Shakespeare in Middletown: 1890-1899

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Tara Olivero

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Frank Felsenstein

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

April 2014

Expected Date of Graduation
May 3, 2014
Abstract

Throughout the last few decades of the nineteenth century, America experienced a cultural shift in which Shakespeare moved from an integral part of common culture to a more refined position in the cultural hierarchy. By researching evidence from Muncie, Indiana during the 1890s, Shakespeare’s presence and impact on the average American city can be examined and evaluated in comparison to previous scholarly research on Shakespeare’s cultural upward mobility. Shakespeare in advertisements, public lectures and studies, social clubs, public education, and performance notices from the local newspapers are analyzed, as are the Shakespearean texts borrowed from the Muncie Public Library according to the “What Middletown Read” database in order to come to a general conclusion about Shakespeare in Middletown at the turn of the twentieth century.
Table of Contents

Acknowledgements [2]
The Gilded Age in America [2]
Theatre in the Gilded Age [5]
Shakespeare in America [6]
Shakespeare in Muncie [12]
Shakespeare in Advertisements [15]
Shakespeare as Literature [23]
Shakespeare at the Library [31]
Shakespeare in School [43]
Shakespeare in Clubs [50]
Shakespeare in Performance [63]
Conclusion [74]
Appendix A [78]
Works Cited [82]
Shakespeare in Middletown: 1890-1899

Acknowledgements

The bulk of my research was collected from the microfilm reels documenting the *Muncie Morning News*, which changed names to the *Morning News* and the *Muncie Daily News* throughout the decade, from 1890 to 1899. I would like to thank the librarians at Bracken library for assisting me with finding missing microfilm reels and helping me to fix the microfilm machines when they inevitably broke down over the course of two years of reading the newspapers. The librarians at the Allen County Public Library should be thanked as well, for digging various book resources out from the depths of storage for me to use.

I would also like to thank Dr. James Connolly and Dr. Frank Felsenstein, from the What Middletown Read project, as they were the ones who first hired me to read and take notes on the Muncie newspapers starting in the fall of 2012. Without my honors fellowship working for them, I would not have had the materials or the idea to begin working on this research paper. Additionally, Dr. Felsenstein graciously agreed to be my thesis advisor, and I owe him tremendous thanks.

The Gilded Age in America

The Gilded Age, the time period from around 1870-1900, brought a multitude of changes to the culture of the United States. The greatest change was the evolution of America "from a largely agricultural, rural, isolate, localized, and
traditional society to one that was becoming industrialized, integrated, national, and modern” (Calhoun 1).

An increase in immigration brought an influx of new people from Europe, Asia, and South America, from varied religious backgrounds and who spoke new languages. These immigrants were generally poorer, less educated, and more racially diverse than immigrants from previous decades (Schlereth 9). Despite the “identification of the American with open land,” U.S. cities expanded exponentially throughout this time period (Blair 2). Rural white Americans began flocking from the country to cities, drawn by the economic opportunities and cultural avenues available in larger centers of commerce (Schlereth 16).

Transportation became more efficient and more widespread, especially because of the expansion of the U.S. railway system. Four U.S. transcontinental lines were in operation by 1890, with trains departing and arriving in Chicago every four minutes by the year 1900. Railroads “reshaped the American-built environment and reoriented American behavior;” allowing people to travel more easily for both work and leisure (Schlereth 22).

Other inventions helped create ease in daily life in the home. Gaslight “offered an alternative to the dirt and demands of kerosene illumination,” if a homeowner was close enough to the gas supply and could afford its installation (Schlereth 114). Gas also further increased the move towards more urban cities. For example, an abundance of natural gas was discovered in Eaton, Indiana, in the late 1870s and early 1880s, which brought a major surge to the businesses in Muncie because factories relocated to the source of the gas. Following this discovery and
the industrialization of the city, the population of Muncie increased from five thousand citizens in 1880 to over twenty thousand by the end of the century ("Muncie History").

The reading habits of the American people shifted during this time period as well. By 1896, dime novels sold for half the price, after the nickel was introduced in 1866. Most newspapers and magazines were sold at just five cents per copy during this time, too (Schlereth 85). More than just becoming more affordable, the reading material of this time increased in popularity because of its wider reach. The circulation of daily newspapers increased by seven times, and the publication of books tripled (Schlereth 177). This increase happened for a variety of reasons, most being the fact that more improved printing technology was available, such as the steam-powered press, as well as cheaper paper made from wood pulp. Between these advances and the improvements in transportation throughout the country, reading material had a much wider audience (Litwcki 197).

In terms of schooling, high schools offered a fairly diverse curriculum as this time period progressed. For example, in Muncie in 1889, students chose between two four-year courses, one in Latin and one in English, but by later in the 1920s, they had twelve options covering a diverse range of electives from college preparatory to music to bookkeeping to mechanical drafting to home economics (Schlereth 248). Literature, elocution, history, mathematics, and science were the typical focuses of study for all high school students, which would prepare them for the world outside of secondary education once they graduated.
As America approached the twentieth century, the country was in a period of transition. Technological innovations and shifts in culture and education helped guide the United States towards a more modernized society. And just as everything else in society evolved, so did the world of theatre.

