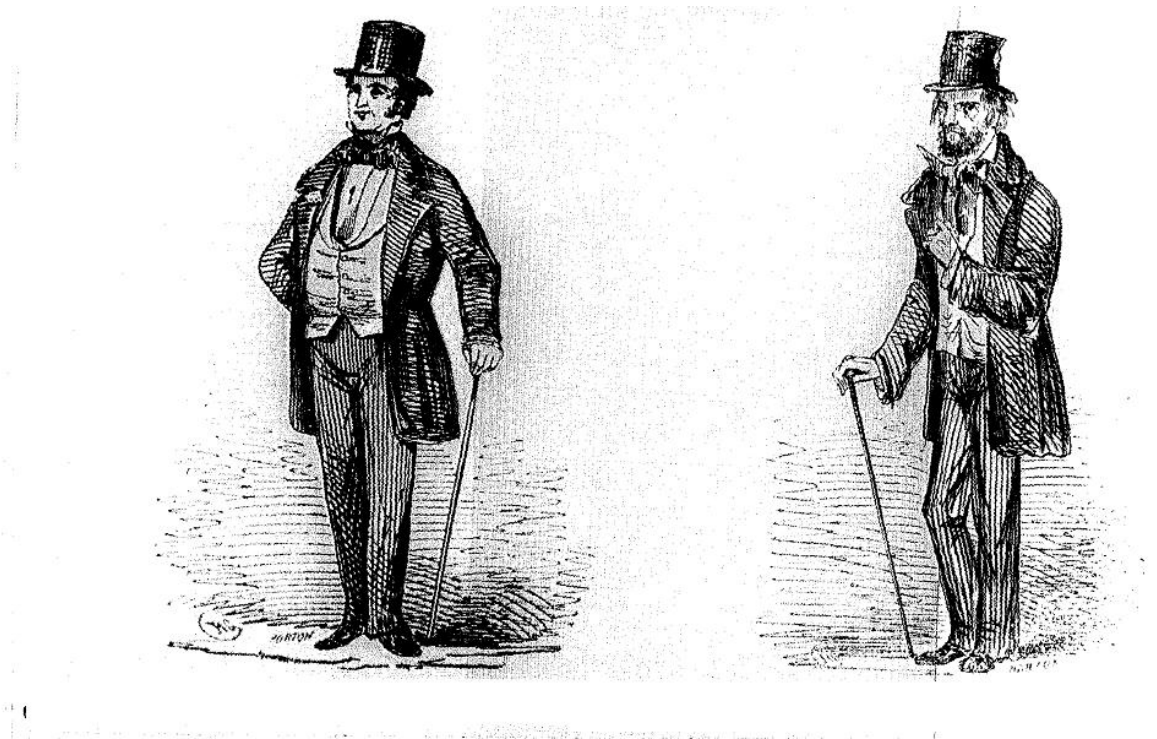


Figure 3.1
“Before and After: A Juror in the Forrest Divorce Case” (*Diogenes, hys Lantern*)

Actor and comedian John Brougham's satirical newspaper, *Diogenes Hys Lantern*, gave an illustrated description of the deleterious effects of the trial on members of its jury. In the images, “Juror in the Forrest Case, As he entered the Court” and “The Same Juror at the Probable Conclusion of the Case” (Figure 3.1), a white male juror from the case stands before the trial, healthy, dapper, strong-backed

and respectably dressed with a neatly done tie and a shiny stovepipe hat.¹⁰⁸ He looks off proudly and confidently into the future. In the after version, the same man's cheerful and hopeful visage has turned sunken, framed by a scraggly beard and unkempt hair peeking out from his now battered and crooked hat. His gaze has gone from straight to sidelong and from hopeful to suspicious, while his tie has unraveled and become unwieldy. He holds up a thin hand in defense, or as a warning not to go where he has been. Once tall and strong, his back and shoulders are now hunched. In both versions, he holds a cane, but whereas in the before sketch the cane served as a gentleman's accessory, in the after view, it instead supports his now unstable form. The juror, before the trial, looked ready to walk the streets of New York as if he owned them, but the juror after looks like a man wary shop owners would chase from their doorway and respectable pedestrians would try to avoid. If hearing the details of the trial could be so deleterious to a white, male and middle-class juror performing his civic duty in a courtroom, the reader was left to imagine how destructive it would be for more vulnerable members of society, especially those young and/or female, left to read them on their own or to overhear them in mixed company.¹⁰⁹

Edwin Forrest's strategy in the case, the destruction of his wife's reputation even before the trial commenced, ultimately backfired. The actor lost the case and came out looking like a liar and a husband who had sought to destroy and humiliate his wife.¹¹⁰ Additionally, he had been found guilty of adultery. These details were so widely spread and so commonly known, that many more observers than the *Lantern* wondered about the effects of the trial on public morality. An especially damning

¹⁰⁸ *Diogenes, Hys Lantern* 1:2 (January 17, 1852).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Baker, *Sentiment & Celebrity*, 134-158.

verdict came from the judge in the case, who with *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley's support, called upon the state of New York to close the proceedings in such high profile cases, with testimony released only at the legislature's discretion.¹¹¹

Newspapers outside of New York City believed the case revealed that the city's elite—both those who were involved in the trial and those who could have protected the public from hearing about it—were, at the very least, delinquent in their “moral habits.”¹¹² A North Carolina newspaper editorialized, regarding the trial,

If the revelations made pending this trial present anything like a true statement of the actual position of society among the ‘upper tens’ of New York, then the Lord preserve us, if we ever get married, from New York uppertendom.¹¹³

It mattered not to the North Carolina paper that Catherine Forrest had been found innocent of the charges made by Edwin. None of the parties involved had come out of the trial looking particularly respectable. The editors declared Edwin “a rude, arrogant, uneducated, and somewhat brutal man, coarse, vulgar, unrefined and purse proud.” But they also counted among the witnesses for Catherine, a “broken down roue” and a “dawdling heartless, man-milliner.” A newspaper in Connecticut could not have agreed more, saying that if the “upper ten of New York” could countenance such a trial and the behaviors it publicized, “it was high time they were instructed in some of the elements of good breeding.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ *New York Tribune*, 1/26/1852.

¹¹² “The Forrest Case,” *The Constitution* (Middletown, CT), 2/4/1852.

¹¹³ *Wilmington (NC) Daily Journal*, 2/6/1852, as quoted in Baker, *Sentiment & Celebrity*, 155.

¹¹⁴ A February 1854 issue of the *Knickerbocker* included a satirical dialogue lifted from a geography lesson in which the students, through a series of question and answers, establish the “upper-ten-dom” as an “empire” with its “principal seat” on a “large island in New York bay,” remarkable for “cool airs,” inhabited by “SNOBS” who are forgetful of their family obligations, and whose primary resources are in the “Money-Market,” leaving them to worship the dollar, fashion and popularity. Men “dig and delve,” while women “dress.” Poverty and “independent exertion” among women are criminalized, 640.

The “upper-ten” was a slang term for New York City’s nineteenth-century elite, but especially those involved in a “world of fashion,” the arts, popular publishing, and the theater.¹¹⁵ It was familiar to readers outside of New York long before the Forrest divorce case, and had been a topic of mockery as well. In an article titled, “The Upper Ten,” “At Fanny Kemble’s last reading...the daughter of a wealthy man, asked her husband who Shakespeare was. He replied, without hesitation, that he was *the man who wrote the New Testament*.”¹¹⁶ Clearly not much could be expected from such a population. The *Saint Louis Daily Reveille* remarked that no one had reason to be surprised by the details coming out about the problems in the Forrest marriage, because after all, “[n]one of the persons figuring in it appear to be implicated in anything more remarkably ungentle or ungraceful than what is frequently perpetrated in fashionable society, after an extra glass of champagne.”¹¹⁷ “Fashionable society,” the *Reveille* suggested, was characterized by excess, and the trial only made public what everyone already privately knew. Of course, such a fact did not prevent it from reporting avidly on the case for its duration. Scandal, clearly, was news to this western paper and others, even if it simply proved to be an opportunity for regional judgment and self promotion.

The editors of the Middletown, Connecticut *Constitution* went a step further than declaring the participants in the trial to be part of an elite, but nonetheless apparently disreputable, class. It declared that this kind of reporting was not, and should not, be news. They agreed with the judge’s opinion that such high-profile

¹¹⁵ John Stephen Farmer and William Ernest Henley, *Slang and Its Analogues Past and Present: A Dictionary, Historical and Comparative, of the Heterodox Speech of All Classes of Society for More Than Three Hundred Years; with Synonyms in English, French, German, Italian, Etc.* (1903), 507.

¹¹⁶ “The Upper Ten,” *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 4/14/1849.

¹¹⁷ “The Forrest Divorce Case,” *St. Louis Reveille*, 4/5/1850.

cases should be closed to the public, for the sake of justice but also for the sake of public morality. They reflected that in their view, the trial was part of a pattern, and that of late, “almost every day there had been displayed before the public a shameful story of lax morals among some of those who have commanded the respect and admiration of the community.” They were disturbed by the “avidity” with which journalists pursued such stories especially in cases like the Forrests’ when the “interested parties...were persons of no little influence.” If the public was to tolerate, even be entertained by such tales, the editors worried that the “scale of morality” displayed by the “upper ten-dom” of New York City would come to be the norm, because many people were “accustomed to ape better men in better things.”¹¹⁸ This statement gets at the crux of Edwin Forrest’s downfall. Forrest had been a man in whose fate the country, or at least its newspaper editors, had been deeply interested. As much as he had been lauded, and his career held up as a model for theatrical success, he was clearly not a “better man,” nor was his life one a respectable family would want their sons to “ape.” In the antebellum celebrity scandals, we see the final shift in celebrity culture’s epistemology—its emergence as a moral touchstone in itself, as a way for newspapers and observers (such as Joseph Sill) to position themselves relative to the key debates and personalities of the period.

The *Saint Louis Reveille* continued its harsh judgment of New York society at least as reflected in published journalism. Its editors pledged to keep their readers aware of current events, but still separated from potential corruption by the pages, stating, “As we have given the one side, it is but fair the other should be heard, as it would be in full.” Still they felt that one particular letter from a witness for Edwin Forrest that had been published in some newspapers “unnecessarily” included

¹¹⁸ “The Forrest Case,” *The Constitution*, 2/4/1852.

specific details and charges against individuals. They therefore only printed a short passage from it.¹¹⁹ The editors further argued that such a method was only fair, because it protected not only the public, but also a vulnerable woman, Catherine Sinclair Forrest. The unproven testimony circulating around the case could “produce the lasting disadvantage of the wife of the great American tragedian” and according to the *Reveille*, newspaper editors were obligated to protect her reputation from unfair damage.¹²⁰

The Forrests’ divorce was not the first sensational case to spark disagreement about what should be in the news, or to raise questions about New York City society nationally. More than fifteen years earlier, the Helen Jewett murder had marked an epoch in reporting by turning a violent crime of local interest into a national sensation. The Edwin Forrest divorce case, however, was of a different nature given the pre-existing prominence of the parties involved. His divorce marked a conclusion of one period of celebrity reporting. Since the careers of David Garrick, Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield—for those celebrities associated with artistic, philosophical, and religious genius—discussions of their private characters had been as much a dialogue about the value and role of certain personality traits in public figures, as an expose of one person’s character. In that context, those who lamented the discussion at all seemed to think it might be possible to change coverage. With time, though, it became clear that intense public scrutiny into private lives would not stop, no matter the protests that came from certain voices. It was not a true and viable debate, but rather the lamentations became part of celebrity culture’s discursive formation. There would always be those who protested mass

¹¹⁹ Untitled, *Saint Louis Reveille*, 4/11/1850.

¹²⁰ “The Forrest Case,” *Saint Louis Reveille*, 4/12/1850.

celebrity's existence at all. In popular culture, celebrity became an explicitly guilty pleasure, and celebrity scandal *schadenfreude*.

Jenny Lind's Public: The Romantic Alternative

If Edwin Forrest was the nineteenth century's poster boy for bad behavior, Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind was its Pollyanna. Whereas the era's journalists and audiences found Forrest to be disappointingly human in his failures onstage and off, they looked to Jenny Lind as almost divine in her success as a woman and a singer. Despite, and in fact in part because of, the way she and her managers promoted and handled her reputation, Jenny Lind inspired the production of an incredibly variety of print and consumer objects. She had been a popular figure in American newspapers since the mid-1840s, but the announcement of her decision to tour in the United States in 1850 generated tremendous excitement and the expansion of a market in material goods that was already remarkable for its reach and variety. From Jenny Lind biographies, to pieces of sheet music, to blue-eyed potatoes and even industrial equipment, almost any admirer in the United States could consume their own private piece of the Swedish Nightingale. She seems to have been among the most represented, if not the most, represented nineteenth-century celebrity in print, material and visual culture. The incredible diversity of ways to relate to Lind in the nineteenth century meant there were a variety of ways to interpret and negotiate her relationship between admirers, producers, and consumers of her celebrity.

Following on the pattern of her promotion in Europe, P.T. Barnum and his associates began before she arrived on American shores to direct consumers' knowledge of Jenny Lind. In anticipation of and helping to create the expansive

market of interest in her, the journalist, music critic and friend of Barnum Charles Rosenberg published a biography, *Jenny Lind: Her Life, Her Struggles, and Her Triumphs* (1850). It hardly differed in substance from N. P. Willis' *Memoranda of the Life of Jenny Lind* published a year later or any of the many other books and pamphlets written about her before, during and after the tour. Writing about Lind seemed to follow a predetermined script, one that began with Swedish author Fredrika Bremer's first mention of her in the novel, *Hemmet eller familje-sorger och fröjder* (1840). English poet and author Mary Howitt brought this work to English-speaking audiences with her translation, *Home; or Family Care and Family Joys* in 1842. Bremer's work first carved out Lind's international persona as an oxymoronic *prima donna* that later her managers would work with the singer to perfect.¹²¹

According to the popularized narrative of Lind's life, Jenny was both an ideal and a reluctant celebrity. She craved modest domestic comforts as a woman should, but her family's poverty and the gift of an extraordinary voice compelled her to the public stage.¹²² She trained with Europe's best opera coaches but defied their modest evaluation of her talent. Her story almost came to a dramatic end, when she lost her voice during early years of her training. After a period of silent reflection and prayer, she emerged deeply religious and with an unexpected genius for vocal expression. Embarking on her solo career, she drew large audiences and international praise, but still she fought a constant stage fright. She lived modestly, but used her tremendous voice to raise unprecedented amounts for Swedish

¹²¹ Bluford Adams, in *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) carefully lays out the ways in which Jenny Lind participated in her career, modifying the impression created by newspaper journalists and Barnum himself that the success of her tour and reputation had been his own creation.

¹²² This sort of apologia for public performance was not unprecedented. It is impossible not to notice, for example, the parallels with narratives of Fanny Kemble's early career, and the continuing trope of the reluctant daughter forced to peddle her genius for the support of her family; Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars*.

charities. Bremer's original draft of Lind's character for the public established this general framework for her biography, which managers, journalists and friends then translated into texts everywhere the opera singer performed, and beyond. This narrative of Jenny Lind's life has been much written about and explored by historians of music and popular culture in Europe and the United States.¹²³

These uniform narratives emerged, as a practical concern, out of the culture of reprinting. In the United States, neither Rosenberg nor Willis nor the countless other journalists who published stories about Lind for example, built their works out of personal interviews or extensive travels to investigate her past. These were not the typical tools of celebrity writers in the period. Instead, they relied on existing news articles and press releases submitted by her managers, and on the letters of correspondents from Europe who had already seen her perform. Individual confirmation of her strong character came from dozens of published stories recounting her spontaneous kindnesses, in the form of charity or concerts, for unsuspecting admirers. Rosenberg, especially, adhered to the script Barnum wanted promoted. Yet he did not lack journalistic integrity. Rather he was part of Barnum's promotional machine.¹²⁴ Barnum himself had inherited many of these materials from the pre-existing mania surrounding Lind in Europe.

As consumers, readers could have responded to the narratives about Lind in any number of ways. The tropes about Lind established by Bremer and adopted by

¹²³ Sherry Lee Linkon has identified three major themes in texts about Jenny Lind: her feminine and Christian virtues, her professional success as being primarily about the support of others' needs rather than her own, and the tremendous excitement exhibited by large audiences at her performances; see "Reading Lind Mania" *Print Culture and the Construction of Nineteenth-Century Audiences*, *Book History* 1 (1998): 94-106.

¹²⁴ For more on the specific mechanics of Barnum's promotion of Lind, see Adams, *E Pluribus Barnum*; William Porter Ware, Thaddeus Constantine Lockard, and Thaddeus Lockard, *P.T. Barnum Presents Jenny Lind* (Louisiana State University Press, 1980); James W. Cook, *The Colossal P. T. Barnum Reader* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 1-8.

subsequent writers offer several suggestions. The valorization of the sacrifices Jenny Lind made for her family and her generous gifts to charity offered a powerful model of contemporary Christian virtues to readers interested in seeing their own values in print. Or, the stories of her struggle to overcome her family's poverty and her triumph after nearly losing her voice were wonderful tales of inspiration. These stories could have been just a way to pass the afternoon, or could have been retold to family, friends, and Sunday school classes for didactic purposes. Such details allowed readers to imagine they knew Lind as more than an artist, but additionally had some insight into what had made her into the figure they saw on stage. They may have felt they had something in common with her, in their own background, hopes, and fears.¹²⁵ The stories surrounding her were sufficiently vague to appeal to readers with a variety of interests and backgrounds, while still specific enough in detail to make her character seem transparent, admirable, and likeable.

Still, the potential for Lind's celebrity to be marked by some disgrace always existed, and at various points in her career, stories appeared in the newspaper that seemed ready to do so. During her English engagement in 1847 to 1849, rumors that she would marry a "Mr. Harris," the nephew of the Bishop of Norwich, circulated in newspapers around the U.S.¹²⁶ By the summer of 1849, some newspapers were publishing denials that these rumors had ever been true.¹²⁷ Others, such as the *Baltimore Sun* suggested that the wedding plans fell apart over a disagreement on the fate of her fortune, while another suggested it was Harris's family's dislike of her

¹²⁵ Janice Radway, "What's the Matter with Reception Study? Some Thoughts on the Disciplinary Origins, Conceptual Constraints, and Persistent Viability of a Paradigm," in Philip Goldstein, James L. Machor, eds., *New Directions in American Reception Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 327-53.

¹²⁶ Untitled, *Rockford Forum*, 5/3/1849; "London," *New Orleans (LA) Picayune*, 3/20/1849; "Jenny Lind," *Daily Picayune*, 5/5/1849.

¹²⁷ "Jenny Lind's Marriage Denied," *Baltimore Sun*, 6/9/1849.

fame made the relationship untenable. Just as the rumors seemed headed toward scandals, the articles stopped, apparently intentionally on the parts of many papers. The *Baltimore Sun* on June 18th, repeated the concerns of the *London Daily News*, editorializing that if speculations on the potential engagement or its demise continued, journalists would succeed in creating “a national quarrel” between Lind on behalf of Sweden and Harris on behalf of England on the level of the “squabble between Macready and Forrest.”¹²⁸ The New Orleans *Daily Picayune* printed a letter from a correspondent excerpting a collection of contradictory articles he had collected from various papers, concluding with the proscription, “it is rather difficult to keep the run of Jenny Lind.” Yet he also summarized that most reporting was “rather positive in its tone,” and that Jenny Lind was an artist whose concerts were worth patronizing.¹²⁹

Following her actual marriage, rumors periodically circulated about trouble between the retired singer and her husband, Otto Goldschmidt. Few newspapers, however, gave much credence to these rumors. The *Brunswick Brunswicker*, for example, in May of 1853, included a vehement defense of Lind’s adherence to domestic harmony and womanly virtue, writing, “Jenny Lind does not intend appearing again as a singer, and has never had an unpleasant word with her husband.”¹³⁰ Even after her retirement, the mechanics of the burgeoning celebrity culture industries were deeply invested in maintaining her reputation as a reluctant public person who preferred domesticity and off-stage life.

The public impression of Lind’s life and her private reality were apparently not in complete harmony with one another at all times. Letters held in private collections

¹²⁸ “News from the Old World,” *Baltimore Sun*, 6/18/1849.

¹²⁹ G.W.K., “Correspondence from Europe, *New Orleans (LA) Daily Picayune*, 6/20/1849.

¹³⁰ “Short Notices,” *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 4/23/1850.

confirmed both the rumors of an acrimonious broken engagement in 1849 and occasional problems in Lind's eventual marriage to a different man. Jenny Lind, in a letter to a "Mrs. Hall," in May of 1850, suggested that she was indeed engaged to a young man, but that her "friends" in Sweden opposed the relationship. She understood the importance of keeping her private affairs from public knowledge, writing on the side of the letter, "I ask you the greatest discretion dearest."¹³¹ Mrs. Hall, and apparently many others who are mentioned by name or acronym in the letter, followed Lind's request. Given the number of people involved, and the degree of public interest in Jenny Lind, it is remarkable that so little information leaked out in the pages of public print.

The protection of Lind's reputation continued even after her marriage to Otto Goldschmidt and her retirement. Following her wedding, while newspapers lamented her departure from the public stage, they also celebrated the reluctant celebrity's entrance into the domestic harmony she had craved and represented so well on stage. Yet it seems that in reality, her triumph and happiness were not so complete. In 1852, Jenny's husband wrote to a mutual friend that his wife "appeared sometimes, nay often, not only not to enjoy womanhood but even to look back to her former state as something lost."¹³² Friends and business associates of Lind, however, held tightly to their secrets, and these stories, never took hold or became part of the dominant narrative of her life and career. Lind's life remained a charmed one in the pages of print and celebrity culture's memory.

Lind's reputation significantly contrasted with the model of scandal offered by

¹³¹ Jenny Lind, Dover, to Mrs. Hall, May 15, 1849, Hall Series, Dreer Collection, V. 5, HSP.

¹³² ALS Otto Goldschmidt to Anna Hazard Barker Ward, March 20, 1852, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Folder 3. bMS Am 1465.

Edwin Forrest's celebrity. Her American tour, following the Astor Place Riot by just a few months, and happening in the midst of the Forrest divorce, represented an alternative imagining of celebrity in the period. Nothing suggests that different consumers followed these contrasting stories. In reality, many Americans probably read, thought, and talked about both Jenny Lind and Edwin Forrest. Their appearance in the same newspapers or in different ones sold in the same shops and stands showed there was room for consumers to invest in more than one narrative of American celebrity and version of celebrity culture.

Jenny Lind: Consumerism's Muse

Fanny Kemble inspired the naming of tulips and a race horse.¹³³ Edwin Forrest's name ensconced a steamship and at-least two dance styles.¹³⁴ Charles Dickens became fashion's model, with young men sporting what sellers advertised as imitations of his hair cut, his suit, and his hat.¹³⁵ But Jenny Lind's fame in particular extended to the realm of material and consumer culture. Her name graced an unprecedented variety and volume of advertisements and products, some obviously related but others surprisingly obscure. The decision to purchase an object associated with or named after a celebrity substantively differed from the decision to read about them. The choice to spend money on an expensive single item clearly indicated a more sustained and particular interest in a figure than just the reading of an article in a newspaper or periodical containing articles on multiple topics.

Celebrity observers and admirers in the mid-nineteenth century had a variety of

¹³³ Thomas Hogg, *A Supplement to the Practical Treatise on the Culture of Florists' Flowers* (1833), 96; Fanny Kemble the horse, Untitled, *Richmond (VA) Enquirer*, 6/7/1833.

¹³⁴ "Damages of the Gale," *The Tallahassee (FL) Floridian*, 9/16/1837; Sep. Winner, "The Drama March, Composed & Respectfully dedicated to Edwin Forrest, Esq." (Philadelphia: Winner & Kerk, 1857), Edwin Forrest Sheet Music, Davis-Kendall Collections, HRC; "Edwin Forrest Quick Step" (nd), Edwin Forrest, G.2., Albert Davis Collection, HRC.

¹³⁵ "Boz," *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 8/11/1842.

consumer products to choose from if they wanted to indulge their interest in a renowned person. Within the realm of print culture alone, there were special markets in biographies in book or pamphlet form, autobiographies, special issues of newspapers, engravings, lithographs, daguerreotypes, and other printed imagery. Clothing retailers, smiths, food sellers, furniture craftsmen, ceramicists, and even cigar makers—really anyone with something material to sell—could take advantage of and further the mania of the moment.

Among the most popular and easily available objects were books. Books obviously collected more information on a single topic such as a celebrity than a reader could get from a single newspaper or magazine. But they were more than a collection of text on a page, or the summation of information in one place that could be gleaned in bits and pieces from elsewhere. As discrete objects, books held a material value for consumers. Their spines could decorate readers' shelves and give a room an air of cultivated taste and learning. Elaborate covers, like the one for a "Jenny Lind album" pictured in Figure 3.2 could grace a small table in a parlor or a lady's desk in her room. Annually published gift books often included images of the year's most talked about women as frontispieces. In 1835, Fanny Kemble's picture opened Miss Leslie's *The Gift: A Christmas and New Year's Present for 1836*. Fifteen years later, the *Flowers of Literature and Ladies' Keepsake* included an engraving of Jenny Lind (Figure 3.3). The books' recipients could have kept the images intact in the book, but the lithographs and engravings were also appropriate for cutting out and framing, and were often sold separately as well. In purchasing and displaying books and images of celebrities, consumers were making an obvious statement that they enjoyed their talents. But it was more than that.



3.2 Jenny Lind Album Cover, Box 4, Jenny Lind Collection, NYHS

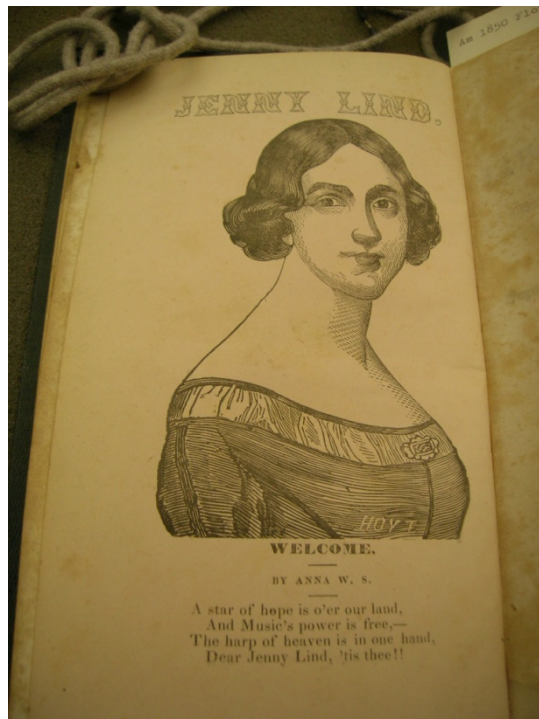


Figure 3.3 Frontispiece, *Flowers of Literature and Ladies Keepsake*
(A. C. Greene, 1850)

Samuel Beman of New York City, the producer of a book called *The Nightingale; Or, the Jenny Lind Songster* used the Jenny Lind moniker for several reasons, as advertising first of all, but also to classify the music within it. He meant for his book to be used for singing and piano playing, and its title suggested the kind of music the consumer might expect to find in its pages (“might” because few of the songs were verifiably part of Lind’s repertoire.) The songster was a tangible demonstration of the compiler’s promise that he would, with public support, “spare no expense” in collecting, cataloging and circulating “the songs of a charming, pure and benevolent girl” (Jenny Lind). This task was an important one, Beman explained in the introduction, because while all “civilized” young people had music “insensibly interwoven...with every nerve and fiber of [their] existence,” their experience was imperfect because they often did not know the exact titles, words, tunes and origins of their favorite songs. His mission then, was a moral one, aimed at perfecting their education. It was also one that happened to cultivate a particular kind of standard musical knowledge requiring a market in published music.

This Jenny Lind songster, Beman announced, was just the first of many aimed at improving the social experience of singing through standardization. It would be part of a larger series compiling and cataloging,

the greatest possible variety of songs—Old and New—Serious and Comic—Love, Bacchanalian, and Sentimental—Naval, Military, and Patriotic—Scotch, Irish, English, and other National and Foreign airs, with a reasonable allowance of a new description of American song which at present threatens to give tone and character to our national music, to wit: NEGRO SONGS.¹³⁶

Each of the succeeding works also would be called “The Nightingale,” which was not a unique name for a songster, but still his choice of that title at that moment clearly

¹³⁶ Samuel Beman, A.M., *The Nightingale; Or, the Jenny Lind Songster* (New York City: Stringer & Townsend, 1850).

meant to associate his work with the Swedish Nightingale. It also tried to suggest that he shared the values espoused in other texts written about her. His educational purpose took on a charitable bent, for example, when he argued that he meant to sell his compilation not only in the city, but even more so he would circulate it in “country villages, in distant hamlets” where popular vocalists rarely visited.¹³⁷

As an object, sheet music and words on a page, bound and printed in mass, Samuel Beman’s compilation was a method for spreading the message of Lind’s celebrity, through her chosen medium of music, to places she could not reach. As an arts and entertainment professional, he clearly understood the discourse of Lind’s celebrity and at least hoped he could co-opt it for his own financial benefit.

Production and consumption are cultural practices, and producers were not alone in molding the market and traits associated with Lind to their needs and desires. In purchasing, using and displaying objects, consumers also made a statement about the class and values with which they associated, or with which they wanted to be associated.¹³⁸ Displaying an image of Jenny Lind or singing a song from her repertoire in one’s home might suggest a consumer’s commitment to the values her celebrity forwarded, while it might also suggest that they wanted to look that way to guests. If friends, family and acquaintances were displaying similar objects and singing similar songs, it could herald the buyers’ inclusion and participation in a larger community. On the level of personal sentiment, it could have been meant to remind the purchaser of the time they saw Lind perform in person, or serve as a substitute if they were never able to do so. It could have been given as a

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

gift, and be a reminder of love or friendship.¹³⁹



Figure 3.4 Sam'l Saqui Cigar Box, Box 1, Folder "Materials Related to Use of Jenny Lind's Name," Jenny Lind Collection, NYHS

Other pieces of Lindiana were meant to be used, but without their purpose as carefully spelled out as that of the *Nightingale* songster. At least two companies offered Jenny Lind brand cigars for sale, decorated in wrappers marked with her name and image in miniature, available for purchase in boxes similarly decorated. The "Sam'l Saqui" company appropriated a particularly soft and feminine image (Figure 3.4) for its product meant to be used, presumably, by men.¹⁴⁰ Male and female cherubim support—rather than a throne of God—a portrait of Lind. They hold it at a slight angle, so that her striking blue eyes seem to gaze thoughtfully off to the right of the viewer. The pale green light that seems to emanate from her and emphasizes the beauty of the roses in her hair, suggests nature and purity. The

¹³⁹ Leon Jackson, "Authorship and Gift Exchange," *The Business of Letters: Authorial Economies in Antebellum America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 89-138

¹⁴⁰ One of the problems with surviving pieces of material culture, of course, is to establish who produced it, when and where. The box top, for example, of the Jenny Lind cigar says "Havana," on it, but I have identified a Samuel Saqui cigar company in New York City later in the 19th century through references in the historical *New York Times*. Perhaps it is a different company, perhaps it moved, or perhaps the tobacco itself came from Cuba while the cigar was produced in the United States. None of the collections holding a Jenny Lind cigar box top or wrapper have a precise date on the object positioning it during her tour, but there are many references to Jenny Lind cigars and cigar boxes from the period in newspapers and advertisements.

tobacco in these cigars, it avers, will be fresh.



Figure 3.5 Heredia y Co. Cigar Box, Jenny Lind Room, Swedish Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA

Another cigar company, “Heredia y Co.,” used an almost identical image, but with darker coloring—a deeper red and darker green (Figure 3.5). Sam’l Saqui’s cigar wrapper suggested the company used Lind’s reputation for virtue, purity and natural genius to suggest its product and the plants it came from boasted the same traits. Using almost the same image, however, the second company intimated a uniquely flavored cigar. It would be strong and distinctly flavored, like Lind’s voice, with an exciting and perhaps spicy lingering aftertaste. Even as the text about Lind followed repeating tropes, her name and image, free from the copyright and trademark constraints that would emerge at the end of the century, proved surprisingly flexible, able to absorb and represent a multitude of commercial

purposes.¹⁴¹

The incredible variety of products represented an equally diverse consumer market willing to spend their money on Jenny Lind goods and to engage in the celebrity culture it constructed and represented. As a body of goods, such objects supported Stuart Hall's contention that popular culture would imbue a "sense of classlessness"—sense, not reality, being the operative word.¹⁴² An admirer could spend almost any amount to indulge their interest in the Swedish nightingale. The indulgence was available to almost anyone with even the slightest bit of cash to spend. Items for sale during the peak of her fame included clearly very expensive elaborate gilded candle sticks and candelabras, to more moderately priced painted iron mirrors to very inexpensive special issues of newspapers. For the craft inclined, the Jenny Lind album discussed earlier in this section represented an opportunity for a person to make their own collection of Lindiana, as its pages were empty. The small book had room for its purchaser to paste small items, including concert programs, newspaper articles, reprints of tickets to Jenny Lind's shows, or to write out their own reflections after seeing her perform or even having just heard or read about her in the midst of the Lind mania.

The market potential appeared so large that merchants from entirely unexpected fields tried to capitalize on the appeal of the Lind persona. An engineer

¹⁴¹ This appropriation of Lind's feminine image for a product usually understood as being for men's use reflected a common trait in material culture. Female celebrity, it seems, translated far more easily to different forms. Although there were products named for famous men in the nineteenth century, in terms of volume and diversity, it was far more common for an object to be named after a woman. I do not think it too farfetched to suggest there were sexual connotations behind the allusions, making it desirable for men to own products associated with famous women. For female consumers, the ability to consume products named after other women obviously mattered as well, as did the relative rarity of available products named for men. This issue deserves more careful exploration than I can go into here, but would like to pursue further at a later time. With the knowledge I have right now about who purchased and used these products (almost none), it seems to me that without more work, I will just venture into speculation.

¹⁴² Stuart Hall, "A Sense of Classlessness," *Universities and Left Review* 5, no. 5 (1957).

named a new stone-rubbing machine the “Jenny Lind Rubber,” when its advent coincided with Jenny Lind’s American tour.¹⁴³ Although that may suggest that the mason named it after her as a compliment (and it would not be unheard of to name a machine after a famous woman), its advertisements made the most out of the association, boasting the words “Jenny Lind” in all capitals with “rubber” in smaller type.

