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President.—E. Perkins.
Vice President—A. Fitch.
Secretary—T. F. Cooley.
Treasurer—J. W. Rhodes.

The amount of \$7.75 was raised for carrying out the objects of the Club.

Artists at Madison.

We clip the following from the local column of a late number of the *Madison Argus*:

Madison is peculiarly favored at this time with an array of artists few cities in the Union can boast of having. There is Mr. BROOKS, whose life-like portraits have been the theme of so much remark. Then there is the celebrated Mr. BRONSON, whose artistic fame is co-extensive with the Union. Then there is Mr. JACOBS, the portrait painter, the photograph, ambrotype and daguerrian operator. Then there is the large and elegant establishment of JOHNSON & FULLER, who roll out pictures of all kinds by wholesale. While lastly, a new native Wisconsin genius, Mr. O'NEIL, the scenic and portrait painter, has entered the list for competition with them all. The first throw of his brush has really astonished old artists. He has produced a picture entitled "The Fortunes of the Cup," which gives evidence of most decided artistic merit and is an earnest of the future fame of this *Badger* artist.

This picture can be seen at the **Museum Room**, and is to be disposed of by lottery. Success to *native* talent and the fine arts. **AMATEUR.**

The O'Neil mentioned above, is JAMES O'NEIL, of Kenosha, son of our fellow citizen CHARLES O'NEIL. His many friends in this city will be pleased to learn that he is working his way up so successfully in his favorite profession.

An act restricting very much the pardoning power in the hands of the Governor, for the crime of murder, and also guarding against insufficient bail for the same offence, were passed. These acts remove pretty much all the objection that was made to the present law for the punishment of murder, and we presume will prevent any further effort to change the law.

An attempt was made in the legislature to attach the counties of Ozaukee and Washington to this Congressional district, but the matter was postponed until September.

Board of Supervisors.

R. P. Marr, Pleasant Prairie.
Wm. Smith, Somers.
Ira Pierce, Bristol.

BOOTS,



LEATH
AND FIND

55 - - - Main St., Ken

WE announce to consum Southern Wisconsin and our preparations for Fall Trade than ever. We offer our patri (all the largest and much the l in Kenosha. Our acquaintan ufacturers, and the fact that o before the recent advance, en varieties at *Great Bargains*.

Our Ladies Gaiters, French kins are of no good quality as city East or West. We call to our Gents French Calf Boot of Misses and Children's Shoe ence in Manufacturing, enable rate **CUSTOM WORK**, all at and Shoes.

We also offer at the lowest t and Slaughter Sole Leather, C per Leather, French and Amer skins,

Harness, Bridle and (Buck Skins, Morocco, Lining Leather, Taps, Thread maker's Tools, &c.

We have been selling Shoe place 12 years, know the way buy for cash in the lowest mar live upon the principle of Dr. I with small profits; trade only our line, and will give cash by the same money than any house exclusively in the Shoe and Leat Quick Sales, Small Profits, e Cash for Hides, Skins and L Kenosha, Sept. 1856. L



Church unearths piece of history

Civil War-era painting traced to Kenosha artist

BY DIANE GILES

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August 27, 2012

Section: Local

Page: A3

Kenosha has had its share of great artists, but the name of James R. O'Neil is rarely known.

The recent restoration of a painting by this Civil War-era artist with Kenosha ties is the result of a collaboration of the parishioners of the Mater Dei parish in Topeka, Kan., and a local historian here who has tracked the artist through time for the last seven years.

Kenosha historian Don Jensen became interested in O'Neil in 2005 when he came across a newspaper notice regarding O'Neil's death in 1863 by guerrilla rebels under William Quantrill during the Baxter Springs Massacre.

Just two years before he was killed, O'Neil was commissioned by Bishop John Baptist Miede to create a painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary's assumption into heaven for a cathedral he was building in Leavenworth, Kan.

Son of lighthouse keeper

At the time of his death, 30-year-old O'Neil, son of Southport lighthouse keeper Charles O'Neil, was a combat artist working for Frank Leslie's magazines, reporting and drawing editorial cartoons, Jensen said.

O'Neil came to Southport — as Kenosha was known then — as a teen and was exposed to the fine art of local artist George Robertson.

In 1855, O'Neil, then 22, was a carpenter and joined a traveling theater troupe passing through the area. He painted scenery for the troupe and did a little acting and singing, too.

He then worked painting massive panoramic pieces on rolls of canvas for an entertainment company. Called travelogues, people would pay 25 cents to see lectures with singers and musicians performing against the changing backdrops.

Practical joker

O'Neil, Jensen said, was a real jokester, staging phony parades while he lived in Madison and always pulling practical jokes.

An 1861 newspaper item reported that O'Neil had reported to the editor's office dressed as a first lieutenant to be interviewed. But it was all a ruse.

"There's no record of him even serving in the Union Army," Jensen laughed.

Dead end

Three years ago, Jensen hit a dead end in his hunt. He discovered the cathedral had burned down more than a century ago.

But early last year, Jensen was browsing through some old local newspaper articles when he came across an 1870s report that a portrait of the Virgin Mary had been hung in a Topeka church and that it had been painted by Baxter Springs Massacre victim Jim O'Neil.

Hunt renewed

Jensen wrote a letter to the Topeka Capital Journal asking residents for information on the painting.

Bob Swain, Mater Dei parishioner and artwork restorer, had seen the painting 18 months earlier at the Assumption Catholic Church, one of two churches in the blended parish.

"It looked liked it had been painted by a trained artist. Good quality, but in poor shape, with the frame broken," explained Swain, who advised that it be removed from the storage closet in the church basement where it had been found, to a drier environment on an upper floor of the parish school.

When he saw Jensen's letter in the newspaper, he knew right away to what painting Jensen was referring.

He took on the job of restoring the painting to its former glory.

Since the restoration, the painting has been on tour in Topeka.

"We were looking to hang it somewhere in the church (permanently), but we want it to be a little more secure because it's one of the last — if not the last — piece of artwork by this artist," Shawn Hillebret, parish resource coordinator, said. "We don't want anything happening to it now that it's been restored."

No signature

The painting has no signature, but Swain and Jensen both think there is a bit of O'Neil revealed in the painting: There is a dark-haired cherub that stands apart from the rest in the bottom corner of the painting.

He's not like his little fellow angels. Instead of looking adoringly at the Virgin Mary, he looks straight at the viewer, with a worldly smirk.

Jensen thinks there's a family resemblance between the devilish cherub and an image of O'Neil's sister. (No photograph of James is known to exist.)

"I'm personally convinced — although there's no proof — that this is another one of Jim O'Neil practical jokes," Jensen said. "He had a real wicked sense of humor."



The painting before restoration.

Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish



The restored painting of James R. O'Neil may be the last painting of the Civil War-era artist in existence.
Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish



The cherub in the lower corner of the painting could be a self-portrait of the jokester artist James O'Neil.
Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish



Cherubs looking adoringly up at the Blessed Virgin.
Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish



The restored painting of James R. O'Neil may be the last painting of the Civil War-era artist in existence.

Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish



The restored painting of James R. O'Neil is on display in a side altar at Assumption Catholic Church in Topeka, Kan.

Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish



The restored painting of James R. O'Neil is on display in a side altar at Assumption Catholic Church in Topeka, Kan.

Image courtesy of Mater Dei Parish

yet, we doubt whether there is a scenic artist in all of these United States that can surpass him, in spreading nature on to canvases. Guided by the unerring quickness of his eye, he takes no measurements—lays out no studied "scheme," but spreads his paint as rapidly as a house painter glides over the walls of a building.

In perspective painting, we do not remember to have ever seen the equal of O'NEIL, though we have visited many of the most popular theatres and operas in the Union. We have never seen anything that even equals that exact expression of nature, so manifest on all of O'NEIL's paintings, which seem to place all objects in their appropriate position. In making a fancy picture, where colors are displayed to dazzle the eyes, O'NEIL has rivals, but in making "Nature stick out," he stands unrivaled, and were he the student of some celebrated painter, it would require but little printer's ink to give him a fame second to no living scenic artist. — O'NEIL ought to be encouraged.

