

SWANZEY PLAYERS

1955

SOUVENIR PROGRAM

Friday, Saturday and Sunday Evenings

14th Annual Revival

DENMAN THOMPSON'S

"The Old Homestead"

Potash Bowl

Swanzy, New Hampshire

DIRECTOR

Harold F. Drew

IN THE

MONADNOCK REGION

MUSIC DIRECTOR

J. Edward Bouvier



Uncle Josh
Willard L. Thompson

and

Aunt Matilda
Ethel Dudley

The Old Homestead

DENMAN THOMPSON'S parents, Capt. Rufus Thompson and the former Anne Hathaway Baxter, daughter of Dr. Henry Baxter of Swanzey, lived in Beech Wood, Pa. for a short time and it was during this time that Denman was born. After returning to Swanzey, Denman attended Mt. Caesar Academy during the winter, and worked on the farm summers.

At the age of 17 Denman left home and joined a circus in Boston, riding with the opening pageant, and working with the wrestlers and tumblers. Later he went on the stage and played comedy parts.

At the age of 42, Denman Thompson wrote a skit characteristic of New England life which he called "Joshua Whitcomb" and which character part he portrayed. This skit was later developed into "The Old Homestead" play which opened in the Boston Theatre on April 5, 1886. The play toured all the major cities of the United States and its success was tremendous. Denman played the character lead of "Uncle Josh". It is said that he played this part 15,000 times, a single role, longer than any other actor on the American stage.

The theme of the play is built around the age-old story of the Prodigal Son and if Denman had searched the world over he could have found no other theme which would touch as many human hearts as this. Denman embodied in this play the finer yet homlier characteristics of New England life — simplicity, rugged honesty, piety, benevolence, partly hid beneath a rough exterior. Everywhere his drama of Yankee life has stirred the hearts of men.

In 1939 the Hopkins P.T.A. and the Swanzey Congregational Church joined in sponsoring a revival of this famous old play. It was a difficult task but the incentive was there, for this was no ordinary play — this was practically a living page from the history of Swanzey. The original script, which is faithfully followed in the revivals was presented by Mrs. Ethel Homes and Miss Anita Gilpatrick to the Old Homestead Association.

The Swanzey Players take great pride in the authenticity of their production; it has all the heart-warming philosophy of "Uncle Josh", the Yankee wit of "Cy Prime" and "Seth Perkins", and the sympathetic story of "Rube Whitcomb."

The audience, as of yore, still thrills when the yoke of oxen, drawing the "last load o' hay", passes in front of the stage; when the Salvation Army lassies march by singing in front of the original Grace Church scene, and when "Josh" finds his erring son on the sidewalks of New York.

All in Swanzey are proud to give their services to further this wonderful example of neighborhood cooperation; and each year the profits derived from this production are equally divided among the four churches of Swanzey — Catholic and Protestant, and the Community Houses of North and East Swanzey.

*"God Bless You Denman Thompson, for the good y' do our hearts
With the music an' the memories o' youth,
God Bless Ye for the faculty that tops all human arts
The good o' Yankee faculty of Truth."*

— EUGENE FIELD



Theodore Moe
President



Harold Drew
Director



*Aunt Matilda and Cy Prime
Ethel Dudley and Arthur Hanrahan*



*Uncle Josh
Willard L. Thompson*

*Rickety Ann
Dorothy Barrett*

*Happy Jack
Maurice Sullivan*

THE POTASH BOWL AND VICINITY

MANY PEOPLE have perhaps wondered why this amphitheater is called the Potash Bowl. During the early part of the last century and possibly earlier much of the business of the general stores was by barter and one of the items taken in trade was wood ashes. As early as 1800 the proprietor of one of these stores in Swanzey, advertised in the New Hampshire Sentinel that he would pay 1s 6d for good wood ashes or would allow that much in trade for English and West India goods such as West India rum at 5s 11 pence per gallon, sugar, 7 pounds for 6s, and other articles in proportion.

The ashes taken in trade by at least one of these stores near this amphitheater were stored here, and later processed in huge iron kettles to produce potash, lye, etc. for making soap and for other uses. Part was used here and the rest sent to Boston.

It was therefore due to the early use of this site and to its natural contour that it was thought fitting to call it the Potash Bowl.

The old road that passed by the Potash Bowl, once known as the Boston Road, was at one time the most traveled road in Cheshire County. Most of the travel from this section of the state as well as much of that of Vermont going to Boston passed over this road. Due to this heavy travel there were at various times as many as eight places in Swanzey Center used as hotels or inns for entertaining the traveling public. The last building used as a hotel was on the site of the present Grange Hall adjacent to the Potash Bowl.