Other artists also tried to capitalize on her success and used all the tricks print allowed to do so. In Pittsfield, Massachusetts, the Luca Family singers advertised their modest concert with the headline, “Great Excitement—Second only to JENNY LIND” (Figure 3.6). The phrase itself is not so compelling an advertisement, but the form the ad took was suggestive of a sophisticated understanding of print’s possibilities at the time. The all-capital letters used for Jenny Lind would be the first words to capture readers’ attention, especially since the ad was first published during her concert stops in Boston and in an issue of the newspaper already containing five articles about Jenny Lind. Their eye would likely then travel back to the headline, where the capital letters of the “G” and “E” in “Great Excitement” open the text. This positioning promoted a natural diagonal move back to “JENNY LIND,” making the “Second only” line of the advertisement visually insignificant. Using simple font and typesetting choices, the printer grabbed the attention of Pittsfield’s readers. While some residents of the small town in Massachusetts likely made the trip to Boston or New York to see the singer, the advertisement implied that even Pittsfield could offer sufficient entertainment for just twenty-five cents, with tickets purchasable at the local Werden Bookstore.

¹⁴³ An early “mechanical engineer” reminisced about purchasing and using an old Jenny Lind rubbing machine, in his 1908 memoir. Charles T. Porter, *Engineering Reminiscences* (New York City, 1908, 12).

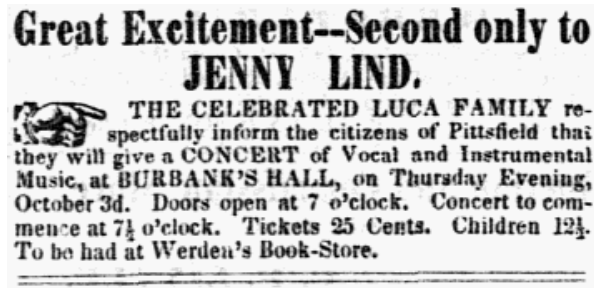


Figure 3.6 Luca Family Singers, *Pittsfield Sun*, 10/3/1850

These advertising strategies and the branding of Jenny Lind products did not begin or end with Barnum's promotion of the Swedish Nightingale's tour. As early as 1847, the newspaper *Constitution* mentioned an advertisement for "Jenny Lind potatoes," complete with "blue eyes."¹⁴⁴ Nor did they end after Jenny Lind left the country. The "Jenny Lind" remains a style of crib, now completely detached from anyone who could have possibly admired Lind in her lifetime. Yet advertisements today still celebrate the "timeless" and simple beauty of this trusted and "most popular" "classic."¹⁴⁵ The work of Lind's promoters to associate her with certain consistent traits, and those who capitalized on it, endures in material culture even to the present.

Sifting through the physical objects, promotional materials and newspaper discussions of nineteenth-century celebrity, can explain much about a figure's popularity and appeal, as well as reveal the multiple discourses at play, but it cannot tell us with great certainty what anyone thought of it all. The relationships between celebrities and their admirers were, by necessity, public. They usually began in the marketplace, with a consumer purchasing something: a newspaper, a book, a

¹⁴⁴ Untitled, 9/18/1847.

¹⁴⁵ DaVinci Jenny Lind Baby Crib, < <http://www.amazon.com/DaVinci-Jenny-Lind-Baby-Crib/dp/B000FTD1P2>>. Accessed on March 29th, 2009.

magazine, or even a ticket to a performance. Thus the relationships were also by nature commercial, but unlike other purchases, were not bounded by the terms of a particular transaction.¹⁴⁶ The purchasers owned the particular thing they paid for—the use of a theater seat for an evening or a decorative object to hang on a wall or set on a shelf. But the process also involved the circulation of a personality and empowered the expansion on a celebrity's fame. Not a few people became invested in the objects of their admiration and felt as if they somehow knew them or were promised and owed something beyond the bounds of a market transaction.

Holding Parley: Coming Face-to-Face with Celebrity

On the occasions that a consumer and a renowned person met face-to-face, the previous experiences and different expectations of both individuals mediated the encounter. An admirer encountering Fanny Kemble on the street in the cities where she performed in the early 1830s might have seen her perform on stage, or might have read parts of her biography on the pages of a newspaper, or at the very least likely had heard about her from friends, family or acquaintances. They likely knew her father's name and perhaps even a part of the history of her celebrated family on the English stage. They might have known that in her spare time she enjoyed reading, writing, and riding horses. But she would have known none of these details about them. Even if an admirer had only seen her at a distance on stage, or not at all, they might have recognized her close up, because they had seen the popular

¹⁴⁶ The commercial nature of modern celebrity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been much studied. See the introduction to this dissertation and P. David Marshall, "Introduction," *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Sean Redmond and Su Holmes, eds., "Introduction," *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader* (Sage Publications, 2007). Most contemporary studies of celebrity as a commercial industry take their theoretical genesis from Horkheimer and Adorno's, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," (first published in German in 1944 but not translated into English translation in 1972) and Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (1964).

lithograph of her in her original stage role, Juliet, or an engraving copied from Thomas Lawrence's 1830 painting of her. Possibly they even had a copy of one of these images in their home, on the wall, or in a book. Objects and texts produced in popular culture made celebrities' appearances, backgrounds and personalities even more familiar to consumers than those of even some of their acquaintances. Observers and admirers thus had reason to think that in some way, they knew the real person behind the renowned persona. Yet the expectations for how one should behave if they met a celebrity in person, given this quasi-personal relationship and the sense of classlessness celebrity culture imbued, were not at all clear, particularly in a social milieu actually strictly divided by class, gender and race, and still dependent on formal introductions and ceremony.

Even individuals from a class used to dealing with famous visitors and professional performers sometimes found it difficult if not impossible to negotiate between the demands of an admiring public and their object of admiration. The organizers of the Boz Ball in 1842 in New York City, for example, and the residents of other cities who tried to surpass it, responded to Charles Dickens's first American tour in the way that made the most sense to them. They wanted to toast a public man with a public event.¹⁴⁷ Committees had organized to similarly fete the Marquis de Lafayette when he visited the country in 1824, and would do so again for famous visitors in the future. This desire had as much if not more to do with displaying their own cosmopolitanism, wealth and power to command a celebrity's appearance, as it did with their appreciation of Dickens's talents.¹⁴⁸ For his own part, Dickens tried to

¹⁴⁷ Juliet John, "'A Body without a Head:' The Idea of Mass Culture in Dickens's *American Notes*," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 12:2 (August 2007): 173-202.

¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of the role of celebratory dinners, parades, receptions and tours in general in the early American republic, see David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The*

refuse the appellation “celebrity” and its attendant burdens during his American travels, claiming instead to be just a tourist and some-times lecturer. Even still, although in practice no one could force him to cooperate with their attempts to capitalize on his literary fame, Dickens still learned the limits celebrity put on his control of his own body and time.¹⁴⁹

In his *American Notes for General Circulation*, Dickens spoke at least once directly about his experience during the enthusiasm surrounding him during his 1842 tour. This passage, which I discuss below, paralleled what he wrote to friends during his trip, although edited for humorous effect and publication.¹⁵⁰ Literary scholar Juliet John describes the trip as a sort of catalyst, or a moment of crisis, for him. Before the trip, he wrote to friends of his excitement to see the republican nation that had long fostered his radical and egalitarian dreams. Dickens had in his earlier writings reflected a belief that commercial culture could reflect a “genuinely ‘popular’ culture consonant with the values and interests of the populace.”¹⁵¹ Upon his departure from the U.S., however, he was, to say the least, “disaffected.” In a famous letter to William Macready, he commented, “This is not the Republic of my imagination” (One wonders, although he never told, if those words echoed in Macready’s own mind following his ill-fated American tour in 1849).¹⁵² The effect of Dickens’s American tour on his thinking was so profound that not only did he think the United States had failed at merging the communal with the commercial, but he

Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁹ Juliet John discusses Dickens’s feelings about his celebrity reception in the US, as expressed in his private letters, extensively in her article about his writing of the *American Notes*, “‘A Body without a Head:’ The Idea of Mass Culture in Dickens’s *American Notes*,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 12:2 (August 2007): 173-202.

¹⁵⁰ Charles Dickens, January 22, 1842, *The Letters of Charles Dickens* Vol 3, ed. by Madeline House and Graham Story (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-2002), 15.

¹⁵¹ John, “A Body Without a Head,” 173.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

was no longer sure his vision was possible.¹⁵³ Dickens's scholars have traced this change to the days following the Boz Ball in New York, when he faced press criticism of the expense and effort expended on his welcome.¹⁵⁴ The personal attacks, unrelenting press attention, his failures to convince American legislators of the need for International copyright protection, what he understood as the invasions of his privacy, and what he perceived as American rudeness all convinced him that his earlier hopefulness had been misplaced. Whereas other scholars have interpreted Dickens's scourging of American behavior as couched in the differences between the cultures of Jacksonian American and British manners, much of this failure for Dickens centered on traits of the emerging celebrity culture and the commodification of personality.¹⁵⁵ In particular, the miscarriage between the author and his celebrity—or the dissonance between what the American public seemed to expect from him and what he expected of them in return, and what he thought of them versus what they thought of him, created an untenable situation where the author realized he was not in control of his own interpretation.

One story about his experience as a celebrity that eventually made it into *American Notes*, a humorous one from his stop in Baltimore, came tucked between discourses on his discomfort at being served by slaves and the organization and architecture of Washington, D.C., which he described as inconsistently slipshod and elegant. He expressed his bewilderment at Americans' manners, explaining how one afternoon as he sat in a train car waiting to depart for D.C.,

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Jerome Meckier, *Innocent Abroad*, 36-39; Michael Slater, *Dickens on America and the Americans*, 65-67; "Dickens and America: The Unflattering Glass," *Dickens Studies Annual* 15 (1963): 41-54; John, "A Body Without a Head."

¹⁵⁵ John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (Macmillan, 1991), 120-125.

[M]en and boys who happened to have nothing particular to do...came (according to custom) round the carriage in which I sat; let down all the windows; thrust in their heads and shoulders...and fell to comparing notes on the subject of my personal appearance, with as much indifference as if I were a stuffed figure.¹⁵⁶

Dickens minimized the cultural significance of his renown, by suggesting that only men and boys without purposeful employment would be interested in his appearance on the street. These bystanders took amazing liberty—not just by approaching him and commenting on his physical appearance in his presence, but by going so far as to open the windows and push parts of their own body into his car. His use of the term “thrust” suggested that their actions claimed a kind of power, or entitlement on their part, and that he considered it an unwelcome and even offensive assertion of intimacy.

In addition to the imposition, Dickens was surprised at the care and purposefulness the men and boys, who apparently had nothing else to do, assigned to their investigation. He continued,

I never gained so much uncompromising information with reference to my own nose and eyes, and various impressions wrought by my mouth and chin on different minds, and how my head looked when it is viewed from behind, as on these occasions. Some gentlemen were only satisfied by exercising their sense of touch....¹⁵⁷

He called them “gentlemen,” but his tone implied that he meant it ironically. These observers and admirers approached Dickens with an industry and freedom usually reserved for distinguishing the quality of an inanimate object on a store shelf, or perhaps even, an individual on an auction block. His decision to tell this particular story at this particular moment in the larger narrative of his tour of the United States hardly seems accidental, especially when he made a point out of describing this

¹⁵⁶ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* (Boston: D. Appleton, 1868), 50, accessed using Google Books, full-text edition.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

experience as of a kind very common to him during his travels (“as was their custom,” in the first quote, “these occasions” in the second).

Clearly, he found the experience of being publicly examined at the very least disorienting, and yet it happened more than once during his visit. Slipped between his words about slavery and American democracy, his emphasis on his admirers’ lack of regard for his privacy, their objectification of him, and the forcefulness with which they imposed on him--in short, their rudeness—seemed to say something larger about his opinion of American market capitalism. He attributed the liberties the public took with him in part to American democracy, including among those who accosted him “many a budding president.”¹⁵⁸ Dickens described how one man, lacking any sense of deference and with the casual authority befitting of a nation’s leader, simply,

walked into my room with his cap on his head and his hands in his pockets, and stared at me for two whole hours: occasionally refreshing himself with a tweak of his nose, or a draught from the water-jug; or by walking to the windows and inviting other boys in the street below, to come up and do likewise: crying, ‘Here he is!’ ‘Come on!’ ‘Bring all your brothers!’ and with other hospitable entreaties of that nature.¹⁵⁹

Although Dickens’s own literature satirized English aristocratic snobbery, the author still expected admirers to adhere to certain standards of formality in their public encounters with him. He clearly, even in his joking tone, found it rude that men would keep hats on and fail to proffer a handshake, upon entering his room—much less stay two hours, wipe their nose, drink from his water-jug and invite others up without asking.

Although the men, boys and budding presidents who accosted Dickens felt

¹⁵⁸ Jerome Meckier, *Innocent Abroad*, 36-39; Michael Slater, *Dickens on America and the Americans*, 65-67; “Dickens and America: The Unflattering Glass,” *Dickens Studies Annual* 15 (1963): 41-54; John, “A Body Without a Head”.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

perfectly at ease, the author himself felt alienated from the scene. They behaved almost as if he were a statue, or an exhibit, present for their personal fulfillment rather than acknowledging him as an actual person engaged in private activity. I am reminded of P. T. Barnum's Joice Heth exhibit that had toured just seven years earlier. Barnum marketed Heth as the 161 year old former nursemaid of George Washington and slave belonging to his family. This claim alone generated audiences, while also raising questions about the exhibit's legitimacy. Eventually, letters, probably planted by Barnum, emerged in newspapers suggesting that Heth was not actually a living person, but rather a rubber automaton. Audiences were allowed to touch the African-American woman, to test her authenticity as either a real or ancient person. Clearly the power dynamics differed as greatly as did those of race, gender, and class. Dickens, a white, wealthy, independent man, could have rejected the encroachments on his space and person, but instead he chose to just comment on them. Had he spoken sharply to the men who accosted him, they might have been insulted, or perhaps even have spoken rudely to him. A newspaper could have heard about the incident and written about it, and his books might have sold fewer copies. But that was an unlikely possibility, and he did not make money on most American editions in any case, given the lack of international copyright protections.

Joice Heth, on the other hand, was a black woman and reportedly had been, even if she was not still, a slave. As she was a woman, the freedom given to men to test her with touch (even if she was past the age of fertility and sexual attractiveness) suggests even more strongly than the "thrusting" of the men into Dickens's carriage, bodily violation. As she was a black woman, it conjures the easy commodification of African Americans, even those who were freed from an actual slave market. Still, the

experiences of both Heth and Dickens exhibited how, albeit in differing degrees and to different ends, the decision to enter the sphere of public performance and entertainment necessarily brought with it a loss of private bodily integrity. Celebrity culture had become a market, and celebrities themselves, commodities. In the process, the boundaries between where celebrities began and ended as public products and private people became unclear.

Yet still we can imagine the scene for the men who approached Dickens very differently, and with a more charitable view of their intentions. Undoubtedly, the men and boys meant no offense. Perhaps they were so familiar with the image of Dickens—the Dickens circulated in text and imagery—that they felt they knew him already. Perhaps this familiarity made them comfortable foregoing niceties of formal introduction and hospitality. Of course, few people even today subject their friends or close acquaintances to scrutinizing and critical physical exams. Perhaps they did view him as something of a “stuffed figure” in terms of his being a purchasable commodity to which they had earned a right of access through their purchase of books, serials, or periodicals. Or perhaps they were starstruck (a term just coming to significance in the period), and could not quite believe that what they were seeing was real.¹⁶⁰ Or, alternatively, perhaps they would not have understood Dickens’s objects on his terms at all. Rather than performing objectification, they were approaching him as they might a distant or long-absent acquaintance, someone they knew from letters and rumors but whom they were seeing for the first or after a very long time. Their physical examination, then, was a jovial interaction, a teasing and playful conversation about how he compared with their expectations. “Turn around!

¹⁶⁰ The Oxford English dictionary identifies starstruck as coming into common parlance as early as 1820; *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

Let me get a look at you!” they seem to have been saying to their good friend Boz.

We do not have the reactions of these particular unnamed and caricatured men, either to their interviews with Dickens or his depictions of them in print. I, however, found two passages in letters and diaries from men who met Dickens during his American tour that provide a strikingly different vision of what it was like to meet with the English author during his stay in the United States, with several parallel fields of description. Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, who would later earn renown as a clergyman in the revivals of 1858, but was in 1842 a theological student at Princeton, secured a formal introduction to Dickens through a friend of his family.¹⁶¹ In his letters to a young woman, Charlotte Morrell, Cuyler emphasized that, even with a letter of introduction, meeting with the author was “an inestimable privilege, vouchsafed only to a favoured few.” It required patience—he was forced to wait at the United States Hotel for “three or four evenings,” having several conversations with Dickens’s private secretary before he finally received an invitation to his rooms.¹⁶² He considered it a great honor and an event worthy of his “Sunday go-to-meeting clothing,” even though it was a Monday night. He did not simply walk into the room, nor could he have yelled out the window to men on the street to join him.

As a man of wealth, but also as a member of a burgeoning class of international celebrity, Dickens had an entourage, including at least one man whose job it was to mediate between him and his public. Joseph Sill had an experience similar to Cuyler when he sought a meeting with Dickens during his Philadelphia stop. He came to Dickens’s hotel as a representative of Saint George’s Club, a

¹⁶¹ Theodore Ledyard Cuyler to Miss Charlotte Morrell, Morrell Family Papers, Box I, nd [Winter 1842 from mention of Boz Ball], NYHS.

¹⁶² Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, Philadelphia, to Miss Charlotte Morrell, March 11, 1842, Morrell Family Papers, Box I, NYHS.

charity men's club comprised of natives of England meant to improve the image of English immigrants in the city. Even with a letter, he and his friends were forced to wait in the hallway outside the hotel room for a long while, as the author's "Gentleman in Attendance" offered excuses. Once they were granted entrance, the attendant reminded them to make the visit quick, as their host had many engagements and little time.¹⁶³ Dickens hardly seems to have been at the complete mercy of his admirers, despite his representation, or his understanding, to the contrary.

Further, rather than feeling at liberty to satisfy his "sense of touch," Theodore Cuyler at least was starstruck and almost terrified to approach Dickens, even though he had anticipated the event for days. He described how he felt "fear" and could not stop "trembling" as he waited to enter Dickens's hotel room. Even after all of his preparations, when Cuyler came into the author's presence, he could hardly speak. He wrote to Morrell,

There we were, nobody but Bos & I & the "old woman." Only think of it. For a few moments, everything, the "old Curiosity Shop" – "Smoke" – "Tim Linkimvater" "Nell" & all the rest of them rushed thro' my mind with such rapid confusion that I could not realize that I was in the presence of the greatest romancer of the time & he the handsome boy before me.¹⁶⁴

Cuyler, an educated man, a college student able to express himself clearly to friends and later renowned himself for inspiring crowds at religious revivals, found himself at a loss for words with this man he greatly admired. He could hardly separate the experience of meeting the man from his experience reading his works. Remembering the passage above where Dickens criticized a man for pacing and silence, we have to wonder how well the "greatest romancer" actually understood

¹⁶³ Joseph Sill, March 8, 1842, Diaries, Vol 3, LCP Manuscripts.

¹⁶⁴ Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, Philadelphia, to Miss Charlotte Morrell, March 11, 1842, Morrell Family Papers, Box I, NYHS.

and appreciated the sentiments of those who approached him in public. I mean this statement not as a criticism of Dickens's honesty, but rather as a sign of just how much the experience of the celebrity encounter relied upon individual interpretation and mediation.

Dickens, however, had one aspect of his admirer's feelings about their encounters with him correct. Both Theodore Ledyard Cuyler and Joseph Sill were fascinated with his appearance and its comparison to print descriptions and engravings that had circulated of him. Cuyler wrote, again to his female correspondent Catherine, that, "Boz was a splendid fellow. His figure & height were precisely Uncle Lewis's & he was attired in a splendid London suit." He had apparently seen several engravings of the author, because he noted that he "did not resemble [them] strongly, least of all, that in 'Nickleby,'" except in his hair, which was "long, dark, glossy, & stringy, & forms the most prominent trait of his person."¹⁶⁵ In his diary, Sill commented that he appeared "younger-looking than [they] had expected."¹⁶⁶ The writers seemed very concerned about comparing the real Dickens to the representational one they had apparently experienced many times on the page. Significant to their interpretation of the man was their individual experience of seeing him in person, and its contrast to what they had known before.

For Dickens, the encroaching demands of the Americans who approached him were annoying, insulting, and perhaps distracting from the literary purpose of his tour. Fanny Kemble, as a woman and an actress, had had a similar experience a decade earlier, but in her case the encounters had challenged her understanding of her status as a respectable woman. The familiarity with which people on the street

¹⁶⁵ Theodore Ledyard Cuyler, Philadelphia, to Miss Charlotte Morrell, March 11, 1842, Morrell Family Papers, Box I, NYHS.

¹⁶⁶ Joseph Sill, March 8, 1842, Diaries, Vol 3, LCP Manuscripts.

approached her seemed at odds with the work her family had done to make acting a respected profession and especially to the ways her aunt Sarah Siddons had fought to distinguish female actors from disreputable public women.

In an anecdote often noted for its disparagement of American manners and refinement, Kemble railed on the assumed intimacy some took with her as a public figure. After an encounter in a New York City store in which a clerk “called [her] by [her] name” and “entered into conversation with [her],” she expressed her anger in a very sharp tone.¹⁶⁷ She wrote that she longed to tell him to keep to measuring ribbons and to “hold [his] tongue.”¹⁶⁸ Kemble believed that her status as a woman of some wealth, however famous, distinguished her from a clerk in a dress shop. She continued that she “had no idea of holding parley with clerks behind a counter.”¹⁶⁹ They were worse than a little familiar, she made sure to emphasize. She could have forgiven them a little, she mused, if they had at least called her “Ma’am,” rather than referring to her by her name. She held herself above them, however, following codes of respectability, by “having the grace to smile and say ‘thank you,’” rather than chastising and embarrassing them publicly, as she felt they perhaps deserved.¹⁷⁰ Given her concern for maintaining a reputation as a respectable woman despite her need to pursue a public career in the theater, Kemble found the confusion of recognition with intimacy among her admirers especially difficult. Insulted by the clerks’ presupposed familiarity—they obviously thought it appropriate to call her by her name despite having never met her before, Kemble demanded

¹⁶⁷ Fanny Kemble, September 16, 1832, *Journal of a Residence in America* (A. and W. Galignani, 1835), 60. Viewed on Google Books. < <http://books.google.com/books?id=eYeYyEbeYvEC>>, accessed on February 14, 2009.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

respect for her social position. As a woman, she expected the clerks to treat her according to the normal rules of etiquette that applied to relationships between respectable women and anonymous store clerks. The clerks instead counted on their knowledge of her gathered from stage appearances and journalism as reason enough to forego formality.¹⁷¹ They did not say anything explicitly insulting, only that they were “anxious to show [her] every attention, and render [her] stay in this country agreeable.”¹⁷² They were behaving as hosts, whereas Kemble thought of them as servants crossing boundaries.

In these early days of commercial celebrity, few mechanisms existed beyond social custom to establish the boundaries between the famous and their eager admirers. The field of celebrity management, however, was well on its way to developing them. Charles Dickens had his “Gentleman Attendant,” surely a paid position meant to see to his personal needs but also to work as a mediator between the actor and members of the public. In 1850, as the following chapter will show, P.T. Barnum and Jenny Lind employed an entire retinue of professionals to ensure the success of her tour and an amiable relationship between the singer and her public. This mediation of these relationships were integral to the development, success and failure of the market in personality and the mechanics of renown.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the growing marketplace of print depended upon this sale of stories about celebrity lives as one of its many products. Other

¹⁷¹ John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (Macmillan, 1991); Thomas Augst, *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in 19th-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

¹⁷² Fanny Kemble, *Journal of a Residence in America* (A. and W. Galignani, 1835), 60. Viewed on Google Books. < <http://books.google.com/books?id=eYeYyEbeYvEC>>, accessed on February 14, 2009.

producers of commodities as well capitalized on the construction of personality that newspaper writers and journalists had accomplished. Biographers, tailors, ceramicists, and cigar sellers—almost anyone with something to sell—worked in unintentional and unexpected consonance to sell sensation on the streets of antebellum America. This sensation, however, depended upon the lives and activities of actual individuals, who at times were not acting in perfect tandem with public expectations. Nor were these expectations themselves uniform in interpretation and expression. Rather than breaking down the market in celebrity, however, this dissonance itself became a product for sale, creating multiple markets, but also a multiplicity of products. Celebrities offered their admirers the chance to admire, to disdain, to enjoy, to relate, to purchase and to judge, or otherwise to engage personally with an ever-diversifying mass market in popular, print and material culture.

Chapter Four

Taking the World on the Fly: Promotion, Boosterism and the Celebrity Tour in the Nineteenth Century

One November evening in 1856, comedian, actor and playwright John Brougham made news around the country for completing an “astonishing” feat of planning and wager.¹ At 7:00 on the night in question, he and his theatrical company played *Stage Struck Irishman* in New York City, and soon as they were finished, caught a train to Philadelphia in time to perform his play *Pocahontas* at 10:00pm on the boards of the National Theatre. They celebrated the triumph with a midnight banquet and a return to New York on a 1:00am train. Citing this act, the *Pittsfield Sun* proclaimed that America had entered a “fast age.” As the press coverage suggested, Brougham’s company had performed and traveled at a remarkable speed. They had played the *Stage Struck Irishman* at an almost ridiculous pace, opening at 7:00pm but managing to finish and travel via omnibus to the train station in time to be on board for departure at 7:52pm. The event was as much of a publicity stunt as a theatrical event and it received a plethora of press attention.² From New York City to Philadelphia to Pittsfield (MA), and San Joaquin

¹ “A Flying Theatrical Trip,” *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, 11/20/1856.

² The newspapers claimed that the train trip between New York and Philadelphia had taken less than two hours. According to *Dinsmore’s Railroad and Steam Navigation Guide*, from July 1859 and September 1860, that trip would have taken more like four hours, three years after Brougham’s flying theatrical. Either the newspapers were exaggerating the feat, or the trip was a special one, with stops and delays specially eliminated.

(CA), potential audience members or travelers contemplated the possibilities for ever-faster travel and access to cosmopolitan entertainment.³

On the one hand, John Brougham's New York-based company made the trip because they could. The technology, population and infrastructure existed. On the other hand, the marketing potential was rich—Philadelphians took pride in having a professional theater as developed as New York City's in the period. Imagining that such a trip could be a regular event made it conceivable that a nationwide market could produce popular entertainments that were not only similar, but happening in a relative proximity of time.⁴ The trip and its publicity, then, became more about sparking the reading audience's imagination and drawing attention to the expanding cultural possibilities of promotion than about the actual formal stage performances.

Of course neither the tactic nor the course was new. For more than a century, performers had crisscrossed the United States and beyond, selling tickets and talent to audiences. Although poor roads, long distances between towns, and numerous petitions and laws against theatricals made conditions difficult, traveling rope dancers, tumblers, dancers and theater troupes nevertheless appeared in many American towns throughout the mid-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.⁵ Treks were in effect a tool of trade for most performers—but produced out of the scarcity of market resources and the lack of institutional support for the arts. They

³ The speed with which people and objects circulated was a common topic of interest among nineteenth-century newspaper readers as well as those who produced entertainment, including P. T. Barnum; See James W. Cook, "The Return of the Culture Industry," in James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman and Michael O'Malley, eds., *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 295;

⁴ "Relative," of course, is the key word here. Truly simultaneous entertainments rely on electronic and digital media; Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 3-5, 162-189.

⁵ Peter G. Buckley, "Paratheatricals and Popular Stage Entertainment," *Cambridge History of American Theater, Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1870*, ed. by Don B. Wilmoth and Christopher Bigsby (1998; Cambridge University Press, 2006), 424-77.

were popular entertainments in the eighteenth century and earlier sense of “the popular”—forms of expression engaged in by the majority who were largely people lacking in political power and social prestige. Entertainers were joined in itinerancy as well by religious and social reformers. Eighteenth-century revivalists, including George Whitefield, had used transportation and communications networks to increase their financial solvency and renown, both literally through their travel and discursively through the circulation of their names and deeds in print.⁶ Nor was the aspect of performing in more than one place in a night entirely innovative. Recently, in the 1830s and 1840s, blackface performers including T. D. Rice and John Diamond had made a practice of performing in more than one theater and had received press attention for doing so.⁷

Yet by the 1830s, these early forays into itinerant entertainment had been transformed from an instrument of illegitimate theatricals into a marketing tool of particular significance for a popular celebrity culture in the nineteenth-century sense of the popular, which assumed a populace with more widespread and consistent access to political and social influence. Itinerant life had grown easier, more attractive, and increasingly facilitated by somewhat developing touring circuits. With increased population density and improved travel conditions in certain areas of the country, performers could reach larger audiences faster.⁸ Once they arrived at their

⁶ Peter Benes, “Itinerant Entertainers in New England and New York, 1687–1830,” in *Itinerancy in New England and New York*, ed. by Peter Benes and Jane Montague Benes, (Boston, MA: Boston University Press for the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, 1984); Harry S. Stout, *Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Erdmans, 1991).

⁷ James W. Cook, correspondence.

⁸ Clearly the United States’ economic and geographical growth in the first half of the nineteenth century facilitated touring, and made it a more attractive enterprise. Its economy expanded as well—with the Supreme Court reaching decisions and the Congress passing legislation that favored capitalist development—Americans in nearly every area of the country spent more on leisure activities and consumer products. See Trudy A. Suchan, et. al., *Census Atlas of the*

destinations, they found audiences with more cash to spend, assisted by “revolutions” in the marketplace and consumerism.⁹ Aided by these changes in culture, social conditions and infrastructure, the most successful itinerants, agents and managers took an English and European cultural tradition, and transformed it into a cultural commodity. The celebrity tour became part of a culture industry and a particular kind of itinerancy that involved the most popular public figures in the period circulating, performing, lecturing and appearing for profit in particular towns or along organized circuits. Celebrity tours included entertainers but could also include reformers and lecturers. This chapter will look at just a few of these figures, and at the agents and processes that made their travels possible and more than occasionally, profitable.

Not everyone, however, accepted such contrived events as a positive thing for local or professional culture and financial solvency.¹⁰ John Brougham’s “flying

United States for images depicting changes in population density over the course of the 19th century. The *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online*, ed. by Richard Sutch and Susan B. Carter (Cambridge University Press, 2006) includes detailed information about population and economic statistics in table form. Transportation improved considerably over the period. The trip between New York and Philadelphia, which took Brougham just a few hours—the newspapers insisted on precisely two—would have taken days in 1800. In 1816, it would have taken thirteen hours and cost \$10, whereas in 1860, it would have taken only four hours and cost just \$3.00; See, *Niles’ Weekly Register* X (August 3, 18616) and *Dinsmore’s Railroad and Steam Navigation Guide*, July 1859 and September 1860, data compiled in “Table: Travel from Philadelphia to Quebec in 1816 and 1860,” in George Taylor Roberts, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Rineheart, 1951); See as well Paul A. Gilje, ed., *Wages of Independence: Capitalism in the Early American Republic* (Rowan & Littlefield, 1997); Thurman William Van Metre, *Transportation in the United States* (Foundation Press, 1939).

⁹ See Scott C. Martin, “Introduction: Toward a Cultural History of the Market Revolution,” pp. 1-12, Brett Mizelle, “‘I Have Brought My Pig to a Fine Market:’ Animals, Their Exhibitors, and Market Culture, in the Early Republic,” 181-216, Graham Warder, “Temperance Nostalgia, Market Anxiety, and the Reintegration of Community in T.S. Arthur’s *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room*,” pp. 217-246 and Scott C. Martin, “Interpreting *Metamora*, Theater and Jacksonian Indian Policy,” in Scott C. Martin, ed., *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution, 1789-1860* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

¹⁰ There is an obvious argument to be made that the celebrity industry closed down local entertainment economies and limited cultural offerings in many places. Peter G. Buckley’s article “Paratheatricals and Popular Stage Entertainment” makes a convincing case for the increasing privileging of “distribution” over “production” in theatrical performance over the course of the 19th

theatrical” journey was a stunt—an attempt by an actor and his company to make a profit. It was a pseudo-event, organized on a bet, and likely meant to generate publicity.¹¹ But to what end? Brougham had wagered \$1000 with an unnamed person that he and his companies could play two cities in one evening. After they succeeded, they were toasted at a banquet at Girard House in Philadelphia.¹² Because Brougham was most famous for his comedy burlesques as well as his satirical writing and journalism, we have to imagine that the trip was perhaps a farce.¹³ The company had given the New York performance incredibly short shrift—it could not have lasted more than thirty minutes, hardly a typical length for an evening at the theater. Audience members, aware of the conditions, obviously were showing up for the pleasure of participating in the adventure rather than for the aesthetic value of the evening, and to see if the company could pull it off. The company could, and did, complete their performances, but probably with very little attention to the finer points of performance. It would be consistent with Brougham’s satirical style to make a performance out of his criticism. Yet if the company was trying to make a statement about the shortcomings of dividing and distributing performers’ labors across long distances in short time periods, few audiences, agents or performers cared to listen. Faster and farther travel for the sake of reproducing events only became more popular and representative as the century progressed.¹⁴

century. In *The Cambridge History of American Theatre*, ed. by Christopher Bigsby and Don B. Wilmet (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 424-481.

¹¹ Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962; Vintage edition, 1992).

¹² “A Flying Theatrical Trip,” *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, 11/20/1856.

¹³ William Winter, ed., *Life, Stories, and Poems of John Brougham* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1881).

¹⁴ Robert M. Lewis, ed., *From Traveling Show to Vaudeville: Theatrical Spectacle in America, 1830-1910* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David L. Rinear, *Stage, Page, Scandals and*

Defining the Celebrity Tour

The celebrity tour bore an important relationship to another facet of the emerging culture industries of the nineteenth century, the theatrical “star system,” but simply likening the two does not fully explain the star system’s importance.¹⁵ From the early- to mid-nineteenth century, theatres often featured renowned European performers from “legitimate” theatricals, performers who had built a reputation through sponsorship in the courts or in royal patent playhouses and who had come to the United States to mine the improving potential for profit. Their arrivals were dramatically different than those of earlier, especially English, actors in the American colonies, who had been part of “illegitimate” theatrical traditions that existed alongside, and were constantly threatened by, the system of royal licensing and patronage.¹⁶ These celebrated performers from Europe were advertised on the basis of their existing reputations abroad. Connotations of legitimacy versus illegitimacy remained salient in the context of the nineteenth-century culture wars

Vandals: William E. Burton and 19th-Century American Theatre (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004); Charles S. Watson, *The History of Southern Drama* (University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

¹⁵ The historiography on the star system is almost boundless, but I recommend in particular, Francis Hodge, *Yankee Theatre: The Image of America on the Stage, 1820-1850* (University of Texas Press, 1964), 20-36; Walter J. Meserve, *Heralds of Promise: The Drama of the American People during the Age of Jackson, 1829-1849* (Greenwood Press, 1986); Leo Braudy, *Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); T. Allison Brown, *A History of the New York Stage*, 3 vols. (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1870); James C. Burge, *Lines of Business: Casting Practice and Policy in the American Theatre, 1752-1899* (New York: Peter Lang, 1986); L. W. Conolly, *Theatrical Touring and Founding in North America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982); George C. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (1888-1891).