**Theatre in the Gilded Age**

Beginning in the early 1800s, most of the entertainment in America was aimed at the growing middle class. In the mid-nineteenth century, theatrical entertainments had a predominantly male audience. However, as gender constraints were slowly relaxed as compared to earlier time periods, theatres attempted to increase their profits by broadening their audiences to women and families as well as just working men (Litwicki 189).

Theatre in the nineteenth century acted as a “provider of laughs, glitter, and maudlin sentimentality” (Essin 341). In the 1890s, a form of musical comedies emerged whose plots were thin but whose performances were filled with songs, dances, comedians, and chorus lines (Lynes 23). Melodrama, a popular form of theatre, “stressed domestic matters and offered audiences reproductions of the family parlour, the poor garret, the prosperous villa, the low tavern, the city street, the bank, and the shop counter” (Booth 310). Another type of theatre popular during this time period was vaudeville, which was entertainment aimed at the middle-class and which typically featured dramatizations of aspirations of the American people (Schlereth 232). Vaudeville also included a multitude of musicians, magicians, dancers, comedians, and other variety acts. Clearly, the goal of these sorts
of theatrical productions was to appeal to the interests of—and connect to the lives of—its audiences, as well as giving them something to enjoy.

By the end of the nineteenth century, during the heart of the Gilded Age, there was certainly no lack of theatre. Almost every city had some form of major theatre or opera house. The quality of the productions at these establishments, on the other hand, received mixed reviews. One theatrical expert of the time, Hugo Münsterberg, stated that artistic productions were “drowned out by the great tide of worthless entertainments... Everywhere the stage caters to the vulgar taste, and for one Hamlet there are ten Geishas” (Lynes 22). Citing Shakespearean plays as foils to “vulgar theatre” would become commonplace as Shakespeare’s works rose within the cultural hierarchy to illuminated heights.

**Shakespeare in America**

Shakespeare has been a part of America’s heritage almost since the country’s inception. His effect on American culture “encompasses virtually all aspects of American life” (Paster 7). However, the way that Shakespeare and his works in production have been treated throughout U.S. history has shifted over the years from a signature staple of popular theatre to a symbol of intellect and high culture.

In the seventeenth century, going to see a Shakespeare play was a perfectly natural thing to do; this type of entertainment had “nothing ‘cultural’ about it” (Dunn 8). Although theatre was seen to be immoral by some, since Shakespeare was regarded as a poet more than a playwright, his plays were popular for the everyday man (Dunn 25). The first significant professional staging of Shakespeare in America
was *The Merchant of Venice*, produced in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1752 (Morrison 230). Throughout the 1700s, there was a limited repertoire of Shakespearean works in the United States, which included *Hamlet, Richard III, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, and King Lear* (Morrison 232). In addition to these few plays, which only cover about twenty percent of Shakespeare’s complete theatrical works, some of his famous passages were often parodied as part of a theatrical entertainment. For example, the “to be or not to be” soliloquy from *Hamlet* was often parodied, which was often seen as “a demonstration of ingenuity” (Dunn 124). Shakespeare parody typically took the form of skits, references, and satirical songs incorporated into other forms of entertainment. Because Shakespeare was so readily parodied, it signified that “Shakespeare and his drama had become by the nineteenth century an integral part of American culture... It is difficult to take familiarities with that which is not already familiar, one cannot parody that which is not well known” (Levine 15).

Theatre was still opposed by civic and religious authorities throughout the eighteenth century, but Shakespeare persevered. One reason why his plays were still frequently performed was because Shakespeare was billed as “a moral playwright,” and his works were often presented as “‘moral dialogues’ or ‘moral lectures’” (Levine 39). They were also simply performed well, which helped keep up their level of popularity. Shakespearean productions in America, which were at that point produced as closely to London productions as possible, became more and more fashionable (Dunn 37). In fact, Shakespeare became the dominating force of theatre in the nineteenth century. According to Esther Dunn, at least one-fifth of all
the plays produced in a season were likely to be plays written by Shakespeare. Dunn believes that this was mostly due to America’s “rough struggle for self-realization as a nation” instead of proof of “the ultimate triumph of a classic” (Dunn 134). Shakespeare’s popularity proved that America was “insecure culturally,” which is why they relied on the sophistication and intelligence of Shakespearean plays in performance to prove America’s cultural ability and worth (Dunn 4).

The way that Shakespearean plays were performed shifted at this time as well. A system of acting emerged at the start of the nineteenth century focused on stars and their entourages. Only a few plays were performed, Shakespeare’s among them, while touring companies traveled throughout the United States with starring actors and actresses from England and American heading the bill (Vaughan 23). The leading role in a Shakespearean play was enormously important and highly emphasized, and, properly rendered, such a leading role could bring “public laurels” for any actor talented enough to take on the part (Dunn 158).

Between 1860 and 1900, Shakespearean actors began to move away from robust renditions of characters towards “a more restrained and subtle method” which more clearly portrayed the sophistication of the plays of Shakespeare as an art form (Morrison 240). One of the most famous actors of this time period was Edwin Booth, who began his career in California in the early 1860s before touring both major and minor cities in the eastern United States until his retirement in 1891 (Morrison 241). Another popular American actor was Richard Mansfield, who was “gifted with mimetic powers and a ‘deep and thrilling’ voice of exceptional range.” He used these talents to feature as Richard III, Shylock, Henry V, and Brutus, among
other roles (Morrison 243). Shakespearean actresses were just as successful; usually those who gained the greatest popularity performed mostly the comedies and romances, along with the titular role of Juliet (Morrison 242). Foreign actresses were also well-known as they toured, such as Helena Modjeska, who originated in Poland but began her career on the American touring circuit in 1877. Modjeska was most recognized for her roles as Juliet, Viola, Rosalind, Ophelia, and Lady Macbeth, and she toured with Edwin Booth in the 1889-1890 theatre season (Morrison 242).

