

1971

## Tivoli Theatre of Pensacola

Dian Lee Shelley



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

### Recommended Citation

Shelley, Dian Lee (1971) "Tivoli Theatre of Pensacola," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 50 : No. 4 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol50/iss4/3>

## TIVOLI THEATRE OF PENSACOLA

by DIAN LEE SHELLEY\*

**P**ensacola during the 1820s was hardly more than a small frontier town, yet its citizens, with a predominately French and Spanish background, enthusiastically supported a theatre. Its importance is not that major theatrical personalities were attracted to the community, but that such a remote town, still the center of Indian trade, would welcome a theatre at all. The desire and support of dramatic entertainment suggests a different perspective from the conception of Pensacola during this period as a raw frontier town surrounded by wilderness.

From Pensacola to New Orleans, the French and Spanish on the gulf coast at the beginning of the nineteenth century often conducted themselves in a way that dismayed Protestant Americans. These Catholics seemed to have had little regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath. After mass they thought nothing of adjourning to the closest establishment for gambling and drinking. Sunday was also a popular time for dancing and the theatre.<sup>1</sup> The Spanish population in Pensacola increased when the Spanish colonial government and the infantry regiment of Louisiana were transferred there from New Orleans after the Louisiana Purchase. According to Don Juan McQueen, "the inhabitants are half French and they you know will dance and be merry anywhere; so altho [*sic*] the society is but small we generally of a Sunday evening have a kick up at some of their houses."<sup>2</sup>

Juan Baptiste Casanave and Pedro Bardonave, two Frenchmen, decided to capitalize on the frivolous inclinations of their fellow Latins in Pensacola in 1805. They were joined by a third Frenchman, René Chaudevaineau, a master carpenter who di-

---

\* Mrs. Shelley is an instructor at the Pensacola School of Liberal Arts.

1. David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled* (Chicago, 1968), in his second chapter investigates contemporary Protestant opposition to the theatre.
2. Lyle N. McAlister, "Pensacola During the Second Spanish Period," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (January-April 1959), 305.

rected the building of the Tivoli ballroom complex.<sup>3</sup> The Tivoli highhouse was a two-story rectangular building designed to offer a place for gambling and drinking. The bottom floor of the highhouse was level with the ground and was constructed of brick. The upper story was of wood with a gallery that hung over the sidewalk.<sup>4</sup> A token discovered during excavations at the Tivoli highhouse site in June 1968, adds fuel to the legend that some of the smaller rooms on the ground floor of the highhouse may have been used for prostitution as well as gambling.<sup>5</sup>

The appearance of the Tivoli ballroom is more difficult to ascertain since it was destroyed in 1841. The only indication of appearance is from maps showing the outline shape and approximate size. The Pintado map of 1810 and the 1821 Spanish titles map indicate a circular structure of about forty-five feet in diameter with a connecting rectangular entrance that overhung Tivoli (Zaragossa) Street in front. Another map, the Brosnaham map of 1819, indicates a conical roof for the ballroom.

The likely prototype for the Tivoli complex was its namesake, "Tivoli Park" in New Orleans. The building in this park used for dancing was an octagonal pavilion, open on all sides, with a pyramidal roof. A tavern was also an integral part of this park.<sup>6</sup> This New Orleans park was established by Santiago Bernardo Coquet, who bought the property on Bayou St. John on September 23, 1800. Thomas Ashe, in his travels in 1806, mentions that every Sunday evening on the bayou, about two miles out of New Orleans, the "Country concentrates, without any regard to birth, wealth, or colour."<sup>7</sup>

The Tivoli complex was Pensacola's only place of entertainment during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Paul Alliot, the French traveler, reported a population for Pensacola

3. Cazenava, Bordenave and Chaudenineau document in possession of Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, page 1-A.

4. The highhouse was not destroyed until the 1930s, therefore photographs and drawings are available for its description.

5. Token numbered 8Es100 from the June 1968, Tivoli excavation in possession of the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board.