¹⁶ In the process of passing 1737 revisions to a vagrancy bill, Sir Robert Walpole added provisions restricting theatrical performances to those playhouses holding a royal patent, thus limiting legitimate, legal theatricals to just two houses in London, Covent Garden and Drury Lane. For a detailed account of its passage see, Vincent J. Liesenfeld, *The Licensing Act of 1737* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). For a discussion of its effects on English theatre, see Matthew J. Kinservik, *Disciplining Satire: The Censorship of Satiric Comedy on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage* (Bucknell University Press, 2002), especially pp. 95-133.

over what constituted respectable entertainment.¹⁷ Their performances helped to construct what came to be called the star system, a form of theatrical organization that privileged particular lead actors both by paying them considerably higher rates and promoting them independently and heavily in advertisements and journalism, but in effect neglected less well-known or stock players.¹⁸ Because the same stages often featured actors as well as other kinds of performers, appearances by singers such as Jenny Lind were also a part of the star system. These stars were one aspect of the emerging celebrity culture, and contributed much to the celebrity tour in the nineteenth century.

Yet whereas the star system referred specifically to the promotion of star performers in nineteenth-century theaters, the celebrity tour encompassed far more than just stage performances and ticket sales. The latter participated in and contributed to an entire cultural industry surrounding the sale of celebrated personae, generating the production of newspaper and periodical articles, books, printed images, and material objects as well as a more general fascination with

¹⁷ Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

¹⁸ Stock players were actors who comprised the regular employees of a theater or troupe and who played the more minor or character roles in most performances. The “star system” emerged in the United States in the late 1820s, as a method for creating, promoting and profiting from the popularity of particular leading actors and actresses in the theatrical market. The “star system” was basically what it sounds like—the employing of a small network of starring actors to play in theaters around the country. For most of the 19th century, the “star system” was hardly systematic, but more of a byproduct of certain trends in theater management and promotion that made it more profitable to spend less on minor actors and more on a celebrated performer and personality. By the 1830s and 1840s, especially into the 1850s, some managers and actors were convinced that the star-system was a detriment to the field, because managers were forced to invest so much money into paying starring players that they could not make a profit and pay stock actors, or the minor roles, well enough to keep or train them long term. Thus while a show might have one or two highly talented and qualified actors in a show, many of the minor parts were played by unimpressive performers. Yet until 1870, or at least and perhaps until the advent of the film star, the theatrical star remained entrenched in theatrical organization. See as well Douglas McDermott, “Structure and Management in the American Theatre,” pp.197-211, Simon Williams, “European Actors and the Star System, 1752-1870,” pp. 303-337, and Bruce McConachie, “American Theatre in Context,” pp. 147-155, in *The Cambridge History of American Theatre*, ed. by Christopher Bigsby and Don B. Wilmeth (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

public figures' private lives and characters. Other individuals, besides actors and performers, who were celebrated in the pages of the nineteenth-century press, also toured the country exploiting their renown.

The celebrity tour often was concerned with using the fame of its subjects to promote social and cultural change, as well as to establish reliable networks of exchange. Celebrity reformers, including temperance lecturer John B. Gough and the abolitionist singing family, the Hutchinsons, toured both to make money for and to advocate for their causes. As we have already seen, writer Charles Dickens undertook his first American tour in 1842, to gain experiences for his planned travel narrative but also to advocate for international copyright legislation in the United States.¹⁹ The celebrity tour thus necessarily extended beyond the reach of the star system—renowned figures often traveled outside of usual major theatrical circuits visited by performance stars.

The celebrity tour also merits a separate exploration because of the significance it held for those communities beyond the reach of the mainstream theater industry. As Dickens's experiences during his tour have already revealed, prominent people, or boosters, in cities throughout the United States looked to the visit of a famous individual as one method for promoting their communities' growth

¹⁹ For a discussion of Dickens's and the debate over instituting an international copyright, see James Barnes, *Free Trade in Books: A Study of the London Book Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: The Life of Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Gerhard Joseph, "Charles Dickens: International Copyright, and the Discretionary Silence of *Martin Chuzzlewit*," in Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds., *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 259-270, Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 109-132; Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), Jerome Meckier, "Introduction," *Innocent Abroad: Charles Dickens's American Engagements* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 1990).

and gaining national recognition. Individuals as well thought of their attendance at a celebrity event as one way to see the world without traveling great distances. Thus in addition to creating an increased profit-potential for professionals in the field, celebrity touring influenced and facilitated the cosmopolitan strivings of a still-young nation and its residents, especially in western and smaller American cities, while influencing local economies in entertainment.²⁰ This new commodity circulated on and off of the mainstream, distributing character, respectability and recognition among consumers and cities that spanned the nation, and beyond.²¹

Our knowledge of many of the nineteenth-century's most notable celebrities comes from their contemporaries who documented their successes as itinerant

²⁰ Although many towns had no shortage of local leisure options, the idea that more and more Americans in more and more places could participate directly in simultaneous forms of entertainment, but also share a consumer market in products provided a powerful impulse for the imagination. In the early- to mid-nineteenth century United States, clothing styles, reading materials, furniture, decorative items and news traveled from east to west, but also increasingly in the reverse direction. Many historians have noted this rise, and taken account of the successes and failures. Roger F. Riefler discusses the relationship between interregional exchange and national growth through the development of metropolitan, or town and hinterland, areas in his "Nineteenth-Century Urbanization Patterns in the United States," *Journal of Economic History* 39:4 (December 1979): 961-974. In *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*, Jonathan Wells details the efforts of middle-class southerners before the Civil War to transform the national image of the region, to combat the perception of the South as "backward and feeble" through exploring economic growth, transportation expansion, and the similarity of reading materials across the north and south as particular markers of the nationalization of class standards and behavior. Andrés Reséndez's work on the borderlands of the United States and Mexico addresses relationships between national and commercial expansion. In exploring the impact of the influx of American medicine and alcohol on the local economy and cultural milieu of Texan and New Mexican communities, he creates a compelling model for the reconfiguring of local worlds through the introduction of imported goods. He details how demand for the new goods circumvented the government's ability to regulate the material world and provided a method for local residents to project "longings and aspirations that did not necessarily correspond to those prescribed by government officials."

²¹ The interest in celebrity touring in general was not disconnected from the growing interest in tourism, for those with the money to either travel themselves, or invest in the increasing catalog of published travel literature. See Richard Gassan, "The First American Tourist: Authorship and Print Culture of the 1820s," *Book History* 8 (August 2005): 51-74; Thomas A. Chambers, *Drinking the Waters: Creating an American Leisure Class at Nineteenth-Century Mineral Springs* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). For an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of contemporary tourist studies see Dean McCannel's *The Tourist: Towards a New Theory of the Leisure Class* and Daniel J. Boorstin, "From Traveler to Tourist," in *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Athenaeum, 1972), 77-117.

performers and lecturers. The travels of actors Edwin Forrest and Fanny Kemble, musicians Jenny Lind and members of the Hutchinson family, writer Charles Dickens, and reformers John B. Gough and Frederick Douglass appear as topics in the periodicals of far-flung places both large and small from northern New Hampshire to central Missouri to northern California. Beyond print alone, paintings, dishware, glassware, clothing, furniture and more items associated with celebrated personae appeared in museums and historical societies in most major nineteenth-century cities as well as in many smaller ones. Towns in what were remote areas of the country in the nineteenth century today bear the names Jenny Lind, Metamora and Hutchinson, in honor of celebrities and their achievements. Particularly in the context of celebrity travels around the United States, however, the significance of their movement has not been fully explored.²²

These feats of travel and performance were an extension of the sale of sensational and sentimental relationships on the pages of print.²³ In attending a performance by or seeking an audience with a person celebrated around the country and the world, people, wherever they were, could imagine themselves as sophisticated participants in and arbiters of a popular culture they might have experienced previously only through conversation, the printed page, or the purchase

²² James W. Cook's current book project on the touring and travels of African American performers will do much to increase our understanding of the trans-Atlantic culture industries of the middle nineteenth century; see Cook, "The Return of the Culture Industry," James W. Cook, "Dancing Across the Color Line: A Story of Mixtures and Markets in New York's Five Points," *Common-place* 4, no. 1 (October 2003) <<http://www.common-place.org/vol-04/no-01/cook/cook-2.shtml>>; and James W. Cook, "Master Juba, King of all Dancers! Black Dancer's Story form the Dawn of the Transatlantic Culture Industry," *Discourses in Dance* 3, no. 2 (2006).

²³ The trend would grow only more expansive and complex after my period of concern, with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Nationally touring circuses became organized "big business" entities with tremendous local significance for the cities they visited, their stops becoming annual events and linking the imaginations of individuals in far distant communities; Janet Davis's *Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

of a consumer product. By emphasizing the distances and speed at which people traveled (especially famous people), journalism promoted the rising superiority and efficiency of transportation technology and suggested that far distant cities and people could in effect become closer. To complete their portion of the sale, a tour's organizers and its performers relied on much more than their own creativity and commercial relationships within their immediate vicinity, but rather built professional relationships that spanned tremendous distances across train routes, roads and waterways. These exchanges and the professions that emerged out of them produced the possibility for a trans-continental popular culture and comprised a primary piece of the mechanics of celebrity in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁴ Markets could and were merging, while culture, transportation, technology and industry worked together, mutually dependent and constitutive.

The Itinerant Life; or, What Actors and Reformers Shared in a Century of Theatrical Labor

For many itinerants of English-language entertainment, religion, or reform, the tour had begun as a simple fact of life—part of a system delineating legitimate and illegitimate practices. Rather than a mark of prominence or broad appeal, the itinerants' need to travel from city to city, or state to state, marked their need to plea for support because of the impossibility of living off the proceeds of the market in a single place.²⁵ In the eighteenth-century, English actors at least strove to surpass the role of the strolling player, and to become part of a royal patent theater that

²⁴ One important example of professionalization was the emergence of the trade paper addressing issues of concern to those who worked in theatrical fields. In 1838, the *Era* began printing in London, and in 1853, an American paper the *New York Clipper* emerged. These papers were early on concerned with broad international markets; see Cook, "The Return of the Culture Industry," in *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, ed. by James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O'Malley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 300.

²⁵ Peter Benes, ed., *Itinerancy in New England and New York*.

allowed them to spend most if not all of the year in one place.²⁶ At the start of his career in 1741, David Garrick began as a member of a troupe that typically traveled based on the decisions of its manager or the whims of local legal authorities. He, however, was an extraordinary case. He became a successful and celebrated actor very quickly, gaining a permanent position at the royal-patented Drury Lane during the 1741 to 1742 season.²⁷ His status allowed him to stay mostly in London, although he chose to travel to other cities during summer seasons to increase his already substantial purse and renown. The Kemble family began similarly as strolling players, and only in the second generation—with Fanny Kemble's father Charles, and his siblings John Philip and Sarah Siddons, did they rise to prominence and become London-based.²⁸

Anglo-America inherited these ideals around theatrical culture, but by the nineteenth century much had changed. In the theaters of the United States, the star system and the strolling system existed alongside one another in the first decades of the century; although, in contrast to the strolling players, stars traveled independently of companies and troupes, and many of them held considerable

²⁶ See for example, Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald's *The Kembles: An Account of the Kemble Family, Including the Lives of Mrs. Siddons, and Her Brother, John Philip Kemble* (1871; reprint B. Blom, 1969) and Simon Williams, "European Actors and the Star System," in Don B. Wilmet and Christopher Bigsby, eds., *Cambridge History of the American Theatre*, Vol I (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁷ In an interesting early proof that the growth of the star system shut down other avenues for entertainment in English-language theatricals, David Garrick applied in 1741 for positions at London's Drury Lane and Covent Garden, but was rejected. When his performances for the non-patented Goodman's Fields Theatre managed by Henry Giffard began to pull audiences away from the legitimate royal theater, the manager of Drury Lane engaged Garrick with his theater for the 1742-43 season and convinced Lord Chamberlain, who issued letters patents for theatres, to enforce the law and close down Giffard's theatre; see Jean Benedetti, *David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre* (Methuen, 2001), 21-46 and Alan Kendall, *David Garrick: A Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 1-26.

²⁸ Fitzgerald, "The Strollers," *The Kembles*.

control over the terms of their contracts.²⁹ Edwin Forrest's career embodied this trajectory. Between his first performance in the major market of Philadelphia in 1820 and his rise to national stardom in the latter years of the decade, he traveled almost constantly, acting on minor and major stages in Pittsburgh (PA), Lexington (KY), Cincinnati (OH), Hamilton (OH), New Orleans (LA), Petersburg (VA), Fredericksburg (VA), and Albany (NY). Newspapers, however, did not report on these early travels and the company often struggled to gather audiences and pay its actors. Only when Forrest became famous did newspapers begin reporting regularly on his travels and appearances, as his touring became a profit-generating event, rather than simply a tactic of the field.

For the itinerant reformer, such as preacher George Whitefield in the eighteenth century and temperance lecturer John B. Gough in the nineteenth century, conditions were of course somewhat different. They were trying to spread specific messages across distances, rather than simply to attract a profitable audience. Although some itinerants, especially those attached to religious movements, did eventually quit traveling and affiliate themselves permanently with a particular congregation or institution, Whitefield, Gough and other successful figures traveled for the duration of their careers.³⁰ Nevertheless, their stories too reflected changing conditions of the tour with their own increasing prominence. In some ways, the itinerant preachers and lecturers may have led the way for extensive professional and celebrity touring. Whitefield's sermons, especially early on in

²⁹ Simon Williams, "European Actors and the Star System," in Don B. Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby, eds., *Cambridge History of the American Theatre*, Vol I (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁰ For a more detailed discussion of itinerant reform, lecturing and religion in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see the various essays on these topics in Peter Benes, ed., *Itinerancy in New England and New York*.

England, were often held outdoors and were in a sense, illegitimate, disconnected from an established pulpit and often irking local religious officials.³¹ His sermons depended for their success upon his own talent for exposition and the projection of his voice, thus requiring him to labor to draw a crowd and organize a venue. The celebrated Whitefield, however, depended far less on his own continuing efforts to arrange events and attract crowds, although he did have to work to maintain his appeal. His reputation preceded him in the form of newspaper coverage; and, he often spoke by invitation at meetings organized by hosts in communities around the American colonies and Great Britain.³² Lecturer John B. Gough began his career in 1842 as a lecturer by asking to speak at a temperance meeting. Yet, at the height of his fame he was able to reject invitations from individuals and communities spanning organized lecture circuits and beyond. By the time he became a lecturer by profession, the field benefited from organized religious and reform groups to support his efforts.³³

The organization and professionalization of reform and the theater typically spread from east to west, although eastern cities very often pulled talent and ideas from western communities. Fanny Kemble's career, because of its extraordinarily long duration from her debut in 1829 until the mid-1870s, epitomized the transitions in the touring industry over the course of the early to middle nineteenth century. When she and her father, Charles, arrived in the United States in 1832 for what

³¹ Stout, *Divine Dramatist*.

³² Stout, and Chapter One of this dissertation.

³³ Anne M. Boylan, *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Lori D. Ginzberg, *Untidy Origins: A Story of Women's Rights in Antebellum New York* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

would be his only and her first performance tour in the country, they visited just five cities—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. The American capital was not a typical stop along the theater circuit at the time, yet it was a regular destination for the country's celebrated visitors. President Andrew Jackson and Congress had invited Fanny and Charles, members of the family English writer Leigh Hunt described as "God's Almighty nobility," to make a special command performance in the city.³⁴ Clearly many prominent Americans considered the Kembles' tour an important event.

Yet the decision to travel to the United States at this early stage of Fanny's career reflected her father's professional failures as much as her own successes. Her journal and letters make it apparent that she only reluctantly agreed to travel, that she would have preferred to stay at home in London.³⁵ Although they were members of England's most successful and enduring theatrical family, and Fanny had achieved much in her brief two years on the stage, Charles Kemble was floundering financially. He had taken over the management of Covent Garden from his brother John Philip Kemble in 1817, but it operated more often at a loss than a profit. The family needed this American tour to reverse their fortunes and replenish their financial reserves.³⁶

³⁴ Leigh Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, With Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries* (Harper & Bros, 1860), 163.

³⁵ Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars*, 48-49; Fanny Kemble, *Journal of a Residence in America* (A. and W. Galignani, 1835), 1-6.

³⁶ Charles Kemble's brother, John Philip Kemble had purchased 1/6 of the royal patent for the Covent Garden Theater in 1808. Later that year, the theater burned. After John Philip, with the help of his siblings, rebuilt and opened it with elaborate improvements, setting higher ticket prices to recoup the substantial investment, audiences protested and eventually rioted, once again destroying much of theater. For the next thirty years, the Kembles struggled with debt, but were unable to raise prices to a level that would turn a consistent and high profit. Charles Kemble had assumed John Philips stake in Covent Garden in 1817. For more on the Covent Garden Theater riot in 1809, see Marc Baer, *Theatre and Disorder in Late Georgian London* (London: Clarendon Press, 1992). The tradition of theater rioting was one inherited from the eighteenth century, see

The Kembles made the right decision for their personal finances. American audiences were as accustomed to hosting English performers on their stages as English actors were to coming to the United States to revive floundering fortunes and careers. An American manager, Stephen Price, who oversaw New York City's Park Theatre from 1808 to 1826, and then from 1830 to 1840, did much to facilitate the touring of European, but especially English, stars. From 1826 to 1830, Price had managed the Kembles' competitor, Drury Lane in London.³⁷ The family apparently did not bear a grudge towards him, however, as they performed at Park Theatre in New York under his management when they first arrived in the United States in 1832. They also may very well have had him as their agent throughout their American tour. He often served as an agent for foreign actors, dancers and singers wishing to come to the United States, and they may have had few, if any other choices.

In the late 1820s, as Price established his reputation for engaging European performers, rumors began circulating that he was scheming to bring a Kemble to the United States. The *Philadelphia Ladies' Weekly Gazette* told readers that he had offered the sixty-year-old Sarah Siddons \$45,000 for come to the United States for a year and to play in Charlestown and Boston.³⁸ Price guarded his position in the American theatre jealously, and historians have documented that he used harassment and violence against his competition, especially William Brown's African-American company in the 1820s.³⁹ Obviously he would not have used these

James Joseph Caudle, *London Theater Riots, 1700-1800: Pattern and Ideology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1992).

³⁷ Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars*, 47-48.

³⁸ "Theatrical," (1/23/1828): 269.

³⁹ Contemporaries and theatre historians have written extensively about Price's control of especially the New York theaters, but also the American stage in general. He guarded his

tactics against the Kembles, but he kept the field of options limited for all actors and managers. Price had established an initial circuit that guaranteed foreign actors a stage not only in New York, but also in Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Charleston (SC).⁴⁰ Eventually he expanded that circuit to include Cincinnati, St. Louis, Mobile, and Orleans.⁴¹ The Kembles followed the earlier circuit, although they excluded the smaller markets of Providence and Charleston. Despite their limited itinerary, the Kemble's American tour was decidedly a success. In New York City, their earnings were "preeminently the best returns of the year," and beat out even the American-born sensation Edwin Forrest.⁴² Newspaper coverage suggests they triumphed similarly in other cities.

As the special invitation they received to perform for the president and Congress suggested, the Kemble's tour, spread out and repeated over the course of more than a year, had a broad significance. It became more than just another star event, but also became a chance to market Fanny Kemble as a celebrity, a young woman of admirable character, genius and talent already lauded in the pages of newspapers since her London debut two years' earlier. Fanny captured the attention of newspaper editors around the country, who penned and reprinted stories about her at a remarkable pace. Some of the newspapers, including the *Salem (MA) Gazette* and the Providence *Rhode Island and American Gazette* included among their audience readers who could and did travel to cities where she performed. Given their position on the circuit, perhaps the *Gazette's* readers were especially

position, and that of the Park Theatre, carefully, and has been suspected, with strong reason, with instigating a riot targeting an African-American theatre company in the 1820s, and most certainly at least sponsored harassment against them. See Erroll G. Hill and James V. Hatch, *A History of African American Theatre* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 24-60.

⁴⁰ Simon Williams, "European Actors and the Star System, 1752-1870," 309-311.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² George C. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (1931; reprint New York: AMS Pres, 1970), 670.

interested, and disappointed, that the Kembles skipped their city on the tour. Readers of the Keene, New Hampshire *Sentinel* were less likely to have traveled the eighty miles or so to Boston to see her perform, but certainly it would have been possible. Yet these possibilities were not the sole reason for her promotion. Even fewer residents of Richmond, Charleston (SC), Nashville, Macon (GA), Chicago, or St. Louis were present during her performances, although local papers included stories about the actress.⁴³

Readers of newspapers outside of the immediate areas where she performed were experiencing the theater and her celebrity vicariously through print. The stories printed a broad picture of Fanny Kemble's life, character and persona, as they varied from simple announcements of performances, to extensive reviews, with the occasional short story about a tulip variety and a racehorse named "Fanny Kemble." One such article told the story of a young man in London driven insane by his "violent passion" for the actress.⁴⁴ Such reporting, although it emerged from an event based on the traditional star-system model, comprised the content of celebrity culture. In the context of celebrity touring and its expansion during the first half of the century, it could only have increased the interest of readers in particular figures, and proved a positive investment for later celebrities and their agents to build more expansive itineraries.

Kemble herself reaped continuing benefits from the attention to her early career and its construction of her celebrity. Nearly fifteen years after her initial tour,

⁴³ *Richmond (VA) Enquirer*, 6/7/1833, 7/16/1833, 12/3/1833, 6/2/1835; Charleston, SC *Southern Patriot*, 4/30/1834, 6/14/1834, 5/2/1835, 5/16/1835; Macon (GA) *Weekly Telegraph*, 2/5/1835; Nashville *Banner and Nashville Whig*, 4/17/1834.

⁴⁴ Untitled, *Rhode Island American*, 10/9/1832; Untitled, *Salem Gazette* 10/9/1832; Untitled, *Pittsfield Sun*, 10/11/1832; "Baltimore Central Course Races," *Richmond Enquirer*, 10/30/1832; "Variety," *New Hampshire Sentinel*, 12/27/1832.

while she was embroiled in a bitter divorce from Pierce Butler, Kemble returned to the performance circuit, this time as a dramatic reader rather than as a stage actress. Rumors that she would return to performing had circulated since her retirement from the stage after her marriage in 1834. In the later 1840s, a ring of truth began to characterize the stories that she would tour again. Certainly prominent men and women in London, Boston and Philadelphia, at least, knew about the long-standing problems in her relationship with Butler, and so it was perhaps inevitable that suspicions and suggestions, but no specific details, would appear in newspapers.⁴⁵ In January 1846, after the couple had separated but before the divorce, the *Southern Patriot* out of Charleston intimated that marriage difficulties would soon force her back onto the stage.⁴⁶ Other papers also printed the rumors, apparently filtered from London sources.

Yet rather than making a permanent and complete return to the theatre, she began in 1848 to perform a series of afternoon and early evening readings of Shakespeare's works in smaller venues.⁴⁷ She signed with an agent, Henry Mitchell, to handle her British engagements outside London, but maintained considerable control over her scheduling, pay rates, and the prices of tickets for

⁴⁵ Word of their separation began appearing in newspapers in mid-1844. See the *Berkshire County Whig*, 4/11/1844 for an announcement of the separation and 5/2/1844 for an intimation of Butler's adultery which reports characterized as "true or not true." See as well the second half of Clinton's *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars* and Deidre David's *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), for more detailed discussion of this period in Kemble's life and career.

⁴⁶ "Fanny Kemble," *Southern Patriot*, 1/23/1846; "Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler," *Southern Patriot*, 2/25/1847.

⁴⁷ Kemble did attempt a return to the stage (announced in the United States in early 1847; "Items," *New Hampshire Sentinel*, 3/31/1847), but found the rigors too difficult given physical problems she had suffered from since the births of her daughters. In taking this step, she followed the example of her father, who as an older, distinguished actor had considerable success as a reader of Shakespeare's works in parlors and reading rooms around London. See Catherine Clinton, *Fanny Kemble's Civil Wars*, 137-158.

audiences.⁴⁸ It seems that in the United States, her lawyers, Joshua Fisher and Theodore Sedgwick, represented her financial interests although she must have engaged with American theatrical agents or local organizations to schedule her readings.⁴⁹ The events were apparently successful—the *Berkshire County Whig* reported profits of \$1000 per week for the actress from her readings in Massachusetts and New York.⁵⁰ Diarist Philip Hone and subsequent Kemble biographers have estimated that based on an average of \$500 per reading, she may have earned as much as \$30,000 in an average year during her reading career.⁵¹

Newspapers and magazines, were enthusiastic about her return to public performance, and gave her touring schedule considerable attention while waxing enthusiasm about her enduring character and talents. The *Houston Telegraph* in April 1849, reported that her recent reading at the Stuyvesant Institute in New York, in front of a “large and fashionable auditory,” of “mostly ladies,” had been a “triumph in every way.”⁵² The *Pittsfield Sun* declared a reading of hers in Philadelphia “a rich intellectual treat” characterized by “masterly skill.”⁵³ The methods for promoting her celebrity thus had not changed much over her decade’s absence from the stage. In the midst of her divorce proceedings and at the start of her American reading career, the *Ohio Statesmen* had reprinted an excerpt from a New York newspaper about her

⁴⁸ Clinton, *Fanny Kemble’s Civil Wars*, 143-145.

⁴⁹ Clinton, *Fanny Kemble’s Civil Wars*, 143-145; I could not find references to her contract arrangements for readings in biographies or in the archives I visited, except for an article from the July 19th edition of the *Morning News* which printed a rumor that she had been offered \$25,000 by “Mr. Simpson” to perform in the United States. I might find more evidence of them in English archives.

⁵⁰ Untitled, *Berkshire County Whig*, 2/15/1849.

⁵¹ Deidre David, *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 235-237.

⁵² Untitled, *Houston Telegraph*, 4/12/1849.

⁵³ Untitled, *Pittsfield Sun*, 10/11/1849.

famous “eccentricities,” but with a meaningful twist.⁵⁴ The writer claimed to have seen her out riding alone along the “North River,” when she spontaneously boarded a boat filled with immigrants and distributed money to the poorest looking among them. It concluded this “proof” of her eccentricities with, “God bless her for it!”⁵⁵

In the past, such articles in the western newspapers would have been a vicarious introduction to a woman that readers never expected to see in person. Yet, by 1849, the article in this Ohio newspaper might have been subtle advertising. She would appear in Cincinnati in November 1849.⁵⁶ Soon newspaper editors in Illinois, Missouri and even Texas were also wondering if “Mrs. Fanny Kemble,” would come to their towns and cities.⁵⁷ A Saint Louis journalist speculated that since “Mrs. Fanny Kemble is to give a series of Shakespearean readings in Cincinnati....[o]f course she will visit St. Louis?”⁵⁸ Such an event now seemed possible to residents of western cities. Cincinnati and St. Louis boasted respectably sized markets, while the theatrical circuits in place and commonly used by prominent figures (dependent upon steamboats that regularly traveled the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers) might make her readings profitable. They even shared a management team in the firm of Sol Smith and Noah M. Ludlow.⁵⁹ The *Republican* ventured correctly. St. Louis hosted readings by Kemble periodically up to and after the Civil War.⁶⁰

Her remarkably different itinerary for her readings than the one she had completed with her father in 1832 through 1834 evidences the expanding market for

⁵⁴ “Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler,” *Ohio Statesman*, 5/15/1849.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Untitled, *Daily Missouri Republican*, 11/6/1849.

⁵⁷ Untitled, *Ohio Statesman*, 3/13/1849, Untitled, *Houston Telegraph*, 4/12/1849.

⁵⁸ “Mrs. Fanny Kemble,” *Daily Missouri Republican*, 11/6/1849.

⁵⁹ Sol. Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* and Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*.

⁶⁰ Fanny Kemble indicated in her published journal, *Further Records, 1848-1883: A Series of Letters*, that she had been to St. Louis, MO and Milwaukee, WI, in the “winter” sometime before November 1857 (H. Holt and Company, 1891), 316, 317

celebrity touring and legitimate theater in the period. Regions and cities that had only reported on her in the 1830s, now expected to host a Kemble reading. Indeed, between her divorce and the American Civil War she gave readings in St. Louis as well as typical eastern cities including Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, but also traveled to at least Worcester (MA), Springfield (MA), Cincinnati, Milwaukee and Chicago. Periodicals paid particular attention to the cities where she chose to perform and assigned cultural and social meaning to the decisions.

She did not, however, tour in the South and sources reported that this choice had political significance. One newspaper reported that while she did give a reading in Baltimore, she did so only once and it was “gratuitously,” because she refused to receive money in a slave state.⁶¹ Several claimed that she had refused an engagement in Louisville, for the same reason.⁶² Although Fanny Kemble became an especially important cultural figure for anti-slavery after the publication of her narrative *Journal of a Residence on A Georgian Plantation* in 1863, by the mid-1840s her name and persona—her celebrity in effect—were already being used in sectional debates, based upon her decisions of where, and under what conditions, to perform.⁶³ During her first tour, in the 1830s, no one commented in published sources about the choices of venue, or made a statement about the cities’ significances. This difference reflected a decisive shift in the social climate around not only the issue of slavery, but in the uses of celebrity.⁶⁴

⁶¹ “Shakespeare and Free Soil,” *Pittsfield (MA) Sun*, 11/22/1849. Of course Kemble would not have refused money from her ex-husband, who was one of the larger slave-owners in Georgia until debt forced him to sell many of his slaves on the eve of the Civil War; Untitled, *Farmers’ Cabinet*, 1/10/1850.

⁶² “Mrs. Fanny Kemble,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 12/27/1849.

⁶³ For more on this issue, see Catherine Clinton, *Fanny Kemble’s Civil Wars*.

⁶⁴ I comment more upon the uses of celebrity by such reform movements as abolition in Chapter Five.

The shifting terrain of Fanny Kemble's career as an itinerant performer, and celebrity tourist, thus indicated not only the increasing reach of professional theatricals and celebrity culture but also the construction of meaning around them. Journalists used the professional decisions she and her agents made in organizing her stops along the tour route to make statements not only about a city's significance, but also about the relationship of the arts to political decision making and action. Publicity around other celebrity tours in the period yielded similar discussions as well as efforts to boost a particular community's reputation and prominence.

Charles Dickens—Celebrity Tourist

As much as anything else, Charles Dickens's 1842 visit offered a chance for publicity. His tour appeared to provide Americans with an opportunity for public celebration reminiscent of Lafayette's reception in 1824 and reflective of the national excitement and fêting that would greet Hungarian revolutionary Louis (Lajos) Kossuth and Swedish singer Jenny Lind in the early 1850s.⁶⁵ Like Fanny Kemble later in the decade, Dickens ventured far beyond the traditional circuits of the 1830s, but unlike her, he did not do so because of the expanding reach of theatrical culture. As I discussed in the previous chapter, he came as a traveler more than a performer and also had explicit aspirations—the creation of an international system of copyright protection.⁶⁶ Reports about the writer's expectations regarding the United States

⁶⁵ For more on Lajos (Louis) Kossuth's tour of the United States, see John H. Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-52* (Buffalo, NY: East European Institute, 1973).

⁶⁶ For a discussion of Dickens's and the debate over instituting an international copyright, see James Barnes, *Free Trade in Books: A Study of the London Book Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: The Life of Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Gerhard Joseph, "Charles Dickens: International Copyright, and the Discretionary Silence of *Martin Chuzzlewit*," in Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, eds., *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*

preceded him. He had written to his prospective hosts in Boston about his excitement, in a letter from which several different newspapers excerpted, that he looked forward to “setting [his] foot upon the soil [he] had trodden in [his] day-dreams many times.”⁶⁷ Prominent citizens in major cities along the usual route for celebrated visitors immediately went into action upon hearing of his plans, planning public gatherings in his honor.

The first of these welcome events, a dinner in Boston, went off successfully, with the results reported widely. The New Orleans *Daily Picayune* reported that it “undoubtedly had been a grand affair” and that Dickens had thanked his hosts with a “most graceful and fluent” address.⁶⁸ Closer to Boston, the *Barre (MA) Gazette* wrote that “rare and clever things [were] said and done at the dinner,” and based on these third-person observations, the newspaper judged it to have been an event “admirable—delightful—worthy...of the City.”⁶⁹ Hartford, Connecticut followed up with a similar affair, while in Worcester, Massachusetts citizens called upon Dickens and his wife at the governor’s mansion, “for the purpose of manifesting civility.”⁷⁰ I have already written about New York City’s elaborate Boz Ball, with its 3000 guests,

(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 259-270, Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 109-132; Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Alexander Welsh, *From Copyright to Copperfield: The Identity of Dickens* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), Jerome Meckier, “Introduction,” *Innocent Abroad: Charles Dickens’s American Engagements* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 1990).

⁶⁷ “From the *New York Courier and Enquirer*,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 11/18/1841.

⁶⁸ “The Boz Dinner in Boston,” *Daily Picayune*, 2/17/1842; Untitled, *Pittsfield Sun*, 1/27/1842, from the *Boston Advertiser*, 1/25/1842.

⁶⁹ “Dickens’ Speech,” *Barre Gazette*, 2/18/1842.

⁷⁰ Ibid, “Mr. Dickens,” from the *Aegis* in the *Barre Gazette*, 2/11/1842.

and a meal requiring the slaughter of two hundred turkeys, ducks and chickens and the uncorking of one hundred fifty gallons of Madeira and wine.⁷¹

Although Dickens ultimately rejected many invitations after the New York event, and scholars have marked its extravagance as a major turning point in his affections for the American republic, the great care given to planning and publicizing such receptions for Dickens reflected the aspirations that civic leaders and prominent citizens attached to high-profile visitors.⁷² Fêting the English writer provided the cultural and financial elite with opportunities to put their self-professed sophistication on display, and to advertise the particular character and benefits of their community. Boston's event provided "rare and clever" conversation, while the smaller communities of Worcester and Hartford manifested civility. New York offered opulence, or at least such were the stories told in the reams of competitive reporting expended on the affairs.

His hosts obviously had multi-layered motives. Newspapers had printed the author's intention to publish a travel account. Having experienced the biting reports of other traveling tourists---Fanny Kemble, Francis Trollope, and Thomas Hamilton among them, influential Americans were determined to orchestrate his experiences by presenting only carefully chosen aspects of society.⁷³ The *Barre Gazette* reprinted a (horrible) poem from a New York newspaper that spoke about the hopes surrounding the Boz's American tour,

⁷¹ "Mr. Dickens, Alias 'Boz', *Southern Patriot*, 11/6/1841, and "Found a Grave," *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 3/10/1842. I speak more about the Boz Ball in the introductory paragraphs of Chapter Two.