Actors not only graced the stage but the world of Shakespearean scholarship as well. For example, in 1877 and 1878, Edwin Booth published stage arrangements of fifteen of Shakespeare's plays with his own commentary on their interpretation, titled *The Prompt Books* (Dunn 303). Even non-actors found audiences for their criticisms and Shakespeare-related works. Shakespearean criticism made its way onto the lecture circuit in full force in the nineteenth century, and lectures were often later primed for publication (Vaughan 29). Shakespeare-focused articles could be found printed in newspapers and circulated materials as well, as editors could typically "reckon on a sufficiently permanent interest in Shakespeare" (Dunn 131).

As the nineteenth century came to a close, Shakespeare's prestige on the stage was "greater than ever." The productions were more elaborate and sophisticated, and Shakespeare had become a crucial element of secondary and university education (Dunn 304). In fact, the importance of Shakespearean study skyrocketed. As Esther Dunn states: "To own a volume of Shakespeare, or to see Shakespeare in the theatre, to learn how to declaim his great speeches in the American public schools, was an obligation. The young eagle screamed deferentially
in Shakespeare's blank-verse lines" (Dunn 4). Shakespeare began to stand for something to be studied and read with scrutiny and direction, not something to enjoy for its entertainment value alone. Amateurs could no longer experience or enjoy Shakespeare; instead arose a "specific and self-conscious, almost grim, pursuit of him as an element culture" (Dunn 129).

Where in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, Shakespeare had appealed to all classes in society, now his plays were appropriated by America's higher classes. Although in previous centuries Shakespearean plays were presented with songs between the acts and comedic shorts afterwards, these were eventually weeded off until Shakespeare was presented only as refined entertainment (Morrison 244). Compared to the continued performances of farces, pantomime, and song-and-dance. Shakespeare in performance was seen as prestigious for both the actors and the audience. Many audience members went to be seen and to "have the snobbish pleasure of feeling that their diversion has the seal of fashionable approval" (Dunn 142). In general, during the 1880s and 1890s, Americans "were reminded time and time again that a level of education and cultivation were required to appreciate the plays," which limited their scope and audience (Morrison 244).

Of course, Shakespeare's plays were no more inaccessible than they had been in any decade previously; the power of public perception, however, is hard to overcome. Commercial entertainments shifted focus towards minstrel shows, vaudevilles, circuses, and amusement parks, which gave "ordinary" people affordable entertainment based on spectacle and novelty (Litwicki 189). Proponents
of "higher" culture believed in entertainment in order to educate and refine audiences, and as Shakespeare signified everything that high culture purported, his plays moved out of the domain of the general public. Therefore, Shakespeare's overall popularity declined as the century came to a close (Morrison 244).

Lawrence Levine, an expert in this particular field of Shakespearean study and the author of *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, states:

> The problem that requires thoughtful attention is not why Shakespeare disappeared from American culture at the turn of the century, since he did not; but rather why he was transformed from a playwright for the general public into one for a specific audience. (Levine 56)

In his book, he takes a close look at the phenomenon of Shakespeare moving out of the range of the common citizen. In the first half of the nineteenth century, dramas, authors, operas, and art were "able to enjoy simultaneously high cultural status and mass popularity." However, cultural lines began to solidify and become more defined, to the point where people who wanted to experience so-called "legitimate" or "serious" art did so outside of the mainstream (Levine 234). There was no longer a middle ground; there was just highbrow and lowbrow, and Shakespeare was inextricably part of the former. Unfortunately, climbing up the cultural hierarchy came with a cost. According to Levine, Shakespeare "did not simply lose his popularity in twentieth-century America; his appropriation by certain groups and the manner of his presentation in theaters and schools often converted him into an alienating force" (Levine 237). Americans became more ambivalent towards Shakespeare as he moved towards a more inaccessible high culture and away from
the general public domain. Shakespeare had become a part of "polite" culture and had become "the possession of the educated portions of society who disseminated his plays for the enlightenment of the average folk who were to swallow him not for their entertainment but for their education" (Levine 31). According to Levine, the same transformation took place all across the United States in the last decades of the nineteenth century; a way to further check the validity of this idea is to examine a specific example of Shakespeare's presence in American culture by looking at one city: Muncie, Indiana.

**Shakespeare in Muncie**

Muncie, Indiana, has also been known as "Middletown" since Robert and Helen Lynd chose Muncie as the primary example of a small American city in order to complete their 1929 study, later published as *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*. Muncie has become synonymous as the typical American city. According to James Connolly in his introduction to the fall issue of *Indiana Magazine of History* in 2005, Muncie was viewed as "a representative slice of the nation," and therefore it has become "the most well-documented, thoroughly studied community of its size in the nation" ("Middletown").

Therefore, a study of the ways Shakespeare and his works were incorporated into Muncie culture in the 1890s, through performances, readings, references in newspaper advertisements and articles, et cetera, can act as a microcosm of how Shakespeare was treated in the typical small American city during this time period. A close examination of Shakespeare's presence in Muncie might give insights into or
further examples of how the culture of Shakespeare shifted throughout the decade before the turn of the century.