6. Description of New Orleans's Tivoli were gathered from a letter, Samuel Wilson, Jr., to author, October 23, 1969, taken from a piece of sheet music in the possession of Wilson, New Orleans architect and an authority on colonial New Orleans architecture, and also from Louisiana Courier, May 13, 1808.

7. Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America* (London, 1808), 346.

before 1806 of 1,000.<sup>8</sup> Four years later an article on Pensacola in the *St. Louis Gazette* estimated that there were 300 families. The Tivoli, as described in the *Gazette*, was “a small neat rotundo for public balls, and in the public rooms adjacent . . . is exhibited that rage for excessive gaming.”<sup>9</sup>

The ballroom and highhouse lost none of their appeal as new people began to move into the community. The census of 1813 revealed “3,063 most of whom were French Creoles, Scots, and Irish.”<sup>10</sup> Many Americans arrived after the territory was transferred to the United States in 1821. Noah Ludlow, theatre manager, actor, and founder of several southern theatres, said that Pensacola at the time “was supposed to be the El Dorado of the United States, a point at which fortunes could be picked up in two to three years.”<sup>11</sup> Among the newcomers was Andrew Jackson Allen and his small company of actors who planned to remodel the Tivoli ballroom for their theatre. Using a ballroom for a theatre was not novel; New Orleans and many other southern theatres began in ballrooms.<sup>12</sup>

To understand how a circular ballroom like the Tivoli could be converted into a theatre, one must examine the theatres of New Orleans often used as a model prior to 1821. The Tivoli was wooden with a pyramidal roof as was the Cayentano's Circus and New Orleans' Tivoli. A circus building had the dual purpose of using the circular pit for the equestrian and circus acts and by placing benches in the pit area, theatre presentations were located on a stage at one side. Cayentano's Circus in New Orleans offered theatrical entertainment in 1817 and 1818.<sup>13</sup> It was a three-story wooden building with a conical roof. Adjoining it was a large rectangular structure and several small lean-tos.<sup>14</sup>

Since the Tivoli continued to be used as a ballroom until at

8. McAlister, “Pensacola During the Second Spanish Period,” 300.

9. “Pensacola in 1810,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXII (July 1953), 44-48.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It* (New York, 1880), 200.

12. Brooks McNamara, *The American Playhouse* (Cambridge, 1969), 76, 123.

13. Nelle Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans* (New York, 1944), 13; Robert P. McCutcheon, “The First English Plays in New Orleans,” *American Literature*, II (May 1939), 193-96.

14. Described in a letter, Boyd Cruise, curator, to author, November 11, 1969, from a sketch by T. Bigot dated 1817, in the Historic New Orleans Collection.

least 1837, the owners would not have sacrificed the dance floor to construct a protruding stage.<sup>15</sup> The most reasonable design would have been to convert the attached rectangular entrance of the Tivoli into a stage following the plan of Cayentano's Circus in New Orleans. The property inventory of the first theatre manager and an advertisement in the *Pensacola Floridian*, June 22, 1822, show that the stage properties were complex enough to require a stage that would fill all of the entrance of the Tivoli ballroom. The structure probably had an interior that resembled the New Orleans Condé Street ballroom which was used as a theatre in the period 1811-1816.<sup>16</sup> Ballrooms such as this had tiers of box seats along the sides for the girls taking turns dancing.<sup>17</sup> Windows must have been spaced generously to catch the bay breezes during the hot summer months.