⁷² Juliet John, "'A Body without a Head:' The Idea of Mass Culture in Dickens's *American Notes*," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 12:2 (August 2007): 173-202

⁷³ Frances Ann Butler (Fanny Kemble), *Journal* (J. Murray, 1835); Frances Milton Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832); Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (1832).

Welcome, loved stranger to our happy land. / Fair son of Genius! Ruler of the mind! Mover of hearts.../ We share with thee the best and noblest part.../ Be this thy resting place. Remain and share / Thy love and friendship of the good and fair.⁷⁴

Behind the hyperbolic effusions lay a plea to Dickens to use his genius to explore “the best and noblest part” of the United States. The aspiring poet reminded him that his words ruled minds and moved hearts, and thus as a “loved stranger,” he should be “good and fair” to them. The poem’s author and Dickens’s hosts failed famously to convince him of their virtue. He wrote a biting criticism of American culture, politics and society in his *American Notes for General Circulation*.

Yet some writers, especially those outside of the major cities and especially in the west, criticized and anticipated problems with Dickens’s reception. Some blamed it on the culture of the large cities in the East. Thus commentators on celebrity culture in journalism, just as they would with Fanny Kemble later in the decade, used his reception and touring to espouse sectional divisions. In this case, however, they noted divisions between east and west as well as between urban and rural. A writer with a more entertaining talent for verse than the poet above, penned the following, also printed in the *Barre (MA) Gazette*,

They’ll tope thee, Boz, they’ll soap thee, Boz,
Already they begin!
They’ll dine thee, Boz, they’ll wine thee, Boz,
They’ll stuff thee to the chin!
They’ll smother thee with victuals, Boz,
With fish, and flesh, and chickens;
Our authorling will bore thee, Boz,
And hail thee, ‘Cousin Dickens!’
While ladies-‘spite thy better half,—
Blue, yellow, foul, and fair,
Will coax thee for the autograph,
And likewise locks of hair!
Beware, Boz! Take care, Boz!
Of forming false conclusions.

⁷⁴ “From a Poem in the Times,” *Barre Gazette*, 2/4/1842.

Because a certain sort of folk
Do mete thee such obtrusions;
For they are not the people, Boz,
Those templars of the cork,
No more than a church-steeple, Boz,
Is Boston or New York!⁷⁵

This unaccredited poem, published just weeks after Dickens's arrival, captured and expressed the conflict as many journalists and writers understood it. The verbs "tope," "stuff," "smother," "bore" and "coax" all suggest excess, that the events would overwhelm his senses and threaten his ability to see beyond them and understand the true United States. He or she also implied something about the false familiarity created by such relationships. "They" – the wealthy – would "hail" him "Cousin Dickens" – suggesting that upon first greeting the author, they would assume immediate intimacy while trying to get his autograph and take his hair. They were false and opportunistic admirers. All the while, for example, "blue, yellow, foul and fair" women among them would spite his wife. The poet tried to assure Dickens, though, that these were only "a certain sort of folk," and trusting them would lead him to draw false conclusions about the United States. These "templars of the cork," were not "the people," but only the residents of Boston and New York City. The poem then suggested that the cities of Boston and New York were themselves misleading and no more than the country's "church-steeples" – decorative and directional features, useful but deliberately set apart. The poem, thus, urged Dickens to leave the big cities and see more of the country's true interior.

This poet was not alone in bewailing Dickens's reception on the East Coast and its reflection on the larger nation. The editors of the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* lamented that "Charles Dickens should be in New Orleans, and not in

⁷⁵ "Address to Boz, from the N.Y. Jour Com," *Barre Gazette* (2/4/1842).

Boston, to pick up new kaleidoscope views of life.”⁷⁶ They dismissed the reception in that city and the speeches it inspired as regrettably shallow, opining, “We venture to say he would draw more grave and philosophic reflection from the exhibition [at Mardi Gras] than may be dreamed of in superficial thinking.”⁷⁷ A correspondent to the *Picayune*, John Smith, of Arkansas, put it more simply, writing from New York that “Charles Dickens still remains in Boston, and is lionizing against his consent.”⁷⁸

The writers need not have worried, Dickens proceeded south and west in March and succeeded in having many everyday experiences, some of which he recorded in *American Notes*, published later that year. He learned and wrote about how—despite American assertions to the contrary—travel networks remained undeveloped and uncomfortable. He alluded to water shortages in hotels and the poor quality of roads that left him stuck in the mud multiple times, thus embarrassing prominent and enterprising Americans. He did, however, relax his stringent restrictions on public receptions by the time he concluded his western tour in St. Louis in April, and allowed a public soiree in his honor. In contrast to New York, St. Louis charmed Dickens. He wrote positively about his hotel, the Planters House, stating that “the proprietors had most bountiful notions of providing the creative comforts.”⁷⁹ He acknowledged that the city was “still ‘progressing,’” but noted that already “some very good houses, broad streets, and marble-fronted shops, had gone so far a-head as to be in a state of completion” and felt sure that the town “bid fair...to improve considerably.”⁸⁰ He also praised the “elegance” and “beauty” of

⁷⁶ “Mardi Gras,” *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 2/9/1842.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ “New York, January 27, 1842,” 2/8/1842.

⁷⁹ Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* Vol. 2, (Chapman and Hall, 1842) 117-118.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Cincinnati.⁸¹ Although journalists emphasized the criticism Dickens heaped upon American character, he did compliment western expansion and tourism as promising and worthwhile enterprises.

Such a report should have gratified the men and women working to boost the economies and popular culture offerings in the communities beyond the east coast and traditional centers of American cosmopolitanism. Dickens and Kemble were not alone in venturing beyond the historical mainstream to establish new and thriving cultural centers. They worked with and depended upon emerging industries in entertainment, journalism, tourism and commercial production to make their tours a success.⁸² For the most part, these mechanics remained unseen but the processes, professions and relationships created are apparent in the successes, failures and simple reality that celebrities and their products increasingly appeared in dispersed places around the United States.

Booking the Celebrity: Juggling Boosters, Sectionalists, Charlatans, and Lindomaniacs

Celebrity agents and managers in the mid-nineteenth century juggled a variety of needs and concerns in their decision making about where and when to schedule a celebrity performance. Discerning where to find appropriate and sizable audiences depended upon not just the existing travel infrastructure and performance circuits, but also upon creating new routes and venues as populations and boundaries moved and fresh pockets of demand emerged. Given the wide

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Richard Gassan, "The First American Tourist: Authorship and Print Culture of the 1820s," *Book History* 8 (August 2005): 51-74; Thomas A. Chambers, *Drinking the Waters: Creating an American Leisure Class at Nineteenth-Century Mineral Springs* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

distances traveled and the diversity of markets in place, balancing realistic expectations with the enthusiasm for celebrity touring required a keen mind and understanding of contemporary social and cultural demographics. Professional and personal relationships were particularly important in negotiating these terms, since trust played an important role in a field easily muddled by charlatans ready to take advantage of highly mobile and distant populations.⁸³ Uncovering the connections between decision makers and the processes behind the decisions made is an important part of understanding the mechanics of celebrity culture in the nineteenth century.

Significantly, the emerging popular culture included not just entertainment, but social reform. Evangelical religious figures had discovered over the course of the early decades of the nineteenth century that they could use the tools of mass-distributed culture—the printing press and distribution networks—to spread Christian religion.⁸⁴ Abolitionists and reformers were intimately connected with this industry, and adopted as well another facet of commercial culture in the period—the tour. The tours of celebrated artists and those of celebrated reformers in the mid-nineteenth century had much in common. Each required an audience and accessible travel routes. Each needed to appear in communities with considerable financial and cultural capital and each depended upon established print networks for publicity and promotion.

⁸³ Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (Yale University Press, 1983); See as well the section on “Problems of Moral Community” in Karen Halttunen and Lewis Perry, eds., *Moral Problems in American Life: New Perspectives on Cultural History* (Cornell University Press, 1998), 15-102.

⁸⁴ Brown, *Word in the World*; David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Reformers thus appeared in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore initially but also moved on to the emerging metropolitan centers of St. Louis, Chicago, Louisville, and Cincinnati, just as their famous dancing, singing and acting peers had done increasingly over the early decades of the century. These major cities, however, only captured a part of the reformers' attention, since even the most celebrated reformers made different demands upon their available venues. In trying to spread reform, celebrated activists took their message off the mainstream entertainment circuit, to appear in smaller and middling communities throughout the country. Yet there were different limitations on certain reformers, especially abolitionists. The sectional divisions that may have influenced Fanny Kemble's decisions in scheduling her readings were even more pronounced in the choices that anti-slavery activists made about where to appear, or in the reactions they evoked during their stops in areas of particular conflict.⁸⁵

Booking Temperance: John B. Gough – Traveling the Straight Road

As one of the century's most active and famous reformers, temperance lecturer John B. Gough embodied much of the antebellum culture of reform but he was also an important figure for contemporary celebrity. His career intersected with the fields of celebrity entertainment but also, given his cause, with evangelical religion and revivalism. He enjoyed the recognition that came with extensive reporting about his life and character in newspapers and periodicals at the time. Yet

⁸⁵ On opposition to abolition and actions taken against abolitionists, see David Grimsted, *American Mobbing, 1828-1865: Toward Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Susan Wylly-Johnes, "The 1835 Anti-Abolition Meetings in the South: A New Look at the Controversy over the Abolition Postal Campaign," *Civil War History* 47:4 (December 2001): 289-209; Jennifer Rose Mercieca, "The Culture of Honor: How Slaveholders Responded to the Abolitionist Mail Crisis of 1835," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10:1 (Spring 2007): 51-76.

he weathered one of the most sensational scandals of the period when he vanished for a week in New York City in 1845 (as either the victim of his own alcoholism or of the scheming by those opposed to the temperance movement). He emerged from that scandal as one of the most recognized names in nineteenth-century public life. His own efforts, however, made his face one of the most recognizable around the country as he appeared in person in more communities than any of the other figures this dissertation explores.⁸⁶ That in some ways was the more extraordinary feat, with significance not only for reform but for the spread of celebrity as an intimate relationship between a figure and admirers.

Between his first appearance as a lecturer for the temperance cause in 1842 and his death in 1886, Gough traveled hundreds of thousands of miles advocating for temperance and sharing his experiences with alcohol dependence in communities across the United States, Canada and Great Britain. He spoke in almost 500 cities and towns before 1860; and, after 1860 added another 400 to the list. Many of these places he visited multiple, evens tens of times. Like the itinerant preacher George Whitefield, he lectured publicly until just days before his death.⁸⁷ He received considerable newspaper coverage during his career, but we can know even more about his travels because he kept the most extraordinary and meticulous logs in accounting ledgers. The books include an almost complete accounting for and of his location, the numbers of signatures he won for the temperance pledge, the amount of money he raised for the cause, and the amount he spent for travel

⁸⁶ John William Crowley, "Introduction," pp. 1-28 and "John B. Gough, from *An Autobiography by John B. Gough*," *Drunkard's Progress: Narratives of Addiction Despair and Recovery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); William Carlos Martyn, *John B. Gough: The Apostle of Cold Water* (Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1893); John B. Gough, *An Autobiography* (1845, 1852, 1855, 1867, 1870).

⁸⁷ "Necrological," *Dallas Morning News*, 2/19/1886.

and sustenance during his more than forty-year career. He began the volumes with his earliest forays into the field in 1843, and continued tracking his time, travels, and accounts in them until close to his death.⁸⁸

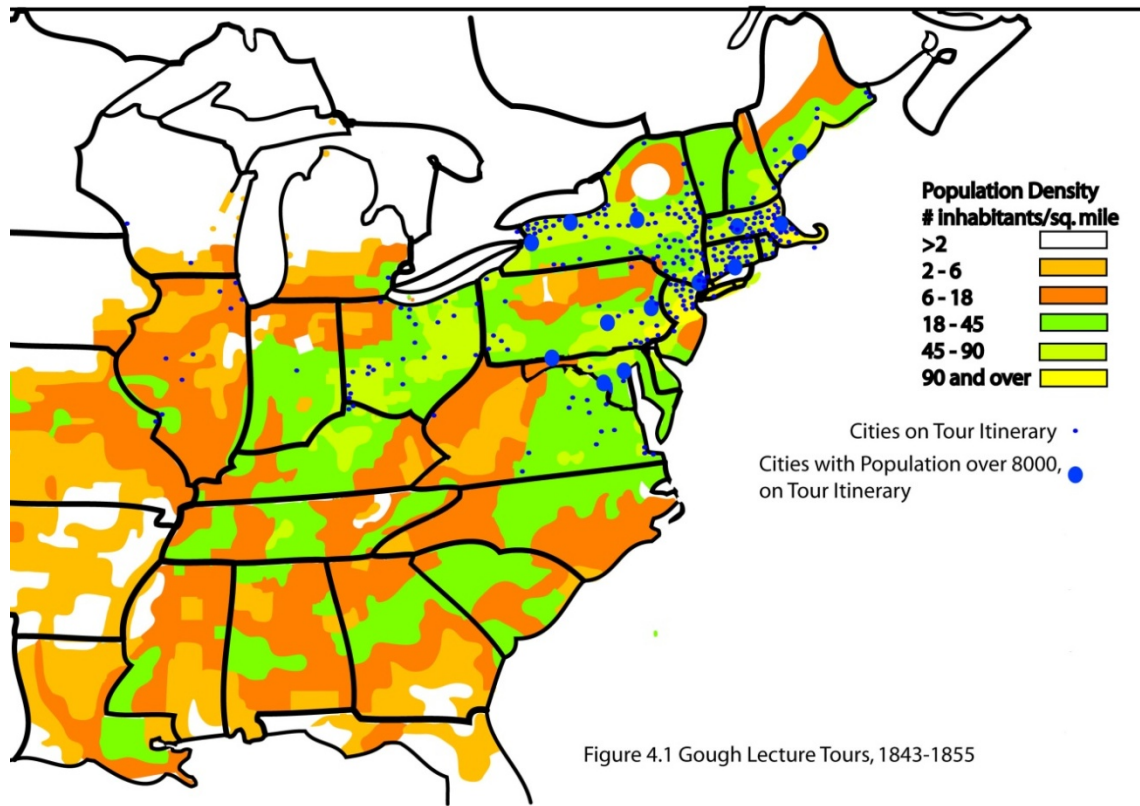
Newspapers and periodicals introduced celebrated names to small and dispersed communities. Reform went even further, bringing them celebrity culture in the person of John B. Gough, temperance lecturer. Figure 4.1 represents my mapping of his travels between 1843 and 1855, based on the cataloguing of his diaries, laid against population density information gleaned from a nineteenth-century atlas.⁸⁹ He first traveled beyond New England in the second year of his lecturing, 1844, with a trip to New York in the spring and then later to Philadelphia. It would be another year before he extended his touring to more of the Mid-Atlantic States to include Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. He made an extensive tour of Ontario in 1850, and then in 1851 his itinerary finally stretched into the Ohio River Valley and the Mid-West. While he did most of his traveling in the more populated areas of the United States, following pockets of denser settlement, the map also reveals that, as a reformer, he visited areas with smaller population densities, bringing national and international celebrity culture to places that the most prominent white entertainers and celebrities skipped over.

These regions were not unused to the itinerant performer and lecturer, or to products of popular and commercial culture. Certainly in upstate New York, he traveled the path hewn by revivalists in the region known as the “Burned-Over

⁸⁸ See the John B. Gough diaries in the manuscript collections of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA.

⁸⁹ From Francis A. Walker, “The Progress of the Nation, 1840,” *Statistical Atlas of the United States Based on the Results of the Ninth Census 1870* (United States. Census Office, 1874), plate XVI.

District,” and right along the Erie Canal.⁹⁰ Other communities regularly hosted theatricals and more minor traveling performance troupes. They did not, however, regularly enjoy visits by the most famous and affluent performers. That Gough traveled so widely testified not only to his celebrity and extraordinary commitment to



his cause, but also to the role of temperance in dispersing celebrity culture throughout the country. He could not demand the compensation that celebrated performers could, and throughout his diaries (more commonly in the early days of his career than later) the phrases “no pay” or “mean no pay” appear next to city names and dates to indicate events where he raised no funds due to lack of support or overt

⁹⁰ Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1950); Ary J. Lamme, “Commemorative Language in Abolitionist Landscape Texts: New York’s ‘Burned-Over District,’” *Southeastern Geographer* 48:3 (November 2008): 357-372; Adam Jortner, “Cholera, Christ, and Jackson: The Epidemic of 1832 and the Origins of Christian Politics in Antebellum America,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 27:2 (Summer 2007): 233-264.

hostility among the audience.⁹¹ He, in effect, paid more to speak in some places than he received compensation in return. Fortunately, he could count on the generosity of residents in cities with a larger sympathetic population, such as in New York, where at his benefit on December 25th, 1844 he received \$720—a rate comparable to a star actor’s benefit.⁹² By comparison, he spent much of January 1845 in Philadelphia, where it took him sixteen days to raise just \$600.⁹³ Although he required money to travel, there was not an obvious relationship between his ability to raise funds and to raise support for temperance. In Lynchburg, Virginia in the second week of March 1846, he gathered a paltry \$200 but collected an impressive 1240 names to the temperance pledge.⁹⁴

| Year | Average Receipts/Lecture | Year | Average Receipts/Lecture | Year | Average Receipts/Lecture |
|------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| 1843 | \$2.77 | 1849 | 19.12 | 1855 | 50.14 |
| 1844 | 7.29 | 1850 | 24.36 | 1856 | 63.73 |
| 1845 | 14.42 | 1851 | 21.80 | 1857 | 62.90 |
| 1846 | 20.52 | 1852 | 21.67 | 1858 | 47.88 |
| 1847 | 21.06 | 1853 | 25.33 | 1859 | 49.32 |
| 1848 | 17.28 | 1854 | 48.46 | 1860 | 60.10 |

Table 4.1 John B. Gough, earnings per lecture 1843-1860, compiled from John B. Gough Diaries, John B. Gough Manuscript Collection, AAS.

His earnings improved over time, as Table 4.1 reveals. He eventually raised enough money regularly to cover his own expenses, support his wife, and contribute to the cause. These averages come from his own calculations, and included those lectures where he earned nothing as well as those where he earned hundreds of dollars. He lectured an average of around 200 times per year after 1846, meaning

⁹¹ John B. Gough Diaries, May 24, May 25, 1844, May 26, 1844, September 8, 1844, August 10, 1844, et al., John B. Gough Manuscripts Collection, Box 1, AAS.

⁹² Actors relied on benefits, which traditionally occurred once a year or in the case of a star performer, at the end of their run in a particular theatre. The beneficiary kept all proceeds of the evening’s performance, except for the managerial expenses.

⁹³ John B. Gough Diaries, 1844, 1845, John B. Gough Manuscripts Collection, Box 1, AAS.

⁹⁴ John B. Gough Diaries, 1846, John B. Gough Manuscripts Collection, Box 1, AAS.

that he earned between \$3,800 and \$4,200 during those years.⁹⁵ While that did not make him as wealthy as his celebrated performer peers Fanny Kemble and Edwin Forrest, it certainly made him prosperous and more than competitive financially with other lecturers, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, who earned an estimated \$825 to \$900 from his 1846 lecture series.⁹⁶

Newspapers used the kind of statistical information he compiled in his journals to account for his time and money and to show his dedication to the cause. They periodically reprinted numbers and details that they only could have learned from Gough himself or those close to him. Very early in his career, in December of 1844, the *Barre (MA) Gazette* recorded that “Mr. J.B. Gough...has traveled since May, 1843, 11,916 miles, delivered 563 regular lectures, spoken in 168 different towns, and obtained 26,940 names to the pledge.”⁹⁷ In 1846, a New Hampshire newspaper reported that Gough had spoken in Boston more than 150 times by December of that year.⁹⁸ In anticipation of his appearance, newspapers often recounted the number of names from how many different places he had gathered from people pledging to give up drinking alcoholic beverages. For Gough’s celebrity,

⁹⁵ I do not know at this point with any consistency, how temperance organizations supported Gough beyond booking his appearances. I do know at times that organizers promised him certain levels of pay, such as in the case of his Virginia appearances in 1848 that I discuss on page 250, but I do not know how regular those arrangements were. This might be something I can determine with further research into the records of particular temperance organizations.

⁹⁶ Peter S. Field, “The Transformation of Genius into Practical Power: Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Public Lecture,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 21:3 (Autumn 2001): 467-493, 474. In the same period, in 1846, the average artisan earned \$1.37 for a day’s labor, while the average clerk earned around \$43 for a month’s work, “Table Ba4253-4267 - Daily and monthly wages for common labor, artisans, and clerks, by region: 1821–1860,” in *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online*, ed. by Richard Sutch and Susan B. Carter (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁹⁷ Untitled, *Barre (MA) Gazette*, (2/13/1844; for calculations in Gough’s words or handwriting, see John B. Gough, *An Autobiography* (Boston, 1845), 115 and his diaries in the manuscript collections of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA. They are most often found at the end of a particular year’s log.

⁹⁸ “Great Temperance Rally,” *New Hampshire Sentinel*, 12/2/1846.

at least, the extent of his travels, and the number of people he had reached, proved a major point of interest and appeal.

Such an extensive and long-lasting itinerary revealed and forged bonds between temperance organizations in different cities. Gough encouraged personal relationships between members who corresponded about their experiences with him or followed him on his travels. His constant roaming between communities required careful planning and negotiation. Late in 1846, the lecturer struggled to satisfy temperance activist Otis Allen's request for a lecture series. He wrote that while he was "exceedingly anxious to come back to [his] state and labour with and for [him] in this great cause," he was not sure that he could manage it given his schedule.⁹⁹ He had already tried to rearrange an appearance in Norfolk, Virginia so that he would have time to stop in Allen's area, but they would "not give [him] up there."¹⁰⁰ Virginia temperance activists and Gough had a close relationship in the mid-1840s—he had last appeared in the city and area in April 1846, and already he was scheduled to return in early 1847. Newspapers show that plans for his 1847 appearance in Norfolk had begun in October, and that he was to receive \$100 per week for delivering five temperance addresses per week, and that he would stay in Virginia for the winter.¹⁰¹ It seems that Gough was constantly in the process of negotiating and revising his travel and lecture plans.

His Virginia plans seemed firm and long-standing, but still Gough did not want to disappoint a friend and supporter. He suggested that perhaps if Allen, or a Mr. Delavan, wrote to General Cooke in Virginia, that the latter "could be persuaded to

⁹⁹ John B. Gough to Otis Allen, December 10, 1846, Gratz Collection, Case 13, Box 36, HSP.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ "John B. Gough," *Morning News*, October 31, 1846.

prevail upon the people in his section” to reschedule their series.¹⁰² He seemed hopeful that an agreement could be met and a relationship could be forged between the men who shared an interest in the cause. Although Gough did not mention financial compensation in his letter to Allen, he did tell him that his plans already required “heavy expenses in travel,” and that this added trip would cost him a lot in as well, but “he should not mind that.”¹⁰³ Whether he received compensation for his travels seems to have depended upon the venue, and the popularity of reform in the area. Gough did end up spending three weeks in Norfolk, Virginia in the winter of 1846 to 1847, but also found time to visit other areas including Philadelphia in the period discussed in the letters, so I suspect Allen, Delavan, Cooke, and Gough managed to find a suitable arrangement for all.

Given the complications involved in arranging his travel and appearances, Gough understandably expressed some frustration at the difficulty involved in negotiating across distances. He opened his letter explaining that he had been delayed in answering Allen’s request because he had had to wait for slow letters from the South to arrive.¹⁰⁴ While his tours and travels tended to run as smoothly as could be expected given the distances he traveled and the variability of communications networks, he often found himself apologizing for disappointing his admirers’ hopes for a visit, or for plans that fell through as the result of a lost or

¹⁰² John B. Gough to Otis Allen, December 10, 1846, Gratz Collection, Case 13, Box 36, HSP.

¹⁰³ Ibid; He also mentioned that he was having a stock of his autobiographies sent to Allen for him to sell, pointing to another source of income and the importance of the reform circuit for spreading the culture of temperance nationally; Chapter Five goes into this question in more detail.

¹⁰⁴ Although contemporary observers often expressed wonder and joy over the improvements in communications networks over the century, lost or delayed letters were not uncommon. Correspondents frequently opened epistles with statements on when letters were received, and commented upon the time it had taken for them to arrive, as a way to make sure all correspondence was complete and up-to-date. See David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 158-165.

delayed letter, or a “mistake in the correspondence.”¹⁰⁵ Despite these complications, however, Gough managed to build a full schedule of appearances and a prosperous career out of reform and his celebrity appeal throughout much of his life.

It seems surprising that with such a complicated travel schedule, at least during the 1840s and 1850s, Gough never employed a booking agent to organize his schedule. Instead, he negotiated his arrangements himself or through friends by relying on these dispersed groups of reformers and temperance organizations. These organizations were themselves largely built upon networks of volunteers. Still their members took the business of reform and the potential inherent in celebrity culture seriously and in many places around the country offered their communities a consistent calendar of edificatory diversions that certainly rivaled nascent professional entertainment industries.¹⁰⁶

Managing a House Divided: The Hutchinson Family Singers and Abolition

While Gough traveled extensively in the northern, southern and western United States as well as Great Britain for the benefit of the temperance movement, his abolitionist colleagues, the Hutchinson Family Singers found their itinerary more limited. The Hutchinsons had begun singing in public late in 1840, with a group comprised of brothers John, Asa, Jesse, and Judson.¹⁰⁷ Jesse soon quit performing, however, in order to dedicate his time to managing the family’s farm and

¹⁰⁵ John B. Gough to Charles Woolsey, November, 29, 1867, Dreer Collection, Philanthropists, HSP.

¹⁰⁶ John W. Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁷ The Hutchinsons built upon the fame of European singers, billing themselves as an American-born family offering the opportunity for audiences to support “native” talent while enjoying the genres of music they had come to enjoy from the traveling Tyrolean Vocalists and the Rainer family from Europe. See Dale Cockrell, “Prologue,” in *Excelsior: Journals of the Hutchinson Family Singers, 1842-1846*, ed. by Cockrell (Pendragon Press, 1989).

his siblings' performance careers. Sister Abby replaced him, and together this group popularized the four-part harmony in the United States.¹⁰⁸ Their singing turned political in 1842, inspired both by their personal convictions and by Jesse's idea that they could form a niche market as singers for reform. Without weakening or questioning their dedication to the cause, the Hutchinsons clearly understood their careers as in the fields of entertainment and reform. At this point, they also abandoned a repertoire of European songs and began singing their own compositions, mostly written by Jesse and remarking upon American or reform themes.¹⁰⁹ By 1846, they were internationally known, widely celebrated and welcomed in communities across the northern United States and Britain. Their career marked the possibilities available for, but also the limits placed upon, the reform-celebrity tourist. Reform celebrities such as the Hutchinsons found the market for their entertainments both increasingly broad and sharply limited according to political boundaries and social alliances. For anti-slavery activists, the boundaries of course were more sharply divided than for temperance reformers, especially between the American North and South.¹¹⁰

Initially organized along the traditional patterns of itinerant musicians, the Hutchinsons made socially enlightening entertainment a family business. Each member had their role in the organization. Rather than employing a "travelling agent," for example, at times a brother would travel ahead of them, arranging and publicizing concerts, or the family would send "bills by mail or by friends" to

¹⁰⁸ Gage Averill, *Four Parts, No Waiting: A Social History of American Barbershop Harmony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21-48.

¹⁰⁹ Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-Century Culture of Reform* (Yale University Press, 2007), 4-10.

¹¹⁰ James Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (Hill and Wang, 1976); Ronald Walters, *Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

announce their performances, hoping to find accommodations once they all arrived.¹¹¹ As musicians and reformers, their bookings combined entertainment with social reform, and they worked in professional theaters as well as in venues associated with reform groups. Like Gough's schedule, their itinerary was a constant work in progress with changes and negotiations happening on short notice based upon their competing interests, or the unreliability of their contacts. Yet more so than for Gough, their early career mirrored traditional itinerant performers because they rarely planned very far ahead, maintained a flexible schedule and initially privileged smaller communities and venues. If they found a community welcomed them and audiences remained substantial, they would extend their stay.

In the early 1840s, they relied especially heavily on local activists in different communities. On their first trip to Albany, New York in late 1842—a popular location for itinerant performers as well as reformers—they opened to disappointingly small audiences, and some of the family considered abandoning a public singing career. A gentleman, however, approached them with the offer of \$100 if they would stay just a few more days to sing in three of the city's churches. They realized then that wealthy benefactors in temperance and abolition were just as, if not more, valuable to them than ticket sales, and "taking the hint thus furnished," they "ever after sang in churches where opportunity was offered."¹¹² Their relationship to reform thus was sealed.

Although they sang and stood for temperance, they found their true calling in abolition. Successful concert appearances during anti-slavery conferences held

¹¹¹ John Wallace Hutchinson, *The Story of the Hutchinsons, Tribe of Jesse* Volume I (Boston: Lee and Shepard, Publishers, 1896), 50.

¹¹² Hutchinson, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 60-61.

throughout the 1840s bolstered their career.¹¹³ Singing at an anti-slavery meeting in Essex County Massachusetts led to concerts “west of Boston,” and a performance in Boston led to invitations for concerts in New York.¹¹⁴ These areas, plus their home state of New Hampshire, provided the early anchors for their popularity, as John Hutchinson explained in his memoirs,

Our patronage was particularly or generally derived from the masses of New England settlers from Connecticut and other States who in their enthusiasm induced the more staid and conservative Gothamites to at least indorse and come out and swell the interest of our entertainments, and we soon reached an elevated point of popular favor.¹¹⁵

Yet John felt that while New York City consistently gave them their most profitable audiences, popular commentary in newspapers indicated that they were successful there in spite of, rather than because of, their political message. This reception, rather than disheartening the family, gave them hope that other communities not known for abolitionist sentiment would be willing to hear them.¹¹⁶

With this idea in mind, they decided to expand their itinerary beyond the northern Atlantic and New England states. They first felt “duty call [them] to utter sentiments before the people in Baltimore” in 1844.¹¹⁷ In Baltimore they claimed to have found an ample audience, but many hotel and boarding house managers refused to rent rooms to them. While they were thankful they had not been driven out violently like other abolitionist visitors before and after – William Lloyd Garrison, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Charles Turner Torrey for example – in the 1840s it was still a “novel experience” for them to face open hostility.¹¹⁸ As they became

¹¹³ Cockrell, *Excelsior*.

¹¹⁴ Hutchinson, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 78, 86, 88.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 92.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 100.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

more famous, however, and traveled into new regions, they found increasing resistance in communities with residents opposed to their activism for abolition.

In August 1845, they traveled to Britain and had a successful tour there until their return to the United States a year later. American newspapers followed their triumphs closely while they were abroad, and the Hutchinsons returned home much more famous than they had been before they left.¹¹⁹ The trip made them true celebrities, and brought a barrage of biographical stories and close attention—for good and bad—to their family background and the individual characters of the siblings.¹²⁰ It also opened up the West (but not the South) to them. Counting on the support of friends, like the Reverend William Perry, a man they met originally in Philadelphia but who had later moved to Cleveland, they cautiously made their way to the Ohio River Valley and beyond.¹²¹ According to John Hutchinson, their western tours were not about profit; they had enough success in New York, Boston, Hartford, New Haven, Springfield, Worcester, and Providence to live comfortably. Rather “the other places [they] visited were usually at the solicitation of admiring friends” who hoped the Hutchinson’s music would inspire reformation.¹²² Similar to how Gough’s travels to smaller or less active communities were subsidized by his visits to larger and more prosperous temperance organizations, the Hutchinsons’

¹¹⁹ Gac, *Singing for Reform*, 208-224.

¹²⁰ In 1850, the family was plagued both by the reality of and reports about brother Judson’s mental illness; For a sampling of reports see “Chapter of Incidents,” *The Middletown (CT) Constitution*, 10/30/1850, “Insanity of Judson Hutchinson,” *Baltimore Sun*, 10/30/1850, “Judson Hutchinson,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 10/31/1850; “The Insanity of Judson Hutchinson,” *Daily Ohio Statesman*, 11/1/1850, and Untitled, *Wisconsin Democrat*, 11/2/1850. In 1859, Judson Hutchinson committed suicide, for a sampling of these reports see Untitled, *New Hampshire Patriot & State Gazette*, 1/19/1859, Untitled, *The Pittsfield Sun*, 2/10/1859, and :the California Steamship,” *San Francisco (CA) Daily Evening Bulletin*, 2/12/1859.

¹²¹ Hutchinson, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 99.

¹²² *Ibid*, 238.

trips to communities with divided support for abolition were in effect subsidized by generous patrons and more profitable engagements elsewhere.

In 1851, such friends convinced them that it might be possible to “turn the tide of popular prejudice into the channel of sympathy for the slave” in St. Louis—a city known for strong disagreements regarding abolition. Accordingly, they planned in the spring of that year to visit the river city.¹²³ Having heard through their western contacts that the proprietor of Wyman’s Hall, Edward Wyman, was a Massachusetts native who boasted of being born under the shadow of Bunker Hill, the Hutchinsons assumed he would be sympathetic to abolition and arranged to perform in his hall. Wyman, however, had more of an interest in preserving his hall’s profits than in supporting abolition. Opposition to their appearance began even before they entered the city. Upon their arrival in St. Louis, they learned that “scurrilous” newspaper articles and reports had been circulating that the Hutchinson Family scheduled to perform in the town was not the genuine famous family but rather impostors. Although the reports were illegitimate and likely originated with parties who knew they were false, the damage to the Hutchinson’s reputation in Saint Louis was permanent.¹²⁴ Rumors of planned attacks on the family or the performance venue circulated. Finally, although compelled at first to book the family because of their international renown, Wyman bowed out of the arrangements at the last minute when it became apparent that many residents would not welcome their singing, and might very well become hostile. In the end, fortunately, the Hutchinsons lost only money and time from their failed St. Louis engagement.¹²⁵

¹²³ Ibid, 289.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 292-94.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 289-95.