A great deal about Shakespeare in Muncie can be determined from articles in the local newspaper at the time. One of the most widely circulated publications in Muncie was the *Muncie Daily News*. This Republican newspaper was published every evening except Sunday from 1879 to 1892 ("About The Muncie daily news"). The editor was Nathaniel Fuller Ethell, a white male born in Ohio in 1834. On the U.S. Census for 1880, he listed his occupation as "editor," and on the 1900 Census he listed himself as a "writer;" additionally, his occupational rank was high white collar ("WMR: Patron #144").

This newspaper was succeeded by the *Muncie News*, published from 1892-1893 and edited by Charles F.W. Neely. The *Muncie News* was published every day except Monday, and the title on Sunday was changed to the *Sunday Morning News* ("About The Muncie news"). Born in 1859 in Muncie, Neely graduated from the Muncie high school in 1877 before studying law for three years. Neely was an "earnest republican," which was reflected in his newspaper, and was described as a "sprightly and incisive writer, a shrewd politician, and a born newspaperman" (Bowen).

Eventually this newspaper shifted names in 1893 and was then called the *Morning News*. It was still published as the *Sunday Morning News* on Sunday, though Neely remained the editor ("About The morning news"). Finally, the newspaper changed one more time this decade. Published by News. Co., it was printed daily
from 1899 through 1901 before shifting names and becoming the *Muncie Morning Star* after the turn of the century ("About The Muncie morning news").

This continued newspaper, from the *Muncie Daily News* through the *Morning News*, regularly published city and world news, local notices, advertisements for businesses and products, and more. Among these many elements of the daily newspaper are references of, quotations from, and advertisements for Shakespearean plays, readings, and works. A closer look at Shakespeare in these newspapers between 1890 and 1900 can lead to greater understandings of the place Shakespeare had in Muncie, and therefore typical American, culture.

Another avenue of insight into Shakespeare in Muncie during the 1890s is the information found in the "What Middletown Read" database. This database, freely accessible online, contains the borrowing records of the patrons of the Muncie Public Library from between 1891 and 1902. These library records came to light after Frank Felsenstein, an English professor at Ball State University, discovered ledger books in the attic of the 1904 Muncie library during its renovation in 2003 (Plotz). Felsenstein then "enlisted the Center for Middletown Studies and Ball State University Libraries in constructing a searchable digital version of these handwritten records" ("Welcome"). Census records are also included on the page of each patron, so with a few clicks a curious individual can determine what a certain Muncie citizen checked out of the library and when they did so, along with a plethora of personal information such as their age, race, gender, occupation, birth date, and more. The "What Middletown Read" project is unique because "no
previous project includes a database that supplies, to ordinary casual Web visitors, this kind of in-depth history about a library’s acquisitions and patrons” (Plotz).

While the “What Middletown Read” database shows only what books Muncie citizens borrowed from the library and not necessarily the books they actually read, it still provides information about what types of Shakespeare-related books the Muncie people were interested in at the time, as well as what types of books Shakespeare-involved individuals typically borrowed.

Therefore, by using the Muncie newspapers and the “What Middletown Read” database as the main sources of information, Shakespeare in advertisements, schools, clubs, and performance in Muncie between 1890 and 1900 can be analyzed and conclusions can be drawn about whether or not Shakespeare’s impact on Middletown reflects research about Shakespeare in America during this time period.

**Shakespeare in Advertisements**

Some of the most intriguing appearances of Shakespeare in the lives of the people of 1890s Muncie can be found in the newspaper advertisements of the day. Much like today’s television and radio advertisements are filled with cultural references, the advertisements found in the *Morning News* reference both Shakespeare and Shakespeare’s works on a more regular basis than one would most likely assume. For example, on March 15, 1895, an advertisement for Diamond Dyes makes reference to one of the most famous soliloquies written by Shakespeare, Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” speech:

To Dye Or Not to Dye that is the question; whether it is better to wear that faded, shabby dress and endure the scornful looks of all your
well-dressed neighbors, or to purchase a package of Diamond Dyes and restore its freshness in another color—making a new dress for ten cents.

It is unclear whether or not this advertisement is playing on the thematic idea of being versus not being as similar to dying ("dyeing") versus not dying, or whether the advertisement's reference is dependent solely on the structure of the familiar lines. What is clear, however, is that although the advertisement makes no mention of either Shakespeare or Hamlet, the advertiser assumes that the reader would recognize the parallels of this statement.

Does this mean that everyone in 1890s Muncie would recognize this as a reference to Hamlet? It is difficult to tell. Certainly, the reference must have gone over the heads of some of the readers of the newspaper. But it can be assumed that the reference rang true with a wide population of the readership, especially since this is a reference from one of the more famous of Shakespeare's plays. Perhaps not all who understood it was from Hamlet would have ever read or seen Hamlet previously—most people today would even understand the parallel from their general cultural knowledge, even if they hadn't read the play in its entirety—but as one of the most recognizable soliloquies, it would most likely bring a level of class and sophistication to this advertisement for clothing dye. In fact, scholars note that "no famous Shakespeare passage works better for parody than "To be, or not to be.""