Pensacola's theatre audiences were representative of the community's polyglot population. An account of an amateur play presented during the Mardi Gras of 1823 indicates the enthusiasm of the spectators, some of whom were members of the United States military stationed in Pensacola:

On entering we found the audience as eager as motley, and impatiently awaiting the rousing of the curtain . . . the front seats seemed by common consent conceded to the better classes, and there was a marked and essential, though but a nominal line which separated them from those of more humble station, as for example the retiring and inoffensive quadrone women, quietly seated in the rear.<sup>18</sup>

For performances at the Tivoli, the cost of admission was \$1.00 for box seat, seventy-five cents for pit, and children fifty cents. This was the price commonly charged in theatres at this time.<sup>19</sup> The audience capacity of the theatre, considering its fairly small diameter of fifty-six feet, was probably not more than 200 to 250 persons; the capacity could have been larger if

15. Bishop Kemper in an 1837 sermon at Christ Church, across from the Tivoli, complained of the dancing.

16. McCutcheon, "The First English Plays in New Orleans," II, 116, 189.

27. Jacques Berquin-Duvallon, *Vue de la colonie espagnole du Mississippi*, (Paris, 1803), quoted in Perry Young, *The Mistick Krewe* (New Orleans, 1931), 20.

18. Major General George A. McCall, *Letters From the Frontiers* (Philadelphia, 1868), January 20, 1823.

19. Grimstead, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 51.

the theatre had a second tier of boxes. Other area theatres such as the Cayentano's Circus, the St. Phillipi, and the Orleans in New Orleans held over 700. The theatre designed by Noah Ludlow for Mobile in 1824 had a pit and two tiers of boxes, and it could seat between 600 and 700 people.<sup>20</sup>

A typical Tivoli theatrical evening featured a full-length play, followed by a farce or short comic opera. Often there was also a musical number. Comedies, tragedies, and melodramas were all performed. In New Orleans the theatre season began in November and closed during the summer when yellow fever was epidemic. In the summer the actors appeared in Pensacola and in other gulf towns with the same repertoire of plays they had presented in New Orleans. The communities west of the Appalachians and east of the Mississippi, including Pensacola and New Orleans, were called the Western Theatre.

A survey of the practices of stock companies and the structure of drama during the early years of the nineteenth century makes a review of the plays and actors on the Pensacola stage more meaningful. The melodrama, very popular during this period, did much to accentuate the stock character. Every melodrama had its list of stock characters which centered around the heroine – the epitome of virtue, gentleness, a heavenly angel, and man's salvation– despite the misfortune and temptation that she was subjected to. Attempting to destroy the virtue of the heroine was the villain who was a smooth and base deceiver. In serious plays the villain was the devil incarnate, despicable and unprincipled. For comedy he had the same attributes, but now the character was too ridiculous to pose any real threat. Out to thwart the villain was the hero– brave, modest, virtuous, and defender of virtue. The old father character was usually wise and full of good advice. In comedy, he desired money or position which blinded him to the merits of the hero and to the baseness of the villain.<sup>21</sup>

During the 1821 and 1822 seasons the *Pensacola Floridian* listed only four of the mainpieces, which included three popular melodramas.<sup>22</sup> *The Stranger*, by Auguste Kotzebue, presented

20. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 264-65.

21. Grimstead, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 171-203, gives an excellent analysis of stock characters.

22. *Pensacola Floridian*, August 18, September 8, October 8, 1821, June 22, 1822.

August 18, 1821, deals with a woman who deserts her husband and children for another man and then, repentant, spends her energies doing good deeds to atone for her sins. Found by her desolute husband, she is forgiven and welcomed back into the bosom of her family. On October 8, 1821, the Pensacola playgoers were entertained with the Gothic melodrama *Castle Spectre*, by Matthew Gregory Lewis, which was complete with ghosts and a gloomy subterranean dungeon. In this spectacle, Osmond, the villain, abducts the heroine, Angela, and her lover, Percy, who had come to the castle to save her. Years before, Osmond had murdered his brother's wife and had chained his brother in the dungeon. Angela is their child. The ghost of the mother so startles the uncle-villain that it prevents the death of her husband and gives Angela the opportunity to stab her uncle. The 1822 season began with the melodrama *Douglas* by John Home. The play is the tale of a baby who is lost in a terrible storm, but who later returns, a thoroughly noble young man despite his rearing in a shepherd's cottage. *Douglas* also contains the complete villain with designs on the heroine's chastity and who is the main agent of catastrophe.<sup>23</sup>