The debacle in St. Louis, however, earned them sympathy among anti-slavery groups in Chicago.¹²⁶ The *Chicago Tribune* focused on sectional divisions as a question of character, and in particular on its disappointment in Wyman as a “Massachusetts man,” stating “When a Yankee falls, he sinks deep.”¹²⁷ The northern newspaper felt, however, that anti-slavery sentiment in the border state would win out, and challenged the city to redeem itself with “We know enough of the people of St. Louis to assure Mr. Wyman that this closing of his doors against the Hutchinsons will prove an unprofitable speculation for him.” The editors of the *St. Louis Daily Tribune* stood by Wyman’s decision, and wrote threateningly that, “If there be Abolitionists here who are disposed to put into execution the suggestions of the Tribune, there are hundreds of others who can resist it quite as effectively.”¹²⁸ Although the debate between the newspapers did not recover the Hutchinson’s fortunes in St. Louis, it did help make their performance in Chicago’s Tremont Hall a success.¹²⁹

Like other celebrated reformers, the Hutchinsons balanced their profitable concerts in sympathetic and wealthier cities against politically driven performances in less-welcoming communities for the purpose of furthering their public and private interests. The owner of the St. Louis venue, Wyman, on the other hand, had to balance the demand for popular acts that often originated on the East coast against sectional politics and the constant struggle for profit that characterized the entertainment industry, especially in the West. Despite his skewering in the Chicago

¹²⁶ For the Hutchinson’s version of their experience, see Hutchinson, *Story of the Hutchinson’s*, 290-296. To read the response from St. Louis, see issues of the *Daily Missouri Republican* from mid-June 1851, especially 6/21/1851.

¹²⁷ Untitled, *Chicago Tribune*, 6/12/1851; reprinted in the *Daily Missouri Republican*, 6/21/1851.

¹²⁸ Untitled, *Daily Missouri Republican*, 6/21/1851.

¹²⁹ For the Hutchinson’s version of their experience, see Hutchinson, *Story of the Hutchinson’s*, 290-296. To read the response from St. Louis, see issues of the *Daily Missouri Republican* from mid-June 1851, especially 6/21/1851.

press, we do not actually know his feelings on slavery or political affiliations. Both he and the Hutchinsons were dependent upon the advice, whims and perspectives of third parties to direct their careers, decisions and fortunes.

The Hutchinsons were not the first or the last famous abolitionists to suffer the threat of violence or to organize their travel based on political sentiments, at least as far as newspapers were concerned. In 1845, "W." wrote to the *Farmer's Cabinet*, out of New Hampshire that an abolitionist "who valued his life and liberty on one hand, and his right to free speech and action on the other...should not go South."¹³⁰ True or not, it becomes apparent that the article was an advertisement more than a piece of journalism. "W." continued that it was thus "a happy and fortunate circumstance that the South has come here by representative" in the person of Frederick Douglass.¹³¹ W. concluded his letter with a plea for *Farmer's Cabinet* subscribers to "read the autobiography of a slave...written by himself, and just published."¹³² Douglass the celebrity represented not just the fugitive slave, then, according to W., but could introduce his audiences to slavery and the entire southern United States. Thus the experiences of and risks to reform celebrities traveling in hostile places, could instead of limiting the movement, provided useful material upon which to capitalize.¹³³

I do not dismiss Douglass's celebrity as simply a promotional and profit-making event. Certainly, as historians have shown, the anti-slavery author and lecturer as well as others were not welcome in areas of slavery or cities sympathetic to slave-holding interests. St. Louis had long been counted as partially among

¹³⁰ "Testimony in Relation to Slaves," *Farmer's Cabinet*, 5/29/1845.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Stewart, *Holy Warriors*; Walters, *Anti-Slavery Appeal*.

them.¹³⁴ In 1847, the *Missouri Democrat* reprinted an article stating that Douglass was traveling and telling his story at the behest of “persons pretending to decency,” and it could not understand why any white man would “countenance such disgusting exhibitions.”¹³⁵ The editors called his promoters “demagogues” whose “time [they thought] had passed.”¹³⁶ Promoters of reform and abolition, as well as their opponents, ably used the sensational tactics of celebrity culture to circulate their cause and their wares, using the tension and excitement it produced. Facing limits on their own circulation, they turned opposition into a promotional object.

Boosterism and Celebrity Management Squared: Confronting Edwin Forrest and Lindomania

The problems of distance and expanding markets sometimes confounded even veteran celebrity promoters, including the famous P.T. Barnum. By the time he undertook to organize and promote Jenny Lind's American tour in 1850 and 1851, he already had long-standing relationships with managers around the country. In particular, he had been since at least 1840, a friend of Sol Smith's and Noah Ludlow's, who had managed theaters in Mobile, New Orleans, St. Louis, St. Charles and Cincinnati. Smith and Ludlow had engaged one of Barnum's first promotions, “Master Diamond,” in St. Charles and New Orleans.¹³⁷ Earlier in his career, Barnum had traveled with his acts while promoting them, but later he often scheduled ahead

¹³⁴ Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Stauffer, *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism* (New York: The New Press, 2006); John Stauffer, “Frederick Douglass and the Aesthetics of Freedom,” *Raritan* 25:1 (Summer 2005): 114-136; Perry Lewis, “What Disturbed the Unitarian Church in This Very City?”: Alton, the Slavery Conflict and Western Unitarianism,” *Civil War History* 54:1 (March 2008): 5-34.

¹³⁵ “From the *St. Louis Union*” 9/18/1847.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Sol Smith, “Natchez, Mississippi, Jan 24,” Memorandum Book of Sol Smith, 1837-1850, MoHS. Someone has penciled in “1838” as the year on this entry because of its position in the log, but I think it has to be more like 1840 or 1841. In his memoir, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, Noah Ludlow says they engaged Diamond and Barnum at the end of 1840 (reprint, Benjamin Blom, 1966), 533.

or through agents. The contacts he had made in person continued to be important throughout his life.

While for the sake of the audience, negotiations usually resulted in a consistent run of entertaining diversions, for the performers and entrepreneurs they made for very difficult business. Few people, even among the most well known, were able to balance the demands of an audience with the problems of organizing performers and general financial malaise well enough to make a consistent and successful living. Even the Kembles struggled against financial ruin throughout their lives and careers, despite their long history in the theater. Very few firms of any sort, much less those involved in the theater or entertainment, were able to maintain themselves through frequent economic downturns. Westward growth had brought with it the creation of different theatrical systems and companies around the country. But it became very difficult in the expanding commercial economy of the nineteenth century for those organizations to survive as independent entities in unpredictable economies.¹³⁸ Figures often had their hand in multiple markets, and balanced interests in different places to keep the entire circuit in place and functional. Such demands inspired Ludlow and Smith to merge their interests and create a formal partnership in 1835.¹³⁹ In 1851, when Lind arrived in the western states, Noah M. Ludlow and Sol Smith continued to manage their theaters in Saint Louis, Mobile, and

¹³⁸ William G. Carson, *Managers in Distress* (St. Louis: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1949); Douglass McDermott, "Structure and Management in the American Theatre from the Beginning to 1870," *Cambridge History of American Theatre: Beginnings to 1870*, ed. by Don B. Wilmeth and Christopher Bigsby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹³⁹ Sol Smith and Noah M. Ludlow, "Articles of Co-partnership," June 2, 1835, Box 1, Sol Smith Collection, MoHS. This initial partnership was only for the Mobile Theater. Each man invested \$500 in the firm and owned equally all wardrobes, books and music belonging to the theater. The terms promised each man \$40 per week and a "settlement of profits" at the end of each season. Their wives were promised \$20 each week and half the proceeds of their husbands' benefit performances.

New Orleans, while also maintaining financial interests in Cincinnati and other growing towns in the west.

During the sixteen most active years of their partnership (1836-1852), the managers hosted nearly all of the significant performers of the age in one or multiple of their theaters, including the French theatrical troupe, the Ravel Family, actress Charlotte Cushman, and among the celebrities included here, Edwin Forrest and Jenny Lind.¹⁴⁰ The papers and correspondence maintained by Sol Smith recorded the difficulties in balancing the schedules of performers traveling the country with the demands of particular locations. Having an interest in and monopoly over multiple markets helped. Adding celebrity personalities only further complicated the process. Jenny Lind's American tour, for example, brought great potential for profit, but also greater investment as well as competition with and discontent among other celebrated figures. And although Edwin Forrest's engagements were often well attended, even that was no guarantee of a profit given the high demands stars put on the theatrical system.

Ludlow and Smith began the process of negotiating the Lind appearances with Barnum in the fall of 1850 for the spring 1851 season. A series of telegrams between the managers and their New York agent, William Corbyn, and letters between Barnum and Smith detail the booking process.¹⁴¹ They actually made an agreement with Barnum that Lind would appear in St. Louis long before they set the dates. Haggling over the schedule continued for a long while. Barnum insisted that he would need until the winter to finalize the exact schedule. He and the Swedish

¹⁴⁰ For an account of Smith & Ludlow's long and varied career see Noah M. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It* and Sol. Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1868).

¹⁴¹ W. Corbyn, New York, NY to Ludlow & Smith, New Orleans, LA, 10/22/1850, 11/19/1850, 11/23/1850, 12/14/1850.

Nightingale would be in Havana immediately preceding the New Orleans concerts, and although he believed they would “doubtless arrive...[on the] 1st Feb.,” he could not be sure of it. Barnum assured Corbyn that he would “do all that [he] could consistently to accommodate [his] friends Ludlow & Smith,” and promised to write to them as quickly as possible once he evaluated the situation in Havana.¹⁴² Although this delay made it especially difficult for Ludlow and Smith to organize their theatrical seasons in their three cities, they had little choice since the popularity of Lind gave Barnum the better hand in the bargain.

Negotiations, however, were always friendly even after the trio ran into several more problems while making their plans for Lind’s concerts. It was important to all that they maintain their relationship.¹⁴³ After exchanging a number of letters and telegraphs wrangling over Lind’s dates, they discovered that a part of their confusion had emerged from the interference of a man who was either a charlatan or an incompetent schemer. The man had been promoting himself as an agent of Barnum’s among other managers in New Orleans. Although all previous communications over Lind had gone through Ludlow & Smith’s agent in New York, Barnum wrote personally to Sol Smith to assure him the man was not authorized to negotiate for him. Calling Smith, “Old Friend,” he wrote, “Hall of course was no agent of mine in any way or shape.” He indicated, however, that Hall had some genuine professional aspirations, and thus his name may have been familiar to Smith and Ludlow. He had tried to engage with Barnum’s firm, as he continued,

¹⁴² P.T. Barnum, Washington to Corbyn, 12/16/1850, Ludlow-Field-Maury Papers, box 4-17, MoHS.

¹⁴³ Smith and Barnum especially maintained a lifelong professional and personal friendship. In 1854, Sol Smith dedicated his volume *Sol. Smith’s Theatrical Journey Work and Anecdotal Recollections* to Barnum, signing himself “Your Friend and Affectionate Uncle,” (Philadelphia: T.B Peterson & Bro., 1854) and each of Barnum’s autobiographies speaks fondly and admiringly of Smith.

“Before leaving New York he asked me if he could do anything for me in N. Orleans.” The master manager, however, did not need any further contacts, and certainly not one as sloppy and amateurish. He concluded the story with, “I said I thought not -- in as much as I should doubtless engage some place in that city before he reached thereI confess I did not credit his letter.”¹⁴⁴ Even this attempt at a minor fraud, however, happened among a surprisingly small network of acquaintances. After affirming that he was not speculating behind his old friends’ back, the master of humbug elaborated on the affair, “Singularly enough I had a blow up with his father in New York about the same time the son was playing agent for me in N. Orleans.”¹⁴⁵ Apparently, dishonesty as well as the theater were often family affairs, and those who wanted to find success needed to recognize the players and know the system.

With these complications behind them, when Ludlow, Smith and Barnum finally agreed in early January that Lind would appear in St. Louis in March, a new problem emerged. Lind’s dates conflicted with actress Charlotte Cushman’s scheduled performances for the season. Ludlow and Smith asked Cushman to reschedule or give up a few of the overlapping evenings. The actress, an international celebrity in her own right, chafed at having to compete with Lind.¹⁴⁶ Yet she grudgingly conceded that it would “injure [her] in all ways,” if the Swedish singer were to perform, “before during or after [her] engagement” and thus consented to give up the nights. She did insist upon being compensated, at the rate of

¹⁴⁴ Barnum, Charleston to my old friend (Sol Smith), 12/26/1850, Sol Smith Collection, box 4, MoHS.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ For more on Cushman’s life and career, and especially her particular success in London, see Julia Markus, *Across and Untried Sea: Discovering Lives Hidden in the Shadow of Convention and Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000) and Lisa Merrill, *When Romeo Was a Woman: Charlotte Cushman and Her Circle of Female Spectators* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

“\$250/night, for so doing, which was the positive worth of those nights” to her.¹⁴⁷ Cushman could have refused the request. She had made a previous agreement with Ludlow and Smith. But, although the managers were handling the arrangements for both performers in St. Louis, they had engaged Wyman’s Hall rather than their own theater as the site for Lind’s concerts. If Cushman performed, she would have been a competing act. They were giving her a chance to consider the situation. She understood that her own celebrity paled for the moment in comparison to Lind’s, and that a small audience would humiliate her and possibly damage her reputation. It was therefore in her best interests to reschedule. A few months later, the Hutchinsons faced a similar dilemma. They gave up Melodeon Hall in Boston for a few evenings in October 1851 after hearing Lind would be in town.¹⁴⁸

If the impressions given by contemporary newspapers were accurate, however, Cushman and the western management firm may have interpreted incorrectly the effects of sharing a city with Lind. Preparations for the Swedish Nightingale’s stop in a city sparked a frenzy of development. As the most famous celebrity tourist of the century, and the client of the enterprising P. T. Barnum, she was booked in cities like St. Louis entirely on speculative terms. When Ludlow, Smith and Barnum made their agreement, there was no venue in the city large enough to host the kinds of crowds that had followed Lind in other cities. There were not enough hotels and boardinghouses to house the out-of-town visitors the entrepreneurs hoped would arrive. As late as March 8th, before her first concert on March 17th, a St. Louis newspaper speculated that she might skip over St. Louis

¹⁴⁷ Charlotte Cushman to Sol Smith, 2/25/1851, *Sol Smith Collection*, Missouri Historical Society (MoHS).

¹⁴⁸ Hutchinson, *Story of the Hutchinsons*, 308.

because a suitable venue still had not been found. At that very moment, the paper reported, Barnum's agents were in town and making inquiries about venues and accommodations.¹⁴⁹ Yet Ludlow and Smith's records confirm all arrangements had long since been made. This claim very well might have been intended to increase the Lind furor in town and to add tension to the frenzy of preparations by local hoteliers and merchants. By March 12th, the newspapers confirmed that Lind indeed would be coming, and began an ardent discussion of the specific arrangements going on in town for her arrival.

The *St. Louis Intelligencer*, among other papers, reported in detail on the preparations and personalities involved in the Lind promotion. The lives and backgrounds of Barnum, Lind and her musical accompanists had been documented extensively in newspapers around the country. The *Intelligencer* focused upon a man involved with the preparations of St. Louis for her arrival, the architect charged with creating an appropriate venue. An agent of Barnum's, "Mr. H. Harrington" had contrived a plan for renovating the modest Wyman's Hall into a large and elegant concert space. Harrington, according to the paper, had "accompanied Miss Lind from the time of her landing in New York," and was an expert in architectural design. His plans for the hall accounted for planning for the control of crowds and the distribution of tickets, the orderly ushering of people into their seats, and the types of flooring support necessary to handle the weight of a large audience. The writer assured readers that given the "uniform success that has invariably attended his supervision of such matters, we may be sure of the impossibility of an accident."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ "Jenny Lind Coming," *St. Louis Daily Reveille*, 3/8/1851.

¹⁵⁰ "Jenny Lind Coming," *St. Louis Intelligencer*, 3/12/1851.

This same hall, built according to the standards of a New York architect, would serve the city for decades.¹⁵¹

The journalists' increasing anticipation had its reflection among St. Louis's potential audience members. In the days before her first concert, the streets were crowded with city residents and visitors from around the region craving a glimpse of the songstress they had been reading about for years. Journalists boasted that the city's

hotels and boardinghouses were full to overflowing and every boat which arrived contributed to the influx of strangers. Almost every town and city for hundreds of miles around is not only represented, but most of those within any reasonable distance seem to be literally emptying themselves into us.¹⁵²

Surviving personal correspondence from the months before and during the Lind excitement in St. Louis confirm this description. G.G. Filley wrote to his brother in Bloomfield, Connecticut, "Jenny Lind is expected here to night [sic] or in the morning," and expressed wonder at the extensive preparations by city businesses and shock that tickets were to start at five dollars apiece, and go as high as ten or fifteen.¹⁵³ City engineer Samuel R. Curtis's diary for the early 1850s rarely varied from its rote description of business issues and sketches of sites. He only did so once to report that one of his children had died and once to report on March 17, 1851, that, "Jenny Lind had just arrived and was carried up to Planters House in a carriage with 4 horses. Considerable excitement on the arrival of so distinguished a

¹⁵¹ Mark Twain claimed to have delivered a telegram to Jenny Lind at Wyman Hall. The Hall hosted not only the Swedish Nightingale, but Louis Kossuth, and many other celebrities and entertainers in the period; David Rachels, *Mark Twain's Civil War* (University Press of Kentucky, 2007) 112. The building also served as a private "English and Classical High School," opened in February 1851; Roy Bosenbecker, *So, Where'd You Go to High School? He Folklore of St. Louis* (Virginia Publishing, 2008), 158.

¹⁵² "Jenny Lind," *St. Louis Intelligencer*, 3/14/1851.

¹⁵³ G.G. Filley, St. Louis, to Brother Jay (J.H. Filley), Bloomfield, CT, 3/16/1851, St. Louis Early Days Papers B.2/F.2.

personage.”¹⁵⁴ Although not marked by the ebullient language of the newspapers, the event’s mere appearance in Curtis’s diary suggests it was an exceptional event that he wanted to remember.

Other Missouri residents reflected on how Lind’s visit gave them a reason to become tourists. A young woman in Jefferson City wrote to her sister in Fayetteville, “Liz and I are going to St. Charles from there to St. Louis, will be in St. Louis to hear Jenny Lind sing don’t you think we are right in trying to see something of the world I do.”¹⁵⁵ She did not ask her sister if she agreed it would be fun to see Lind, but rather if would it be “right.” For this woman and her female relative, the arrival of the Swedish Nightingale heralded a moment of youthful independence, a chance to expand their cosmopolitan education. Similarly, the Jenny Lind concerts in St. Louis marked an epoch in the city’s development, and its arrival as a metropolitan centerpiece in the west. At the end of the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century, histories of St. Louis and personal memoirs would consistently point to the Jenny Lind concerts and the completion of Wyman’s Hall as an important moment for the city’s history and its residents.¹⁵⁶

St. Louis was not the only city to profit so palpably from the arrival of Jenny Lind, even if it was not framed as a coming-of-age moment. New York City, in the first days of her tour, saw a similar influx of visitors. The *Brooklyn Eagle* estimated that over 400 residents of Troy, New York alone had traveled to the city in anticipation, but that out of those 400 only seventy-five attended the first night’s

¹⁵⁴ Samuel R. Curtis Diary, MoHS.

¹⁵⁵ M.G. Basye to Mrs. Francis W. Reynolds, 2/1/1851, Thomas Reynolds Papers, MoHS.

¹⁵⁶ St. Louis historian Walter Barlow Stevens, called Lind’s stop in St. Louis “notable days” for the city. See “When Jenny Lind Came,” in Walter Barlow Stevens, *St. Louis: The Fourth City, 1764-1911* (St. Louis, 1911), 654- 7; Missouri Historical Society, “Jenny Lind in St. Louis, 1851,” *Glimpses of the Past* (Jefferson Memorial, 1937), 47-50; Theophile Papin, “Jenny Lind in St. Louis,” *Music: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to the Art, Science, Technic and Literature of Music* (W.S.B. Mathews, 1901), 20-33.

concert.¹⁵⁷ Newspapers speculated that New Orleans benefited from the expenditure of over \$1,000,000 by its citizens and visitors in exchange for hotel rooms, concerts, tickets, and gloves.¹⁵⁸ Every city that hosted Lind expected a windfall. Cities left out of the planning scrambled to be included, even without much reason to expect it. A Massachusetts paper ran an article about Sheboygan, Wisconsin's eagerness to attract Lind to their town, writing, "The Jenny Lind fever has reached a fearful crisis in Wisconsin. The citizens of Sheboygan say they will have a concert from Jenny, if they have to mortgage the town!"¹⁵⁹ Whether true or a satire on the expense of the national enthusiasm for a performer, the anecdote captured the rampant speculation involved in pursuing the Lind tour.

Still none of these examples explain why Charlotte Cushman, herself a celebrated actress, may not have fared so poorly had she competed with Lind in St. Louis. The expansion of a hall, the arrival of out-of-town visitors in need of food and board, and the increasing possibilities for sales of souvenirs were positive things for a city's growth and architecture, or at least its current theatrical season. According to reports, a variety of entertainment venues thrived in the shadow of Lind. The *Brunswick Brunswicker* (MO) described "golden harvests" for the "various places of amusement" in St. Louis,

The great circus of Spaulding & Rogels has realized more than any other establishment always excepting the receipts of the Nightingale herself. The canvas has been crowded nightly and the receipts for the week pending last night amount to \$8313.50. Barnum and Jenny Lind will probably realize over \$90,000 while the theaters and other amusements have received over \$10,000. This will prove a profitable business.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ "They Come From Afar," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 11/22/1850.

¹⁵⁸ "General Summary," *Semi-Weekly Eagle*, 3/24/1851; Ludlow and Smith themselves may have grossed \$135,000 from the Lind concerts in New Orleans, see John S. Kendall, *The Golden Age of New Orleans Theater* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952) 273-278.

¹⁵⁹ Untitled, *Pittsfield Sun*, 2/27/1851.

¹⁶⁰ "Heavy Receipts," *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 5/10/1851.

Rather than being a competing act, the arrival of the Swedish Nightingale heralded a performance festival of sorts. With so many out of town guests likely to have arranged for a couple of nights in the city, and only so many seats in Wyman Hall, the demand for entertainment during the week remained high. Like the young woman from Jefferson City quoted above, many people took the Jenny Lind tour as an opportunity to not only hear her, but to see a bit more of the “world.”

Such a windfall, however, depended upon the cooperation of entertainers, managers, merchants, and boosters. Unlike the considerable commercial growth and excitement caused by the brief ascension of Jenny Lind, not all performers facilitated a spreading of the wealth. Edwin Forrest’s celebrity apparently did not always benefit local interests. His career and its effect on profit sharing brought some of the worst complaints about the star system in the United States. Western theaters especially had to offer ever higher rates of compensation to star talent even if their own markets were not improving. Treasuries were gutted of the funds needed to sustain a quality stock acting troupe. Managers, however, felt trapped by the system, because audience receipts were often weak “unless some novelty were offered.”¹⁶¹

Among mid-nineteenth century stars, Forrest apparently was one of the field’s most demanding. Although Forrest had legal and financial advisors, he very often handled booking his own appearances. Several letters in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s detail negotiations between the actor and the managers Ludlow and Smith. In

¹⁶¹ Oscar G. Brockett, *History of the Theater* 8th Edition (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 368; Simon Williams, “The Actors: European Actors and the Star System in the American Theatre, 1752-1870,” *The Cambridge Guide to American Theatre*, edited by Don B. Wilmet and Tice L. Miller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 303-357; for a Marxist interpretation see Bruce McConachie, *Melodramatic Formations: American Theater and Society, 1820 – 1870* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992).

1838, the managers sought to arrange for a Forrest tour in some of the cities where they held interests. They haggled over details through several letters for each engagement—with the actor demanding half the receipts and the firm responding that this condition was impossible, because it would violate their partnership agreement.¹⁶² The managers knew that he was not entirely out-of-line in asking for half of the profits. Other letters in the collection indicate Forrest did receive those terms in other cities, even years after age and scandal dimmed his popularity.¹⁶³ Nevertheless in the aftermath of an economic downturn that began in 1837, Smith and Ludlow forewent a visit from Edwin Forrest for the season.

A year later, Smith and Ludlow again renewed negotiations with Forrest over compensation. The actor insisted that by coming west, he risked earnings of more than \$600 per night in more prosperous markets. Eventually, rather than risk not having a star engagement for their Mobile theater, Ludlow agreed to his terms for that city, but “begged him not to name the terms for St. Louis.”¹⁶⁴ They must have lost that negotiation as well, because less than six weeks later Smith wrote to Ludlow from St. Louis, “Forrest will not change the terms – holds on like a leech.” The exact numbers agreed upon do not survive in the records, but the managers later determined that they had made a mistake by agreeing to them. Smith detailed in a letter written during the first evening of Forrest’s St. Louis engagement why his inflexibility was especially distressing,

¹⁶² Ludlow & Smith to Edwin Forrest (copy), 6/23/1838 and Ludlow & Smith to Edwin Forrest (copy), 9/29/1838, “Letterbook of Ludlow and Smith, 1835-1844,” Sol Smith Collection, MOHS; for the terms of the partnership between Sol Smith and Noah M. Ludlow, see “Articles of Co-Partnership,” signed June 2, 1835 with periodic renewals and amendments, Sol Smith Collection, Box 1, MOHS.

¹⁶³ C.A. Logan to Sol Smith, 6/3/1848, Sol Smith Collection, MoHS.

¹⁶⁴ Sol Smith, Mobile to Ludlow, 4/1/1839, Sol Smith Collection, box 1, MoHS.

72 seats sold! Six o clock. – I don't know what to make of it. Perhaps they are waiting to hear if he is a good actor or not.... Play over – 12:00 – Forrest first night -- \$506.... It does seem to me that on the 1st night in St Louis of Edwin Forrest there ought to be \$1000 in the house!!¹⁶⁵

The actor had written that he could clear \$600 an evening in *personal* profits in other cities. And yet, he had not managed to draw more than \$506 total for the box office during one evening in St. Louis. Smith had expected almost twice as much, and blamed the vagaries of the star system for the failure. The public demand seemed to be there, he wrote that “people” and journalists constantly asked him, “who have you got coming next?” Yet the audiences were inconsistent. He exclaimed to his partner, “d—n’um, haven’t they got the most attractive tragic actor in the world?”¹⁶⁶ They knew they were not alone in their frustration, as parts of the country continued to reel from the losses of 1837 to 1838. Some of the difference, then, between the Lind and Forrest tours certainly occurred because of the twelve-year time span. But these concerns about the star system were not exclusive to the late 1830s. They plagued the American theater industry throughout the century.¹⁶⁷

Despite the risks involved, theatrical industries depended upon and participated actively in their corner of the market in celebrity culture. As part of their business practices, Ludlow & Smith’s firm followed theatrical affairs in other cities, using industry gossip, personal correspondence, and their subscriptions to newspapers from all over the country to keep abreast of significant trends. Their records include copies of various newspapers from around the country as well as receipts for subscriptions and letters describing the experiences of other theater

¹⁶⁵ Sol Smith, St. Louis to Ludlow, Mobile, 5/5/[1839], Ludlow-Field-Maury Collection, box 1, MoHS.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Nineteenth-century actor William Burke Wood’s *Personal Recollections of the Stage* dedicates much of his text to lamenting the star system’s effects on American theatre (H. C. Baird, 1855).

managers and performers in other cities. They corresponded regularly with C. A. Logan, father of renowned actress Eliza Logan, arranging schedules and discussing the happenings in their markets as well as others. In addition to exploiting personal contacts, Noah Ludlow followed public promotions. He paid out a total of \$57.50 for eight years' worth of subscriptions to the New York *Spirit of the Times* in the 1840s.¹⁶⁸ He also paid out twenty dollars for a six year subscription to the New Orleans *Picayune*, another paper with a particular interest in theater and celebrity, in 1848. They thus knew how often theatrical firms failed, and how stock actors struggled to survive even as star actors demanded more extravagant terms. And yet, they felt trapped by the demands of the star system, and its close relative, the celebrity tour.

Forrest's gouging of the profits from the theaters and stock actors that supported his success became common knowledge even outside the industry, and a popular source of contempt among newspaper writers. The *Spirit of the Times* and *Daily Keystone* (the same newspaper to which Ludlow maintained a faithful subscription) characterized his regular demand for "one moiety [half] of the proceeds of the house every night" as "shockingly exorbitant."¹⁶⁹ They made this claim in 1849, a full eleven years after Ludlow and Smith's complaint. The star system became over the course of the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, the bane of the theater industry – or at least was perceived as such. Even in London journalists lamented its effect on the American stage. An 1842 article in the *Era* described the aftereffect of over-speculation of the 1830s, saying that even after the "wildfire" had abated,

¹⁶⁸ Receipts, Ludlow-Field-Maury Papers, Folder 2, MoHS. By probably purposeful coincidence, Cincinnati also had a newspaper *Spirit of the Times* that was founded in 1840, but the receipt specifically spells out that his is the New York newspaper.

¹⁶⁹ "Mr. Forrest's Terms," *Spirit of the Times and Daily Keystone*, 5/4/1849.

The stars...would not abate in their demands, and the managers had nothing left but to succumb, or otherwise play to empty benches....insufficient and impaired sock companies were engaged and everything made subservient to the talents or pretensions of the stars....What was the result of this false principle? Beggary to the manager and actor.¹⁷⁰

There were great profits to be made, for sure, by the engagement of a major celebrity performer. For the vast majority of individuals involved directly in the field of arranging and organizing these engagements, however, success came in much more modest returns.

When Jenny Lind, the Hutchinson family, John B. Gough, Charles Dickens and Fanny Kemble set off on their respective tours of the United States, they did so for personal and professional reasons particular to their own lives and careers. But in choosing to tour, they also participated in the networks of travel, exchange and communication that were helping to construct a far reaching popular and celebrity culture. These networks had been developed, and were still developing, to satisfy the needs and demands of their chosen fields and causes, as well as the creation of a cultural discourse around touring. Nineteenth-century newspapers and observers followed the movements of the century's most celebrated individuals, commenting upon the places they visited and spreading knowledge of the circuits followed by performers as well as the individuals who facilitated it. The geography developed by this celebrity touring distributed an idea of the country and its particular regional similarities and differences that could be called upon not only for education and leisure, but also to unite and divide. Personal relationships, extended between professionals and across distances for the purpose of booking and promoting celebrity visitors, took on the characteristics of a nascent and developing commercial

¹⁷⁰ "The 'Star' System in America," *The (London) Era*, 1/9/1842.

industry in celebrity, entertainment and exchange. The celebrity tour as commercial object and phenomena had become one of the century's most important and influential productions. It also contributed to the very construction of celebrity culture itself, through its dispersion of personality and its products.

Chapter Five

Crafting Congenial Celebrity: Marketing Reform through Reformers in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

“There is in the present generation a prevailing and insatiable thirst for novelty.”

- “Reform! Reform!” *Rockford (IL) Forum*, 1/3/1849

In an era that witnessed the expansion of the penny press, the drama of the Boz Ball and the feting of Jenny Lind, the string of novel forms of leisure and consumption must have been striking. The search for the next David Garrick or Sarah Siddons was a familiar one for theatre-goers throughout the early nineteenth century, but by the early 1840s and 1850s, newspapers were announcing the next Fanny Kemble, Jenny Lind and Edwin Forrest before the old ones had even left the stage. Among a population only starting to get used to industrial forms of production, advertisements continually marketed a new season’s hats and miracle medicines next to announcements boasting about ever-faster communications or offering tickets for improved steam transportation by water or rail. For conservative writers such as the one cited above in the *Rockford Forum*, the desire for “novelty” among his contemporaries may very well have seemed “insatiable.”

Yet the writer was not protesting the relative plethora of products and theatrical entertainments available to the “present generation,” but rather the popularity of reform associations among them. He titled his rant, “Reform! Reform!” The leaders and members of these organizations, he believed, advocated “continual changes and revolutions...to the habits of men” that were not rational options but

rather “artificial stimulants...for quickening the pulse.” Instead of allowing change to come at an orderly pace, these groups sought to “accelerate the natural movements of society.” This impulse, he believed, was dangerous, because “the man who rightly contemplated the law of the human mind,” would not jump to accept “new theories,” but instead would be “ever distrustful [of them], however plausible, and of exciting experiments, however popular.” Given his preference for gradual over immediate action, he was probably referring to the anti-slavery cause. Yet he named no names and gave no specific details. He also could have been thinking of the temperance or women’s rights movements, or of associations dedicated to the reformation of systems of education, medical care or criminal justice. Or, he might have been referring to the revolutionary upheaval in Europe that had begun just months earlier in 1848.

He was not alone among journalists in opposing any of these movements, but he framed his feelings in a particularly significant way. His general conservatism linked social, cultural and political shifts together through a broad condemnation of a generation that thirsted for the new. Ironically, the reformers condemned by the *Rockford Forum’s* contributor very well may have shared his sentiment that change dominated and threatened the modern social world even as they differed in their response to it. Post-revolutionary political changes, according to many historians, brought about a second revolution in social relationships. Older forms of patriarchal and hierarchical social orders collapsed, instigating anxieties among some observers, especially in the elite and emerging middling classes that the republican experiment

might “degenerate into anarchy” as “self-seeking individualism” driven by commercialism and consumerism undermined “traditional morality.”¹ A sense of fear over perceived increases in crime pervaded newspaper articles and reform publications in the period, with their writers blaming dislocation resulting from immigration, urbanization and westward expansion for threats to social order.² Whether reports of the increase in crime or other behaviors understood as immoral were accurate hardly mattered—their widespread discussion guaranteed that disorder at least appeared to be rampant.

Fortunately for those frightened by disorder and violence, middle-class writers influenced by evangelical religion and secular philosophy advocated a new moral sensibility emphasizing communal responsibility for social ills.³ According to such a belief, the vacuum created by the collapse of older methods of social control could be filled by new, compassionate and non-coercive methods, especially moral suasion. The most influential nineteenth-century reform movements strongly

¹ Steven Mintz, *Moralists & Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), xiii. Mintz's ideas are synthesized from several scholars of the American Revolution and early republic, especially the work of Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (Knopf, 1991) and David Rothman's *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (1971; revised edition, Aldine Transaction, 2002); Lewis Perry, *Boats Against the Current: American Culture between Revolution and Modernity* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

² Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Harvard University Press, 1978), Perry, *Boats Against the Current*.

³ Anne Boylan, for example, has shown how Frances Wright, using the language of Thomas Paine, and Sarah Grimke, in the language of the Bible, both argued for the “radical potential of a republican femininity” to reform social relationships, and especially to improve the conditions of women; *The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 8. Her portraits of women organizers consistently show a blending of the biblical with secular philosophy and she found evidence of their reliance as well on the ideas of Rousseau and philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment and evangelicals. I do not mean to suggest that this merging of the religious with secular philosophy was new, especially among women in particular. See Susan Juster, *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelicalism in Revolutionary New England* (Cornell University Press, 1996).

advocated moral suasion and the ability for individuals to reform themselves and the society around them.⁴

Even as they lamented contemporary social problems, many reformers chose a particularly modern response to them, culled from their experiences with the emerging market economy and consumer products. As David P. Nord and others have shown, evangelical Christian missionaries in particular used innovations in publishing and marketing to encourage conversion and maintain commitments among the converted. Antebellum American culture had even more to offer reformers than an improving and increasing circulation in newspapers and popular literature. Activists also found inspiration and audiences in the theatrical fields and along the lyceum circuit. In consonance with their colleagues in more commercial markets, many of the most visible and vocal members of movements and organizations for reform found themselves transformed into print celebrities by a culture ready to latch onto, buy, sell and consume a striking personality. Yet they did so even as they were uncomfortable with each of these institutions in their most popular forms, and worried that being caught up in the market might seem to compromise the authenticity of their sentiments.⁵

⁴ The diversity and significance of movements for reform in the nineteenth century has hardly gone unsung. Whether one believes that reformers were middle-class paternalists, or benevolent liberals (or both), historians have done much to explore their role in defining American society and culture from Andrew Jackson's presidency to the Civil War. Burton Bledstein cites an emerging youth culture as a major source of activism, pointing out that between 1830 and 1860, over forty percent of the population was under fifteen years old, and nearly thirty percent were between the ages of fifteen and thirty. Young Americans, he argued, "were disillusioned" by their elders' choices and disheartened by the political successes of compromise on issues of slavery and poor relief, as well as by the appearance of corruption in the political system; *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976), 220; Boylan, *Origins of Women's Activism*; Lori D. Ginzburg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992).