Wis. Daily Patriot

CIRCULATE THE DOCUMENTS.
P. S. Postage stamps may be sent for all supply less an \$1.00.

NOTICE TO DAILY SUBSCRIBERS.
From and after the 1st of June, the Daily Patriot will be delivered to City Subscribers at \$6 per annum, payable quarterly; or to those who prefer, paying by the week, at 12 1/2 cents per week. Bills will be presented for payment on all amounts due on subscription: to those who trust the accounts will be promptly adjusted.

Madison, May 21st, 1860.

GUERNSEY PRESS FOR SALE.—We will sell cheap a Guernsey Power Press, having no further use for it. It is in good order, and will be sold at a bargain. It is now standing in the Patriot Press Room. Enquire of S. P. KOCZWA, Chicago, or at the Patriot office, Madison.

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CARPENTER & HYER.

PUBLIC NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given, that we will hold ourselves responsible for no debt contracted in our names, not expressly authorized by us, either upon our order, or upon personal sanction.

Madison, May 17th, 1860. CARPENTER & HYER. dif

MARKED.
In this city, on the 20th September last, by H. J. ROBERTS, Esq., Mr. DAVID STRUKY and Mrs. ELIZABETH SEWITZKI, both of China, source county, Wis.

By the same, on Sept. 27th, Mr. ALEXANDER HINES and Miss I. OANFIELD, both of Columbia co., Wis.

CROCKERY.
IN THIS DEPARTMENT we keep what is usually kept in a Crockery Store, and offer the goods at LOWER PRICES than usual in this city.

HUNTLEY & STEENSLAND, U. & BR. July 9

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Offers his Eyes. Our treatment never injuring the eyes. — BOARD AN IS OFFICE, AND II persons, Wisconsin.

I have known Dr. pronounced incurable July 31st 1852

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ever seen in Madison June 5

ILL REFS

James Richard O'Neill was born in Ireland (Per Census)

Date of Birth, Feb. 11, 1833 based on a sworn deposition in a lawsuit.

6 ft. family marker on plot in Greenridge Cemetery, Kenosha erected in Dec. 1877, shortly after death of brother, John O'Neill, seems to show James's Oct. 6, 1863 death as being at age 29 years and 8 months. This would correspond to Feb. 1834, which seems erroneous. James, of course, is not buried in Kenosha, but in the federal veterans section of Baxter Springs, KS cemetery, along with other victims of the massacre.

Obituaries of other family members indicate emigration of the family from Ireland was in 1835.

However, Ancestry.com passenger arrivals says that a Charles O'Neill, age 26, a weaver; wife Eliza, 20; and 1 year old son, James, 1 year (or less) arrived in New York on July 8, 1833, aboard the 343 ton sailing ship, Rhode Island.

Place of Birth, possibly County Monaghan, in Ulster adjoining County Tyrone.

James' uncle, his father's younger brother Matthew O'Neill was born 4/5/1823 in Drumbirn, County Monaghan, Ireland. Came to United States in 1827 (Census 1900, Buffalo NY said arrived 73years previous) Matthew, a Lake Michigan lake captain, died in Buffalo, 6/18/1902. Buried O'Neill plot in Kenosha/Greenridge Cemetery. If Matthew was only 4 years old when came to US, presumably was with his parents, yet to be located.

Per obituary, James' father, Charles O'Neill was born in Ireland in the year 1800. *Thus it is possible he also was born in County Monaghan.*

BACKGROUND FOR CHARLES O'NEILL -- Born Ireland 1800. In Ireland, married Elizabeth Mary Douglas, unknown date. Child, James Richard, born Family emigrated to US in 1835.

Other Children, Elizabeth Mary (same as her mother), born August 28 1836, in Quebec, Canada; and John Charles, born 1838 in New York State.

From this I conclude that the O'Neill family came first to Canada, (perhaps via port of New York, but very soon settled in Quebec. However, briefly, they lived in New York State in 1838 when youngest son was born. Family obituary information indicates family came to Kenosha (Southport) WI in 1843 "from Canada."

Charles O'Neill, wife, Elizabeth, three children lived in village of Southport (incorporated as city of Kenosha in 1850) from 1843. They are shown in 1846 and 1847 Wis. Territorial Census as living in village of Southport.

On May 8, 1849, Charles O'Neill was appointed by Pres. Zachary Taylor as keeper of the Southport lighthouse. He kept that position after Pres. Millard Fillmore became president upon Taylor's death. O'Neill's appointment was controversial, locally, since it ousted Jeremiah Jordan, the popular keeper. 1850 Census shows Charles O'Neill as lighthouse keeper; he and his family living within the new city of Kenosha.

Charles O'Neill remained lighthouse keeper until April 29, 1853, when he resigned, as he was required to do, and was replaced by a new keeper.

The 1855 State Census shows O'Neill as a farmer, and living with wife but with only a son and a daughter, on a farm in Somers, the town adjoining Kenosha on the north. As we will see, eldest son, James moved out the previous year.

However, the 1860 US Census shows the entire family, including James, living on the same Somers farm.

Sept. 25, 1861, Charles O'Neill was reappointed lighthouse keeper by Republican President Abraham Lincoln, a post he held until Dec. 25, 1865.

1870 US Census shows Charles, wife Elizabeth, daughter, Elizabeth living on another farm in the town of Pleasant Prairie, the town adjoining Kenosha on the south. John has left the home for parts unknown, and James, of course, was dead by then.

Kenosha City Directory 1875, shows Charles O'Neill back in the city of Kenosha, seemingly living with or near his by-then-married daughter. And on Sept. 13, 1875, as reported in the Kenosha Telegraph, Sept. 16, Charles O'Neill, former lighthousekeeper and wife were living on Mechanic St (Later Durkee Ave., and today, 3rd Avenue) and Vermont St. (no longer in existence, but at the south end of Eichelmann Park, and on the lake shore. That morning, Charles O'Neil walked downtown and ordered a wheelbarrow made for him. Then he took a walk along the beach with his dog.

Several witnesses saw them there. He was seen wading in the water and it was thought he was gathering driftwood. Later that day he was found, dead on the beach, with his dog waiting by his side.

An accident? Suicide? Something else. A doctor reported he drowned but may have suffered a fatal stroke while in the water. Charles O'Neill was buried in Greenridge Cemetery.

BACKGROUND ON ELIZABETH MARY O'NEILL, James' mother.

She was born in County Tyrone, Ulster in northern Ireland in 1803. She was the daughter of Richard Douglas. Her mother's maiden name was Anderson. She married Charles O'Neill in Ireland; had two sons, James and John, and a daughter, also Elizabeth Mary.

After her husband's death in 1875, she continued to live with her daughter. At the age of 93, on Feb. 18, 1896, she died and was buried next to her husband, Charles, in Greenridge Cemetery.

BACKGROUND ON ELIZABETH MARY O'NEILL, James' sister.

She was born in Quebec, Aug. 28, 1836, and came, with her family, to Southport (Kenosha) in 1843. She became a school teacher and, later gave private music lessons.

June 1, 1874, Elizabeth Mary O'Neill, age 38, married for the first time, Orla M. Calkins (b. July 1836, Oswego NY) They were married in the Episcopal church. The O'Neills were Episcopalian, not Catholic.

Orla Calkins was a traveling salesman for a time, but he opened a successful grocery business in Kenosha and became moderately well to do. In 1909, Calkins donated a large bronze statue of a seated Lincoln to mark the 100th birthday of Lincoln. But before this gift to the city, which stands today, was unveiled that year, Calkins died suddenly.

His widow continued to live in their stately home on 3rd Avenue (Durkee Ave) 1910 Census shows her, a widow, living in the same 3rd Avenue home. Reportedly on east side of the street, just south of Eichelman Park. This house later was moved to 909 72nd St., and a new residence was built on the 3rd Ave. site.

Circa 1911-1913, she remarried, a Col. Webster Porter Moore, identified as the commander of the Loyal Legion of Wisconsin, apparently a veterans group. Moore died about 1918.

Widowed a second time, Elizabeth Mary O'Neill Calkins Moore herself died at her Durkee Avenue (3rd Avenue by today's addresses) on May 24, 1919.