The stock company system as practiced in the nineteenth century limited some of the actor's versatility. Actors were hired for a special type of role or "line of business," and they were classified in one of the following categories: leading tragedy, juvenile or romantic leads, low-comedy, old men, old women, heavy villains, serious fathers, and numerous special types such as the Yankee and/or the black-faced Jim Crow type. On an actor's benefit night, when the proceeds of the evening went to that actor, he could choose whatever role and play he desired. This sometimes led to miscasting as was perhaps the case of the October 9, 1821, benefit in Pensacola when a male actor elected to play a female part in *Castle Spectre*.<sup>24</sup>

The first company of actors to play in Pensacola was composed mostly of young, inexperienced actors. It was managed by

23. Grimstead, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 131; Charles Loch Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784* (Berkeley, 1943), 139, states that in St. Augustine on May 20, 1783, an announcement appeared for a presentation of "Douglas, a Tragedy," for the benefit of the loyalist refugees who had evacuated Charleston and Savannah after the British defeat at Yorktown.

24. Grimstead, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 84-98.

Andrew Jackson Allen, who referred to himself as the "Father of the American Stage." He was deaf and sometimes his associates called him "Dummy Allen." Born in 1776 in New York City, he first appeared on the stage at the age of ten as a page in *Romeo and Juliet*. He later played in theatres throughout the North. He arrived in Florida with creditors in his wake, and his stay in Pensacola seems to have been marred by financial woes. Later he traveled with Edwin Forrest as costumer and cook.<sup>25</sup>

Despite his deafness, Allen was very loquacious. He was described in his later years as "tall and erect in person, with firmly compressed features, an eye like a hawk's, nose slightly Romanesque and hair mottled gray. He spoke in a sharp, decisive manner often giving wrong answers."<sup>26</sup> Most of the Pensacola company were relatively inexperienced. James M. Scott had been on the stage only a year before he began acting in Pensacola. He was described as "possessing a strong voice and a manly figure, being over six feet in height."<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Legg, a talented and beautiful woman, was in her early twenties when she appeared at the Tivoli in the summer of 1821, but she had had five years experience. Mr. Hanna's ten years of experience unfortunately did not improve his acting style. He was described as a young man of "tolerably good appearance,"<sup>28</sup> although a critic in New Orleans wrote that he "not only suffered from an unbecoming shyness and stiffness of demeanor, but in many scenes his attitude was one of stupid indifference."<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Price had been playing leading roles at the American Theatre in New Orleans before coming to Pensacola.<sup>30</sup> Her death in Pensacola must have come early in the 1821 season since she is not mentioned in the newspaper advertisements. Eliza Vaughan also died that same summer. She was only twenty-three, although she had

25. Oral Sumner Coad and Edwin Mims, Jr., *The American Stage* (New Haven, 1929), 175; Laurence Hutton, *Curiosities of the American Stage* (New York, 1891), 102; Richard Moody, *America Takes the Stage* (New York, 1955), 34; George C. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage, 1834-1843*, 4 vols. (New York, 1928), IV, 37, 91, 101, 233, 254, 443, 471; Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* (New York, 1868), 138-40.

26. Hutton, *Curiosities of the American Stage*, 102.

27. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 324.

28. *Ibid.*, 182.

29. Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 16.

