

In the realm of theatrical entertainment Lindsay has had a number of professional and semi-amateur stage personalities.

Away back when travelling road shows were "the order of the day" there was James Meehan, a son of an Ops Township farmer, who was the leading man in the drama "The Man on the Box".

Wilber McWatters, the son of Wm. McWatters, a baker and confectionery man, gained some degree of prominence as an actor in the U.S. and appeared in Lindsay along with Miss "Missie" Newton, a Lindsay actress.

The Pepper Twins, of Lindsay, won the hearts of many a New York audience and did well on Continental tours. The Twins were Midgets and had a number of good acts dressed alike, sang the popular songs of the day, danced well and at times had monologues. These were the days of straw hats and swaggering canes on the stage. It is understood that the Pepper Twins performed before Royalty.

Jim Perrin, born in Lindsay, was picked up by one of the famous Marks brothers on one of the annual appearances of the Marks Shows in Lindsay. Ernie, Joe, Tom and Alex Marks were theatrical attractions for many years at the Academy Theatre and usually provided a show during the Lindsay Fall Fair. They packed the theatre every night for a week at a time.

A brother of Jim Perrin has been a resident of Haliburton for several years.

One of the most attractive, talented and successful Lindsay theatrical stars was Mae Edwards, whose name was for many years associated with the Mae Edwards Stock Company in New England States. Her husband, Charles Smith, of Portland, was the producer of a number of shows, one of the best being "The Old Homestead".

Several decades ago a Lindsay Brass band was under the leadership of a gentleman named Allie Brown and his family, the six Brown Brothers, gained a wide reputation in New York and on Continental stages, using the name "Brown Brothers Saxophone Sextette". Some fifteen years ago, Tom Brown, the head of the sextette, spent several months in Lindsay, during which time he produced one of the best minstrel shows ever presented by amateur talent. The following sketch of the Brown Brothers is from the pen of Ed. Manning of radio station CFPL-TV of London, Ontario:

One of the most abused instruments of the present generation is the saxophone. It was invented in 1840, with the highest hopes, by the Belgian, Adolph Sax, from whom it takes its name. Most of the late lamented dance bands used only the alto, tenor, and sometimes the baritone saxes, but actually, there are at least 12 varieties — two belonging to each of six classes — soprano high pitch, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass. The saxophone was used widely, and still is, in military and concert bands, and there have been some outstanding soloists in the past, and the present. But until the first world war years, this instrument was largely unknown in dance and popular circles.

So it was still a novelty — as a matter of fact, many people had never heard the saxophone — until a group of young Canadians appeared in American vaudeville. Trooping along the various vaudeville circuits were an increasing number of saxophone ensembles, quartets, sextets, and octets, but the most famous of these were the Six Brown Brothers from Lindsay, Ontario.

These were originally the Five Brown Brothers, and as such, made Everlasting Cylinder records around 1912. The original five were Alec., William, Vern., Fred and the leader, Tom. When a sixth member was added, and the name was changed to the Six Brown Brothers, the new man was Harry Finkelstein, not related to the others. The group's personnel may have occasionally changed throughout their career.

The Brown Brothers were

brought together by Tom Brown in the early 1900s — after his own career with the Ringling Brothers Band — as a headliner in vaudeville — and in musical shows. The group's success in vaudeville stepped them up to musical comedy, and so this Canadian sax sextette became one of the features of the successful production 'Chin Chin' produced in 1914, and starring Montgomery and Stone, and they also created something of a sensation in Stone's new production of 'Jack O'Lantern'. People would stand in line to hear them.

The Six Brown Brothers often appeared on the vaudeville stage in clown uniform.

The Victor record catalogue of 1917 printed this about the group — "A complete novelty is here offered in the shape of records by the famous Brown Brothers Saxophone Sextette. These accomplished players have chosen lively numbers which show the skill of the organization, and exhibit the nimble tone quality of the instruments. Like most players who are worth-while," concluded the modest Victor catalogue, "The Brown Brothers make records exclusively for the Victor."

These last words were the stuff that dreams are made of, since the Six Brown Brothers, under the name of the Saxo Sextette, recorded for Columbia, Victor's great rival, and with much the same repertoire.

Tom Brown passed away in Chicago, August 29, 1950, at the age of 68, and brother Fred died in the same city on February 9, 1949 at the age of 55. It would appear that the brothers settled in Chicago, perhaps after retirement.