BACKGROUND OF JOHN CHARLES O'NEILL, James' brother.

He was born 1838 in New York State, and came with his family to Southport (Kenosha) in 1843. He continued to live at home according to the census accounts, 1850 (only 12 years old), 1855 State Census, and 1860, when he was listed as a 19 year old clerk (he would have been about 22, actually).

By the 1870 census, when he would have been 32, he is no longer shown as living at home with his parents in Pleasant Prairie, nor can he be located living anywhere else. At the time of his father's death, the obituary indicates that he was "living abroad." His name on the family memorial marker, placed in December 1877, shows that he died 11/20/1877. There was a funeral service for him in Kenosha on 12/7/1877 which was "well attended."

Was that actually a funeral, or was it a memorial service. Did he die here or abroad. Is he buried in the plot. We know only he was dead at the age of 39.

BACKGROUND OF MATTHEW O'NEILL, James' uncle

As noted earlier, Matthew, Charles much younger brother, was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, in 1823; came to the US, presumably with parents, at age 4. Per a 5/9/1970 newspaper story, presumably based on a 1906 clipping when a large, 18 ft. granite Celtic cross on a 4.5 ft. base, (\$35,000 cost) was erected over his grave (at the direction of his will), Matthew was a lake captain and Kenosha was his favorite port, likely because his older brother and family lived here, so when he died he wanted to be buried in the O'Neill family plot here. The news clipping indicates he was "descended from early kings of Ireland, daring 12th Century patriots and heroes of the the time of Cromwell in England." But what Irisman would not make such claims. (However, the name O'Neill seems to date to Niall Glundub, a 10th Century (900s) ancestor of the UiNeill line in Ulster which, by the 11th Century, had established its seat of power at Tullahogue, Co. Tyrone. And they all date back to King Niall of the the 9 Hostages, 400 AD) Little is known of Matthew O'Neill life except that in 1900 Census) he was retired, along and living in a rooming house in Buffalo, where he died two years later.

And with that, we can return to:

BACKGROUND OF JAMES RICHARD O'NEILL

James was born in Ireland Feb. 11, 1833. His paternal family came from Drumbirn, Errigal Trough, Clogher diocese, Cos. Monaghan and Tyrone...He came to North America later that year, traveled with his family to Quebec, seemingly briefly to New York State and back to Quebec, from which they all finally came to Southport (Kenosha) in 1843.

He would be one of two sons listed in the territorial censuses in 1846 and 1847, as living with parents within the village of Southport. He is listed as a 16 year old carpenter, living with his family in the lighthouse keepers quarters in the 1850 census.

***Scotts

Speculation, of course, but George J. Robertson, painter of portraits/landscapes (Scotland, b. 1810, son of Presbyterian minister, in teens to London to study at the Royal Academy, to Milw. From Cleveland to Milw. In 1846.) traveled around painting and spent at least a month each year, between 1846-1851, in Southport/Kenosha painting on commission. It is reasonable to suspect that O'Neill (13 in 1846, 18 in 1851) was at least influenced by Robertson and perhaps taught art.

**May have been known in Rockford circa 1861/2 because of Robertson.

It appears that sometime in the early 1850s, perhaps as early as 1852, when he would have been 18, but more likely 1854 or 1855, he went off to Madison to paint. Madison was becoming known as an artistic center in the Midwest.

See Kenosha Telegraph, Feb. 5, 1857. "Fellow citizens Mr. and Mrs. D.L. Scott are nightly rapturously encored in their graceful dances, while to the magic brush of J. O'Neill of our city, is the world of Madison indebted for the varied scenery of mountain, lake, tree and river, with castles, dungeons, cities, etc., etc., nightly unrolled and rolled up before their wondering eyes, (canvas sets and drops, no doubt, and not panorama paintings are meant here) to say nothing of the remarkable success he has had in personating the character of the 'fierce brigand' or the singularly lifelike manner which, in the closing tableaux of the 'Carpenter of Rouen,' he exiates on the gallows his offenses toward the 'Carpenter,' aforesaid. Tis ?? let us bear our honors meekly." Signed S., probably Christopher Latham Sholes.

During this period he MAY have become familiar with Pellage's Band, supposedly well known in Madison.

Oct. 17, 1857, per Argus and Democrat, Madison, Langrishe and Atwater opened 3rd season at Fairchild's Hall on Sept. 21, 1857, with anmts that two "excellent scenic artists, Messers. O'Neil and (Albert) Godell" The latter was a New York designer. The two would serve as permanent members of the company.

May 8, 1858, O'Neill gave a legal deposition in a lawsuit in Madison. Langrishe and Atwater were sued by a Samuel Hoyt and his wife, Teresa. She injured her leg in April 1856, when seats collapsed in L&A's Great Western Amphitheater tent show in Madison at the start of the traveling theatrical season. Jury awarded them \$750 damages. O'Neill testified that he was 25 on Feb. 11 of that year, 1858, hence born Feb. 11, 1833. He also said he had been with L&A for a little more than three years, that is, probably March or April 1855.

In 1858, O'Neill boarded in Madison on Main, between Pinckney and Webster.

Find out with whom he boarded. Also how far from his studio in City Hall.

** May have gone abroad in late 1850s cf Castle Garden immigration depot since 1855. Trip abroad, however, seems unlikely.

Per Sept. 8, 1858 Argus and Democrat, O'Neill remained with the National Theater for L&A, and his studio was a room at the City Hall. A reporter left the following record of O'Neill. "He was painting a snug looking room scene... Two or three motions of his skillful hand, formed a shelf, and one or two more placed upon it, a candlestick, pitcher and cup. We had hardly concluded wondering at this, before a picture frame was suspended upon the wall, and speedily filled up with a traveler passing over rocky country. We envy O'Neil his power to make common canvas glow with the spirit of Nature or art, as seen in the varied landscape, the Ocean, the antiquated Chamber or Drawing Room.

Sept, 16, 1856 The New Theater is progressing finely. The fourth story of Van Bergen's Block is nearly completed and before our citizens are aware of the fact, we

In the 1860s and 1870s, it would be a focal point for artists making panoramic maps, or so-called birdseye views, mostly published by art printing firms in Milwaukee and Chicago.

In (1856), the art community in Madison included Samuel Marsden Brookes, who painted portraits (and landscapes, and taught painting, as did his partner, Thomas H. Stevenson); the "celebrated" Bronson (also reported as Bronxson), nationally known L. Rowley Jacobs, portrait painter, photograph;, ambrotype and daguerrian operator: the "large and elegant establishment of Johnson and Fuller (John S. Fuller, artist, b. 1828) which rolls out pictures of "all kinds by wholesale" (probably a printmaking establishment) and O'Neill, who paints scenic and portraits. Latest was a picture called "The Fortunes of the Cup," which was to be disposed of by lottery. Shown at the Museum Room. (see Madison Argus, shortly before 4/3/56) Possibly received training from Brookes/Stevenson??

Further to the Madison scene: (per Madison Wisconsin State Journal, 3/12/1856-9/27/1856.) Jacobs was L. Rowley Jacobs of Seaver & Jacobs Photographic Picture Gallery, though Jacobs also painted portraits. They were located in the 4 story brick Buren's Block (built by the late W.R. Buren in 1853, on the north side of Capitol Park, Washington Avenue and Pinckney St. Jacobs was an oil painter who had exhibited in New York City, the Wisconsin and Illinois State Fairs. Johnson and Fuller had a well known photo studio. Temple of Art. Bronson or Bronxson has his studio on the fourth floor of the Buren's Block. Also on the 4th floor was the Seaver & Jacobs Picture Gallery and, in a separate room, the so-called Museum room (see above re O'Neill's painting) Also a J.S. Clow opened a studio in the former Daguerrian Gallery next door to Colwell's Drug Store on Pinckney St. Ad for opening in 6/4/1858 Madison Daily State Journal. In 1858, per Madison Daily State Journal, 9/10/1858, also was a fine art gallery with Messrs. Brown and Holt. Unknown who they were.