⁵ David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (Oxford University Press, 1997); Brown, *Word in the World*; Holly Berkley Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (Routledge, 2008).

Indeed it is no accident that broadly marketed celebrities and the major reform movements of the century were introduced into American culture at precisely the same time, chiefly in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. The traits of sensationalism that interested readers and audiences in Edwin Forrest's, Fanny Kemble's and Jenny Lind's stories of personal success, triumph and hardship, and the characteristics that gave them an intangible appeal understood as genius, were part of the philosophy of and growing interest in individual potential that also drove reformers' faith in the tenets of moral suasion. Each of these celebrated figures was marketed as having been driven to the stage by financial hardship, and of having overcome personal burdens to succeed. For the subjects of reformers' attentions, their afflictions were more pronounced and required the active intercession of their enlightened peers. Reform publications and events as well as mainstream periodicals focused upon the stories of their experiences, making some of them into celebrities in their own right. Reform writings, along with their authors and their promoters, were among the most significant mechanics of renown in the nineteenth century.

Reform celebrity built upon the most palatable aspects of both social activism and celebrity to create congenial forms of both. As with other types of celebrity, it hinged upon the cultivation of an intriguing personality. This chapter will look closely at two such figures, temperance lecturer John B. Gough and Hungarian Revolutionary, Lajos (Louis) Kossuth, as well as at the very different results of their campaigns for change. Gough enjoyed tremendous success as a temperance advocate. He labored for decades in the field, convincing his audience of the merits of sobriety while supporting his family in relative affluence. Kossuth, one of the most famous participants in the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe, hoped to capitalize on the

excitement for reform in the United States in order to cultivate support for Hungarian independence by the American government. He found that while Americans eagerly purchased Kossuth hats and Hungarian bonds, they had little desire to translate a consumer passion into a political or military commitment.

Celebrity Reformers, Part I: John B. Gough, From Delirium Tremors to Coldwater Apostle

As Mr. E. M. Hardy and his wife prepared to send their son off to college in the mid-nineteenth century, they shared at least one concern that would be familiar to modern parents. They worried about how he would handle the drinking culture at his chosen institution. They took some comfort from his having joined a temperance society before leaving home, but even still, they were anxious about how he might handle the social pressures to drink alcoholic beverages. Mr. Hardy came upon the ideal solution. He wrote to the most famous temperance advocate of his time—lecturer John B. Gough. “Knowing the temptations to which youth are so fearfully exposed,” he asked the lecturer send his son a small medal honoring his signing of the pledge “so that he might in the moment of temptation look upon the little talisman [and] think of his pledge.”⁶ In requesting a token, Hardy hoped to tap into both the influence of temperance and the appeal of Gough’s celebrity.

Gough’s labors brought him a fame that outstretched most of his peers in reform and the lecture circuit, both geographically and in print exposure. Gough counted the miles he traveled and amounts he raised for temperance, but also focused upon the numbers of signatures he won to the total-abstinence pledge circulated at meetings and lectures. Temperance advocates used the pledge as one measure of success, and so in their terms they had succeeded with the younger

⁶ “Letters Received by John B. Gough,” Box II, Folder 1, John B. Gough Collection, AAS.

Hardy. But as the elder Hardy understood it, that pledge was only the beginning of a commitment, and was only as strong as a young man's ability to resist the goading of his peers.⁷ A physical memento, a medal, from the movement's most recognizable leader would be a powerful reminder and could only strengthen his resolve.

This simple request illustrated a much more complex relationship between celebrity and reform, and between celebrity culture and its observers and admirers. In a sense, social pressure had encouraged the younger Hardy to sign the pledge. He had been moved by the sentiments expressed at a meeting or a lecture, but only time and experience would tell how strongly he had internalized its message. His parents had no way of knowing how he might behave if emotion and his social surroundings moved in the other direction, against temperance and towards alcohol consumption. They thought he might need a physical reminder of temperance's sentiment, imbued with significance through its connection to the cause's greatest advocate, to maintain his commitment to the sensation of sobriety. They also understood that if their son could just hold a token of Gough's celebrity, and perhaps show it to his peers, its positive pressure might compete with his society's more negative ones.

Men and women like Mr. and Mrs. Hardy believed that alcohol posed a dire and visible threat to a family's success, stability and happiness. As they and their contemporaries in the nineteenth century looked in newspapers and talked with friends and relatives about a perceived increase in crime and violent behavior, not a

⁷ Gough and other activists also acknowledged that the pledge had its weaknesses. In at least one lecture in 1853, the activists reportedly lamented that of the 600,000 "who had signed the pledge, in connection with the Washingtonian movement, 450,000 had violated it." Temperance took constant vigilance and community support; Untitled, *Barre Patriot*, 6/24/1853.

few concluded that widespread intolerance was to blame. Far more so than today, drinking played an integral role in many aspects of American life.⁸ It would not only have been acceptable for a man to break out a bottle while working in the early years of the century, but normal.⁹ In the succeeding decades many people began to understand these habits as a menace. Drinking around elections, another tradition, but increasing along with competition between political parties, now seemed to threaten democracy. Urbanization, industrialization, immigration and migration had severed communal ties that had served to regulate behavior. It seemed to observers that public and disorderly inebriation were becoming rampant. The economic repercussions of intemperance also came under scrutiny. Industrialization demanded a reliable workforce and drunkenness affected not only individual employment, but collective productivity. Concerned Americans concluded that advocating for temperance across classes, was absolutely necessary for the health of the young republic.

Temperance reform in the nineteenth century came in so many iterations that referring to “a” or “the” temperance movement makes little sense. It underwent many stops and starts in several iterations before becoming the comparatively stable movement of the late 1840s and 1850s that pushed through prohibition laws in many communities and twelve states. Despite the phenomenal disappointment of the twentieth-century constitutional experiment with prohibition, there is more to the history of temperance than failure and an overreaching impulse to legislate morality.

⁸ Matthew Warner Osborn, “A Detestable Shrine: Alcohol Abuse in Antebellum Philadelphia,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 29:1 (Spring 2009): 101-132.

⁹ Alcohol was not a new product in American life, but its categorization as a social ill was—see W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) for a discussion of the role of alcohol in everyday life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It was one of the most successful social movements of the nineteenth century. More people joined temperance organizations than became members of abolitionist groups or signed women's rights petitions.¹⁰

Temperance's significance surpassed its role as a social movement. The tales of drunken depravity and inspiring recoveries that emanated from temperance meetings and publications of the 1840s promoted the sensationalist and sentimentalist expression that characterized popular literature in the following decades.¹¹ These stories were presented as true and told publicly by the men who had experienced them. When told in a small local meeting, their effect was significant but small. But when lecturers took these stories on the road and shared them on the lecture circuit or writers published them in reform, evangelical and even mainstream publications, the tales became much more broadly influential. In his study of the parallels between temperance literature and other forms of popular print, Glenn Hendler found that "the reformed and transformed drunkard stood near the beginning of a history of American mass culture."¹² Temperance leaders and lecturers—John B. Gough the foremost among them—set out to encourage people to abstain from alcohol and sign the temperance pledge. In the process, however,

¹⁰ For a general history of temperance movements in the United States before the Civil War, see Ian Tyrell, *Sobering Up* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979). Joseph Gusfield's *Symbolic Crusade: Status, Politics and the American Temperance Crusade* looks at the contestations of class and status inherent in temperance movements throughout their history. Jack Blocker's *Give to the Winds thy Fears: The Women's Temperance Crusade, 1873-1874* and Ruth Bordin's *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty* as well as her biography of Frances Willard provide an important look at the role of women's organizations in late nineteenth-century temperance movements. Jed Dannenbaum's *Drink and Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washingtonian Revival to the WCTU* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) and Mark Edward Lender's and James Kirby Martin's *Drinking in America: A History* (New York: Free Press, 1982) look at temperance over an extended period.

¹¹ "Bloated Bodies and Sober Sentiments: Masculinity in 1840's Temperance Narratives" Mary Chapman, and Glenn Hendler, eds., *Sentimental Men: Masculinity and the Politics of Affect in American Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 127.

¹² Hendler, "Bloated Bodies and Sober Sentiments," 127.

this recovered drinker wielded considerable and unintended cultural influence. He and his sober brethren contributed not only to the temperance cause and developing literary genres, but also to the construction of a celebrity culture that thrived on the public exposure of private lives and struggles.¹³

Although they much surpassed them in influence, John B. Gough and the temperance movement of the 1840s benefited from the experiences of earlier established temperance organizations. The first temperance activists came together in the 1810s and 1820s. In 1813, one hundred elite men founded the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (MSSI) and within the next few years several auxiliary societies organized throughout the state. The MSSI initially did not condemn all imbibing of alcoholic beverages, but rather only drinking enough to lead to drunkenness. The members of the MSSI took no direct action against excessive drinking, but rather pledged to lead by example. As prominent men—clergymen, town officials, employers—they believed that it would be enough to model temperate behavior among themselves, and to let their habits filter down to other classes. An exclusionary organization of elite men, the MSSI did not successfully reduce drinking in its communities and the organization lapsed within just a few years of its founding.¹⁴

A Congregationalist minister, Justin Edwards, resurrected temperance reform in 1826 by founding the American Temperance Society (ATS). His organization shared membership and tactics with the Christian missionary American Tract Society,

¹³ Although she does not discuss the recovering drunkard, Ann Fabian has written about the popularity of confessional tales in this same period in her *Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth Century America* (University of California Press, 2000).

¹⁴ Ian Tyrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 54-86; Jed Dannenbaum, *Drink & Disorder: Temperance Reform in Cincinnati from the Washington Revival to the WCTU* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 16-18.

and like the MSSSI, was comprised at first of only the privileged few.¹⁵ By sharing printing presses and distribution networks with the American Tract Society to print and disseminate their pamphlets, the society circulated their own writings condemning intemperance, expecting the printed word to have a much greater range of influence than leading by example. Early ATS pamphlets argued for temperance on the basis of “principles, facts, and reasonings.”¹⁶ It imagined its audience as the “Preacher, Lawyer, Physician, Magistrate, Officer of Government, Secretary of a Temperance Society, Teacher of youth, and educated young man.”¹⁷ The society concentrated on preventing young people from drinking in the first place, rather than focusing on the rescue of those who had already fallen. Finding that their pamphleteering brought some results, the ATS took another page from evangelical Christianity’s successes by sending speakers from town-to-town advocating a commitment to sobriety, along the model of religious revivalism.

The ATS model for temperance coincided with a surge of interest in combating the problems of drunkenness. Local and auxiliary branches of temperance organizations formed around the country, but especially in the North, at a rapid pace. The national association could not keep up with a centralized organization and became instead more of a “clearing house” for literature about reform.¹⁸ By the later 1820s, the movement had expanded the definition of temperance to denounce use of any hard liquor, not just drunkenness. In 1835, dispersed organizations and auxiliary societies combined to form the federated United States Temperance Union and began advocating a uniform anti-spirits pledge.

¹⁵ Nord, *Faith in Reading*.

¹⁶ American Temperance Society, “Introduction,” *Permanent Temperance Documents of the American Temperance Society*, Vol. I. (London, 1841).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 18-20, 21.

These newer organizations purposefully expanded to include a more wide-ranging population, including for the first time women's and African American temperance association in the middling classes.¹⁹

It was from these spontaneous and middling groups—those representing young men, women, African Americans, skilled laborers, and small business proprietors—that the turn to teetotalism emerged. Temperance groups became more active in the 1830s, convening meetings more frequently and developing social networks committed to advocating total abstinence and supporting their members in maintaining the pledge. The all-or-nothing approach of the total abstinence commitment alienated some of the traditional elite members of temperance organizations, who were averse to condemning wine and more in favor of encouraging moderation as a form of self-control. Additionally, the ways in which temperance allowed previously excluded groups to make claims for civic participation further pushed what had been a movement of social elites towards more radical and inclusive stances. Still, even as temperance by the early 1840s had come to encompass a more diverse social demography, it still neglected to address one very important individual in the context of alcohol use: the drunkard.²⁰ Early

¹⁹ Ibid, 21; on black temperance organizations see Donald Yacovone, "The Transformation of the Black Temperance Movement, 1827-1854," *Journal of the Early Republic* 8 (1988): 281-97 and Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969; reprint De Capo Press, 1991), 75-85.

²⁰ Much of the historiography on temperance I read argued that the drunkard was excluded from the early temperance movement's efforts, and consistently quoted ATS founder Justin Edward's words, "Keep the temperate people temperate; the drunkards will soon die, and the land be free." See Milton A. Maxwell, "The Washingtonian Moment," *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 11 (1950), 412; Hendler, "Bloated Bodies and Sober Sentiments," 128; Maxwell, "The Washingtonian Moment," 412; [need to look up; I'm sure it's in Tyrell and Dannenbaum at least; perhaps Warner]. While it may be generally true that drunkards were marginalized from the movement's efforts, a quick look at the collection "Permanent Documents of the American Temperance Society," published by the society in London in 1841 (one year before the founding of the first Washingtonian Society) will reveal several attempts to address drunkards, and a contingent of reformed drunkards in England who sought to rescue their peers.

activists concentrated on preventing people from becoming heavy drinkers, rather than reforming those who drank excessively. Common wisdom considered drunkards beyond rescue, and accepted that they would simply die out and become extinct as temperance became more effective.

The founding of the Washington Temperance Society in 1840 (its members popularly called the Washingtonians) changed the understanding of drunkenness, and proposed that with communal support and guidance, even the heaviest drinkers could be saved from ruin. The Washingtonians borrowed from their predecessors the spirit of association and social reform, but gleaned their techniques from the realms of democratic politics and contemporary theater—taking especially a page from the script of the melodrama.²¹ Founded by a group of Baltimore men who frequently drank together, their innovations would define the movement for the next fifteen years. In large cities such as New York and Brooklyn, hundreds of meetings were available per week, demonstrating not only the popularity but also the relevance of the Washingtonian style that emphasized solidarity, compassion and continuous support to the recovering drinker. Weekly or bi-weekly meetings could be found in several smaller cities.²² Meetings sustained their popularity not only because of the support they offered to the society's members, but because of their structure. They were built around the "experience story," consisting of a drunkard's story of decline and ideally ending with his eventual reformation (most of the figures who shared their stories were men).

²¹ David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800-1850* (1968; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987)

²² Thomas Augst, "Temperance, Mass Culture, and the Romance of Experience," *American Literary History* 19, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 297-323, 300.

Whereas earlier activists had merely warned of alcohol's dangers, the Washingtonians had lived them. For a time, they capitalized on the period's concern with authenticity of sentiment. They questioned the efficacy of those who had never known the "sensation of 'drunk'" or who had always held a position of comfort, privilege and respect in society to make a convincing case against alcohol. Washingtonians argued that only those who had experienced the misery of alcohol dependence and been despised for it by their peers could faithfully convey its evils.²³ Yet, eventually the greater social cache of established organizations began to compete successfully with the discourse of experience among Washingtonians. The original Washingtonian organizations were short lived, but the more mainstream movement absorbed many of its tactics and members, including putting the drunkard at the center. The greatest recovered drunkard of the century, perhaps, was John B. Gough.

With its melodramatic tales of social and moral ruin followed by recovery, Washingtonianism created a character out of the drunkard that appealed to the sympathies of reform-minded Americans. Through the drunkard's appeal to the popular sensationalism of mid-nineteenth century culture, he brought temperance far more national and international interest than the early activists could have ever imagined. In forwarding John B. Gough, a particularly attractive and articulate former drinker, as a spokesperson for temperance, leaders embraced and refined celebrity as a product of contemporary culture and markets. Gough's life story as it played out in the sensational public, through his lecture tours and articles about him, exemplified and celebrated the experience story and the redemption it promised.

²³ Augst, "Temperance, Mass Culture, and the Romance of Experience," 303.

John Bartholomew Gough (1817-1886) was born at Sandgate in Kent, England, but moved to the United States when he was around twelve years old. According to his multiple autobiographies, his father, “being unable to furnish him with a trade,” paid ten guineas to a neighbor in exchange for taking the young man to America, teaching him a trade, and providing for him until he was twenty-one years old.²⁴ After only two years, Gough left the neighbor’s family and went to New York on his own. In time he became a bookbinder. His mother and sister joined him in the United States in 1833, but in the summer of 1834, his mother died. He began drinking soon after that. For the next eight years, he worked irregularly and declined into greater and more frequent intemperance. Finally, after the death of his first wife and child, in October of 1842 he signed the pledge and joined the temperance movement. Over the course of his career, he traveled nearly 500,000 miles, gave approximately 10,000 lectures, and gathered 140,000 names to the pledge. His prolific career spanned beyond the lecture circuit—he published five updated editions to his 1845 autobiography and over one million copies of his lectures were printed and sold.²⁵

The above details are the facts of Gough’s life, unembellished. Very early in his career as a public figure, he began constructing a personal history and public image that dramatically complemented his role as a temperance organizer in the Washingtonian vein. He and his agents crafted the narrative so skillfully, that by now it is impossible to disentangle Gough the celebrity from Gough the private individual.

²⁴ John B. Gough, *Autobiography and Personal Records of John B. Gough, with Twenty-Six Years’ Experience as a Public Speaker* (1870), 47.

²⁵ Compiled from John B. Gough’s diaries at the American Antiquarian Society and the entry on Gough in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography* 9 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 334.

Gough the celebrity embodied the major tenets of the experience story and took it beyond Washingtonianism to the mainstream of temperance and American culture.²⁶ He understood himself, or at least he spoke as if he understood himself, as a minister of temperance. He crafted and publicized his life's experiences as a testament to the battle between alcohol's evils and temperance's blessings. In many ways, because of his deliberate openness, his life story set a precedent, and legitimized journalistic scrutiny into the life of anyone who put themselves on a public stage.

Gough became a public figure the night he signed the pledge. The floor was open at Washingtonian meetings. They welcomed all attendees to take the podium and tell their story, as catharsis to themselves and an example to others. Gough made his first relation of an experience story part of his own later narratives, and part of the sensational experience of overcoming alcohol dependence. He wrote in his autobiography about the evening he signed the pledge at "lower Town Hall," in Worcester, MA. He wrote that he felt compelled to speak as soon as he arrived at the meeting, and was quickly granted permission to take the podium,

I lifted my quivering hand, and then and there told what rum had done for me....I was once respectable and happy...now I was a houseless, miserable, scathed, diseased, and blighted outcast....[S]carce a hope remained to me...but...in my palsied hand I with difficulty grasped the pen, and, in characters...crooked...I signed....[T]he feeling of relief arose from the honest desire I entertained to keep a good resolution....[M]any who witnessed my signing, and heard my simple statement, came forward kindly, grasped my hand, and expressed their satisfaction....A new and better day seemed to have dawned upon me.²⁷

Experience stories, of course, were told orally. Specifically because a drunkard performed his experience story when he was on the cusp of pledging, or had just

²⁶ Hendler, "Bloated Bodies and Sober Sentiments;" Augst, Thomas Augst, "Temperance, Mass Culture, and the Romance of Experience."

²⁷ John B. Gough, *An Autobiography* (1845), 67.

recently pledged, himself to total abstinence, his voice represented a liminal one. By the time Gough or any author came to write down his experience story, he had already crossed from the margins to respectability.²⁸ This short passage does not reproduce the exact words he spoke that evening, or fully capture the emotional significance of the event for the speaker or his audience. Yet it captures the narrative structure of the experience story. Gough had tried to express in it the promise of Washingtonianism that proved the source of its popular appeal—the tale of a man who had traveled from respectability to disrepute to redemption.

Surviving accounts of oral experience stories recount that the speaker often began as Gough had, by telling how he had once been a loved son or husband, comfortably employed, until the “demon rum,” or other drink of choice, had lured him away. The downfall began gradually, but then all of a sudden, after giving him several chances, his family and social support vanished, and the drunkard was left alone and despised. In Gough’s case, his drinking left him unable to provide for his wife and child, who became sick and died, but in other examples, the drunkard resorted to domestic abuse. Finally, the drunkard reached a precipice—death or total abstinence became the only remaining options. At this point, the Washingtonians entered the story. The drunkard, forsaken by everyone but the temperance advocate who truly understood his misery and offered him a friendly hand, signed the pledge. His signature would lead to redemption, support, and the recovery of his respectable origins and his family’s happiness. Most reformed and reforming drunkards told their story once or several times at their local temperance meetings. Gough made his

²⁸ This was particularly true for the reformed drunkard. As Ann Fabian has shown, it was not necessarily true for other individuals who told their stories of ruin, recovery, escape or rescue from other social problems including poverty and slavery—especially convicts; see *Unvarnished Truth*.

livelihood out of traveling and telling his experience with alcohol addiction and recovery.

Although Gough had little formal education and no training in extemporaneous speaking, he quickly ascended from amateur to professional speaker. He signed the pledge for the first time on October 31, 1842. Local associations asked him to speak almost immediately at meetings in Worcester, MA and surrounding towns. He made one of his first appearances in newspapers on January 6, 1843, when a journalist for the *Barre Gazette* wrote that Gough, “alike ready to sing or speak,” had entertained the diners at a local temperance supper. A little more than a year after signing the pledge, he was lecturing in Boston, to crowds at Faneuil Hall and Tremont Temple. He appeared in New York in mid-1844, and by 1846 was traveling in the upper south—a great victory for temperance, which had been much less successful beyond New England.

Critics credited his theatrical style with making him a success as a lecturer. A *National Intelligencer* correspondent gushed that his charms exceeded those of the stage. He claimed that prior to hearing Gough he had considered temperance “hackneyed,” and uninteresting.²⁹ Yet after reading “many laudatory notices in the newspaper,” he decided in the spring of 1845 to attend a lecture he was giving at the Tabernacle in New York City.³⁰ He had a theater ticket for later in the evening, but once the lecturer began his tale, “not even the memory of the allurements of Signora Pico in *Cerentola* at the opera house could have drawn [him] away.”³¹ Another newspaper expanded on that statement, arguing that he was not only a “model of

²⁹ “Mr. Gough,” *Barre Patriot*, 1/3/1845.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

natural eloquence,” but also of “Christian fervor and kindness.”³² He first captured audiences’ attentions through public speeches and confessionals, but newspaper coverage such as that to which these newspapers both responded and contributed spread his celebrity far faster and more widely than his individual appearances could.

Gough the public performer maintained a close eye on the print coverage of his career and reputation. His autobiography, publicized as an intimate look at his life thus far, made celebrity central to its story. He opened the work with an apology (typical in the period) for being immodest enough to write about himself but claimed that errors in the press made it necessary for him to correct the public record. He embraced his public status. He then related a background strongly resembling the plot of a stage melodrama or romance novel—inflected with aspects of the Washingtonian experience story. He described his affectionate relationship with his father, a retired soldier, who spent hours teaching him to complete military exercises using brooms as weapons. His mother he compared to a “fountain, whence the pure waters of affection never ceased to flow.”³³ She had been a village schoolmistress, and under her tutelage he had excelled in his early studies. Surrounded by the castles, beaches and landscapes of Kent, he cultivated an interest in the “beauties of nature,” and dreamt of the sad histories of “Katherine of Aragon, and Anne Boleyn.” He met the English reformer William Wilberforce with his father, and the abolitionist had spoken kindly to him and given him a book. Gough lamented that as a drunkard he had forgotten all of these lessons and opportunities given him as a child—ignoring Wilberforce’s examples, abandoning the order and discipline his military father had instilled in him, and betraying the loving attention his mother had given to

³² “John B. Gough,” *Morning News*, 6/10/1845.

³³ John B. Gough, *An Autobiography* (1845; reprint Boston: J.B. Gough, Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1848), 3.

his moral, religious and intellectual development. He infused his childhood with peace, beauty, historical significance and filial affection to make his later decline into drunkenness and dissipation that much more dramatic.

Gough's autobiography skillfully integrated romantic and melodramatic discourse with subtle pleas for social reform. It was a masterful testament to the cause of moral suasion. He acknowledged his own moral failures in his life as a drunkard, but carefully pointed out the external causes that had driven him to drink. He lauded his parents and their attention to molding his character. But although they were hard working, they had been poor. They thought that sending him to America would secure him better opportunities, and believed they could trust their neighbors to care for him. Yet his guardians—in the first of many of his life's crippling disappointments—had abused and neglected him as a servant without providing for his religious and practical education. His story was crafted as a perfect example of the results of immigration and dislocation that reformers feared. After embarking on his own at age fourteen he had drifted around the northeast, coming close to "temptation." When his mother and sister arrived in the country in late 1833, the sixteen-year old Gough seemed to thrive again under the influence of maternal love.

Eventually, however, the economy turned and both he and his sister lost their jobs. Unable to find replacement positions, Gough took to walking miles every day, looking for wood to burn and begging for bread. He sold his coat to buy his family mutton. After surviving a cold winter, they were stifled by summer heat. His aging and starving mother died of heatstroke, and was buried, without ceremony in a pauper's grave. He described the circumstances of her burial bitterly in his autobiography,

There was no burial service read—none. My mother was one of God's

creatures, but she...had bequeathed no legacies to charitable institutions, and how could the church afford one of its self-denying men to pray over her pauper-grave? She had only been an affectionate wife, a devoted mother, and a poor Christian.³⁴

He returned to the circumstances of his mother's death many times in his lectures and framed it as the catalyst for his descent into dissipation and as an example of the gaping failure of American Christians to care for their vulnerable poor.

His narrative continually hit upon institutions and trends that concerned the period's reform-minded Christians. Gough claimed to have been raised to despise the theater as a Christian, but without his mother's guidance he became an actor in the evening to supplement his working days as a book binder. The problem was not his lack of employment—he earned five dollars a week, which would have covered his needs had he not spent so much on alcohol. He joined a volunteer fire company notorious for drinking among its members, and descended further into alcohol abuse. He married and had a child, but because of his drinking habit he only worked sporadically and often failed to fulfill their basic needs. When his wife and child died, he was left completely alone. His sister had long since married and moved to Rhode Island with her husband. His neighbors blamed and scorned him. Yet just when it seemed he could go no lower, a temperance advocate reached out and convinced him to attend the meeting where he signed the pledge. Not long after that, he began his speaking career and started working towards redemption.

Gough's original autobiography ended there, following a predictable melodramatic pattern. Autobiographies were a popular genre, but it is significant that he claimed this particular story as his own. His later editions minimized his years of dissipation as stories from his speaking career took up most of the text, but they

³⁴ Gough, *Autobiography* (1850), 25.

never eliminated any details from it. A reader would be loathe to forget that this man “[t]o procure liquor...was compelled to resort to every kind of stratagem.” While his wife lay pregnant and ill, he drank away his wages that could have secured her food and medical care. Later, as she was dying, her attendants sent him out to buy rum to ease her pain. He drank it himself. This pathetic figure always existed before and alongside the famous lecturer in his celebrity persona.

Even as he alluded to the cruel treatment that had led to his downfall, he emphasized that charity and compassion from others had rescued him. Gough was hardly the only young man to arrive in the United States with minimal adult support, nor was his mother the only immigrant woman that suffered a miserable death. As an activist, he crafted his story as an example, asking his readers to think of all the other unprotected women and children populating the United States. His autobiography is a history of the Washingtonian approach and an appeal for its broader adoption. He repeatedly asserted that his life as a drinker was a fate contrary to his nature. He in no way simplified the task of reforming the drunkard, and he related how several individuals had tried to help him, by giving him shelter, setting him up in business, or offering him credit. A barman provided him with the money to open his own bookbinding shop, but he drank it all away. Once alcohol became a habit, he needed more than money and business credit to break its hold. It took the pledge, a strong network of emotional support, and an understanding of the physical compulsions alcohol held to rescue Gough.

Washingtonianism and the total-abstinence pledge addressed the whole of the drunkard's experience. Gough often related how when no other man would look him in the face, much less touch him, a waiter at a temperance hotel, Joel Stratton, approached him on the street, grasped his shoulder and told him he was worthy of

the pledge. Even as his former friends and colleagues scoffed at his ability to remain sober, a near stranger, Jesse Goodrich, came to him after he signed and told him he was welcome to call upon him, “whenever.” The lecturer’s relationship to these men became a testament to the cause. Their public bond (and evidence in Gough’s private papers affirms it was personal as well) was so strong that it was rumored later that Gough provided for Stratton’s widow for the rest of her life. Gough dedicated every edition of his autobiography to Goodrich, writing that his “kindness cheered and supported me when days were dark and friends were few.”³⁵ As members of a society dedicated to the rescue of and populated by habitual drinkers, the Washingtonians understood the physical experiences of withdrawal and recovery. They promised those who would sign the pledge not only that temperance would bring them redemption, but that they would help them with the trials along the way to achieving it. If concerned Americans blamed rising intemperance on increasing social and familial alienation, temperance societies of the mid-1840s offered an alternative.

The Experience Story as “Moral Authority” and Celebrity Fare

One could hardly imagine a public setting more built upon the kind of discursive intimacy that characterized celebrity culture than a temperance meeting featuring experience stories. The experience story’s “personalized moral authority” hailed from its status as true.³⁶ The reformed drunkard claimed that by telling his story he wanted nothing more than to build a community of temperate friends and supporters. His willingness to admit how deeply he had debased himself while drinking offered credence to that assertion. The experience story, taken at face value,

³⁵ Garraty, ed., *American National Biography*, 334.

³⁶ Augst, “Temperance, Mass Culture, and the Romance of Experience,” 304.

offered a more intimate look at a person's background than most people would ever get from most of their acquaintances. Audience members were allowed—even invited—to care deeply about these storytellers. John B. Gough launched himself from the *Washingtonian* stage and into celebrity by telling such autobiographical tales.

Other reform movements also used the sentimental discourse of personal experience to claim moral authority in their cause. Activists for expanded divorce and property rights pointed to stories of abused and neglected wives as reason enough to act while the slave narrative offered a different tale of suffering and redemption. Temperance, however, had a particular appeal. Historian Thomas Augst has argued that in accepting the pledge, signatories “admitted the cautionary implication of personal experience...that the drunkard's story might become one's own.”³⁷ Few of those with cultural power and authority could imagine themselves or their families as victims of slavery. Temperance advocates claimed to work for the benefit of abused and neglected women, without any reason to expand upon women's, or constrict men's, traditional rights (at least before the move towards prohibition later in the 1840s and into the 1850s).

The perils of drunkenness were far less remote. “I was once and can again be like you and your family members,” coming from the mouth of an articulate white man was far easier for the mostly middle-class white audiences of temperance to identify with than the example of a black fugitive slave. The plight of semi-fictional Ruth Hall, in the novel of the same name by Sara Parton Willis, as a neglected widow may have been familiar but the argument that it should bring a reform in laws was harder to make. The mainstream movement focused upon reforming white men

³⁷ Ibid.

for the benefit of themselves but also for their families and the country at large, thus smoothly attaching itself to familiar discourse.³⁸ They made choosing temperance into an action of choosing liberty, or freedom from the slavery of intoxicating beverages. Michael Warner argued that this broad appeal was part of what made temperance into “a civil society phenomenon, arguably the largest and most sustained social movement in modernity.”³⁹ It also gave John B. Gough a tremendous audience from which to build his base of admirers.

In the mid-nineteenth century no one gained more recognition for performing drunkenness and redemption than Gough. More than a lecturer, he acted out roles as he spoke of his past. He hunched over and shook as he spoke about being drunk. He was famous for his disturbing impersonation of a man in the throes of delirium tremens. But he stood upright and spoke joyfully as he rejoiced over his new life as a sober man. His lectures were edificatory entertainment, fun for a good cause. In a perhaps deliberate echoing of George Whitefield’s first New England tour nearly a century earlier, Gough claimed in his 1869 autobiography that while in Cincinnati in 1851, overcrowding had forced him to enter several churches through windows due to overcrowding. The coincidence may seem too great, yet it seems more believable when he pointed out that Lyman Beecher, the celebrated clergyman, had been with him on one of those evenings.⁴⁰

As a celebrity and a reformer, he inspired deep devotion among his admirers, and received countless letters from admirers. A man from Glasgow, Scotland who had

³⁸ Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement*.

³⁹ He additionally credited their use of republican iconography in temperance rallies, conventions and parades; Warner, “Whitman Drunk,” *Breaking Bounds: Whitman & American Cultural Studies*, ed. by Betsy Erkkila and Jay Grossman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 34.

⁴⁰ This makes me wonder why these churches had no back doors. Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 125; Gough, *Autobiography* (1869), 271.

heard him speak in his city reflected on his admiration, "I confess that I am guilty of cherishing towards some of my fellow men a feeling of Hero-worship. You are one of my heroes. It was love at first sight or rather at first hearing."⁴¹ The lecturer collected many such letters from individuals and bound them in volumes in his meticulously catalogued library of materials relating to his career. He also received letters and tokens of praise from temperance organizations and other groups, especially evangelical and women's associations. These ranged from simple but formal letters, like one from the Montreal Sons of Temperance from September of 1850, that expressed a confidence that through Gough's visit to their community, "the dropping would be revived, the weak strengthened, [and] the hesitating decided," to the more elaborate scroll he received from a British temperance organization during his 1855 tour, its neat calligraphic lettering embossed with gold ink. Gough valued these letters, even including an exceptionally sloppy one from the "Laborers of the 20th Regiment of Montreal," who declared themselves "under" Gough's "command" and promised to "refrain in future [sic] from the intoxicating liquors."⁴² Admirers who gave letters to Gough not only expressed their appreciation for his work in temperance, but participated in constructing the market for celebrity. They believed (correctly) that he would care enough to read their writings. By passing on their thoughts to and about a favored celebrity, they found a way to possibly influence the culture building around them.

⁴¹ Fergus Ferguson, Glasgow, to John B. Gough, 2/25/1854, Octavo, Vol 16, John B. Gough Collection, AAS.

