

Early days of "The Academy" recalled with the advent of "Save the Academy"

The advent of the "Save the Academy Theatre Foundation" has stirred memories of the theatre's earlier days in the minds of long-time Lindsay residents. One of them — Ford W. Moynes — has the following recollections of its contributions to the town's theatrical entertainment:

Recognized by many as one of the best in the country, the Academy Theatre was at one time owned by the late Alex Ross, father of Dr. John Ross, Kent St., Lindsay.

Early road shows included "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "The Bonny Brier", "East Lynne" and many others.

A familiar and popular troupe was headed by the famous Mark brothers—Joe, Tom, Alex, and Ernie — and in this connection, it is interesting to note that the late Jim Perrin, of Lindsay, married Arlie Mark one of the great lady actresses. — "Guy Bros. minstrels made a yearly appearance and featured their invasion by a big street parade with band and members of the troupe in long coats and silk toppers..

"The Man On The Box" played to a packed house and the big draw card was a former Ops township boy named Meehan."

"The late Wilbert McWatters, a Lindsay boy, and Miss Newton, a Lindsay girl, also appeared at the Academy in their own road show."

"Minstrel days in Lindsay date back to the days when the Lindsay Minstrels were head-

ed by Jack Fullerton, of the Dundas and Flavelle store; Herb Walker a nephew of the late B. J. Gough; Capt. Arthur Simpson, of the Hotel Simpson, and many others."

"Later there were Hi Meehan, Harold Mercer, Mel Robson, Fred Roberts, Tom Murtagh and Jack Grey.

"The late Cecil Forsythe, father of Harvey Forsythe, Lindsay, was instrumental in producing two or three extravaganzas including "Queen Esther" and "Natural Knot" when the leads included: Mrs. W. E. Reesor, Mrs. G. Blackwell, Mrs. Howard Nesbitt, Miss Helen Flavelle, Mrs. W. R. Widdess, Harry Brimmell, Ford Moynes, Rev. Billings, and H. J. McMullen.

From year to year the Kiwanis Club held amateur shows in the Academy.

It was customary to bring in a director from 'The States' and the playwrights were also largely of American origin.

"W. C. (Chic) Baker and the late Chas. Smith were mainstays in these productions and in this connection it is worthy of note that Chas. Smith for many years headed his own road show and was very well known through the Eastern States. His wife, the late Mae Edwards of Lindsay, was in her own right one of the finest actresses in her day. "The Old Homestead", one of the Smith productions from Portland, Maine, was presented in Lindsay with Mae Edwards in the title role."

— "For the past ten years, the Kiwanis Club had produced some very fine amateur shows with George Zarfes as the director."