In early 1855, he joined the traveling theatrical troupe of Langrishe and Atwater as a scenery painter. During the 1850s, from 1851-1859, Langrishe and Atwater played regularly in Madison WI during the winter months (Jan. to March or April) when the *state legislature was in session, providing larger audiences. Initially their theater was located in a hall on the third floor of the Fairchild Block, at the corner of Morris and Pinckney St., off of the capitol park in downtown Madison. During the rest of the year, they toured, mostly Wisconsin but with sojourns into Minnesota and Michigan. From at least 1856, possibly 1855, they performed in a large tent theater, easily moved, which eliminated the need to rent a theater in each town where they played. When in Madison, the tented Great Western Ampitheater was located at the rear of the Brurn's Block building at Washington and Pinckney St., on the north side of capital park. For more details on Langrishe and Atwater, see separate file.*

In early 1857 newspaper accounts, it is certain that James O'Neill continued to paint and create scenery, but also had become an actor. One account describes him as a fine actor in a drama of the day called the Carpenter of Rouen. Since the part he played was one of the leads, he apparently was not just a bit player.

conductor, probably O'Neill, who called himself E. Pluribus Barnum. Seemed to be a spoof of the Madison commandery of the Knights Templars. In fact, in Oct. 1, 1859 WSJ, there is an announcement of the regular meeting of the Knights of Augustine that evening at the organization's "rooms" in Bacon's Block at 8 o'clock. O'Neill signed it W.F., presumably standing for Worshipful Fellow, a parody of the Masonic order. A certain W.W. Bird, was listed as secretary. W.W. Bird was another Madison printer. In another instance, this sort of "meeting" announcement was signed by O'Neill as K.O.T.J.N., which presumably stood for Knight of the J? N?

This curious "fun" organization of a group of irreverent young men reached its zenith on Independence Day, 1859. Under nom d'jour Ye Anciente and Horrible Artillerie, the group of young wags donned masks or false whiskers and dressed in outlandish military uniforms. Banging tin pans, whooping it up, and displaying a banner reading, "We stupe to konker!" They paraded through Madison for an hour and a half.

The State Journal called the mock celebration "absolutely one of the best examples of 'fantastica' we have ever witnessed!" The next day, however, a Madisonian, who identified himself only as "T," wrote a letter to the editor complaining that the motley "ragamuffin cavalcade" had mocked and demeaned the militia companies that marched in the community's "real" parade" earlier that day.

This prompted O'Neill to respond, anonymously signing himself O.E.O., defended the event as "a harmless amusement," lambasting the complaint as "old fogeyism" and "purile twaddle." "T is evidently a sorehead," he wrote. "Young America no sooner kicks off his clouts (period regionalism referring to a baby's diapers" than he complains. Nonetheless, least it be thought to have demeaned the Madison militia, Ye Ancient and Horrible Artillerie did pass a resolution, published in the paper, offering the local militia "the right hand of fellowship."

It would not be the last mock military 4th of July celebration for O'Neill.

June 16, 1859, The friends of Mr. James O'Neil, formerly of Kenosha will be well pleased to learn that he is making fine progress in his profession – scenery and landscape painting. He is now engaged in painting new scenery for both the theaters in St. Paul, Minn. (KT)

January 27, 1860, the Wis. State Journal referred to O'Neill singing a comic song. A Miss Clara danced.

Feb. 2, 1860, per the State Journal, "O'Neill sings."

Feb. 11, 1860, SJ reports O'Neill's appearance on stage as Richelieu

In the late 1850s, it seems O'Neill was painting in Madison, and at some point painted panoramas. In the mid 19th Century, the rolled panorama, a kind of portable mural, became a popular amusement and educational device. Accompanied by a

shall have one of the finest theaters in the western country. Mr. James o'Neill is now engaged in painting the scenery at the City Hall and is getting up some very fine scenes.

In October 1858, Langrishe began his theater season in a remodeled hall in Madison, WI, which he called Lyceum Theater.

Jan. 8, 1859, Madison Daily State Journal reported that Langrish troupe will open again tonight. All the old favorites return, including Langrishe, Gossin, Miles, O'Neill and Mrs. Langrishe, with other members of the company. This company deserves and will no doubt receive a liberal patronage during the winter.

Jan. 15, 1859, State Journal. Lyceum again performing. There were two new performances, Schinderhannes or the Black Brotherhood, and the farce, Naval Engagements. And "Mr. Oh Kneel" dances.

Feb. 26, 1859. Mr James O'Neill, the talented Scenic Artist, takes a benefit at the Lyceum on next Monday evening. The "attractions" will be announced in the bills of the day. Mr. and Mrs. Locke appear this evening for the last time in Madison in three new pieces. Tomorrow they leave for Milwaukee where they will go with the regrets of our Theater goers, that they can stay no longer. The pieces for this evening are "The Advocate," "The Yankee Pedlar," and "Both Sides of the Picture." O'Neil has a benefit on Monday.

Feb. 28, Monday, State Journal. James O'Neil, the talented and good looking actor and scenic artist of the New Theater takes a benefit this evening. . . O'Neill will execute one of his inimitable fancy dances. Jim is one of the best hearted fellows in Madison and deserves a full house, for he is a favorite with everyone.

March 18, 1859, O'Neill will deliver himself of one of his inimitable comic dances. Here we would remind our citizens that this is the last time that this good looking actor will appear during the present season. . . O'Neil dances the Highland Fling.

But times were difficult and by March 1859, Langrishe was broke, and ended his theatrical efforts in Wisconsin and disbanded his troupe.

That spring, O'Neill was "president" of a social organization called by various names, apparently as the whim struck him. Sometimes it was merely, The Club, a secret humorous organization whose meeting place, and sometimes time were kept a secret, though the meetings were announced in the newspaper (State Journal). Met about once a week. W. Pop. Hollister, was secretary. He was William Hollister, a Madison printer. The organization seems to have had an Aristotelian flare. References to virtue. Possibly linked to the Lyceum, Aristotle's place of lecturing. Met on various occasions in Feb (18th) and March(7th).

Apparently by May (31) per State Journal, The Club was called the Peripatetics, also reference to Aristotelian walking scholars. Then the head of this group was its

lecture, and often music, the painting, on canvas and wound between two poles, would slowly be unrolled behind a frame, or revealed in sections. Sometimes theatrical realism was utilized in the form of real steam, smoke and sound effects. Among the longest and most ambitious of these rolled panoramas was one 370 meters long, by the American John Banvard, showing the entire course of the Mississippi River. Seemingly O'Neill, in Madison, painted several panoramas, of the Holy Land, of Italy, of the British Isles and of Ireland.

His first panorama, a mishmash with little in the way of a narrative theme, more simply a collection of scenes, was exhibited in Madison at Van Bergen's Hall, beginning Sept. 25, 1859, with the whole McEvoy troupe performing. See Wis. Patriot ad 9/29/59.

The Patriot on 10/1/1859, interviewed the artist, O'Neill. "We supposed that few, if any of our citizens are aware that all these nature-like paintings are from the brush of that talented Madison artist, O'Neill, who began his career as a scenic artist, by painting for Langrishe. O'Neill has been through no pupilage. He has had no tutor, save the art and instincts that nature has endowed him with, and yet, we doubt whether there is a scenic artist in all of these United States that can surpass him in 'spreading nature onto canvas."

In early December 1859, he exhibited a panorama, probably an expanded version which included scenes from the Holy Land, Grecian statuary, the "duel" from "The Corsican Brothers," and scenes on board the "Great Eastern" and "The Minnehaha Falls.:

As early as April and May 1858, Mr. and Mrs. D.L. Scott, dancers and actors from Kenosha who had previously, in 1857, performed with O'Neill in the Langrishe and Atwater troupe in Madison, had gone to Leavenworth and were operating the Melodeon. The 1850 Kenosha Census shows them as D.L. Scott, b. circa 1829, 21 years old, with the theater, and Harriet Scott, 18, both living in Kenosha's 1st ward, with, presumably, Scott's older brother, William Scott, a cabinetmaker. And his family.