30. John S. Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre* (New York, 1968), 18, 21.

begun acting with her husband and Mrs. Legg in 1816. John Vaughan had been playing the lead in tragedies in many of the Western Theatres.<sup>31</sup>

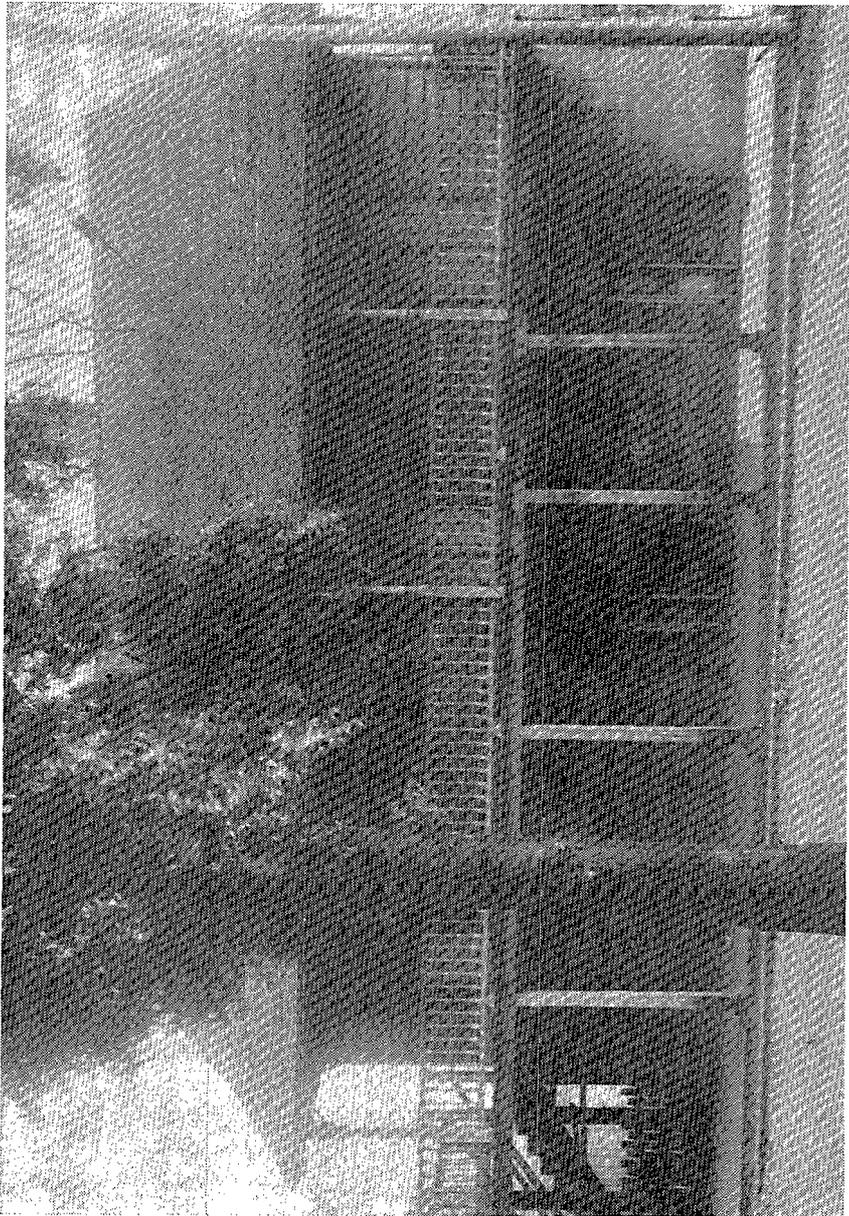
In Pensacola, Mrs. Legg and James Scott, the only ones of this company to achieve national acclaim, played tragic leads and Allen the comic roles. Scott was often referred to as "Long Tom Coffin," the character role in Paul Jones, *Pilot of the German Ocean*, that brought him fame. He remained popular until his death in 1849, starring on the stages in New Orleans and New York.<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Legg married John Augustus Stone, a popular dramatist, in the summer of 1822. After his death she married another dramatist, N. H. Bannister, and returned to the stage, appearing occasionally in New Orleans.<sup>33</sup>