This particular tragic soliloquy was often the core of comic burlesques during the nineteenth century based on Shakespeare's works, as it was a "rich seam to be mined for ridicule" (Marche 30). Ridicule or not, the quotation in this advertisement would draw the immediate attention of anyone familiar with the tragic Dane.
Diamond Dye is not the only household item to rely on Shakespeare to draw the attention of the audience. Both short and long advertisements capitalized on Shakespeare's words and phrases as they tied in to the specifics and purposes of various products. Additionally, “to be or not to be” is not the only target of parody and reference. Another evidently popular Shakespearean quotation is the “What's in a name?” speech from *Romeo and Juliet*. This is found in numerous references throughout the decade in the newspapers of Muncie, as well as in advertisements for products. For example, on October 1, 1890, an advertisement titled “What's in a Name?” noted:

Shakespeare says a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Nevertheless, just at the dawn of the 20th century in the year of grace, 1890, there is a great deal in a name to us... A merchant without a name and reputation is heavily handicapped in the race for trade... Our name 'The Winters Shoe and Clothing Co,' we want to establish by selling goods and fair dealing.

This store, which would be opening on Walnut street during the week following this advertisement's publication, used this famous quotation as a segue into their discussion of their name as a store and how they wanted to ensure that it was reputable and trustworthy.

The well-known phrase can be found again in an advertisement in the *Muncie Morning News* from May 1899 for Prickly Ash Bitters, which opens with “What's in a name? The word 'bitters' does not always indicate something harsh and disagreeable.” Here, the writer of the advertisement uses the Shakespearean quotation to attempt to convince his readers that the name of the product doesn't necessarily correlate to the product itself, much like Juliet attempts to convince herself that Romeo's family name means little in the grand scheme of things.
Another simple advertisement on December 4, 1898, stated:

Shakespeare's invocation: 'May good digestion wait on appetite,' need not have been had proper food, properly cooked, been on the table. Muskegon housekeepers can get information by attending the Shredded Wheat demonstration at McNaughton's.

Shakespeare's quotation here, from act three, scene four of Macbeth, is used as an introduction to the advertisement for shredded wheat, acts as a hook in order to get the readers to continue reading the advertisement. This seems to be a fairly frequent tactic, as another advertisement, this one from December 1890, does the same thing but begins with a quotation from Malvolio in Twelfth Night ("Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them") before saying, "So it is with nervousness," and transitioning into an article about the advantages of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters.

Examples of longer advertisements can be found by looking at those for Dr. Greene's Nervura, a remedy for vitalization and invigoration. One from January 1899 titled "What Did Shakespeare Mean?" stated that "Shakespeare never wrote truer words than, 'Life of our pleasant vice doth make whips to scorn us.' This can only mean that to our misuse of the pleasures of life we owe most of the ills of poor health." It then continues to discuss poor health and the causes for it before eventually introducing Dr. Greene's Nervura. This advertisement, written and printed as though it were a news article, perhaps uses Shakespeare as a lure to grab the attention of readers who believe this is the focus of the article, only to find later on that it is an advertising ploy. It should be noted, however, that the exact quotation used here is not attributed to Shakespeare, nor any other writer of note. Shakespeare, in regards to "pleasant vices," did write that "The gods are just, and of
our pleasant vices/Make instruments to plague us” in act five, scene three of King Lear; the so-called Shakespearean quotation referenced in this article, though, is either misinterpretation, misinformation, or a blatant farce.

Another advertisement for the same product, from later in January 1899, is again article-like and is titled “Shakespeare’s Great Words to Men.” This one notes that “Probably no words of Shakespeare have so inspired weak men as those well-known lines: ‘Can’s’t thou not minister to a mind diseased, raze out the troubles of the brain, and with some sweet antidote, cleanse from that which so weighs upon the heart?’” before going on to discuss Dr. Greene’s restorative medicine. This advertisement, too, is somewhat liberal in its quotation of Shakespeare. The actual quotation is from act five, scene three of Macbeth, when Macbeth is seeking help for his guilt-stricken wife, and reads:

```
Can thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
```

The advertisement seems to abridge and condense this section of the text quite a bit, although the main thematic element still remains. It is doubtful how much these lines would have “inspired weak men,” as the advertisement claims, as Macbeth’s words are more desperate to find help for his wife than inspirational, but Macbeth is certainly one of the most quoted and referenced of Shakespeare’s plays during this time period, so it probably would have been, as the advertisement also stated, “well-known.”
Strangely enough, another advertisement for a different product chose the very same portion of *Macbeth* to quote. This untitled advertisement from March 1890 stated, "When Macbeth ironically asked, 'Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?' he little knew that mankind would one day be blessed with Ayer's Sarsaparilla. In purifying the blood this powerful alterative gives tone and strength to every function and faculty of the system." Why was this quotation so popular in advertisements? A great number of the products advertised during this time period were for remedies and cures for health problems, which might be why this quotation, one that speaks of ministering to a disease, might have been an easy target. Because the quotation is a question, the readers would also be able to apply that question to their own life. Is their life, mind, or health diseased? What could possibly minister a solution? The product in the advertisement, of course.