On Feb. 29, 1860, Leavenworth Daily Times reported Messrs Gardner & Co. had been working on the panorama for nearly a year. Description of what it included, including battle fields between Border Ruffians and Free State Forces, cities, etc. etc. The artist is now putting on the finishing touch and expects to have the first exhibition in this city. Then to NY and then the country generally.

Gardner likely is George Balthazar Gardner, b.Aug. 15, 1835, in Grosseogarien, Germany (Hesse Darmstadt) in the Odinwald (Forest of Odin). Contrary to father's wishes, he was interested in painting from childhood. Came to US as a young man (possibly 1852, at 17) and first to Pittsburgh. Traveled extensively though, residing for short periods of time at different places. Presumably 1859-1860, in Kansas and the west. In 1868, was living at Port Huron, MI (and teaching at Adrian College), but

came to Hillsdale MI and start of 32 years as prof. of art at Hillsdale College. Died at Hillsboro March 25, 1904.

On May 23, 1860, Leavenworth Daily Times reported (via a correspondent) that had seen (likely not in Leavenworth but probably in Auburn or Topeka, the studio of our old friends?? Messrs Gardner and Lewis a few days before. Highly delighted with the sight of our beautiful city, including Ft. Leavenworth and the Missouri River. The correspondent, Friend of the Fine Arts, said it excelled the famed Panorama of the Mississippi by that prince of artists, Bauvard. Predicted it would be first shown in this city (Leavenworth), then throughout the US and Canada and then Europe.

On May 30, 1860, the Leavenworth Daily Times reported that Mr. Gardner of the firm of Gardner & Co. is in town making preparations for the exhibition of this Panorama of Kansas, the Gold Mines and Utah in a few weeks. Those who have seen it speak highly of it. "It is one of the finest specimens" says the Record of Topeka, "of this description of painting we have ever witnessed." Included several life size portraits of distinguished citizens of Kansas are included. An interesting descriptive lecture to be delivered. Also similar description to that below.

On June 27, 1860, the Leavenworth Daily Times reported that two entrepreneurs Gardner and Lewis were creating a panorama –Gardiner's Railroad Panorama of Kansas, Utah and the Gold Mines –some 3000 square yards of rolled, painted canvas. Later referred to correctly as the Panorama of Kansas and the Gold Fields, or (by December) Panorama of the Missouri River, Kansas, Trip across the Plains to Pikes' Peak and Utah.

The following should be noted about the Leavenworth Daily Times, which will be quoted extensively in the following pages. It is clear that the owner/editor of the Daily Times was a friend of O'Neill's, and afforded him great publicity, seemingly gave him space in the newspaper to report on military activities with Blunt's forces, and upon death, eulogized him.

Moving Panoramas – one might think of them are the entertainment forerunners of movies -- featured artist painted scenes that moved across the stage. The canvas painted scenes unrolled at one side of the stage and were rerolled on the other side. Panorama companies traveled from town to town, setting up their portable displays in rented halls. A lecturer would describe the scenes as the large canvas was unrolled to viewers. Gardner had traveled through the west making sketches, then painted the scenes on a huge canvas. Gimmicks: Moving boats trains, military figures. Chemical panoramas apparently used chemicals to simulate atmospheric conditions. Fog, mist, etc.

On June 27, Gardner and Lewis (possibly Archibald M. Lewis, 45, a carpenter in Topeka) announced that the panorama was virtually completed and would be shown for the first time on July 4 in Auburn KS, as the Panorama of Kansas, per the Kansas State Record in Topeka, 7/7/1860.

Aug. 2, 1860, Gardner and Lewis Panorama opened in Topeka on August 2.

Aug. 9, 1860 opened in Leavenworth. Leavenworth population in 1860 was 7,429
Panorama had scenes on river from Fort Leavenworth to Junction City by water,
then across the Great Plains to the Colorado gold mines, Salt Lake City and
Brigham Young and his wives.

Aug. 14, 1860 Leavenworth Times reported it an unfinished work. To add street
scenes in Leavenworth to boost the community, when exhibited in the East.

Oct. 8, 1860, Gardner and Lewis had studio in Leavenworth. Now there were
expanded plans to combine the Kansas panorama with one of the entire railroad
route from Boston to St. Joseph MO.

Reported that they had artists in the east making sketches (likely O'Neill and W.M.
Hook) Referred to as a diopanoramic exhibition. Studio visited by the Daily Time
editor.

** In 1860 and 1861, exhibited panorama of Ireland in Chicago and Detroit. See
Chicago Times, Sept. 1 and 10, 1860, and Detroit Free Press, Nov. 22, 1860, and Dec.
28 1861

O'Neill's panorama of Ireland, along with Prof. McEvoy and troupe, was exhibited in
Chicago, according to the Chicago Times, Sept. 1 and 10, 1860.

Oct. 11, 1860, A series of pictorial and musical entertainments will be given at the
Franklin Hall in Kenosha, the first of which will appear this evening (Thurs). The
paintings were executed by Mr. James O'Neil, formerly of this city. They represent
magnificent views of scenery in England, Ireland and Scotland. The music, vocal
and instrumental, is such as cannot fail to please. The persons prominent in the
vocal department have a wide reputation. The entertainment is one which elsewhere
draws full houses and will doubtless have appreciative audiences here. Likely the
MacEvoy's

Nov. 22 1860, per Detroit Free Press adv. Beginning Sat. Nov. 24, 1860, for one week,
there was exhibited at the Detroit Firemen's Hall, MacEvoy's Cyclorama (panorama)
of "A Tour Through Ireland." It was called a grand pictorial and musical exhibition,
illustrating the song and scenery of Ireland. The report says 10,000 square feet of
canvas (highly questionable since that would mean, for a 10 ft. tall canvas that it
was 1,000 feet long, more than three football fields in length!) Several hundred feet
would be extreme. It was claimed that it was painted from sketches made in Ireland.
This is fairly doubtful.

It would replay in Detroit in December 1861, according to the Dec. 28, 1861 Detroit
Free Press.

This was a very musical event and very much a family thing. Prof. Charles MacEvoy played the piano; his 12 year old daughter Therese played the Irish harp, her older sister Kate, 17, who sang the works of Moore, Balfe and others, accompanied on harp by 19-year-old Mary (Maria) MacEvoy . A young John Martin Spaulding (another account calls him McAlaster John Spaulding) took the role of Barney, the Irish guide, and sang humorous songs. Therese dressed as an Irish peasant girl, played harp solos. Prof. MacEvoy also presented a historical and descriptive lecture.

At the time, the MacEvoy's lived in Chicago. On June 8, 1860, when the census was taken, James O'Neill (misidentified as Charles) 25, artist, was staying with the MacEvoy's. On June 28, he was counted as living with his parents in Somers, thus he was counted twice. He was recorded there as an artist, 22 (actually 27) My guess is that he had a studio in Chicago, where he painted the panorama, and stayed with the MacEvoy's, but traveled back to Kenosha by boat from Chicago frequently.

MacEvoy, called a professor of music, was both performer and composer, writing many popular and particularly Irish songs, also marches, over the years, between about 1857 and 1885. In about 1870, and into the early 1880s, he headed a troupe of Irish American performers with what was called MacEvoy's Original Hibernion, which was a popular entertainment among Irish Americans in the 1870s-80s, a sort of Irish vaudeville, with music, poetry and other ethnic cultural performances, dancing, fast paced comedy sketches. In that sense, MacEvoy's Cyclorama in Detroit and Chicago and probably other cities, maybe considered a precursor to the Hibernion. In 1870, the MacEvoy's were living on Long Island; in 1880, in Camden, NJ, near Philadelphia.

Nov. 27, 1860. Now it is Gardner and Kiser. (Likely Samuel Kiser, who later operated the Mission House hotel in Leavenworth) Leavenworth added scenes nearly done. Boston railroad scenes advancing.

Likely Gardner went home to Detroit where he met and hired O'Neill.

Dec 10, 1860 Editor visited studio. Panorama of the Great central Railroad Route from Boston to St. Joe, in connection with the Panorama of Kansas, Gold Mines and Utah. Ready in about 4 weeks. The joint panorama now said to be 1400 square yards of canvas, claim largest in world.