⁴² "Address of the Laborers of the 20th Regiment of Montreal," 10/5/1850, Box II, Folder 1 "Letters Received by John B. Gough," John B. Gough Collection, AAS. It is unclear from the letter whether the men who addressed Gough were actual military soldiers or members of a temperance organization such as the Good Templars or Independent Order of Rechabites. The suggestion that they could be under Gough's command suggests the latter, but could be metaphoric; while the fact that they are already organized into a regiment and only now promise to practice complete abstinence suggests the former. Again, though it could be hyperbole reflecting a renewed commitment to the pledge.

While some of these tokens were given or mailed privately to Gough, often the exchange was part of a public display. His private collection included many elaborate scrolls, which were read aloud and then presented to him before or after a lecture appearance. Newspapers would then report upon such a ceremony marking his visit and lecture, increasing his status as a respected guest of a community and suggesting that other places ought to prepare similar events in the future. Very early in his career, in October 1844, the *Barre Patriot* reported that “Young Ladies of Boston” had given Gough, “the young and eloquent Apostle of Temperance,” a silver cup as a symbol of their appreciation for his work.⁴³ Six months later he received another goblet from the “Ladies Temperance Union Association of Philadelphia.”⁴⁴ Gough included descriptions and lists of the objects he had received at the end of his autobiographies, claiming that he did so not because he was “impertinent and conceited,” but rather because they expressed the extent of the regard for and the popularity of the total-abstinence cause.⁴⁵

A Sensationally Bad Week: John B. Gough's Disappearance and the National Police Gazette

Despite numerous expressions of admiration and good will, Gough and his friends in the temperance movement faced a difficult task in maintaining his good reputation. Although experience stories were presumed true, the authors of these stories were admitted drunkards and drunkards—reformed or not—were notoriously unreliable. Common wisdom did not accept rehabilitation for a habitual drinker as a likely possibility. Further complicating the temperance mission, the passion for reform in the era competed with an equal appetite for and supply of sensational and

⁴³ Untitled, 10/25/1844.

⁴⁴ Untitled, *Pittsfield Sun*, 4/10/1845.

⁴⁵ Gough, *Autobiography* (1870), 340.

scandalous news stories. Gough confirmed one willful violation of his pledge, in the first year of his career. He publicly apologized, and was reprimanded but welcomed back into the temperance fold. The *Barre Gazette* praised him for “alluding freely to the violation of his pledge.”⁴⁶ The story became a part of his narrative of the evils of alcohol and the justification for increased efforts by temperance activists.

Yet despite the faith of his friends in the temperance movement in him, controversy followed Gough throughout his career. Speculation about his adherence to the pledge increased tremendously in the newspapers in 1845, when his fame began spreading well beyond the New England states. He also in that year almost doubled his earnings from \$7.29 to \$14.42 per lecture. The first challenge came to his character and the honesty of his experience story. An 1845 pamphlet accused the lecturer of libeling the family who had escorted him to the United States. It told the story of the daughter of the family, now Mrs. Reverend Torry, who had while visiting New York City happened upon a lecture by Gough. Her “amazement” turned to “indignation” when she heard him describe her family—who had only ever acted out of “compassion” towards the young man—as drunken and dissipated.⁴⁷ Newspapers quickly picked up the story, but with a short time many retracted it. The *Emancipator and Weekly Chronicle* explained that a “clergyman(!)” Jesse Pound had written the false narrative because he personally thought Gough was a “scoundrel.” That paper attacked Pound personally, writing that the “professed minister of Christ” probably had written the untruths because he “took a little” (alcohol) and “very likely his wife did too.”⁴⁸ Since neither Pound nor the alleged daughter Mrs. Torry came

⁴⁶ “July 4 in Barre,” *Barre Gazette*, 7/7/1843.

⁴⁷ “His Foster Father,” *Echo of Truth to the Voice of Slander; or, John B. Gough’s Early History* (New York: Stanford & Swords, 1845), n.p.

⁴⁸ “Attempt to Destroy J. B. Gough,” 4/2/1845.

out in defense of the narrative, most newspaper writers quickly accepted it as a forgery. The attacks on Gough's reputation only grew more vehement and sensational. Just a month later, in May 1845, a "report" came out of Newburyport, Massachusetts that Gough had been seen drinking in a pub there. Within days newspapers carried another retraction from the supposed author of the rumor, the pub's owner, who now claimed that he had hoped to improve his business through the scandalous association.⁴⁹

Four months later a story with more sticking power emerged. Gough went missing in New York City on Friday, September, 5th, 1845. Newspapers around the country announced his disappearance and reprinted a handbill circulating in the New York with the details of his last known sighting.⁵⁰ Newspapers reported that he had last been seen at "Saxton & Miles" soda shop, and that his friends and family feared "foul play."⁵¹ On the twelfth, newspapers were reporting that the lecturer had been found and that his disappearance had been perpetrated by a "designing person" who had drugged "a glass of soda water" and then "detained him" at a house for a week.⁵² Some papers described the house as "vile," and claimed that he had been "plied with liquor" that left him "partially insane."⁵³ Others said nothing about the house, but did report that according to the officer who found him, a Mr. G. H. Hays, he had been admitted to the house already very ill and confused, and had not had

⁴⁹ "A Calumny Against Mr. Gough," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, 5/13/1845.

⁵⁰ *New York Tribune*; *New York Commercial Herald*; "John B. Gough Missing," *Morning News*, 9/12/1845; "Mysterious Disappearance of Mr. John B. Gough," *Boston Daily Atlas*, 9/13/1845; "Mysterious Disappearance of Mr. John B. Gough," *Newport Mercury*, "Mysterious Disappearance of Mr. John B. Gough," *St. Louis Daily Reveille*, 9/12/1845.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² "John B. Gough Found," *Commercial Advertiser*, 9/12/1845; "John B. Gough Found," *Morning News*, 9/13/1845.

⁵³ "Brooklyn," *Morning News*, 9/15/1845;

any liquor while there.⁵⁴ In any case, it was the original soda water that had “deprived him of his reason.”⁵⁵ Out of the \$230 he had had with him when he disappeared, only sixty dollars remained. His watch and rings were either still with him when he was found or had been “given up” by the “mistress of the house” to the police.⁵⁶ Some suggested that the drug in the soda water had been opium, and that he remained in precarious health, “almost beyond the reach of medicine.”⁵⁷

While most news articles initially reported the drugged soda water story as factual, by Monday the fifteenth, the *New York Tribune* deemed it “to say the least, very unsatisfactory,” in part because there was no soda shop in the area where he went missing. Still its editors would refrain from judging until Gough was healthy enough to explain himself, and counseled readers that “at present our duty is charity, our privilege pity.”⁵⁸ Another New York paper, the *Commercial Advertiser*, speculated that he had replaced alcohol in his diet with opium, but hoped that rumor would be disproven. Closer to Gough’s home in Worcester, the *Boston Recorder* not only believed the story, but felt that whoever drugged his soda should be put to death.⁵⁹ A paper called the *Register*, cited by New Hampshire’s *Farmer’s Cabinet*, argued that the lecturer had been threatened with drugging by his enemies, and completely believed that “some of the villains who infested the modern Babylon waylaid him and made him their victim.” The *Cabinet* added that “Mr. G,” deserved “patient waiting for all the *facts*,” and “at the worst...was entitled to sympathy.”⁶⁰ “Facts,” however, were not coming forth quickly from Gough or his friends, nor were

⁵⁴ “John B. Gough,” *Barre Patriot*, 9/19/1845.

⁵⁵ “Mr. John B. Gough,” *New York Tribune*, 9/13/1845; “Mr. John B. Gough,” *Morning News*, 9/15/1845.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *New York Express*, 9/13/1845; *Morning News*, 9/15/1845.

⁵⁸ *New York Tribune*, 9/15/1845; reprinted, *Morning News*, 9/16/1845.

⁵⁹ “General Intelligence,” *Boston Recorder*, 9/18/1845.

⁶⁰ “From the ‘Reg., Later,” *Farmer’s Cabinet*, 9/18/1845.

they easily filtered from the cacophony of voices emerging from the reams of newsprint about the story.

While the impatient journalists waited out the days without word from the lecturer's camp, the basic story arc of his disappearance remained the same, but details were added and reprinted, eventually forming into a coherent melodramatic narrative. Ostensibly, a former coworker from the Methodist Book Concern had waylaid him on his way to Brooklyn to speak. Gough had warily agreed to stop with him for some soda water. His acquaintance had directed him away from one shop, "Thompson & Wellers," because it had been too crowded, and into another one around the corner. Gough thought he saw the man and the proprietor exchange looks, but did not want to offend anyone. The drink tasted fine, but he soon felt strange. From that point on, the pages openly speculated. Perhaps his companion had not been a man, but rather a woman of "doubtful fame."⁶¹ Clearly he drank, newspapers agreed, but until he spoke, no one could say whether it was done voluntarily or by force.⁶² G.W. Dixon, editor of the *New York Packet* circulated a false confession in the week after his reappearance. Since it was only a compilation of rumors put into a first-person narrative, however, it added little to the public's knowledge. The confession ran fairly widely, however, and even made it into the *New York Temperance Record* before being exposed.⁶³

However the story turned out, throughout these first days after his disappearance, newspapers sympathetic to the temperance cause reminded readers that while Gough was a great speaker, he was also a fallible individual. His personal

⁶¹ cite

⁶² From the *New York Evening Express*, "The Case of Mr. Gough, Temperance Lecturer," *New Hampshire Patriot*, 9/18/1845.

⁶³ "J.B. Gough," *Barre Gazette*, 9/26/1845.

failures did not invalidate, but rather strengthened the cause. Many newspapers agreed with the *Tribune* that whether he had been “seduced by an enemy of Temperance...or...the uncontrollable strength of his own returning appetite...the sacred, glorious cause of Temperance [is not] implicated in his fate or responsible for his backsliding.”⁶⁴ In fact, his sufferings should make activists want to fight harder against those who dealt in alcohol. The *Philadelphia Gazette* pointed out that it had taken “noble effort” for him to abstain as long as he had and his fall, whether caused by “design or temptation,” should “not only be forgiven but forgotten.”⁶⁵

When Gough finally did publicize his own version of the events around his disappearance, it differed little from the rumors or Dixon’s narrative. It mixed elements of personal responsibility with conspiracy. He confirmed that he had arrived in New York City early on the fifth planning to book a winter lecture schedule. He wrote that after arranging his room at the Croton Hotel, he had left to visit friends in Brooklyn. He stopped at a store in Broadway to purchase a watch guard, and then went to another store belonging to “Messrs. Saxton and Miles.” A man calling himself Jonathan Williams had “accosted” him on the street, claiming to have worked with him and suggesting that he probably thought himself too “pious” to “drink a glass of soda with an old shop mate.” He had responded that he would drink a glass of soda “with any body.” They went into the closest soda shop, but Williams thought it too crowded and led him to another shop a few blocks away—not around the block as some papers had claimed and used as evidence against him when no such shop was found. He did not remember the shop’s name, but thought he could find it again. In answer to those who doubted the existence of the infamous second shop, he

⁶⁴ “John B. Gough,” *Baltimore Sun*, 9/23/1845.

⁶⁵ “From the Philadelphia Gazette,” *Baltimore Sun*, 9/19/1845.

explained that he had not identified it to his friends or the police as of yet because he had been too weak to go out.

He added the small but new detail that he and his companion had ordered raspberry sodas. Unlike in the earlier reports, he did not think the man and the soda shop proprietor had conspired against him and exchanged looks. Rather, he said his companion had taken his glass from the proprietor before handing it to him. After finishing their sodas, the two men parted. Gough then felt “a warm sensation about the lungs and chest, with unusual exhilaration [sic].” It was only then that he began to “suspect it was not all right.” He “felt completely bewildered, with a desire for something I know not what” and wandered for a long time. He stopped into a store and bought brandy, but he did not know where or even whether he had paid for it. Thus Gough admitted that he had broken the pledge, but only because he had been drugged. He begged “the public” to believe that he only wanted to tell the truth, not to “excuse” himself. He wished he could admit that he had drunk “voluntarily and deliberately,” because that story would make far more sense, but “the all-seeing God knew, and [he] knew that it was not so.” He answered charges that he was an “opium-eater” by responding that he had only seen opium once in a store, and never eaten any. He defended the household he had been found in, saying it was not one of “ill-fame,” but he felt that “had it been the most notorious house in the city,” he would have entered given the state he was in at the time. He compared himself to Job and pronounced himself ready to accept the consequences of any decision made by his church and his friends as to his future in his congregation and the movement.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ “Mr. Gough’s Narrative,” *Morning News*, 9/29/1845.

This master of the Washingtonian experience story concluded his narrative with a promise that in all of his actions he intended to live by the principles of the pledge. He would, through his trials, become a better advocate of total abstinence. Surely few could claim a worse fall from grace, or a more glorious rescue, from the forces of intemperance. He apologized for delaying his personal message, but he had “wished to write every word and sign his own name.” Thus he remade his disappearance and recovery into an experience story, affirming the principle that only someone who had actually experienced something could tell it authentically. He also recreated symbolically his signing of the pledge.

Most journalists seem to have accepted his account as true. Even those who failed to take a stand on its veracity believed that his plea for forgiveness was genuine and ought to be granted. After an exploratory committee commissioned by his congregation, the Mount Vernon Congregational Church published findings concluding that while he had lacked “prudence” he had nonetheless been “frank and artless” in his confession, most newspapers seemed ready to let the matter rest.⁶⁷ The *St. Louis Daily Reveille* agreed, and postulated further that if Gough could “exercise” his opportunities “wisely,” “circumstances would eventuate in his fortune rather than his ruin.”⁶⁸ Influential benefactor William Tappan avowed his support with the lines, “Thou hast, my friend, as at the first,/With my whole heart, my warm right hand.”⁶⁹ A “committee” called the “Ladies of Philadelphia,” promised their warm

⁶⁷ “John B. Gough—Once More,” *Baltimore Sun*, 11/22/1845; “Report on Mr. Gough’s Case,” *Zion’s Herald and Wesleyan Journal*, 11/26/1845; “John B. Gough,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, 11/26/1845; “Report of the Church in Gough’s Case,” *New York Observer and Chronicle*, 11/29/1845.

⁶⁸ “Mr. Gough,” 9/25/1845.

⁶⁹ “To John B. Gough,” *Boston Recorder*, 10/16/1845.

and continued support in a letter that circulated widely in the presses.⁷⁰ Gough seemed poised for a welcoming return to lecturing and the temperance movement.

Yet other opinions of course were present. The New York *Subterranean* did not agree with temperance activists' use of the case as an argument for their cause. Its pages mocked the suggestion that "rumsellers" had been responsible for his disappearance, and called anyone who believed that story "simple calves." Calling Gough the "temperance spouter," it suggested that the "temperance men" "had looked rather soft when John was *discovered*" because it revealed the truth behind the cause, that "very few of them...would not be caught in a similar snap much oftener than he was, if their insignificance did not cloak them."⁷¹ A few days later, the *Subterranean* writer expressed disbelief that the news continued on the case, declaiming that, "A great deal of unnecessary gas had been blown because this individual happened to drink a little more than his usual dose." The writer felt bad, however, that Gough had "been discovered by some thieves and stool pigeons who were nightly visitors of the crib." Really, the journalist felt, Gough had done nothing wrong, because "Every man with fire and brains gets Goughed once in awhile."⁷² Decrying the need for a temperance movement, he called adherents "fish-blooded calves who lived on bran bread and water, because they hadn't got stamina or animation enough...to digest anything heartier."⁷³ The *Subterranean* was not bothered at all by the idea that the lecturer might be a hypocrite, but rather was peeved that his misstep might actually benefit his cause. Although the articles'

⁷⁰ "John B. Gough and the Ladies," *Boston Atlas*, 10/9/1845; "John B. Gough and the Ladies," *Morning News*, 10/15/1845; "Female Consolation for Mr. Gough," *St. Louis Daily Reveille*, 10/21/1845.

⁷¹ "Humbug Extraordinary," *The Subterreanean*, 9/14/1845.

⁷² "John B. Gough," *The Subterranean*, 9/27/1845.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

words were compelling, I did not their sarcasm reprinted elsewhere in mainstream newspapers.

By mid-October the scandal seemed ready to die out in the presses. Yet in December, the *National Police Gazette* returned to the scandal with a vengeance. Several newspapers had mentioned in September that Gough had been found through a tip given to the publishers of the *Gazette*. His own version of the events confirmed that its publisher, Mr. Enoch Camp, had been the first person to enter his room when he was rescued. The editors explained their initial silence as coming out of a desire to give Gough a chance to circulate his narrative. Yet, when they saw that his story did not match their memory of the events, they felt that public responsibility demanded that they expose him. Responding to newspapers that called for Gough's "fall" to be forgiven and forgotten, especially since his friends and church had done so, the newspaper mused that it was more than a personal matter to be dealt with by a small few, for "[w]hen a man assumed the position of a public reformer, he made a tacit pledge of his own exemption from the special evil he denounced." Rather than being "unnecessary gas," as the *Subterranean* claimed, according to the *National Police Gazette* reporting on the event was of great public importance, for "[w]hen Gough challenged the faults of others, he of consequence agreed to be arraigned upon his own."⁷⁴ Outing Gough as a habitual and unredeemed drunkard, the paper argued, was a matter of protecting the public from a charlatan.

From its founding moment, the *National Police Gazette* built upon the fears that sparked its period's experiments with reform—spreading concerns about immigration, crime, intemperance, and general public disorder—and turned them

⁷⁴ "Exposure of John B. Gough," *National Police Gazette*, 12/13/1845.

into fodder for its sensational publishing success. The paper's professed goal, of course, was reform. Other organizations attacked disorder by encouraging paternalism and compassion. Wilkes and Camp, the publishers of the *National Police Gazette*, instead sought to obliterate the opportunity for crime by making "notoriously known" every "thief, burglar, pickpocket, and swindler."⁷⁵ The police could not be everywhere, they claimed, so the "public gaze" needed a reach extensive enough to make criminals "powerless."⁷⁶ The *National Police Gazette* thus offered the public "protective surveillance" through its crime reporting. In an article titled "Our Success," the editors admitted that might mean that their paper would offer more "startling and romantic incidents than all other schools of biography and ingenious fiction combined," but that was simply a coincidental byproduct.⁷⁷ Their exposure of the temperance lecturer's alleged lies, then, in December 1845 was simply another story aiming to make the character of another notorious swindler part of the public record. If the story helped them bring their circulation—which they claimed to be already around 8,000 in October 1845—to its goal of 20,000, it was all for the better.⁷⁸

The editors of the *Police Gazette* opened their coverage of the story in December by reminding readers that their publisher Enoch Camp had found Gough in the "mire of his base debauch." They claimed that two days after he went missing, before it became public knowledge, they had received information that a man "lay in a house of prostitution in Walker street, in a state of complete mental and physical prostration." The man, the informant said, had been to the house at least twice

⁷⁵ Banner, *National Police Gazette*, 10/16/1845.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

previously in the past year. Yet they had ignored the information until word of the lecturer's disappearance had spread, piquing their curiosity to learn if the events were connected. When Camp found him, he realized that the rumors of foul play had been vastly overblown. Although Gough claimed not to know for certain the "character" of the house where he had been found, Camp stated that, on the scene no one had "attempted to deny...that he had a female assigned to him, and that he passed nearly all the time of the week in her chamber." With this discovery, the writer felt that the "pompous horror had dissolved from its huge proportions, and shrunk into a very vulgar and revolting commonplace." Having shared this salacious fact, the *Police Gazette* regretted that the truth demanded that they "draw" that veil and share such indelicate information with the public. Gough begged Camp not to expose him, leading the paper to point out that an innocent man had no need to "call upon the rocks and mountains for concealment." The newspaper's staff had decided, for the sake of Gough's wife and the temperance movement, to let Gough tell the story publicly and honestly. Yet they felt they had no choice as he had not done so in his narrative.⁷⁹

Their approach to the story, however, had its own discrepancies. They were bothered that he had made his public apology by "sneaking by stealth into a lecture room, and whining forth a pitiful appeal to a simple audience."⁸⁰ Yet Gough had actually first appeared in public after his recovery at Faneuil Hall, a major venue. And his narrative had circulated for nearly six weeks previously to a large, not a "simple," print audience. The *Police Gazette* article, however, might have been referring to the first and false confession circulated which had according to rumor

⁷⁹ "Exposure of John B. Gough," *National Police Gazette*, 12/13/1845.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

been given in front of a small audience of Washingtonians in his hometown of Worcester, MA and then transcribed for reprinting. The newspaper would hardly have been beyond re-circulating old and disproven rumors. A few weeks later they reprinted excerpts from Rev. Jesse Pound's old pamphlet, the *Echo of Truth*, which claim Gough's story about his foster family had been untrue, and framed it as true without any acknowledgement of the problems with it. They also spoke of his "apostasy in Worcester," or his first violation of the pledge in 1843, without admitting that he spoke openly and frequently about it in his lectures. The *National Police Gazette* was never clear about which confession they abhorred, the one he claimed or the reportedly false one. The stories in both were nearly identical in detail, only the tone differed. The false confession emphasized external forces; while in the one Gough admitted to writing, he did claim to have been poisoned but also accepted responsibility for his fall.

Newspapers supportive of Gough responded to the *National Police Gazette's* accusations that the paper had made a "black statement, and [they] trusted that Mr. Gough could and would refute it."⁸¹ He apparently did respond once in a Boston paper, but the text has not survived.⁸² With public favor as represented in the press overwhelmingly on his side after that, he remained silent. In January several stories reported that he was willing to go before a "judicial tribunal" with his "journal and substantial evidence" to prove the *National Police Gazette* wrong.⁸³ Its publishers repeatedly dared Gough to sue them for libel, but he never did.

⁸¹ "John B. Gough," *Baltimore Sun*, 12/18/1845; From the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, "John B. Gough," *Pennsylvania Freeman*, 12/18/1845; "John B. Gough," *Southern Patriot*, 12/23/1845; "John B. Gough Again," *Morning News*, 12/25/1845.

⁸² Mr. Gough, *Morning News*, 12/27/1845.

⁸³ Mr. John B. Gough, *Barre Gazette*, 1/2/1846; "Mr. Gough," *New Hampshire Sentinel*, 1/7/1846.

Some newspapers lamented the attention to Gough, claiming that the temperance cause hurt itself by focusing so much upon one individual. The *Boston Gazette* contended that “the indiscreet friends of Mr. G. have *lionized* him too much, and made more of *him* than they had of the cause.”⁸⁴ The press, of course, was complicit, and the event gave journalists the opportunity to expound upon the rights and obligations of the celebrity. The *Christian Secretary* believed that in becoming a lecturer Gough “had become in a sense the property of the public....In everything relating to his private character and standing, the public had therefore, a deep interest and must and would know, if possible, the exact truths.”⁸⁵ He, especially, had made his name out of sharing his life story, and hardly could argue that he deserved privacy in this case. Indeed, he did not bother, and in his narrative at least professed to give the “public” all the details of his experience as he remembered it. The story resembled the rumors that preceded it in print so closely that it seems that both Gough and his friends had either carefully read the coverage of his disappearance and crafted a narrative that would satisfy the public and press, or that they had been spreading the information all along.

Gough never denied that as an intemperate man he had been unreliable, secretive and self absorbed. He cultivated that image because as a reformed man he was interesting only in as much as he was different from his former self. His extant diaries and records are a fascinating record of how carefully he sculpted his life as a sober man and the public image of it. From mid-1843 until his death in 1885 he kept meticulous records of all his public appearances.⁸⁶ Given his status as a reformed drunkard, and after he first broke his pledge in 1843, he may have

⁸⁴ “John B. Gough,” *New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, 9/18/1845.

⁸⁵ “The Case of John B. Gough,” *Christian Secretary*, 12/26/1845.

⁸⁶ I have described them in more detail in Chapter 4.

recorded his travels in detail so that he could always account for them to his sponsors and critics. After his recovery, he returned at some point to the pages for September 1845. For the fifth, he entered, "Poisoned and for one week was missing." He then entered "sick" for every day between September 13th and December 3rd. Clearly he did not need to remind himself about the event. He must have hoped that his diary would stand as a final statement on what had happened to him. He never backed away from a single detail of his narrative.⁸⁷

There is no way now to recover the truth behind Gough's disappearance. As the *National Police Gazette* and the *Subterranean* believed, it was more probable that a man with an admitted alcohol problem got drunk of his own accord and then hid out in humiliation, than that he had been drugged by a substance so strong that he had been robbed of his reason for more than a week. What is certain, though, is that the *Gazette* failed in its mission to make Gough widely notorious. His original story, and its dramatic presentation, made him a compelling public figure. This new affair made him only more famous than before. Within a few short years his celebrity spread beyond the United States into Great Britain. Having plucked him out of the crowd at a *Washingtonian* gathering in Worcester, Massachusetts, temperance leaders bet correctly upon his abilities. Whatever the truth of what happened to John B. Gough between September 5th and September 12th, 1845, he again managed to spin his experience into a story of traumatic downfall and dramatic triumph. It was likely good for reform, and perhaps paradoxically, it was even better for the expansion of a celebrity culture built upon the whims of a sensational and sentimental public.

⁸⁷ Gough's diaries are housed at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA.

Celebrity Reformers, Part II: The General, the Journalist and the Oyster Man; Or, How the Mechanics of Renown Brought Down the Hungarian Revolution

John B. Gough was not the only renowned person to capitalize on the American sensation for reform and celebrity in the mid-nineteenth century. The intertwining of celebrity and ideology that in essence characterized the discourse around famous individuals seemed to introduce new potentials for the influence of public opinion and pedagogy through market behavior, which reformers ardently hoped would translate into transformations in social and political policy. The idea that by knowing a person's story, one could grow to know their character seemed to suggest as well that by listening to one's story, hearers could be convinced to change, or to act for change. With that in mind, convinced by his American supporters and in the wake of the "Jenny Lind mania" in 1850 and 1851, another European landed in the United States hoping to capitalize on Americans' curiosity and willingness to spend dollars for a good cause (and an evening's entertainment).

When exiled Hungarian Louis (Lajos) Kossuth (1802-1894) arrived in New York City in the fall of 1851, he hoped that enthusiasm, good stories and positive press would be enough to convince the American government to arm and fund his failed and flailing revolutionary cause against the Habsburg monarchy. He, however, vastly overestimated the goodwill behind American words of support and underestimated the entrenchment of non-interventionist policies. While American consumers, and even many politicians, were happy to expend speeches and purchase bonds, these actions were largely detached from any intention to move on the actions he ardently proposed. Kossuth may have arrived a significant and rising celebrity, but within months he had left the country *incognito*, embarrassed and

increasingly reviled, with his own methods and words turned against him by journalists.

Early on, American newspapers were almost universally enthusiastic about Kossuth's trip and large crowds greeted him at all of his early appearances. Political historians—the only American scholars thus far to write in detail about the Kossuth tour—usually argue that Kossuth failed to understand the political mood. He failed to understand American isolationism and he alienated William Lloyd Garrison by refusing to take sides on the slavery issue, thus bringing the wrath of the abolitionists. In an especially strange act, he argued that the United States should attack Haiti. He was, in short, terribly out of touch. In broad strokes, certainly this argument for why he failed makes sense. Yet that does not explain how it happened, how the mood of the country and the public shifted so profoundly in just a matter of months.⁸⁸

Actor John Brougham's comic newspaper *Diogenes, Hys Lantern* propounded on just this question in an editorial illustration (Figure 5.1). The image itself seems to be of a stage set. Kossuth, dressed in military garb, stands up-stage, to the left of the audience, or house. A white man in a black mask is approaching him, and seems to be coming from off-stage. His face indicates he is communicating with someone else off-stage, probably the audience. The false face, the black mask, seems to be engaging Kossuth, and his arms indicate he is excited about something. From the Hungarian's perspective he seems to be welcoming him. Thus immediately we in the audience knows someone is trying to mislead him.

⁸⁸ Although Kossuth is a significant folk hero in Hungary and among Hungarian communities abroad, there has been no significant work on Lajos Kossuth in English since the 1970s; see John H. Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-1852* (Buffalo, NY: East European Institute, 1973), Donald S. Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America: A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy, 1848-1852* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977), and Steven Béla Várdy, "Hungary's Revolutionary Statesman, Louis Kossuth: His Achievements and His Failures," in *Profiles of Revolutionaries in Atlantic History, 1700-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 300-322.

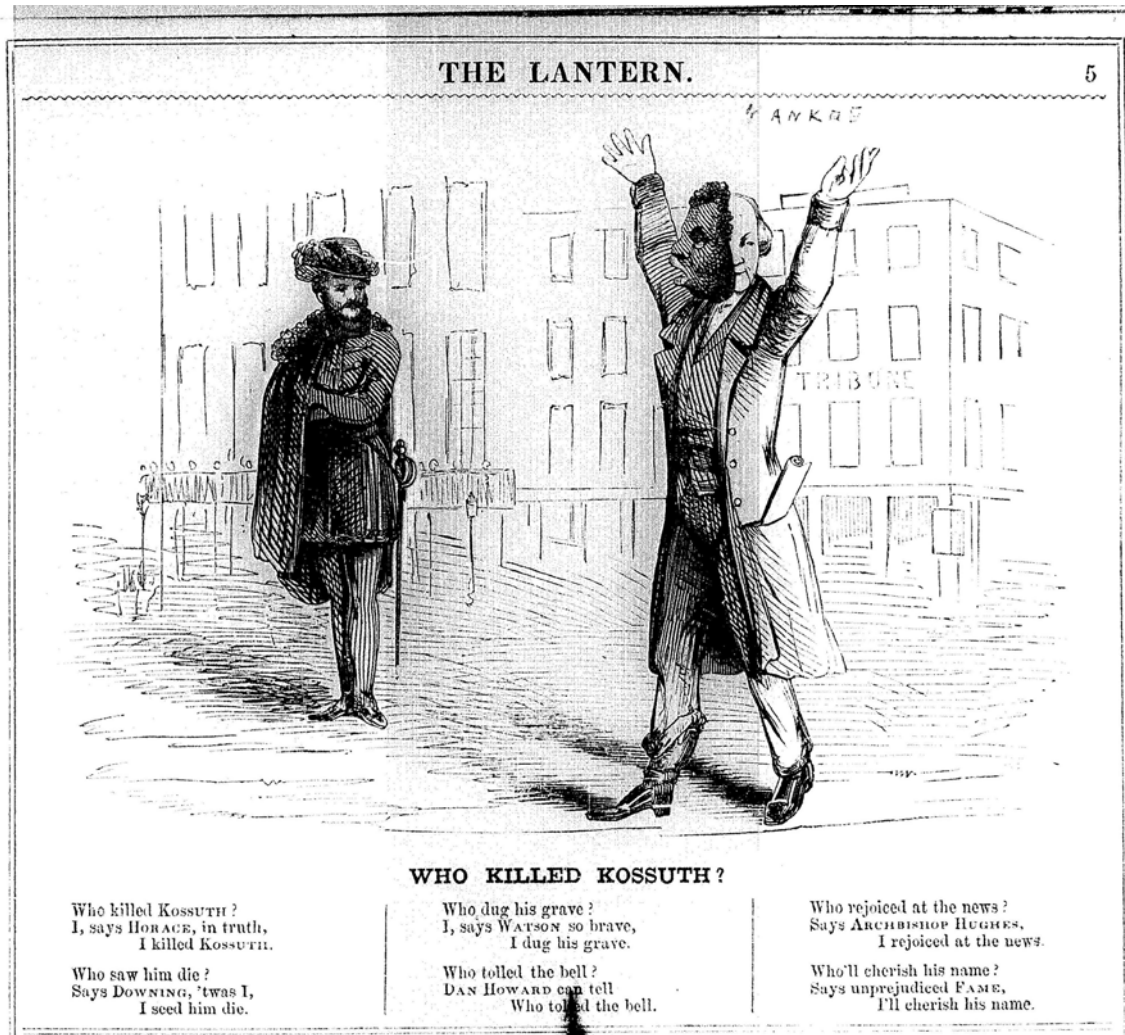


Figure 5.1 “Who Killed Kossuth?” *Diogenes, Hys Lantern* (1/10/1852), 5.

Kossuth, for his part, has his arms closed and his body turned away. He does not seem anxious to engage the other man. The poem beneath the image is meant to be a part of it, because it is not separated from the picture as are the other parts of the page with lines or breaks. The poem asks, “Who Killed Kossuth?”

The answer to the question came in five parts. Kossuth’s murderers were Horace, Downing, Howard, and Archbishop Hughes. “Horace” referred to Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Tribune*. He is the white man in the picture. His image circulated in the period and thus was recognizable, but for those readers who

might not have been familiar with it, the artist scratched the word *Tribune* on the building behind him. He “killed” Kossuth. “Downing” referred to Thomas Downing, a caterer and the proprietor of an oyster house in New York City for much of the first half of the century. He was something of a local celebrity himself in the New York area. His restaurant served prominent and wealthy white customers. It was so popular that in 1842, he had been asked to cater the Boz Ball, a reception honoring Charles Dickens. He was well known for more than that, however. He also sponsored and organized many charitable groups in the city, as well as participated in the abolitionist movement. His name appears sporadically in newspapers around the country, as the “negro oysterman,” either for his oysters or his causes.⁸⁹ He had, according to the *Lantern*, watched Kossuth die. “Watson” was James Watson Webb, the editor of the *Courier and Enquirer*. His newspaper was one of many to turn against Kossuth, and was especially vehement in mocking him later. According to Diogenes, he had buried Kossuth. “Howard,” or Dan Howard, managed the Irving House Hotel, where many of the period’s celebrities stayed when they visited New York City. He “told the bell,” or in other words, announced the crime to the world. “Archbishop Hughes rejoiced at the news.” Hughes was an Irish immigrant, the Fourth bishop and first archbishop of the Catholic Church in New York. A reformer, he campaigned on behalf of Irish immigrants, against the use of the Protestant bible in publicly funded schools and for the offer of state support to Catholic schools. He had tried, and failed, to convince Kossuth to speak for his cause. Obviously this group of men did not literally kill Kossuth, but the *Lantern* suggests that indirectly

⁸⁹ “New York,” *Times Picayune*, 10/18/1845; “Downing, the Oysterman of New York,” *The Daily Picayune*, 12/27/1856; “Downing, the Oysterman,” *The Baltimore Sun*, 1/9/1857; “Summary of News,” *The Constitution*, 3/21/1860. His son George Downing was more recognized as an abolitionist and philanthropist.

they had conspired to kill his American career. They, the paper suggested, had tricked him. Yet—as the poem concludes—his celebrity survived. He would not be forgotten and fame would continue to “cherish his name.”