The last of the most interesting advertisements found in the *Morning News* is a series of advertisements for both the newspaper itself and for the Encyclopedia Britannica and was published in almost-daily segments between September 19 and September 29, 1895. The advertisement is titled "Who Wins the Prize? Boys, Read This, and Girls, Too." It states that the *Morning News* will publish seven short articles and have one or more words in each article bolded in black-faced type. The eleven words together will make a sentence, and "the boy or girl who first puts this sentence together correctly and sends us the answer will receive a full set of the Cincinnati Commercial Gazette's famous edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, together with a beautiful book case made to hold it," and a "beautiful art portfolio" will be given to any boy or girl who sends in the correct answer before September
29, when the contest ends. The article in question is titled "Shakespeare's Seven Ages of Man," and it gives the famous quotation from act two, scene seven of As You Like It. The article then continues on to discuss the encyclopedia and mentions how "At the age of six weeks Baby would not take much interest in EDUCATION; but there are many things essential to his life and happiness contained within the covers of this wonderful book."

The coded article for September 20 is about the schoolboy, the next stage of man, and states that "Every school boy knows that Shakespeare's beautiful epitome of Life in Seven Ages is to be found IN the play, 'As You Like It.' Every schoolboy also knows that the Encyclopedia Britannica IS full of things that he likes to read about."

The newspaper from September 21 was missing from the microfilm, but it can be assumed that the coded article was about the lover, the next of the seven stages. The next day's is about "the soldier," then "the justice," and then "the afternoon of life such as Shakespeare describes," in which it references the "pantaloons" discussed in the stage of life in As You Like It ("For the pantaloons was a character and ORNAMENT in the old Italian farces, and it appears in the Christian pantomime of today. It represents, as Warburton observes, a thin, emaciated old man in slippers."

The Encyclopedia Britannica tells all about old farces IN which the pantaloons appeared"). The last article, then, on September 26, is about the last stage of man, second childishness. It states that the Encyclopedia Britannica "can be obtained now at an outlay of 10 cents a day, through American enterprise, but when the old man was at school the great book cost a small fortune. However, it has never failed him,
and has remained a constant refuge in ADVERSITY amid the loss of friends and family and the sad lapse of time."

One of the reasons why this advertising campaign could have chosen this particular section of *As You Like It* to highlight in the contest may be because of its easy ability to split up the speech into sections. Each of the stages of man Shakespeare has Jacques elaborate upon is given one day’s focus in the contest, which lends itself easily to the opportunity for the writers of the advertisements to show how vital the Encyclopedia Britannica could be to people, and newspaper readers, of every age. Additionally, “All the world’s a stage” is one of the most famous Shakespearean quotations even today, and this series of quotations from that speech would introduce readers to the rest of that passage if they had never read the play or seen it in performance. On September 26, 1895, the newspaper announced that Fred Metz, a student from the Muncie high school who later becomes involved with reading Shakespeare through the English class, won the contest for the Encyclopedia Britannica with the correct answer, “Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity.” Linking Shakespeare to the idea of education and knowledge, especially through its link to the Encyclopedia Britannica, works to further Shakespeare’s connection to intellect and the idea of a higher culture.

Throughout the decade, the advertisements relating to Shakespeare found in the Muncie newspapers show what types of plays the American public might be more familiar with as well as how Shakespeare was used to draw attention to certain products or contests. From Shakespeare’s continued presence in
advertisements, it is clear that Shakespeare was a prominent part of the culture of Middletown.

**Shakespeare as Literature**

One of the ways that Shakespeare can be studied is as literature, as opposed to being studied as a play. Of course, while most of the Shakespearean quotations found in newspaper advertisements at this time were from Shakespeare's plays, he was not only a playwright but a poet as well. As a poet he was known for his sonnets and other narrative poems like *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, but many of the texts of his plays could be considered poetry, too, as a good number of them contain lines in verse. Whether or not his plays were considered drama or literature, they were often studied as serious literary texts.

In Muncie in the 1890s, Shakespeare was found in the books and texts of the time in a variety of fashions. For example, on June 16, 1894, his work is mentioned as being part of a "Gems from the Poets!" series on sale at Johnson's store on Odd Fellows' Block, one of the most heavily advertised stores of the day. In this advertisement, Shakespeare is lumped in with other poets such as Homer, Scott, Burns, Byron, Longfellow, and Tennyson, among others. This spread of writers covers from Homer in the eighth century B.C. to Longfellow and Tennyson earlier in the 1800s. Shakespeare's presence on this list proves his level of distinction among the great thinkers and writers of the world, as determined by the general public at this time. Another example of Shakespeare's works for sale would be an advertisement for the Boston Store from December 1896 in which the article gives
"a Few Sets Worth of Prompt Attention," listing Shakespeare's works among those of Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and Victor Hugo.

Shakespeare is also quoted fairly frequently in columns containing quotations from well-known individuals such as Emerson and Ovid, like in the "Multum In Parvo" column from July 17, 1894 or the "Sayings of the Learned" column from July 24, 1894. What is the most interesting about this, especially the last example, is that Shakespeare was not particularly "learned," at least not more than any schoolboy from the 1700s who learned only basic reading and writing skills. The fact that Shakespeare is considered to be of a higher intelligence here points to the repeated idea that his works were given an inflated sense of high culture during this time period. Shakespeare's words are certainly wise, but to say that his wisdom came from his educational status, as implied by "the Learned," would be inaccurate and unfair. His lack of formal education certainly doesn't hinder his talent as a writer, and to imply that his brilliance came from his education only enhances the opinion that success, ability, and formal intellect are inexorably related.