Dec. 20, 1860, Editor visited the so-called Gallery of Fine Arts, Gardner and Kiser's studio, second floor at Third and Delaware. Refers to the attractive panorama of the Smoky Hill Route to the (Pikes) Peak.

Dec. 31. The Great Central Railroad Route from Boston to St. Joe now completed. Revealed that it was painted by O'Neill and W.M. Hook. It was indicated that previously, (when, where) O'Neill had painted panoramas of the Holy Land, of Italy, and of the British Isles, that latter having been exhibited in the West and hence was known to Kansans.

No word about it being exhibited in Leavenworth, though. Presumably Gardner and Kiser moved on but O'Neill stayed.

June 9, 1861, Capt. C.R. Jennison and cavalry arrived in Leavenworth.

June 21, 1861, O'Neill had an art studio on Main St., near the post office. This was over Charles McGeevy's Charley Saloon on the west side of Main between Shawnee and Seneca.

O'Neill boarded at John Curran's Exchange Saloon on the north side of Cherokee, between 7th and Broadway in Leavenworth, next door to John Lannen's Grocery and across the street from Edmund M. Rankin's brickyard.

He had just completed a fine picture of the Virgin for Bishop Merge of the Catholic Church. Painting on display at the studio.

Apparently working on Civil War panorama too, however.

Start of fall season prompted complaints from D.W. Wilder, editor of the Leavenworth Conservative, about Templeton's inability to curb rowdy audience. (See Malin)

O'Neill may have joined Jennison about late summer 1861, maybe August., but not formal commission. Nothing in records

Background – Senator James H. Lane, in Washington, cobbled together a company in DC and, briefly, when few other troops available, protected Lincoln and the White House. As such, he gained status and was granted permission by the War Dept. to organize regiments of volunteers in Kansas, independent of state authority. But the Gov. Robinson, resenting Lane's interference, raised two companies before Brig. Gen. Lane arrived. Lane then recruited several more, known collectively, as Lane's Brigade. These were mustered into federal service by mid-June 1861. One was commanded by Col. James Montgomery. About Aug. 1, 1861, Gov. Robinson gave Dr. Charles R. Jennison authority to raise a regiment of cavalry. Previous to statehood, Jennison had made a name for himself leading irregular militia during the Bloody Kansas pre-statehood battles between free and slave states. Jennison's Jayhawkers name carried over to the new cavalry regiment. He was commissioned a colonel by Robinson on Sept. 4, 1861, and began to recruit. His field and staff organization fails to show O'Neill's name. The unit, known originally as the 1st Kansas Cavalry, became the 7th Kansas Cavalry the following spring. Per Simeon M. Fox, Lt. in the regiment and later Kansas Adjutant General, Jennison was a worthless officer, in camp or playing poker, leaving it to Lt. Col. Daniel R. Anthony to actually lead the unit in some minor skirmishes some 13 miles out of Kansas City. In January 1862, fought minor battles in Missouri. In March, went into camp at Humbolt, KS then Lawrence, until April. Jennison left actual leading of the regiment

to Anthony. When Blunt was promoted to brigadier general, Jennison was angry and resigned from command May 1, 1862.

Now it is presumed that O'Neill was sought out and was interested in attaching himself to Jennison and to Lane's command, probably at Ft. Leavenworth. And so, during the months between about August and about Christmas 1861, he made many sketches of the Army, but in particular, portrait sketches of Gen. Lane himself, as well as of Cols. Jennison and Montgomery, of Jennison's Jayhawks. Presumably he received a sort of honorary commission as a lieutenant, and probably wore the uniform, but there is no evidence that he actually received a commission from Gov. Robinson. He was a hanger on at the headquarters and never actually was involved in a command and probably never got out of hq. camp.

Aug. 1861 -- Portrait of Gen. Lane in Leslie's

October 7, 1861, O'Neil's Panopticon of the present war is now being exhibited at Ben Wheeler's American hall. It is a masterpiece and reflects credit upon the young artist by whom it was executed. It included Charleston harbor and shipping, the bombardment of Ft. Sumpter and the illumination of Charleston in honor of the event. Other scenes were to be added.

Nov. 5, 1861, letter written this date received by Kenosha Telegraph, published Nov. 14, from Lt. James R. O'Neill regarding bringing his Panopticon to Kenosha in 3-4 weeks. Indicated he also did sketches of Lane's Brigade and the Kansas Jayhawkers, comprising Cols Jennison and Montgomery, with portraits of those commanders. First indication that O'Neill was in the military and probably was not actually commissioned..

Winter of 1861-62, the amusement of military personnel at the fort became important in Leavenworth, hence the theater.

Dec. 26, 1861. Kenosha Telegraph: "We had a call a day or two since from a quondam Kenosha boy, Lt. James O'Neill, son of our old fellow citizen, Charles O'Neill. He has been most of the past summer and fall in active duty in the Army in Kansas and Missouri and now belongs to Col. Jennison's Kansas Cavalry Regt. That has been doing such efficient services in Missouri lately. Lt. O'Neill is home on furlough, to spend the holidays. He is looking well and hearty, as though a soldier's life agreed with him."

Jan 23, 1862, Kenosha Telegraph announced that O'Neill's Panopticon of the War nearly ready for exhibition in Kenosha. "O'Neil's Panopticon of the War. We understand that our young townsman has his paintings of scenes and incidents of the present and former wars of this country, nearly ready for exhibition. We gave some time ago a notice of these paintings which we understand are of much merit. We know they have been prepared at much labor and expense and we doubt not that they will prove in their arrangement and preparation highly interesting and instructive. The series of paintings are arranged in a moving Panorama with moving

figures that will give the beholder the most graphic idea of the original. The Panopticon will be ready for exhibition sometime next week.

Feb. 18 1862. Announced the renovation, painting, papering and decorating of the old Stockton's Hall to become the Union Theater, at Delaware and 4th St.

Stockton Hall had been built in 1859 ref Theater in Kansas, 1858-1868, by James C. Malin, Kansas Historical Quarterlies, www.kancoll.org) Theater on second floor, with Cooter's saloon, Coolidge & Company drug store, and Ashton & Bros had a wholesale liquor store on first floor, and a pork packing business in basement. Was 48 ft. (on Delaware) and 90 ft on Fourth St. On March 20, Burt and wife opened it as a theater, Union Theater.

George Burt was still the theater manager. A new troupe of actors to be hired, but apparently was April before this happened.

Feb. 27, 1862, ancd Kenosha Telegraph that the exhibition at Simmons Hall would open "tonight."

"The Panopticon. Don't forget the exhibition at Simmons Hall tonight, tomorrow night and Saturday night.

March 6, 1862 ancd K Telegraph, that has been on exhibit 5 nights and drawn good houses.

"The Panopticon. Mr. O'Neill's Panopticon of the War has been on exhibition five nights and has drawn good houses every night. This is as it should be. We love to see home talent and home enterprise appreciated and patronized.

Mar. 13, 1862 K Telegraph ancd that the Rockford Democrat had noted the Panopticon reviews in the Kenosha paper, and indicated that O'Neill was familiar to the editor and said city would welcome him and the Panoticon to Rockford.

April 23, 1862, A Mr. Ford, special artist for Harpers, now with the 8th Kansas Regiment, had sketched Ft. Leavenworth, which he sent on to the newspaper that day. This may have prompted Frank Leslie's to look for its own special artist.

May 13, 1862, Daily Times reports arrival on Sunday of the second battalion of the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry at the fort. Accompanied by a fine brass band. Pellages...

June 3, 1862, the 3rd Wis. Cav. Band "discourseth sweet music" for the civilian audience in the vicinity of the esplanade. Also was a parade of the 3rd Wis. Cav. On Leavenworths main street.

June 14, 1862 a flag presented to the Military Hospital by the Ladies volunteer Aid Society. The 3rd Wis. Cav. Band played.

Nothing in Leavenworth newspaper about the Peltage Band after this. Perhaps we can assume there was contact between band and O'Neill but nothing specific in the newspapers.