To understand why, we need to step back a bit from the immediate story of his celebrity death, to look at the origins of his fame in Europe and the United States. Kossuth had found renown through his role in the European Revolutions of 1848 in Hungary. Europe in the 1830s had seen accelerated industrial and economic growth, leading many people by the 1840s to believe they lived on the cusp of inevitable social upheaval. While some observers around the world responded with fear and caution, others reacted with enthusiasm, and joined radical movements springing up across the continent. In 1848, this commingling of the intellectual trends of Romantic and political nationalism with profound economic crisis brought a seemingly spontaneous and universal explosion of political activism and revolt, known collectively as the Revolutions of 1848. Within weeks of each other, factions centered in the major cities in the Italian States, France, Switzerland, Romania, the German States, and the Habsburg empire rose up against absolutism and for national sovereignty, in struggles tinged with economic, ethnic and religious strife.⁹⁰

For his part, Kossuth had waited most of his adult life for this opportunity to rise up in arms against the Austrian empire. As a member of Hungary’s minor nobility, and as a lawyer, he had been in the 1830s a non-voting member of the national assembly, the Diet. He became a vociferous political journalist, detailing activity in the Hungarian royal capital of Pozsony (called in German, Pressburg, and today, Bratislava). His reports took an increasingly critical tone toward the Habsburg

⁹⁰ See Robin W. Winks and Joan Neuberger, “The Revolutions of 1848,” in *Europe and the Making of Modernity, 1815-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 152-182.

dynasty, but made him progressively more popular among the Magyar majority in Hungary as well as brought him his first international attention. In 1837, he was arrested for high treason and spent three years in prison. Yet he was allowed to continue working as a journalist during his imprisonment, and he grew only more popular with liberal reformers in Hungary and abroad.⁹¹ He became a Magyar national hero. In this period, news about him trickled into American periodicals, but not at the volume it would during and after 1848.⁹²

When Hungary eventually revolted in 1848, it initially won several concessions from Vienna, including a representative Hungarian government, with a broadly elected parliament. Late in 1848, however, as the country radicalized further, the moderate government resigned and Kossuth became the leader of a newly installed military regime. In the spring of 1849—against the advice of his own military commanders, he dethroned the Habsburgs and had himself elected “governing president” of Hungary. This extreme act caught the attention of the Russian tsar Nicholas I, who felt the need to act because of continental alliances and anxiety that political liberalism would spread further in Eastern Europe. Nicholas intervened militarily to aid the Austrian imperial army in defeating the rebel government. By August of 1849, the Austrians and Russians had driven Kossuth out of Hungary, and his generals had surrendered to the Russians. Kossuth fled to Anatolia, and was taken under house arrest by Ottoman authorities there. He spent the rest of his life in exile.⁹³

⁹¹ Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America; Louis Kossuth and Young America*; Várdy, “Hungary’s Revolutionary Statesman, Louis Kossuth: His Achievements and His Failures,” in *Profiles of Revolutionaries in Atlantic History, 1700-1850*.

⁹² See for example, “Summary,” *New York Evangelist*, 8/24/1839.

⁹³ Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America; Louis Kossuth and Young America*; Várdy,

Kossuth spent two years under Ottoman watch, while diplomats and leaders representing many countries argued over what to do with him. Eventually in a sign of either the United States' increasing significance on the world stage (which was the interpretation in American newspapers) or just how desperately far away European monarchs wanted Kossuth from their subjects, he was allowed to leave Turkey on the American frigate *Mississippi*. Kossuth was not the only Hungarian exile in Anatolia—the sultan had accepted around 1200 refugees, at a great cost financially and diplomatically. The American government had hoped to bring him to the United States without fanfare along the route, thus defusing tensions in Europe while satisfying popular demands for his release. It seemed initially like a fairly innocuous act, a quiet step onto the stage of world politics.⁹⁴ Kossuth, however, took the trip as a sign of victory, and behaved as if the *Mississippi* were a privately commissioned vessel. He demanded the ship make unscheduled stops at ports all along the Mediterranean, and later the Atlantic coast of Europe, so that could speak publicly against Austria and monarchy. He mostly failed, as foreign governments refused to receive him, yet he made the trip increasingly more difficult for the American captain and diplomatic team on board the ship. After much turmoil, finally the Americans let him off the ship at Gibraltar, but Kossuth was not allowed to cross Western Europe by land. Kossuth's demands put the American commanders in a terrible bind—here was a revolutionary whose ostensible struggle for free speech and self-determination had inspired their leaders to rescue him, but who now for the very same reasons was threatening to destabilize diplomatic relations. He encouraged them to violate their orders from the American government not to let him create conflict on the seas

"Hungary's Revolutionary Statesman, Louis Kossuth: His Achievements and His Failures," in *Profiles of Revolutionaries in Atlantic History, 1700-1850*.

⁹⁴ Komlos, *Louis Kossuth in America, 1851-1852*; Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*.

and ports. The English finally agreed to relieve the Americans of the burden, and put him on board a ship for England. He toured for three weeks in Great Britain before booking passage on the *Humboldt* to arrive in New York in early December 1851.

The Americans had stepped into the aftermath of the 1848 Revolutions for a variety of reasons. Diplomatically, they had a lot to gain by relieving continental Europe of their celebrated problem child. Domestically, Kossuth had become a popular personality in newspapers around the world. Bringing him to the United States could make a powerful statement about the superiority of the American system of government, as well as give the Americans an opportunity to celebrate their benevolent brand of cosmopolitanism. The country had hosted many important European entertainers and reformers in the decade, but no such prominent political figures since Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette.

American journalists had recorded how northerners as well as Southerners initially participated in torchlight processions and raised funds for European revolutionaries, while secular and religious writers composed poetic and prose tributes to ideals of liberty and universal brotherhood. American politicians, including Daniel Webster, and writers, including the poet Longfellow, imagined the revolutions would trounce once and for all the monarchies of Europe, and that republican governments would spread in their wake.⁹⁵ They also focused on responses throughout the United States and very much placed the country's response within the context of a world community. When France instead was rocked by class violence in the "June Days" and began what seemed like a march towards socialism,

⁹⁵ Merle Curit, "The Impact of the Revolutions of 1848 on American Thought," *Proceedings, American Philosophical Society*, 93, no. 3 (June, 1949): 209-215; 209, 214.

American enthusiasm waned. Southerners in particular watched warily as the Second Republic emancipated slaves in the French West Indian colonies. Concerns that such radicalism could spread to the United States and displace either or both Northern industrial capitalism and Southern plantation society—and some saw signs of it in burgeoning Free Soil politics—made observers sensitive to the risks of similar actions in the United States. Americans clung to their revolutionary heritage as exceptional, and increasingly mythologized it as a non-violent and orderly transition.⁹⁶

Although mainstream sources ideologically distanced the American from the French revolution, the Hungarian example they imagined differently. Significantly, Kossuth and his rebel followers had failed in their revolution so there was little reason to worry it would model the French.⁹⁷ Americans who idealized Kossuth of course did not credit his losses as the reason for their admiration, but in the absence of an actually realized national project, he became a symbol of what Americans had hoped would happen in the Europe of 1848. His stated goals seemed commensurate with the endeared values of the American example. His initial petition to the Austrian Emperor Ferdinand I (known as King Ferdinand V of Hungary) in March of 1848 had demanded the abolition of remaining vestiges of feudalism, the institution of uniform and universal taxation, reformations in the national defense

⁹⁶ David Brion Davis, *Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Timothy M. Roberts, “Revolutions Have Become the Bloody Toy of the Multitude’: European Revolutions, the South, and the Crisis of 1850” *Journal of the Early Republic* 25, no. 2 (2005): 259-283.

⁹⁷ During Kossuth’s long exile, in the 1860s, more pragmatic Hungarian leaders shaped a successful reform movement based on progressive and peaceful principles and managed through the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 to transform the Austrian Empire in the Austria-Hungary, a dualistic state giving the Hungarians significant influence on their half of the monarchy. The Austro-Hungarian Empire of course remained a great power until World War I. Living in exile in Italy by the time of the Compromise and until his death, Kossuth continued to condemn any rights of the Habsburg dynasty to rule with Hungary.

system, and the appointment of a Hungarian government responsible to the elected legislature rather than the Austrian throne.⁹⁸ Newspapers pointed out that the Hungarian Diet was of “greater antiquity” than any other legislative body on continental Europe and that the “nation” enjoyed an “old constitutional freedom of speech.”⁹⁹ In April of 1849, under Kossuth’s direction, the revolutionary Hungarian Parliament in Debrecen had enacted a Declaration of Independence stating, “that the house of Hapsburg-Lorraine, as perjured in the sight of God and man, has forfeited its right to the Hungarian throne” and thus the Hungarians were executing their legal and human right to self-determination in severing ties to the empire.¹⁰⁰

Yet, American politicians at least had realized even before Kossuth disembarked from the *Mississippi* that his ideas and theirs about the purpose of his American journey significantly differed. In his state of the union address, given on December 2nd, 1851 while Kossuth was still on board the *Humboldt*, President Millard Fillmore mentioned Kossuth’s expected arrival. Most of the speech, however, lauded the Americans’ particular and unique commitment to neutrality and non-intervention—something, he said, that distinguished them from Europeans, and thus might be misunderstood by them. Congress, nevertheless, he claimed, was still anxious to welcome Kossuth for his representation of universal struggles for political liberty. He said nothing offensive to the Hungarian, but when Kossuth eventually arrived in Washington, D.C., Fillmore did not receive him. Many American newspapers reflected, politically, these concerns with what the Hungarian’s arrival

⁹⁸ Steven Béla Várdy, “Hungary’s Revolutionary Statesman, Louis Kossuth: His Achievements and His Failures,” in *Profiles of Revolutionaries in Atlantic History, 1700-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 303.

⁹⁹ “Hungary and the Sclavonic Movement [sic],” *The American Review: A Whig Journal Devoted to Politics and Literature*, (December 1848): 611-627.

¹⁰⁰ “Hungarian Declaration of Independence, April 1849,” from Henry M. De Puy, *Kossuth and His Generals* (Buffalo: Phinney & Co., 1852), 202-225, 202.

meant for the political situation in the United States. The *Brunswicker* out of Brunswick, Missouri, printed a letter from a correspondent that hoped “he would retire with dignity from a theatre which has hustled him out...rather than adventure...uncalled for, to disturb the peace of the world.”¹⁰¹ Despite this cautionary approach, American journalists for the most part still wrote as if they were adopting a revolutionary protégé of their own founding fathers.¹⁰²

It was this Kossuth who came into eventual conflict with the five men the *Lantern* comic connected with his professional demise. The two newspapermen, Horace Greeley and James Watson Webb, were clearly invested in his tenure in the United States for its journalistic appeal. The connections of the other three—Thomas Downing, Dan Howard, and Archbishop Hughes—are more difficult to establish. Downing, who as a philanthropist dedicated much of his free time to working for the free blacks of New York, was also an abolitionist. In 1851, he had been a member of the “Committee of 13,” a group organized to oppose enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act in New York City. One Friday afternoon in 1851, this group converged upon Dan Howard’s Irving House hotel in New York City, hoping to meet with Louis Kossuth. The Irving House, as I mentioned before, hosted most of the period’s major celebrity visitors. Jenny Lind initially stayed there upon her arrival, although she later left to find more private rooms in a location with a lower profile.

The “Committee of 13” wanted to get Kossuth on the record speaking against the Fugitive Slave Act. They had to have suspected that he would refuse—they were not the first anti-slavery activists to approach him. William Lloyd Garrison had

¹⁰¹ “Kossuth,” *Brunswicker*, 11/7/1851.

¹⁰² A poem published in *Sartain’s Magazine* in 1850 was typical in its unrestrained sentiment, pledging, “Come to our country’s yearning breast / She longs to clasp thee fondly there.... / For Freedom’s homeless, banished son / As in the Land of Washington;” Margaret Junkin, “Kossuth,” *Sartain’s Magazine* 6, no. 5 (May 1850): 336.

written letters to him before he arrived in the country, asking that he make a political statement by refusing to come to the United States. Kossuth's liberal revolutionary rhetoric had called upon principals of universal manhood and freedom, asking people around the world to recognize the urgency and legitimacy of the Hungarian cause. The Committee believed that they were simply asking Kossuth to do the same thing he asked of the American people, to point out to the world another cause where they could act for the benefit of the oppressed everywhere.

Their task, however, was impossible. Despite American assumptions, Kossuth, his wife, and their retinue were not in the United States as representatives of international liberalism or flexible symbols of multiple causes. As Archbishop Hughes also learned when they refused his appeals for support, the Hungarians cared little about advocating for any other causes. They were seeking financial and military support to renew the revolution in Hungary. With this in mind, they used whatever means they thought might help them. The Fugitive Slave Act, had been a hard fought part of the Congress's Compromise of 1850. With Kossuth in the country to convince that same Congress to support his movement with money and guns, it would not have suited his cause at all to annoy them by coming out publicly against their legislation. Instead, he gave the committee a vague, ideological pep talked. He posed and speechified, declaring "that the time for addresses and invitations had passed, and that the time for action had come."¹⁰³ This line, quickly detached from the context in which he gave it, became one of the most famous

¹⁰³ "Kossuth in New York. Attempt to Mix up Kossuth with Fugitive Slave Law Resistance-How it Failed," *The Baltimore Sun* 12/15/1851.

Kossuth quotes in journalism, remembered and reprinted in newspapers for the rest of the century.¹⁰⁴

The men, however, may have understood far better than him how to wield words and the press in the United States. Downing, of course, had through his decades of service in the New York forged connections with significant men in New York journalism and the developing culture industries. Among the twelve men with him that day were James McCune Smith and Philip Alexander Bell, two men who are now far better remembered by history.¹⁰⁵ Smith was the first university-educated African-American pharmacist and physician. He was also more worldly than Downing, and connected with international abolitionists, having gone to University of Glasgow and completed his internship in Paris. Bell was a printer and a journalist, the editor of the *Weekly Advocate*. Like Frederick Douglass, he had worked for Garrison's *Liberator* but had broken with him and started his own anti-slavery paper. According to the letter the men signed and gave Kossuth, a fourth man, J. J. Zuille—a printer, was the president of the group. But of the men, the oysterman Downing was actually the most well known for readers of mainstream New York papers at the time.

Yet in the early days of his trip, indeed, Kossuth—a newspaperman himself—seemed to have mastered the politics of American journalism. In the moment, his phrase must have seemed a particularly elegant way to put off the troublesome reformers who asked continually to be received by him. Ignoring their suggestions that he openly ally himself with them, he instead began his American tour by cultivating the already-circulating associations of him with American revolutionaries.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Széplaki, "Louis Kossuth, 'The Nation's Guest:' A Bibliography on His Trip in the United States, December 4, 1851-July 14, 1852," (Bethlen Press, 1976) 131;

¹⁰⁵ Untitled, *Pennsylvania Freeman*, 12/18/1851.

Encouraged by the allusions to George Washington, he tried to use his image as a springboard for his cause. Having been tipped off about Fillmore's speech, he was well aware of the American attachment to the ideas against intervention abroad espoused in Washington's "Farewell Address." Kossuth's first private act in New York was to request a copy of the address as well as a multi-volume collection of Washington's writings.¹⁰⁶ Within a week of his arrival in New York, he launched an attack against the idea of non-intervention. He told audiences that while in the nation's youth Washington's ideas had made political sense, as a mature nation the United States should be prepared to leave them behind.¹⁰⁷

Although it seems unlikely that the United States government would have found any argument convincing enough to offer military aid to Hungary's revolutionaries at the time, Kossuth may have destroyed his own positive celebrity. He insulted Americans with such rhetoric as, "Is the dress which well-suited the child still convenient to the full grown man, nay the *giant*, which you are?"¹⁰⁸ Making matters worse, he attacked another American principle—the Monroe Doctrine—and demanded that the United States ought to extend it, to the borders of Russia and beyond if necessary.¹⁰⁹ Although Kossuth refused to accept it, Americans had reached the practical limits of their willingness to intervene openly in the revolutionary movements the moment they welcomed Kossuth on board their ships.

Even still, it took months for American popular culture to tire of Kossuth's political demands. For better and for worse, he enthralled newspapers and

¹⁰⁶ Spencer, *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, 8, 20.

¹⁰⁷ New York Common Council, *Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the Common Council of the City of New York, to Make Arrangements for the Reception of Gov. Louis Kossuth, the Distinguished Hungarian Patriot* (1852), 142.

¹⁰⁸ "Kossuth's Great Speech at the New York Banquet," *Boston Daily Atlas*, 12/13/1851; Untitled, *New Hampshire Patriot*, 9/1/1852.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

magazines throughout the country. Enterprising merchants capitalized on the excitement, hawking wares titled after and in-the-image-of Kossuth. New York as usual was in the vanguard of the “Kossuth-mania.” The hatter Genin, who had profited tremendously from publicity around his purchase of the first ticket to see Jenny Lind the year previously, turned an overstock of black felt hats into an imitation of Kossuth’s distinctive headpiece by sewing the left brim to the crown and adding a feather. He had managed to board the *Humboldt* before it landed in New York Harbor, and distributed hats for free among the Hungarian passengers. The visitors then wore their free gifts in the procession in their honor down Broadway. Genin’s genius for advertising again paid off. Contemporaries estimated that Americans spent around half a million dollars on these hats as they became a wearable symbol of liberal and republican sentiment.¹¹⁰ Kossuth buttons, miniatures, restaurants, skates, and even, significantly, oysters followed Kossuth hats into the shops and streets of New York. Similar products emerged in every city where Kossuth spoke – regardless of the public enthusiasm for his cause.

Lest the “Kossuth-mania” seem like simply another iteration of the “Jenny Lind mania” that preceded it, the cause did remain connected in theory to the revolutionary impulse. Branches of the “Hungarian Fund,” an organization selling bonds in denominations ranging from one to one hundred dollars, sprung up around the country, especially in cities where he visited. Although true supporters believed these bonds would indeed be repaid by an eventual independent Hungarian state,

¹¹⁰ Genin had jumped on the Kossuth bandwagon early. In October 1851 newspapers reported that he had offered \$1000 to the “Kossuth Fund” in New York, but that they suspected he expected to benefit from it as he had from his “famous Jenny Lind ticket speculation;” “The Reception of Kossuth,” *Baltimore Sun*, 10/10/1851; “Reception of Kossuth,” *Daily Alabama Journal*, 10/15/1851. The same newspapers then reported on Genin’s angry response to the accusation, “Genin,” *Baltimore Sun*, 10/23/1851. For a discussion of the hats Genin distributed, see *Diogenes, Hys Lantern*, “The Cost of the Kossuth Cap,” 1/10/1852; “Kossuth Hat,” *Trenton State Gazette*, 12/31/1851; “The Kossuth Hat,” *Brattleboro Weekly Eagle*, 1/1/1852;

the fact that Kossuth personally signed only the fifty and one hundred dollar bonds – and refused to otherwise give out his autograph—suggests their dual status as guarantee and commemorative document. The bonds’ exchange value would be only as a memento practically before Kossuth even left the country. When Americans purchased each of these items, they indicated an affection for the principles they understood Kossuth to embody and an eagerness to carry commodities representing them, but not a willingness to do anything more to advance a cause in a foreign land.

Although the sale of bonds seemed a reasonable way of raising money for the Hungarian cause, several newspapers commented on the endeavors’ weaknesses. There was an aspect of commercial mania that distracted from the political nature of his tour—even in a country where political events had frequently coalesced with celebrated and sensationalism.¹¹¹ The *St. Louis Dispatch* commented, that during Kossuth’s visit to New Orleans, “Some circumstances...appeared a little strange...such, for instance, as the appearance in the streets, of men hawking Hungarian bonds, and others vending Kossuth medals.” There was, the paper noted, simply no guarantee of the authenticity of the bonds or their sellers’ intentions. Increasingly over the months of his American tour papers noted that while he frequently drew large crowds and gained “personal friends, and many admirers,” Kossuth also overwhelmingly “left public opinion as he found it.”¹¹² His storytelling, it seemed, inspired only momentary, rather than life-changing passions.

¹¹¹ David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

¹¹² From the *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 3/27/1852.

Kossuth wildly misunderstood the attention he received on the streets and in newsprint. The journalists and comedians at *Diogenes, hys Lantern* did not. They well understood the relationship of American sensationalism to its political reality. The *Lantern* very quickly, and cogently, predicted Kossuth's ultimate bequest to American life and culture. The very first issue of the paper reported that, "[t]he Common Council...voted \$7,000 additional to pay the expenses of introducing the KOSSUTH Cap in New York. This, with the \$10,000 previously appropriated, makes \$17,000 as the net cost of the "Winter Fashion for 1852." The \$17,000 refers to the expenditures the citizens of the City of New York made to welcome and fete Kossuth during his stay in their city. For half the cost and without the fanfare, Genin could have created a "far more elegant" hat.¹¹³ The Brattleboro, Vermont *Weekly Gazette* agreed and elaborated on the problems with the hat, stating, "it causes headaches, [and] makes the hair decay early."¹¹⁴ These two newspapers suggested then, that not only did the people gain only a hat for their efforts to celebrate Kossuth, but also that it was an ugly and uncomfortable one.

Although his first days in New York and a later tour to Boston brought him, according to reports, significant funds, most of his trips cost more money than they raised. The Cincinnati branch of the Hungarian Fund, for example, thought it could raise \$25,000 in contributions, but gathered at most considerably less than a third of that amount.¹¹⁵ The *Cincinnati Gazette* explained that most of the people who attended Kossuth's speeches were just curious to see the Hungarian and his

¹¹³ "The Cost of the Kossuth Cap," *Diogenes, Hys Lantern*, 1/10/1852.

¹¹⁴ "The Kossuth Hat," *The Brattleboro Weekly Gazette*, 1/1/1852.

¹¹⁵ Komlos, in *Louis Kossuth and Young America*, found estimates ranging from \$1200 to \$7000 raised in Cincinnati, p. 119.

entourage. Apparently even his supporters misinterpreted the effects of his popularity.¹¹⁶

Kossuth responded to the lack of fiscal support, and his failed pleas to gain promises of military action on the part of the United States, with anger. He could not understand how the crowds he saw gathered on the street did not translate into political support. His tone became more and more militaristic and demanding. In several strange moves, he reportedly purchased saddles and munitions, without any practical consideration for how he might transport them without gaining the attention and ire of the Austrian government. Several newspapers and politicians balked at his presumptuous behavior.¹¹⁷ He had taken his association in the press with George Washington as a license to threaten American diplomatic relations abroad and lead the country into war. The *Lantern* mocked him with a cartoon showing “Jonathan” (the United States) as a dignified patient in consultation with a “Doctor,” obviously Kossuth as represented by his clothing, facial hair, and scabbard. The doctor is telling the patient that his “pulse is really full – you really don’t know your own constitution – you positively must lose a little blood.” “Jonathan” is sitting peacefully on a chair, legs crossed, looking young, robust, and healthy, while the doctor himself seems overly excited, and preparing to pull the man out of his chair. Pointing over his shoulder to a stern “George Washington” who holds his finger in the air as if giving a lecture, the patient responds jovially, “It is all very well, Mister, in

¹¹⁶ As cited by the *National Intelligencer*, 3/4/1852.

¹¹⁷ “The Kossuth Chapter in the United States,” *The New York Weekly Herald*, 7/17/1852; “Kossuth and his Revolutionary Fund,” *The New York Weekly Herald*, 10/23/1852; Untitled, *Trenton (NJ) State Gazette*, 3/6/1852; “Interesting from Central America,” *The Baltimore Sun*, 3/26/1852; “Domestic,” *Pennsylvania Freeman*, 4/1/1852.

your opinion, but my old doctor thinks otherwise.”¹¹⁸ Newspapers portrayed him as increasingly out of touch and unwelcome.

Once it was clear he would not give up his cause, or become a passive symbol of lost revolutionary dreams, journalists turned completely against Kossuth. In February the *Cleveland Herald* reported that the bill at his hotel in Washington included seventy-five dollars for wine, fifteen dollars for cigars, and a total average daily cost of \$300 – all paid by funds from supporters.¹¹⁹ The *Liberty Tribune* dismissed Kossuth as a political reformer, writing that his entire campaign had been one of “humbugery.” His tour was just another example of the enthusiasm for “excitement” that was one of the “characteristics of a free people.” Although in 1851, Jenny Lind had been one of the “heiresses of the day,” by 1852, the people needed a bit of change, and the Lind excitement “gave way for...Lewis Kossuth [sic].” He “had his day, having traveled from North to South, awakening the most intense excitement among all classes, but affecting none seriously.” It would have been enough had the mania ended there, but he had been ungrateful. After “sneering in his speeches” at American principles, “he was now dead.”¹²⁰ The real man, of course, survived, but for all intents and purposes his career as a celebrity reformer was over. James Gordon Bennet’s *New York Herald* similarly dismissed Kossuth, responding to a claim by the Revolutionary Hungarian Committee that the former “governing president” was refusing to share the \$150,000 remaining of what he had “begged” off of American audiences. The *Herald* treated him as an entertainer alone,

¹¹⁸ *Diogenes, Hys Lantern* (1/10/1852).

¹¹⁹ “Expenses of Kossuth’s Suite,” *Brunswick (MO) Brunswicker*, 2/7/1852.

¹²⁰ As quoted in the *Brunswick Brunswicker*, 5/22/1852.

musings, “he has worked hard for it...harder even than Jenny Lind—who only gave 150 concerts for the same sum” in contrast to Kossuth’s 600 speeches.¹²¹

By August of 1852, Kossuth had given up on any hope of convincing the Americans to intervene materially for another revolution in Hungary. Reportedly chased by creditors for the bills he had wracked up throughout the country, or perhaps because his new and bizarre plan for the Americans to attack Haiti had gained him even more ardent enemies, Kossuth departed the United States under the alias “Alexander Smith.” James Watson Webb’s *New York Courier and Enquirer* declared, “the great Hungarian has quit us—three days before the publicly designated day for doing so, and quit us, too, under the cover of an alias. He who came as a demi-god has left us a runaway.”¹²² By greeting him as an entertainer rather than a revolutionary, the Americans had turned him into a farce.

In explaining what happened to the much-anticipated tour, the *Lantern* pointed to the revolutionary leader’s earliest days in New York with their comic illustration asking, “Who Killed Kossuth?” Horace Greeley, the poem tells us, killed Kossuth. Yet Downing watched him die. The blackface mask, then, seems to represent Downing, as well as the particularly American blackface genre of minstrelsy, trickery and false faces. Horace, it seems, killed Kossuth with his journalism. Another newspaper man, James Watson Webb dug his grave. The project Greeley started, Watson Webb completed. It certainly makes sense when we remember the eulogy for the Kossuth visit in Webb’s paper, “He who came as a demi-god has left as a runaway.” Dan Howard, the proprietor of the Irving House Hotel where Kossuth stayed in New York, “toll[ed] the bell.” He alerted the world to

¹²¹ *New York Herald*, 5/1852.

¹²² As quoted in the *Brunswick Brunswicker*, 8/14/1852.

the visitor's death. As the owner of a hotel familiar with the demands of hosting a celebrated figure, he was in a sense the standard bearer. He could control who came to meet Kossuth in his room, and he or his staff determined what the outside world would know about the happenings in his establishment. In another example of the influence wielded by hotel proprietors and employees, it was from another hotel that the information about the Hungarian's lavish spending and who paid for it leaked into newspapers. Archbishop Hughes represented in a sense the American people at large. Having been disappointed by Kossuth as a liberal reformer, he rejoiced to see him fail. Having also been rejected by Kossuth, Downing shared this role. Yet, as the oyster seller, Downing also represented the commercialization of Kossuth's name—his attachment to every and any variety of material good at the time.

Together, these men and what they represented, were the mechanics of renown. The collusion of the mechanics, who had created a personage too discordant from reality to stand, had killed Kossuth. Downing—as the businessman, activist, and New Yorker who seemed to appear everywhere and know everyone, watched it happen. Kossuth, it seems, rejected their open arms, the multiple avenues the mechanics offered him for the only kind of success he could have had in the United States. He might have succeeded as a symbol, feted with an extended speaking tour and receptions around the country. Yet he, and he alone, was punished for this failure. Greeley and Webb kept their newspapers, Howard his hotel, and Hughes his church. And Downing, of course, still had his oysters.

I wonder what the author of the *Rockford Forum* article cited at the opening of this chapter would have had to say about Kossuth. His warning that there was “in the present generation a prevailing and insatiable thirst for novelty,” could have been a

warning for the Hungarian revolutionary.¹²⁵ Written four years after John B. Gough's notorious fall and recovery and in the months preceding the notorious Astor Place riot, the author was almost prescient in his understanding of the connection between the market for novelties and the tolerance for reform in the United States. Yet committing American money and American troops to a European cause was much more than "an artificial stimulant" that would "quicken the pulse." In the end, the very same forces the *Forum* editor lamented for their superficiality managed to first build Kossuth up and then tear him down. That same fickleness, however, allowed John B. Gough to reinvent himself more than once, counting upon the "continual changes and revolutions" in the "habits of men" to shape old experiences into new narratives.

Epilogue

“Katharine, I will...turn catechist. Did you see any of those “celebrities,” as you call them, about whom you have been thinking and wondering so much all the week?”

- “Eleanor Ogilvie,” in *The Ogilvies* (1849), 22.

As I stated at the outset, this dissertation began with a question, “Who was the first celebrity?” I could also have framed it as, “When was the first celebrity?” Yet this project has been about more than determining a point of origin for what we might understand as a modern celebrity culture. Instead, the *Mechanics of Renown* has sought to put “the celebrity” as a concrete noun into context as an historical construction, to understand the particular conditions surrounding its emergence as a discrete and significant cultural category and the meaning that it held for American culture. It has explored the various sites for engaging with celebrity—in newspapers especially, but also in person, as an audience member, through personal correspondence, and in the purchase or production of material objects.

Beyond the venues which promoted celebrity, I have explored different means for attaining and maintaining fame. The theater provided the most obvious route towards renown, but politics, evangelical religion, authorship, journalism and reform activism also had their celebrities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A category that did not receive attention in this project—crime—played a role in formulating celebrity as well in the period. Although the mechanics of renown encompassed a variety of characters, I have delimited them in a way that I hope

revealed connections while also maintaining important and intelligible distinctions between them.

Throughout this process, I have battled with the contemporary culture of celebrity. Both because most previous scholarship that explicitly explored celebrity dealt with the twentieth century or later, and because of my own inevitable awareness of its ubiquitous modern form, I have consistently asked myself what my project has to do with the present, if anything.¹²³ When I hear criticisms of celebrity reporting that lament the inappropriate and excessive attention to private lives, complain about the superseding of “real news” topics by celebrity stories, or fear for the effects of celebrity on morality, sexuality and behavior, especially as regarding female celebrities, I think that I could find very similar arguments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet I know it is not the same, and that the difference is not just a question of ubiquity. If commercial celebrity always has to do with the sale of public characters through some kind of communications media—print, screen, digital or otherwise—those characters, but also their consumers, have undeniably changed since the celebrity’s origin.

I have referred many times to the *Oxford English Dictionary’s* definition of the celebrity as a concrete noun referring to a person. In its etymology section, the dictionary pairs the definition with an example. Other scholars have found and cited sources predating the *OED’s* choice of a phrase from an 1849 English novel, *The Ogilvies*. Put into context, however, the *OED* example fully reflected the developing discourse around the celebrity figure and his or her role in the contemporary culture. The phrase comes out of a conversation between fictional character Eleanor Ogilvie

¹²³ This had become less true as time has gone on. I look forward especially to the forthcoming *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Tom Mole, from Cambridge University Press, in May 2009

and her younger cousin, Katharine. Knowing that Katharine had attended an event the night before where certain celebrity figures were being feted, Eleanor asked her if she had seen any, “of those ‘celebrities,’ as you call them, about whom you have been thinking and wondering so much all the week?” Eleanor seemed to presuppose the response, and to have a pedagogical motive. She had opened the question with, “I...will turn catechist.” Katharine responded that she indeed had seen some of the celebrities, but admitted, that they were not quite what she had expected. She, in turn, mused to Eleanor, “I wonder why it is that people whose books we read rarely come up to our expectations.” The wiser young woman answered that it was because of their transition from the printed page, “[M]ost men write out in their books their inner selves...and we form our ideal of them from that. When we meet them we see only their outer self—perhaps but a rough and clumsy shell.” With their brief exchange, the Ogilvie cousins turned literary celebrities in particular and celebrities in general upon their head.

With her explanation of Katharine’s feelings, Eleanor suggested that the celebrity in print was actually the real one. The celebrity in person was simply the representation, “a rough,” “clumsy,” and inevitably disappointing “shell.” She pointed here not to the scandal we have come to associate with sensational celebrity in the present, but rather to the idealized celebrity I have outlined in my first two chapters—the figure of genius, imbued with traits and a character out of reach for the average human being. Upon closer inspection and especially in person, such figures would undoubtedly fail to meet expectations. Eleanor’s explanation came as a warning, not against engaging with celebrity at all, but against thinking it matched up closely with a person off the printed page.

Celebrities are characters, not friends, acquaintances or family members. From the mid-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries, these celebrated individuals were carefully scripted and presented to the public by journalists deeply concerned with the aesthetics and morality of the culture in which they participated. Over the course of the nineteenth century, writers did not necessarily become less engaged with questions of morality, but rather journalism changed. Writers who covered celebrity increasingly sought to portray the “real” figure and investigate truth, to question rather than celebrate. Celebrity journalism essentially became what Eleanor deemed a mistake: an attempt to equate public characters with private people off of the page.

If I am completely honest, I suppose I did hope this project would help me come to some productive social conclusion about contemporary celebrity. Sociologist Joshua Gamson argued that in the late-twentieth century the mechanisms for renown had never been more transparent and that consumers, like producers, had choices. Clearly those choices are made within a limited field, but they are not imposed. That possibility might be even truer today. Rather than the “bookish” sheets of paper with long listings of undifferentiated news, or even the carefully headlined newspapers of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, modern readers have access to more news than ever, organized via multitudes of websites with links to any story genre. Celebrity sites are among the most popular. Yet even on major news sites, including the *New York Times*’ and CNN’s pages, human-interest stories and celebrity stories almost always populate their top hits—and comments’ sections consistently contain reader complaints about their inclusion on news sites at all. And so if anything, balancing my knowledge of the past and

present, I have come to an unsatisfactory conclusion: that there is something inevitably interesting about the celebrity to the post-eighteenth century reader.

I do not dislike it because I think the celebrity is bad, but rather because it is an unsatisfying answer analytically. Throughout this dissertation I have emphasized that people made choices—that the mechanics of renown were not just processes but individuals, and that their past decisions could be partially recovered for present day observers. It seems today that the collection of mechanics is ever larger, and that even as consumers have more choices, their patterns are ever more difficult to discern. Computerized programs collect the data on the “most clicked on” pages by readers on the internet. That data then determine subsequent options for them and other consumers who visit the page. Thus, if anything, just as our cultural choice became more numerous and effortless, and require less thoughtful consideration, their effects are more immediate and determinative.

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