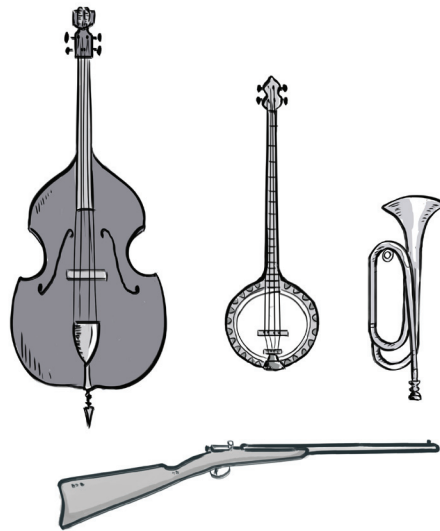


Adventures on the American Frontier

PIONEER SHOW PEOPLE

Part One
The Drake Players Go West



A Royal Fireworks Production

Royal Fireworks Press
Unionville, New York



Other books in this series:
The Chapman Showboat
Doc Spaulding and the Floating Palace
Annie Oakley and the Wild West



This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

Copyright © 2019, Royal Fireworks Publishing Co., Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

Royal Fireworks Press
P.O. Box 399
41 First Avenue
Unionville, NY 10988-0399
(845) 726-4444
fax: (845) 726-3824
email: mail@rfwp.com
website: rfwp.com



ISBN: 978-0-89824-724-4

Printed and bound in Unionville, New York, on acid-free paper
using vegetable-based inks at the Royal Fireworks facility.

Publisher: Dr. T.M. Kemnitz
Editor: Jennifer Ault
Book and cover designer: Christopher Tice
Audio and narration: Christopher Tice



3May19

Long ago, in the days when the whistle of the steamboat was a new sound and the puff and chug of a steam locomotive had not yet been heard in America, two creaky old covered wagons rolled up a dusty road. They carried a company of actors to the Kentucky frontier, where they hoped to open the first theaters to bring shows to the pioneers.

“Whoa!” called out the driver of the first wagon as they pulled into a little town.





The horses came to a stop in the shade of a tree on the side of the road. It was a hot day in July, and they had walked all day on that road in southern New York state, heading west on the long trip from Albany to the Allegheny River.

“Is this as far as we go today, Mr. Drake?” called the driver of the second wagon. He had stopped behind the lead wagon.

Mr. Drake leaned from the driver’s seat to look back. “Yes, Lewis. We’ll post the bills for the show before we go to the inn.”



Then he shouted to a group of four young men who were walking up the road.

“Come on, boys! *Forty Thieves* tonight!”

Mr. Lewis climbed down from the wagon seat and brushed the dust from his hat, his tailcoat, and his striped pants. Then he turned back to the wagon. On the seat, a large, plump lady waited.

“Come, my dear,” said Mr. Lewis. “I’ll help you down. You and the young ladies can rest in the shade of the tree.”

The three young ladies of whom he



spoke got down from the back of the wagon.

They were Martha Drake, her young sister Julia, and an actress named Fanny Denny.

They were helped down by Joe Tracy, the only one in the group who was not an actor.

Joe cared for the horses and wagons, helped put up scenery, shared the driving, and made himself useful in many other ways.

From one of the wagons, Mr. Drake pulled poster boards for the play they planned to do, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* from the *Arabian Nights*.