Near the Potash Bowl, to the west of the Carpenter Home, is the site of the first church or meeting house which was built around 1764-5. Before it was entirely completed it was damaged by the hurricane of 1765. Tradition says that the members of a church council holding a meeting in the church had hardly left the building when the hurricane passed and turned the building one quarter round, so that it was made to face the east instead of the south.

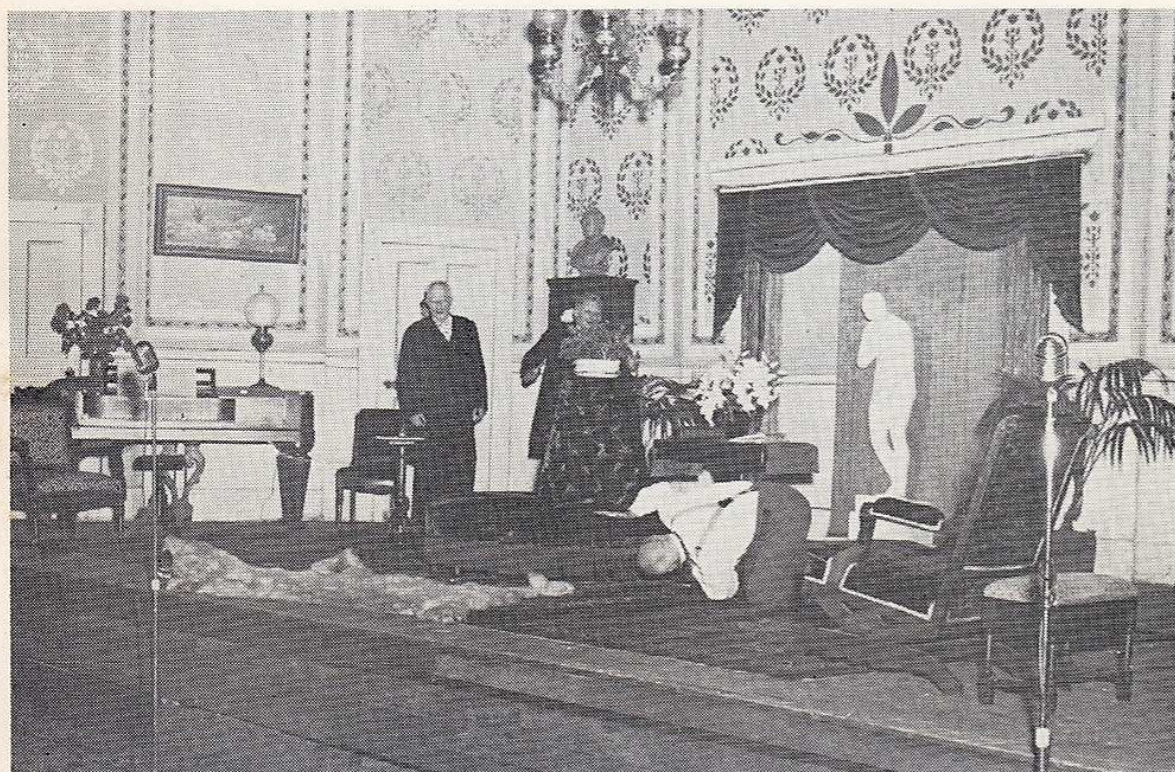
The Mt. Caesar Union Library across from the Potash Bowl was formerly the Mt. Caesar Seminary and Swanzey Academy which was founded in 1843. It flourished for several years and many of its students later became prominent in the industrial and educational life of the country. The library now houses in addition to the library an extensive and interesting collection of relics and mementos of the past.

The fields to the east and south of the library were used for military musters during that period when all able-bodied men from 18 to 40 were required to serve in the militia. At one muster in 1810 as many as four thousand troops participated.

— LEON A. WOODWARD



Uncle Josh and Francois Fogarty
Willard Thompson and Robert E. Parent



Uncle Josh Looking for Bootjack

SWANZEY MEETING HOUSES AND SEMINARY

THE FIRST SETTLERS came to Swanzey in 1733 and the Potash Bowl is in the approximate center of this early settlement. The township was chartered by New Hampshire in 1753 and took the name of Swanzey. It is not known by whose influence the town took this name. Some of the early settlers possibly had connection with Swansea in Wales or from Swansea, Mass.

