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978-0-521-81778-3 - Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America

John W. Frick

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Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America

Nineteenth-century America witnessed a full-blown campaign against alcohol and, for most of the century, temperance reform was a national cause. As an integral part of the various temperance movements, a new form of theatrical literature and performance developed, both professional and amateur, to help spread the message. John Frick examines the role of temperance drama in the overall scheme of American nineteenth-century theatre, taking examples from both mainstream productions and amateur theatricals. Frick also compares the American genre to its British counterpart.

JOHN W. FRICK is Associate Professor of Drama at the University of Virginia. He is author of *New York's First Theatrical Center: The Rialto at Union Square*, co-editor of *The Directory of Historic American Theatres* and *Theatrical Directors: A Biographical Dictionary* and is a contributing author to *The Cambridge History of American Theatre* (1999). He has published numerous articles and reviews in, among others, *The Drama Review*, *Theatre Journal*, *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre* and *The New England Theatre Journal*. He has worked Off-Off Broadway as a dramaturg and as a stage manager with theatre and dance companies in New York.

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JOHN W. FRICK

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Acknowledgements

This book had its genesis a number of years ago as a study of the relationship between the culture of New York's Bowery area and working-class theatre. During my early research, however, I continually uncovered playtexts that dealt with the issue of intemperance – scripts that, unlike *The Drunkard* and *Ten Nights in a Bar-room*, the two temperance dramas with which I was already familiar, were never produced in mainstream theatres and hence were virtually unknown. As the number of these “lost” plays grew as I researched, I became increasingly interested in the link between the nineteenth-century theatre and temperance reform. Before a month of my research leave had elapsed, the subject of my research had shifted to temperance dramaturgy and production.

At each twist or turn in my research, I was assisted by a number of people and institutions who not only fulfilled their responsibilities as librarians or scholars, but took an active interest in my topic as well. I therefore wish to thank the following for their assistance in my research and preparation of this book: Fredric Woodbridge Wilson, Annette Fern, Julia Collins, David Bartholomew and the staff of the Harvard Theatre Collection; Marty Jacobs and Marguerite Lavin at the Museum of the City of New York; Mike Plunkett, Edward Gaynor and Heather Moore at the Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia; the staff of the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center; Mary-Jo Kline and staff at the Kirk Temperance Collection, Brown University; the staff of the Black Temperance Collection, New York Public Library; Tom Lisanti, the New York Public Library; Mary Ann Chach and the staff, Shubert Archive; Sarah Cuthill, J. C. Elsworth and the staff of the Theatre Collection, Bristol (UK) University; Erica Nordmeier, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Andrew Kirk and the staff at the Theatre Archive, Theatre Museum (London); Kathryn Johnson,

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