June 17, 1862, summer grand opening of the summer season of the Union Theater in Leavenworth, at the SW corner of Delaware and 4th St. Owner was now Alfred Shea Addis, also owner of the building (from March 1862 to Jan. 1864, when abolitionists – presumably – burned it down and the Addis' fled to Mexico. Was rebuilt on same site later in 64), who "secured an efficient dramatic company" to open the season with two plays, "The Avenger" and "The Honeymoon."

Addis lived on the South side of Delaware, between 7th and Broadway. His photographic studio (with skylight) was at 48 Delaware, over the Haas (H.B. and M.B. Haas) brothers cigar and liquor store.

On July 1, 1862, Leavenworth Daily Times reported the bill at the Union Theater, including Burt and Templeton. Then "O'Neil has shot from his starry orbit and does hereafter the stage managing of the American."

The American Concert Theater has been described as "Ben Wheeler's 10 Cent show, a disreputable 'varieties' dive in Leavenworth." It was located on the north side of Shawnee, between 4th and 5th Streets and later, V.M. Gorham bought it from Wheeler.

On July 2, 1862, Daily Times reports "The American draws like a large mule or a mustard plaster. The performances are of the first order of merit in the Concert line."

July 4, 1862 per Malin/Theater in Kansas, Ben Wheeler, then operator of the American Concert Hall in Leavenworth put together a troupe called the Ancient and Honorable Fusileers, a facetious military group, which he "commanded" as Colonel, and O'Neill, captain. Paraded on the 4th and accepted recruits. Apparently this mock military group was formed for the previous 4th. The Daily Times, July 4, 1862 says further, The Fusileers, by order of Col. Ben Wheeler, promulgated in council last evening, will parade today in honor of the ever glorious Fourth. An oration will be orated, we expect by Chaplain O'Neill, the eleebrated orator who distinguished himself so greatly last year. In the evening the Fusileers will honor the American by their presence, and a great programme of novelty is prepared for their entertainment. (Also participating was "Major" John Freeland, bartender at the American Concert Hall.)

On July 17, 1862, Daily Times reported "J.R. O'Neil This gentleman, cast in three different parts last evening (presumably at the American), exhibited a knowledge of the drama and a conception of character which is truly refreshing to meet with. He seems endowed with a clear comprehension of what he is doing, whether, as an old man or low comedian, and this is much more than can be said of many other ambitious aspirants for histrionic fame. If he plays and English landlord, it is not

done as a "front cut wood robber," and his low comedy can't be made to assimilate with the hero of a blue fire melodrama. Mr. O'Neil is what might be termed a "useful man" on the stage. Everything he attempts is done well, and we know of no single instance wherein an actor of equal pretensions has so admirably succeeded in holding "the mirror up to nature."

On July 20, 1862, Daily Times reported that last night (7/19) closed the season at the American. This house, before opening again, will be thoroughly renovated and an entire new company brought on for the fall campaign.

July 24, 1862, O'Neill's penopticon of the war will be exhibited at Wheeler's American Concert hall, Leavenworth, this evening. Numerous scenes have been added since last fall.

July 31, Daily Times reports "Theater – The fairy spectacle or extravaganza of Beauty and the Beast will be presented at the Theater this evening with the original music and new scenery painted by that clever artist, Mr. O'Neill. The house was only fair last evening to witness the play for the benefit of the Irish poor. Mrs. Walters starred, Judy O'Trott and sang song in brogue, "Trust to Luck."

Aug. 4, 1862, Theatre- For the Saturday night bill, the management have put up the sensational piece of "The Galley Slave," and the scenic and musical extravaganza entitled, "Beauty and the beast." The machinery worked well, and O'Neill's new snow scene is really a masterpiece of effect. As a scenic artist, he will probably show the patrons of the Union, before long, that some things can be done as well as others.

On Aug. 15, 1862 Daily Times said this evening was a benefit for actor Harry Jordan, Tom Taylor's splendid comedy Still Waters Run Deep, O'Neill played "Old Potter." Has been a successful season.

Aug.17, 1862, Editor of the Daily Times notes that Alfred Shea's Addis' Union Theater ended its summer season the night before. Then he comments favorably on the actors and actresses of the troupe, Miss Helena and Mrs. Walters, Mr. (John) Templeton, the manager (Burt fired in July, and Templeton appointed stage manager to replace him. Temple remained stage mgr until July 1863, when he was replaced by George Chaplin.) Also commented upon favorably in the newspaper were Mr. Jordan, a comedian; a fellow named Healey. . . and O'Neill. "What would they do without the latter, who not only gets up the scenery in a truly artistic manner, but plays everything, from Brabantio **Father of Desdemona in Shakespeare's Othello** to Lady Creamley, **a female character, in drag, from The Serious Family, a 3 act comedy by Moris Barnett.** at home in anything among the "wings."

Aug. 30, 1862, the editor visits the empty theater, and comments on the contrast between the vibrancy of a performance night and the day when the actors are gone and all there are are the painted sets in the dim daylight, among them "The snow

scene painted by O'Neill." A rather dramatic bit about the "poetry of the drama disappears in daylight, and the glitter of mimic royalty disappears like the pageant of a dream."

Sept. 7, 1862, in anticipation of a new season of theater at the Union, "A new palace scene just completed by O'Neil for the the Union Theater is one of the most beautiful specimens of scenic painting we have ever beheld, and puts one in mind of the pictures of Versailles and the Louvre. O'Neil can "make his work" with a brush."

Sept. 13, 1862, it is clear that O'Neill had some degree of management responsibility, briefly, about this time, re Union Theater. However, John Templeton was still in charge of stage managing and the troupe. On this date, the Daily Times reported that "O'Neil is putting up a 'Green Room' in the first story of the Theater Building. It will be decorated in his finest style." A Green Room is a sort of lounge for actors and actresses when not on stage, usually furnished with food. The newspaper editor might be invited to the Green Room to talk with the performers, mingle with them. Since O'Neill was well aware of the value of publicity, he seems to have actively courted the press, in Leavenworth and Kenosha, since it would be beneficial in getting free mentions, re the theater and his art career, in the paper.

Sept. 14, 1862, O'Neill and French (probably 22 year old Samuel French, unmarried, lived in Leavenworth, was one of the acting company. They set a lunch in the Green Room on Tuesday night, with soup and sich. Daily Times also said the Union Theater to open a new season on Tuesday night with "Lady of the Lake," starring Healey.

Sept 15, 1862 it did open, but with local cast. The new company of actors hired had not yet arrived. The newspaper complained "The old routine won't do." The Daily Times indicated that the cast was to reach Leavenworth on the 17th. Daily Times reported O'Neill and French open the Green Room this evening. It is fitted up in the finest style and will keep on hand the purest of liquids.

Sept. 23, 1862, Daily Times repted "We saw O'Neill yesterday, He is engaged to paint a new scene and was going to Weston in search of the point of sight.

Sept. 24, 1862 Daily Times. And so, they did, paper reported, mentioning performances of "La Tour de Nesle" and" the farce, "Spectre Bridegroom." Mentioned that the previous night, the 23rd, an "Otoe" delegation attended and expressed gratification at what they saw. Obviously, Indians in the audience, apparently a novel scene, giving a "boost" to the theater. "If the red folks could appreciate the playing, it's more than a pale face can do." Also Times was critical of the critic from the Inquirer newspaper who had commented unfavorably on Camile.

Oct. 22, 1862 – Eastern Okla., Blunt in Battle of Old Fort Wayne

On Nov. 6, 1862, Daily Times noted that O'Neill bought out the Green Room and is now "sole lessee and proprietor" He gets up oysters in every style and has the

liquid accompaniments under the theater. O'Neill is handsome and talented and puts red on his nose in "Dennis," one of the best Irish parts he plays.

Nov. 27, 1862, Blunt assumed command of the Army of the Frontier

Nov. 28, 1862- Arkansas Battle of Cane Hill.

Nov. 29, 1862, Blunt promoted to Major General.

Dec. 7 1862, Battle of Prairie Grove during Prairie Grove paign.