The first Meeting House was built on Meeting House Hill in 1755. (This site is marked by a stone tablet a few hundred feet to the north-west at the rear of the Carpenter Home). It is perhaps doubtful whether it was entirely completed before it was damaged by the hurricane in 1765 and the damages then caused were not wholly repaired until 1771. The building was "50 by 40 feet on the ground and 22 feet posts. A gallery was on three sides, a row of pews around the sides of the house, and back of the body seats; and likewise a row around in the gallery." This building was used as a church building and town house until about the year 1776 when a new building was erected by the town (where the present Town Hall stands). This building was used by both the Congregational and Universalist Societies until 1836 when the Congregationalists built their own church — the Brick Meeting House.

The Baptist Church (mentioned in the play by Uncle Josh and Henry Hopkins in Acts II and III) is now the West Swanzey Community Church where church services will be held this year. The church was formed in 1792 and the meeting house erected in 1804, "standing lengthwise north and south, thirty-six feet in width by sixty feet in length, with a gallery on the east side — box pews on the floor and a line of pews in the rear of the gallery — the seats of the pews were hung with hinges and by custom were raised during the time of prayer, and the 'Amen' was the signal for the falling of the seats, causing a clattering somewhat like that of heavy musketry.

The Mt. Caesar Seminary was established in 1842. Denman Thompson attended the seminary from 1847 to 1850 during the winter months and worked with his father at the carpenter's trade the rest of the year. Three winter terms at Mt. Caesar Seminary represents all the time he spent in acquiring a higher education through school media. The Mt. Caesar Union Library Association was formed in 1880 and, in 1885, by deed of Quitclaim by Mr. George Carpenter, the old Academy building was presented to the Library Association, subject to the following provisions: — "That it shall always remain where it now stands; that it shall never be sold or transferred under any circumstances whatever; that it shall never be used for a hotel or lodging house; that it shall never be used for the sale or use of any intoxicating liquors or drinks whatever; that it shall never be used for dancing, card playing, gambling or skating . . . it shall always be kept for literary purposes and for the promotion of knowledge and intelligence among the inhabitants . . . and as long as the United States remain free and independent the boys in the neighborhood shall have the right unmolested, to ring the bell on each succeeding Fourth of July." (This deed may be seen in the Library, as well as many interesting and historical relics, valuable for their antiquity.)

*(Taken in part from HISTORY OF SWANZEY, N. H., 1734 TO 1890,
by Benjamin Read)*

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE OF WEST SWANZEY



The Old Baptist Meeting House, West Swanzey, where the Old Homestead Sunday Service will be held at 11 a.m., July 31.

PREVIOUS to the year 1880 little is known of the history of the Baptist Meeting House as it came to be known in later years. However, what little information we have concerning it would indicate that it really came into being in the year 1792 with twenty-five charter members.

The first meeting of this church on record was held eight years later on April 18th, 1800 in what was then known as the "Corner School House." This record is rather vague, however, in that it did not record the names of either the moderator or the clerk who participated.

It was later recorded that on October 13, 1803 the church united with the "Leyden Baptist Association" at Guilford, Mass. and in the year 1809 by her own request was dismissed from said Association and united with the "Dublin Baptist Association" of N. H. She is still a member of the latter Association in good standing. A period of 146 years.

According to the records at hand it appears that the church was not finished immediately at the time of erection in 1804, for it is recorded that

in 1814 the exterior of the Meeting House was finished at a cost of \$400.00, and in March 1820 the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars was raised to complete the interior.

Twenty-three years later, in 1843, extensive alterations were made throughout and it was at this time that the original box pews were replaced with the more modern type.

Again in 1873 a committee was chosen to remodel and repair the Meeting House. This committee raised the necessary funds and went about the task assigned to it and in June 1874 the work of remodeling was completed and the church was dedicated to the service of God in due form.

This Church, and the Methodist Church, after having served for many years as two separate bodies decided at last that the Kingdom of God could be better served if they could come together and work as one church to the honor and glory of God. So, on January 22, 1939 forward steps were taken to this end. Several meetings were held during the next four months; and finally on the seventh day of May, 1939 the work of organization was completed and the two churches became one under the official name, West Swanzey Community Church, and under that name she has carried on for the past sixteen years.