Other sections of the newspaper give specific notes about certain facts regarding Shakespeare's works. For example, on from August 4, 1894, in the Morning News under "Snap Shots" is a note which states: "It is claimed that the 'Dark Lady' to whom twenty-eight of Shakespeare's sonnets were dedicated, was the notorious Miss Mary Fitton, maid of honor to Queen Elizabeth." If this fact was chosen specifically to be on a list of information published in the newspaper, the editor of the paper at the time must have believed it was something that would
interest the Muncie public. Would they have known about the Dark Lady and Shakespeare's sonnets? Some of them must have. If not, at least the newspaper creates an illusion that the audience was familiar with Shakespeare's poetical works. Other facts include a mention in *The Sunday Morning News* in August 1894 that some of Shakespeare's plays are drawn from Celtic sources. As this is about his source material, it can be seen as information about the literary influences of the plays. An article from March 24, 1897, simply states that Shakespeare's longest play is *Hamlet* with 4,058 lines, as compared with the shortest, *Comedy of Errors*, at 1,807 lines. The presence of these facts in the newspaper shows that tidbits of information about Shakespeare were noteworthy to the editor of the newspaper, if not to the public as well. When the newspapers have only four or eight pages, depending on what year they were published, any information included that takes up that valuable space must be of interest.

Shakespeare was also valued as material literature. An article appearing in the *Morning News* on October 25, 1894, stated:

> Valued at five hundred dollars an ounce is a certain book in the British museum. It is a perfect copy of the original edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, published in 1609. There are only two copies in existence, and the second one is valued at five thousand dollars. As the book is only ten ounces in weight, it is worth a good deal more than its weight in gold.

That this article was in the Muncie newspapers is indicative of the fact that someone involved in the printing of the newspaper thought that there would be an audience for this particular article, either because people were interested in rare and valuable books or because they were interested in Shakespearean literature specifically. Perhaps readers would be interested that something essentially made of paper
would be worth so much more than gold. Another article, this one from April 13, 1899, gives other information about Shakespeare’s physical texts, stating that “Sidney Lee, the Shakespearean authority, says that very few of the first Shakespeare folios are to be found in England.” In order to understand this article, Muncie readers would have had to know what the first folios are and why it matters that few of them are left in England.

An advertisement in the Muncie Morning News on January 5, 1899, for a book by M. Clarke, published by the American Book Company and priced at 45 cents a copy, states that the book, Story of Caesar, contains a “special feature of interest and attraction,” which is “Shakespeare’s story of the death of Caesar, as given in his play, the greater part of which is reproduced by way of appendix to the book, with ample explanations of the text to render it more intelligible to the young reader.” A novel, then, used Shakespeare’s take on events in Julius Caesar to give further potential historical context. The most important element of this article to note is the idea that the young readers would need assistance to make it “intelligible,” which implies that Shakespeare needs to be decoded in order for readers to understand it. This plays directly into the evolving opinion that Shakespearean works must be studied in order to be fully understood and appreciated.

Frequently, study of Shakespeare is grouped with study of authors or poets in general. For example, at the meeting of the Delaware County Educational Association in November 1895, in addition to lectures on “Glimpses of Socrates” and “Sketch of James Whitcomb Riley” is a part of the program about the “Message of the Tempest.” Over and over again, Shakespeare is tied to the work of high litterateurs.
In an article from the *Morning News* on November 1, 1894 about a new congressional library, it notes that the subjects chosen to decorate the library as statues are twenty-five men who “have been famous in literary work,” including Homer, Newton, Plato, Bacon, Dante, Emerson, Beethoven, and, of course, Shakespeare. Similarly to the previously discussed advertisement for Shakespearean works being sold alongside great writers and thinkers, this article actually points out how Shakespeare will be immortalized in stone at the congressional library. This is not local news but acts as national news that would show the people of Muncie that Shakespeare is appreciated all over the country—so they must learn to appreciate him, too.

Shakespeare was also studied by the Literature Class of Muncie, as seen in an article from February 18, 1896 in the *Morning News* about how “Shakespeare and His Drama’ will be the subject before the Literature class tonight, 7 to 8 o’clock, Bell block. Rev. F.O. Grannis will address the class.” Grannis was a local reverend at a Protestant Episcopal church, but clearly he had some knowledge about or experience with Shakespeare. A later article which discusses the “very fine addresses on Shakespeare and his dramas by Rev. F.O. Grannis [sic]” indicates that this literature class, conducted “under the auspices of the Woman’s club,” was not the only one of its kind to focus specifically on Shakespeare.

Even other poetry, like that of the then-well-known Muncie poet E.S.L. Thompson, took some inspiration from the works of Shakespeare. One of her poems from February 1897, titled “Falstaff” after the character from Shakespeare’s Henriad and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, begins by quoting part of *Henry V*. A short story, as
well, was published in the *Muncie Daily News* on August 30, 1890, titled “Taming of the Shrew,” by Helen Forrest Graves in *Philadelphia Saturday Night*, though the actual short story had nothing to do with Shakespeare in the slightest. In April 1894, the *Morning News* even printed a serial story titled “A Little Comedy of Errors;” an advertisement for the serial printed on April 7 stated that “Like its famous Shakespearean namesake, the chief interest of the story centers about two brothers—twins—who have a resemblance—so strong as to deceive their intimate acquaintances.” Anyone familiar with *A Comedy of Errors* would be able to see the similarities between the play and this upcoming serial. Maybe after finishing the serial, a Muncie reader would even be curious enough to give the original play a try.

