

Cumberland, MD March 28/84

My Dear Mr. Palmer

I am more than pleased at your request for the biography, and have written it out as faithfully as possible. When you have finished this work, it will indeed prove a most interesting collection and an ornament to any public library.

Allow me to express my admiration for your assorted efforts on behalf of the Actor's Fund of America, your latest and most generous sacrifice, that of closing your own theater to give the performance in Washington will be forever kept green in the memory of our actors.

Sincerely Yours

Benj. Maginley

A M Palmer

Esq.

Madison Sq. Theater

A Short History of My Stage Life

I was born in Philadelphia in 1834. Made my first professional appearance on September 12, 1854, as "Danglers" in, "Monte Christo", at the Fourth Street Theater, Baltimore MD under the management of JC Foster. Played responsible roles with Mrs. Farren in the old French and English mrslo? Dramas. Was transferred during same season to Pittsburgh, PA, where I met all the prominent stars of the day, including Miss Jean Davenport, now Mrs. Lander, Julie Dean, Eliza Logan, Edwin Forrest (sic), J.B.Roberts, Mrs. Jamison and others. Went to Cleveland, Ohio for Summer Season 1855 and during performances of the "The School of Scandal" in which I played "Sir Oliver". Was engaged for the next season at Bates National Theater, Cincinnati Ohio. Remained there until the fall of 1854, playing first and second comedy. During those 2 seasons, met for the first time Barney Williams and wife, Dion Boucicault and Agnes Robinson, WJ Florence and others. Engaged to go to Wood's Theater, Cincinnati, for the next season as the principal comedian.

During that season, played with about the same stars as the previous season. John E. Owens played an engagement of 6 weeks here when I appeared in a number of English comedies, for the first time as "Zskure Glovespeare" in the "heir to Law", Farmer Assfield in "Speed The Plow", Sir Lucious O'Trigger in "The Rivals", Mark Meddles in "London Assurance", John Perrybough in "The Crickets on The Hearth" to Stephen Harribus in "The Poor Gentleman". In the Fall of 1858, I went to De Bara's Theater St. Louis MO and opened in 2 of Mr De Bara's strongest parts, which the management objected to, but which I insisted upon, vis, "Paul Fry" and "Toodles". Made a hit in that Saturday Night, and the next Monday a series of star engagements began. I merely playing in the farces, though I selected the parts that Mr. De Bara was popular in. Being Young, Strong and ambitious, I

made up my mind to stamp myself as a comedian , or fail there and then and go home, as I had left a good one behind me.

My next engagement was with Mr. Ford at the Holiday Str. Theater, Baltimore, MD for the season of 1859/60 where I played opposite business to Mrs. John Wood, and played for the first time with James E. Murdoch, appearing as "Dog Berry" in "Much Ado", "Grasso" in "Money" & the "First Grave Digger" in "Hamlet". Also appeared with Mrs. E Baron, and during the performance of "Twelfth Night" in which I played "The Fool", I was taken with an attack of brain freeze? Psosi?, the result of hard study, which confined me to my bed for six weeks.

Went to Milwaukee Wisc for the summer season in 1860 and remained there as acting manager and comedian until the summer of 1861.

Went to Toronto CA on my first starring tour, and appeared in a number of Mr. Burton's great parts. While the "Osp O' Day Boys" was produced for the first time in this country by Mr. & Mrs FB Conway, in which I played the leading Irish Part, and during the two weeks engagement, and Irish Society presented me with an Irish Harp Breast pin and a gold-headed cane. I left Toronto and went to Memphis TN, fall of 1861 as manager and comedian of The Memphis Theater, which I controlled for 3 years, 1860-1864. During this time I played every night, usually in tow pieces? 2 Usceso?" consisting of almost all of the comedy successes of that time, manuscripts and otherwise.

- In the Spring of 1864 I left the stage and engaged in business, being about 12 years. Re-Appeared on the stage in 1877 as "Bunberry Cobb", with Lester Wallack in "Rosedale" at the Grand Opera House, New York. Played remainder of season with various stars. In 1878/79 I played the "Judge" in "The Danites", and the following season with Dion Boucicault appeared as a star in "Deacon Crankett" which I played for the seasons 1880/82, three weeks of which was at the Union Square Theater, New York, under the management of A. M. Palmer. In 1882/83 I starred in "The Square Man". Season of 1883/84 I joined The Madison Square Theater, as "Roger" in "Esmeralda". In the Spring of 1884, I played "Tom Blossom" in the first production of "May Blossom" at The Madison Square Theater, and continued for the next 2 seasons, - In Aug./86 I began my starring tour as "Uncle Bartlett" in the same play. My appearances in "May Blossom" up to the present time amounting to about one thousand.

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Benj. Maginley