On Dec. 18, 1862, Daily Times reported that a benefit would be warranted for O'Neill. His popularity would bring more money to the treasury than it ever gets on stock nights. He has played with success two seasons and is entitled to a benefit unless it is otherwise expressly nominated in the bond.f

Dec. 27-28 Van Buren, Arkansas Van Buren raid.

Fall-Winter-1862 and Spring 1863 – Background

Things were chaotic in Leavenworth during the fall of 1862 and first part of 1863. It was a rough town, and things got rougher. The theater scene particularly suffered, with Templeton getting a lot of flak in the community because of the nasty behavior of male patrons of his shows. He seemingly was unwilling, or more likely, unable to get the Union Theater crowds under control. He barely hung onto his job.

On Feb. 14, 1863 Reported a great Unconditional Union Meeting at Turners; Hall last night (2/13). Hall filled with enthusiastic Union men. Speakers included Gen Blunt, Col Jennison, other officers, and O'Neill. O'Neill introduced a resolution, unanimously adopted, Resolved That loyal men should not pay or make good any losses sustained by traitors and that we regard any attempt to comply or enforce such payment a participation in treason.

Things got so bad that owner, Alfred Shea Addis shut down the Union Theater from Mid January to Mid March 1863. In February, to establish order, Gen. Blunt declared martial order in the town for a time. On top of that, actress Clara Walters, the bell of the Leavenworth theater scene, was having trouble with her husband, actor C.F. Walters, and she threw him out. The community sided with her and virtually ran him out of town (See Malin)

Without husband and with the Union Theater shut down, Clara (aka June Clara Walters later in her career). See Margaret Lauterbach email) was struggling financially, and so put together her own troupe of other out of work actors and actresses. As the People's Theater Company, they presented musicals in makeshift halls. When she tried to rent some of Addis' Union Theater chairs, Addis refused. A public squabble, resulting in the fact that when the Union did reopen, Addis refused to rehire her.

And when it reopened, to tame the rowdyism, Addis and that the saloon on the ground floor (The Union Theater on the second floor) would be closed during performances. When things settled down a little, in Mid March, Addis sent Templeton east to hire a new company of actors, including "stars" such as Cecile Rush, Mary Shaw and C.W. Couldock, etc., to win back audiences. Meanwhile Clara giving the Union real competition with her makeshift performances. But the stress proved too great and she suffered a breakdown on May 30, and could not perform for a month. But Addis patched things up with her and when she returned to the stage July 2, 1863, with *Much Ado about Nothing*, the Union drew its largest audience ever, to date. In June, Jack Langrishe and his wife, Allen, played at the Union en route back east from Denver. In the new season starting August 29, 1863, John Wilkes Booth played at the Union

On July 4, 1863, *Leavenworth Daily Times* reported that the *Fort Scott Bulletin* reported the previous Wednesday that Maj. Gen. James Blunt had arrived at Ft. Scott with his splendid brass band and performed for the citizens.

July 6, 1863. Much rejoicing over the victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. A big civic parade to Fackler's Grove where a large concourse of people had gathered. Speeches made. In evening, fireworks and a meeting at the Mansion House in Leavenworth. Mayor Anthony read order from Blunt "suppressing" the *New York World*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Columbus Crisis*, *Chicago Times* and "Caucasian in this district) ??Leavenworth Conservative??

All copies that had accumulated in the post office were burned by policeman Spaulding. Speeches by the mayor, Col. Jennison, Capt Loyt (Hoyt??) and others.... A similar enthusiastic meeting on July 9, with more speeches by mayor and Jennison and others.

July 11, 1863, a curious letter dated July 5 from Gettysburg "from our own correspondent" in *Daily Times*. To the "Editor D.T.: In the language of the 'leading paper,' 'glory to God' and Gen. Meade and the Army of the Potomac, which has proved itself of a verity the army of the Lord, and it is marching on now to some purpose, or we greatly mistake the signs of the times, which, as Jim O'Neil says, clearly indicate the downfall of the Southern Confederacy, or at least that portion thereof commanded by Lee, Longstreet..."

Clearly written by a civilian from Leavenworth who was there but not at the front lines because civilians could not get passes to the front, but, after the battle, with the help of a friend in the 12th Corps, and with a little strategy, he visited a portion of the battlefield. Does not read as lightly as the piece, earlier, from Mars. I do not think it was by O'Neill, but clearly by someone who knew O'Neill back in Leavenworth.

July 17, 1863, [Battle of Honey Creek, Indian Territory](#)

On July 28, 1863, Under Gen. Blunt we had martial law in the city for many months at a time. The city was never

More prosperous than then. Martial law makes peace and security. People from all parts of the country flocked here to trade because they felt obscure. What is the difference now. Martial law makes peace and security certain. So (Mayor) Anthony and his followers/ opposed to martial law declared by Gen Ewing.

Oct. 2, 1863, Ladies of Leavenworth presented flag to Blunt

Nothing then until Oct. 7, when a special report receive about the Baxter Springs Massacre.

Oct. 11, Daily Times.

"Among those butchered by Quantrill in his recent attack on General Blunt was our friend, James R. O'Neill. Following the Army of the Frontier as artist and correspondent, he was captured with the band and brutally murdered. Kansas and freedom have lost a true and well beloved friend. Who can forget the genial face, the manly and robust form, the sparkling wit, the unvarying amiability, or the bold purity of heart and life of our lost and lamented brother. Conspicuous among those who in the very beginning of the rebellion flung their loyalty against the sympathizing and cowardly friends of the Southern cause in Kansas; earliest among those who organized unconditional warfare against the enemies of the Government; an abolitionist, a humanitarian – James R. O'Neill won the admiring respect of every loyal man he met. Artist, actor, musician – the versatility of his acquirements enabled him to shine in every occupation of his life. Dead! Thought living ever under the shadow of the imperial wing of the Good Angel, he did not fear to die; nor will his good example cease to live. Unshriven by earthly priest, but shrived, foreign and accepted by virtue of great and unceasing goodness of heart and an invincible conscience, we shall not forget dear James O'Neill. G.H.H.

We do know that after O'Neill's death he was eulogized by the New York Times' correspondent in Leavenworth, who referred to him as "a young man of genius, versatility and generosity. He possessed brilliant power, and as an artist, musician, orator and actor...

Clearly, somehow, he was known to folks in that community as a performer in the Leavenworth theater.

The Leavenworth Conservative newspaper, quoted in the Kenosha Telegraph, refers to O'Neil as a "dear friend," and called him "gallant, generous, talented, we all loved the jovial Irish actor and artist."

Two postscripts:

Leavenworth Daily Times: Jan. 24, 1864, pg. 3 c.1: "O'Neill's Great Diorama of the War will be exhibited at Turner's Hall on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings this week. The exhibition consists of war scenes, battles, incidents, etc., which have transpired since the commencement of the rebellion, presented with lifelike actions and military precision, and requires over 5,000 moving figures. As the painting was the work of the late and lamented James R. O'Neill, artist, actor, musician and scholar, one of Quantrill's victims at the Baxter's Spring massacre, it

will be of double interest to his many friends and acquaintances here, as a living testimonial of his genius and talent. This last production from O'Neill's gifted brain and ready pencil, we are confident, will prove of rare artistic merit, and its exhibition be both entertaining and instructive."

And, Daily Times: Jan. 27, 1864, pg. 3, col. 1 "There will be an afternoon exhibition of O'Neill's Diorama of the War at Turner's Hall for the convenience of ladies and children, the admission being only 15 cents. The last exhibition of this work will take place this evening, commencing at 7-1/2 o'clock. This is positively the last opportunity that will be afforded our citizens of witnessing O'Neill's great work."

His sketch of a union cavalry charge (probably the 3rd Wis. Cav) at Honey Springs, July 17, 1863, appeared in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper in its Aug. 25 issue (pg. 364). A brief announcement of his death in Leslie's in mid-October suggested he had worked for the newspaper for some time and previously had a number of sketches previously published.

What were his duties, albeit voluntary, with Blunt's headquarters staff? My assumption is that his presence was beneficial to Blunt if O'Neill could get the general's exploits into the national press.

And so, he was slain at Baxter Creek (see separate file for account of the fight and its aftermath, O'Neill's burial and, subsequent (2?) reburials)