John Vaughan's company, which included nine people, played in Pensacola in 1822. It was more experienced, but was not as talented as Allen's Company. John Vos and his wife, George W. Frethey and his wife, and Mrs. DeGrushe (Morgan) had been members of Ludlow's companies in either St. Louis or Nashville prior to 1820. This was about the same time the Vaughans were beginning their stage career with Ludlow. John Vos was described as "a pretty good actor in tragedy heroes—rough and crude, yet attended with some signs of genius."<sup>34</sup> Frethey's specialty was low-comedy, and his wife, who was not particularly talented, played minor roles.<sup>35</sup> Mrs. DeGrushe may have been a better actress, but she mainly played "old women" parts.<sup>36</sup> James

- 
31. Coad and Mims, *The American Stage*, 131; Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre*, 22; Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 80, 90, 98, 108, 116, 123, 134, 152.
  32. Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre*, 22, 55, 61, 67, 76, 78, 98; Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 245, 249, 317, 324; Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, IV, 557, 623, 648, 649; Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, 89; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 394.
  33. Hutton, *Curiosities of the American Stage*, 17; Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre*, 21, 125, 137, 146, 151; Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, IV, 238, 247, 310; Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, 89; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 387.
  34. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 270.
  35. *Ibid.*, 172, 256, 267, 272; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 256.
  36. William G. Dodd, "Theatrical Entertainment in Early Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXV (October 1926), 133-34; Coad and Mims, *The American Stage*, 131; Lucile Gafford, "Material Conditions in the Theatres of New Orleans Before the Civil War" (M. A. thesis, Uni-



Thomas D. Rice, an etching of the actor in his Jim Crow costume from Laurence Hutton's *Curiosities of the American Stage*.



Front view of the Tivoli High House taken about 1910. Courtesy of Historic Pensacola Preservation Board.

Scholes joined the Pensacola company after some apparently inadequate experience in New Orleans. Caldwell, manager for the New Orleans company, claimed that Scholes was of "general utility—merely passable in his lines."<sup>37</sup> Pensacola's second professional season was totally lacking the glamour of the first season.

Pensacola and most of the Western Theatre depended on New Orleans for actors. They were not the stars but second and third string actors seeking out a living during New Orleans's off-season. When theatre returned to Pensacola in 1828, Mobile's theatre had been established, and Pensacola received the lesser actors from this stage.

On April 18, 1828, the Tivoli again presented theatrical entertainment using actors from Mobile. The company was small, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Hartwig, Mrs. DeGrushe, and Messrs. Lear, Jones, and Myers. The latter three were minor figures from New Orleans.<sup>38</sup> The star of the Pensacola season was Mrs. Hartwig, a professional actress who played comedy, tragedy (male and female), and equestrian roles. She was also a professional bride, having had six husbands. Mr. Hartwig was her third, and a minor actor. The year prior to her opening in Pensacola, Mrs. Hartwig had played opposite Junius Brutus Booth in New Orleans. She starred in theatres from New York to New Orleans and throughout the West and South.<sup>39</sup> The New Orleans *Bee* described her as having "a fine commanding figure, voice full and powerful but not smooth, wanting that mellow softness . . . which is pleasing to the ear. She seems admirably calculated for those characters which require great physical power."<sup>40</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Hartwig returned to Pensacola in February

versity of Chicago, 1925), 14-16; Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre*, 6-7; Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 116, 138-39, 267, 287.

37. Gafford, "Material Conditions in the Theatres of New Orleans Before the Civil War," 61; Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 216, 245, 249; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 393.
38. Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, 49; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 386, 387.
39. Kendall, *The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre*, 44; Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 322, 423, 435, 459, 470-71, 487, 488; Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, 48, 49, 121, 122; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 57, 58, 112.
40. *Ibid.*, 57.