A church, like a home, needs to be remodeled occasionally for the good of all concerned; therefore, with this thought in mind, in the winter of 1946 plans got underway for another remodeling job. A committee was appointed to raise the necessary funds for this purpose, with the result that a new Altar, chancel, parapet, lectern, pulpit, organ and chimes were installed, a carpet was laid in the chancel and a runner in the middle aisle, and two beautiful memorial windows set, one in the back and the other in front over the Altar. These were all given in memoriam. The auditorium, vestry and kitchen were redecorated all at a cost of about \$9000.00. On the 18th of April, 1947 the church was again rededicated with appropriate services.

Thus the old Meeting House has stood the stress and storms of time, in war and in peace, sorrow and joy, as a beacon light in the center of the community. Her voice is still proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. "And whosoever will may come."

— REV. R. W. E. MACKENZIE

Church Program

Community Church (The Old Baptist Meeting House) West Swanzey, N. H.

Rev. R. W. E. MacKenzie, Pastor

Barbara Grover, Organist

SUNDAY, JULY 31st, 1955

Organ Meditation "ADAGIO" *Ducoudray*

Processional: Hymn No. 300

Call to Worship: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength and faith, through prayer. For prayer is the sacred key which fits the door between man's soul and God."

Response: "Come, then, let us worship Christ the Lord with hearts sincere, through songs of praise and prayer. Amen."

Invocation: (In unison)

Almighty God, author of eternal light; illumine our hearts by the light of thy grace, that our lips may praise thee, and that our worship may glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Response (Organ)

Responsive Reading: (Selection 68) "Coming Back Home"

Gloria Patri

Anthem "O Morn of Beauty" (*Sibelius*) Old Homestead Male Quartet

The Scripture Lesson: Mark 9:1-7

Tenor Solo "If With All Your Heart" (From "Elijah" — *Mendelssohn*)

Richard Hutchins

Pastoral Prayer

Response (Old Homestead Male Quartet)

Offertory "Andante Pastorale" (*Stephens*)

Doxology

Anthem "Peace I Leave With You" (*Roberts*) Old Homestead Male Quartet,

Ken Hallenbeck—Soloist

Sermon: Regal Companionship

Hymn: No. 384

Benediction

Threefold Amen

Old Homestead Male Quartet

Postlude "March From Tennhauser" (*Wagner*)

The pastor and people of the Swanzey Center Church are participating in this, the annual "Old Homestead" Sunday Service. Rev. Herbert Buhler will assist.

The "Old Homestead" Double Male Quartet is furnishing the music. Prof. J. Edward Bouvier, Director and Guest Organist.



Judge Patterson
Leon Haskins
Henry Hopkins
Leslie Frazer
Singing the Fire Song at the Melodian



Mrs. Maguire
Irene Wood

One of the Finest
Kendall Page



Eb. Ganzey (*Willard H. Thompson*)

Rickety Ann (*Dorothy Barrett*)



Happy Jack (*Maurice Sullivan*) Seth Perkins (*Harlan Barrett*) Cy Prime (*Walter Hanrahan*)



And There was Music and Dancing in the House

ASSISTANTS TO THE DIRECTORS

Make-up

Mildred Wilson
Lauralee Hooper

Scenery & Stage

Leland B. Bogue
Norman Cota
Walter Fred
Chester Guillow
Philip Woodward
John Madden
Edgar Madden
Karl Boes
Charles Hanrahan
Foster Martin
Wesley Castor, Jr.

Properties

Marion Haskins
Nathalie Tisdale
Marguerite Moe
Frank Tisdale
Leon Haskins
Hazel Wheeler
Dewitt Skinner
Amy E. Wright
Albert Armstrong

Wardrobe Assistants

Jean Belding
Arline Lane
Bertha Fairbanks
Pauline Ridley
Edna Stone
Barbara Emery
Rita Stone

Sound

Clark Whittemore
Caryle Lane
Pete Holbrook

Lighting

Everett Simonds
Carle Bell
Lyman Lane
Dan Emery
Don O'Brien

Souvenir Sales

Rev. R.W.E. MacKenzie
Elsie Navish
Jeanne MacKenzie
Ruth Aron

Publicity

Harlan Barrett
Philip Woodard
Perley Safford
Heien Kershaw
Evelyn Thompson
Elsie Navish
Roger Emery
John Wright
Leon A. Woodward

Grounds and Beautification

Warren Tracy
Douglas Navish
Edward Aron
Norman Stauback
Morris Wilber
Edwin C. Landers
Arthur Duke
Dwight Stone
Carroll Dunham

Souvenir Program

Rev. R.W.E. MacKenzie
Elsie Navish
Leon A. Woodward

Seating

Austin Curtis
Fred Frieze
Cecil Plummer
Rodney Plummer
Henry Oski
Ralph Plummer
Oscar Bloom
Elbert Willard
Paul Fisher
Austin Curtis, Jr.
Carl Jeffs, Jr.
Leo Miller
Al Dunnell
Reginald Grover
Waino Kauppi
Don Guyette
Joe Budzir

Information & Registration Booths

Evelyn Thompson
Helen Kershaw
Elsie Navish

Fire Protection

Robert Goodale, Capt.