1829, after a fire in Mobile had destroyed the theatre there. The company was small; besides Mr. and Mrs. Hartwig, it included Mr. and Mrs. Rice, Mr. Saunders, and Mary Vos. Saunders was only a minor actor, but the handsome and youthful Thomas D. Rice and Mary Vos were soon to become stars. Mary Vos was only fourteen years old, the daughter of the Mr. and Mrs. John Vos who had appeared at the Tivoli in Pensacola in 1822. She became a very popular actress in the Western Theatre and a special favorite in Mobile. Later she starred opposite such well-known actors as Tyrone Power.<sup>41</sup>

Rice was twenty-one when he first appeared on the stage in Pensacola, but this was the beginning of his career as "Jim Crow" Rice, the predecessor of the black-face minstrels. The February 17, 1829 bill lists three farces plus a comic dance by Mr. Rice. Rice is supposed to have introduced his "Jim Crow" song and dance in Louisville in 1830, an act he had composed the previous year. If this is correct, one can surmise that Pensacola may have received the premiere of "Jim Crow" Rice in 1829. Rice established an international reputation as a result of a tour in England in 1836. His special character roles and his "Ethiopian Operas" earned him a fortune.<sup>42</sup>

During the 1828 Pensacola season the melodrama *Douglas* was again performed at the Tivoli. The only mainpiece advertised in the *Pensacola Gazette* was the popular tragedy *Pizarro*, about the Spanish conqueror of Peru. The play called for many spectacular events such as the erupting of volcanoes plus the presence of Pizarro's army through the play. This amazing cast must have performed some logistical feats of their own to attempt *Pizarro* with a company of six. It is obvious they intended to give the community entertainment to please all tastes from the notice of a benefit on March 13, 1828, for Saunders. Besides the regular program, a theatrical lottery was held, the prizes included two gold seals, a key and ring, a set of *The Casket* for 1828, twelve barege handkerchiefs, one dozen elegant half hose, and a dissected puzzle map. After the show, a balloon eighteen feet

41. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 267, 423; Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, 134; Smither, *A History of the English Theatre in New Orleans*, 396.

42. *Pensacola Gazette*, February 17, 1829; Hutton, *Curiosities of the American Stage*, 119-20; Ludlow, *Dramatic Life As I Found It*, 392, 509; Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years*, 65.

high and fifty-two feet in circumference was to ascend from the back of the theatre.<sup>43</sup>

After reviewing the type of plays presented at the Tivoli during the 1821, 1822, 1828, and 1829 seasons, and the actors that were involved in these productions, an investigation of the stage scenery is helpful for an overall view of the theatre. Knowledge of the scenery is facilitated by the inventory of the property of Andrew J. Allen. Just as there were stock actors during this period, there were also stock scenes, this being especially true for traveling companies like those appearing in Pensacola. The stock scenes were kitchen, parlor, woods, garden, and street. These scenes were used for all plays whether *Julius Caesar* or contemporary melodramas. Allen listed four drop scenes in his inventory. Travelling companies commonly used roll wings and drops for easier handling. The roll wings were loose canvas that hung from above. They were all double-sided and generally varied from 3'4" to 4'6" wide. Back drop scenes were on rollers and hung from above. They were painted canvas, the standard size being sixteen feet high and from twenty-five to twenty-nine feet wide. The act drop hung in front of the stage and it was raised as a curtain.<sup>44</sup> Glass lamps and tin chandeliers held candles for the stage and theatre lighting.

Pensacola's population during these early years was hardly large enough to support a permanent theatre or even a continuous professional theatrical season. The people enjoyed entertainment. They attended plays in a converted circular ballroom, acted by players, many of whom were young, inexperienced, and not very talented. The plays were the same as those presented on the stages all over the country. This was one of the links that tied Pensacola closer to the mainstream of America.

---

43. *Pensacola Gazette*, February 17, March 10, 20, 1829.

44. For a detailed analysis of early nineteenth-century stage scenery, see Richard Southern, *Changeable Scenery* (London, 1951); Wesley Swanson, "Wings and Backdrops," *The Drama*, XVIII (October 1927); Edwin Duerr, "Charles Ciceri and the Background of American Scene Design," *Theatre Arts*, XVI (1932), and Clifford E. Hamar, "Scenery on the Early American Stage," *Theatre Annual*, VII (1948-49).