Ernest Dunham
Richard Goodale
Paul Talbot
Herman Twombly

Refreshments

Ellsworth Wilber
Harry Dunham
Edward Bourassa
Richard Keating
Louis Kirby

Box Office Assistants

Mary Bogue, Chr.
Jacob Hackler
Roger Emery
Ralph Winham

Ticket Takers

Raymond Lane
Frank Domina
Francis Stone
Elmer Barton
Borden Webb

Grange Supper Committee

Willard Adams
Anna Goodale
Elise Adams
Thomas Fairhurst
Harry Adams
Veronica Goodale
Myrtie Hackler
Harriet Corliss

Church Supper Committee

Phyllis Tracy, Chr.

P.T.A. Refreshment Committee

Charlotte Skinner, Chr.

Parking

E. Swanzey Fire Dept.
K. Ridley
E. Ridley, Sr.
E. Ridley, Jr.
L. O'Brien
R. Rines
H. Johnson
E. Morse
M. O'Brien
Max Brink

G. Marsh
E. Jenks
H. Lewis
M. Goodell
E. Devoid
R. Parent
R. Pollard

Police

Chas. H. Miller, Chief
Ralph Rines
Max Brink
William McLellan
Randolph Lavigne
Westly Braley
Robert Cornwell
John Dennis
Donald Duquette

Advertising

Ethel Barrett
Hazel Wheeler Snelling
Mary Bogue

Music

J. Edward Bouvier
Harlan Barrett
Mary Stone
Myrtie Hackler

Exhibits

Dorothy C. Robinson,
Chr.
Mildred Cross
Gladys Starkey
Francis Small
Zora Lane
Mary Whittemore
Myrtle Dunham
Edith Cummings

Ushers

Grace High
Clara Gomarlo
Esther Blake
Vera Blake
Myrna Curtis
Nancy Bradley
Patricia Sarsfield
Mary J. Perry
Martha Perry
Patricia Armstrong
Norma Richardson
Ceona Martel
Barbara Stone
Barbara Bussiere

"Where Is My
Wardering Boy
Tonight?"
George Lovell

"Palms"
Fred Hebert

"Trees"
Friday
Geraldine Plamondon
Garro
Saturday
Robert Prince
Sunday
Gordon H. Sargent

Chimes
Richard Bogue

Double Male Quartet
John Russell
Herbert Capron
Richard Hutchins
Frank Niles
Fred Hebert
Joseph Kershaw
George Lovell
Ken Hollenbeck

Salvation Army
Fred Hebert
Herbert Capron
Robert Calef, Jr.
Evelyn Thompson
Myrtie Hackler
Mary Stone
Alice Blackmore
Helen Kershaw
Mary Bogue
Amy Wright
Rose Dubois
Hazel Wheeler
Snelling
Ethel Barrett

Driver of Oxen
Robert Smith

Owner of Oxen
Charles Richardson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Joshua Whitcomb</i> | Willard L. Thompson |
| <i>Aunt Matilda</i> | Ethel Dudley |
| <i>Cy Prime</i> | Walter Hanrahan |
| <i>Happy Jack</i> | Maurice Sullivan |
| <i>Eb Ganzey</i> | Willard H. Thompson |
| <i>Rickety Ann</i> | Dorothy Barrett |
| <i>Frank Hopkins</i> | Theodore Richardson |
| <i>Annie Hopkins</i> | Edith Armstrong |
| <i>John Freeman</i> | Jerome J. Rogers |
| <i>Nellie Freeman</i> | Josephine Richardson |
| <i>Maggie O'Flaherty</i> | Joyce LeFebvre |
| <i>Henry Hopkins</i> | Leslie J. Fraser |
| <i>The Dude</i> | Clifford Coles |
| <i>Mrs. Hopkins</i> | Marion Haskins |

Alternate — Rua Ridley

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i>Judge Patterson</i> | Leon Haskins |
| <i>Nellie Patterson</i> | Josephine Richardson |
| <i>Francois Fogarty</i> | Robert F. Parent |
| <i>A Drunken Man</i> | Albert Armstrong |
| <i>Rueben Whitcomb</i> | Edward Jenks |
| <i>Hoboken Terror</i> | William Mitchell |
| <i>One of the Finest</i> | Kendall Page |
| <i>U. S. Letter Carrier</i> | Lester Pelletier |
| <i>Mrs. Maguire</i> | Irene Wood |
| <i>Seth Perkins</i> | Harlan Barrett |
| <i>Mrs. Murdock</i> | Ethel Barrett |
| <i>Stratton Girls</i> .. | Esther Blake, Joyce LeFebvre, Karen Stone |
| <i>Warren Ellis</i> | Walter Parker |
| <i>Les Holbrook</i> | Harold Bell |
| <i>Dave Willard</i> | Anton C. Bowie |
| <i>Jew's Harp</i> | Laverne Bushnell |
| <i>Melodeon</i> | Myrtie Hackler |

A C T S

1. Homestead Farm of the Whitcombs in Swanzey
2. Interior Hopkins Mansion, New York City
3. Grace Church at Night, New York City
4. Kitchen in the Old Homestead in Swanzey

DEDICATION

It is impossible, in an undertaking of this size, to properly credit all who contribute to its success. There are many people in Swanzey and elsewhere whose names do not appear on this programme, but have had a large part in the work of "putting on the show".

We wish to thank these folks and everyone else for their unselfish help, their constant effort and their splendid cooperation.

THE DIRECTORS OF THE OLD HOMESTEAD ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS OF THE OLD HOMESTEAD ASSOCIATION

President Theodore E. Moe
Vice-President Harlan G. Barrett
Treasurer Mary F. R. Bogue
Secretary Elsie C. Navish

DIRECTORS

Harry Dunham
Warren Tracy

Perley F. Safford
Francis Stone
Ellsworth Wilber

Harlan G. Barrett
Ivan L. Scribner

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

General Manager Harlan G. Barrett
Asst. Gen. Manager Warren Tracy

Supervisor of Police and Parking:
Ivan L. Scribner

Supervisor of Refreshments:
Ellsworth Wilber

Ushers: Grace High, Clara Gomarlo
Souvenirs: Rev. R. W. E. MacKenzie

Overnight Reservations:
Helen S. Kershaw

Supervisor of Box Office:
Mary F. R. Bogue

Director of Play: Harold F. Drew
Make-up: Dorothy C. Drew

Stage Manager: Edwin E. Brewer
Asst. Manager: Kenneth K. Lane

Wardrobe Mistress: Jean Belding
Director of Lighting: Everett Simonds

Sound Engineers: Clark Whittemore,
Pete Holbrook, Caryle Lane

Supervisor of Grounds: Warren Tracy
Supervisor of Seating: Francis Stone

Publicity: Harlan Barrett
Fire Protection: Harry Dunham

Advance Ticket Sales: Evelyn Thompson
Advertising: Roger Emery,
Philip Woodward

Electricians: Richard Sloan, Lyle
Talbot, Clifton Hills

Director of Music: J. Edward Bouvier
Supervisor of Music: Harlan Barrett

Scenic Designer: Leland Bogue
Asst. Scenic Designer: Mildred B. Wilson

Master of "Props": Leon H. Haskins
Asst. Master of "Props": Carroll Dunham

Exhibits: Dorothy Robinson

OLD HOMESTEAD BAND

Director J. Edward Bouvier
Manager Harlan G. Barrett

Harlan Barrett
Richard Bogue
Rose Marie Niles
Fred Story, Jr.
William Zimmerman
Cecil Nash
Herbert White
Robert E. Bethen
Laverne Bushnell

Carol Bernier
Barbara Bernier
Charles Banner
Harold Bernier
Francis Wheeler
Harold Tyler
Philip Barrett
Carol Croteau
Herman Hill

Frank Blackington
Carleton Russell
Robert Calef, Jr.
Edwin Sterling
Edgar Reed
Dominic King
Anton Bowie
Frank Niles
Solon D. Connors

This Play is produced by special arrangement
with the

WALTER H. BAKER CO. of Boston, Mass.

Tentative Dates 1956 — JULY 20 - 21 - 22 — FULL OF THE MOON

"Now don't let this be your last visit to THE OLD HOMESTEAD"