Lectures on literary topics were also given frequently in Muncie for a variety of groups and a multitude of reasons. Occasionally, lectures were given in order to raise money for worthy causes, either charitable or not. According to an article published in the *Morning News* on July 15, 1897, Mr. Elbert Hubbard came in to speak with the Dante class in order to earn proceeds to benefit the propylaeum, the future home of the confederation of women’s clubs in Muncie. Hubbard was actually a nationally established writer and printer who founded the Roycroft Press (“Roycroft-Hubbard”). In his lecture in Muncie, he spoke about Shakespeare to a “large and appreciative audience” in the evening portion of his program. This was certainly not the only instance of a Shakespearean study and lecture given for the benefit of a public service.

Professional meetings were primary venues for Shakespearean lectures, too, especially when the meetings were related to either literature or education. For
example, an article about the meeting of the Teachers’ Institute, at which Muncie schoolteachers were in attendance, published on August 24, 1898, provides a summary of one of the lectures given by Prof. Griffith. In this lecture, about the reading of books, Griffith asked:

What shall be read? First, as to poets—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spencer and American poets, and such prose writers as Dickens and Emerson. If you are given to romantic novels study the other kind, the realistic. Get as many different points of view as possible. Not many have a taste for dramatic poetry, yet everybody is supposed to read Shakespeare. Whatever your interests or tastes in life, you will find something in literature to contribute to those interests and tastes. The same way all of us ought to cultivate a taste and appreciation for theological literature.

Griffith’s lecture focused on reading outside of specifically academic environments, although he did not focus on what would typically be considered light, or for-fun, reading. He did encourage reading a span of genres and points of view, but he noted that some writers must be read, Shakespeare being one of them. He stated that “everybody is supposed to read Shakespeare,” implying that it Shakespeare is vital to read and understand in order to be a member of society. Although Shakespeare might be something that has to be “cultivated,” and practiced in order to be understood and appreciated (note that while everyone must read it, he said nothing of enjoying it), it must be read nevertheless.

The very next day, the Muncie Morning News reported on the Institute’s program for the next day, which 183 teachers attended. This time, Griffith lectured exclusively on Shakespearean study. He noted the importance of knowing which play to take up first, second, and so on, and notes that “with reference to order, one of the most fruitful sources of information is the chronological order of the plays.”
Other professional workshops that discussed Shakespeare included the meeting of the State Teachers' Association in December 1898. One of the subjects discussed at the meeting of the English section and led by Miss Emma Mont McRae, a professor at Purdue University and a former principal of the Muncie high school, was "Methods of Teaching Shakespeare." In these meetings focused on educating teachers, the teachers learn how to read, study, and teach Shakespeare to their students. More focus is given during the meetings to Shakespearean study than study of any other single author. This implies that teachers need, and possibly want, explicit instruction on how to educate their students about Shakespeare.

An article titled "The Mission of Literature," by Professor T.W. Hunt from Forum, printed on February 18, 1898 in the Morning News, stated that Shakespeare himself has "no legitimate rival in the province of English literature. Most of the Shakespearean plays evince this first condition of literary greatness in their respective embodiment of some great thought." In terms of literary scholarship and analysis, Shakespeare tops the list as a key element to emphasize. Because his plays we seen as "embodying great thought," the Muncie people gave the works exclusive time and energy through lecture and study, during classes, meetings, newspaper articles, and especially during school. Did the Muncie people read Shakespeare as much as these newspaper articles imply? The records from the Muncie public library can shed light on exactly how Shakespeare-related books were read and experienced as literature.
Shakespeare at the Library

Libraries were more widely used in the 1890s for a number of reasons. School attendance had become mandatory and more individuals were enrolling in higher education, both of which increased the level of literacy in the nation, leading to more library use. Private libraries, too, because “socially viable tokens of success” and “frequently misleading symbols of cultural concern” in the houses of the well-off (Lynes 6). But public libraries were more widely available to the general public. In fact, most libraries in the nineteenth century were free to join as long as one was a citizen of the town or city and had a guarantor who could assume liability for fines if the borrower was unable to pay.

Reading selections varied across genres during this time period. Earlier in the 1800s, novels and romances were occasionally seen as temptations because they could “corrupt the mind” by making “vice and crime alluring.” Alternatively, appropriate books that were suggested in periodicals and newspapers were typically “formidable in content, even leaden, especially heavy on history and biography, and cautious in their choice of fiction” (Blair 17). Nevertheless, fiction and dime novels became more and more popular as time ticked towards the twentieth century. Most libraries offered a nice selection of fiction, informational texts, children’s books, history books, and so on.

The Muncie Public Library, too, offered a selection of books from fiction to classics, so that the Muncie people could spend their leisure time reading what they wished. In fact, the Muncie library was active far before the 1890s—it has been an integral part of the Muncie community since 1875 (“History”). At a meeting on
January 13, 1873, the city council decided that a public library and reading room should both be established for the benefit of the city. The original plan was to support the library by private subscription of citizens, but it soon became clear that this plan was impractical. A committee of private subscribers appealed to the city council and "secured the passage of an ordinance subscribing 1,500 shares of $2 each to the capital stock of the association," adding to the 375 shares already purchased by private individuals (Kemper 268).

The library's books were originally collected from the old county, township, Philalethian Society, and Workingmen's libraries, as well as from individual donations. In December 1874, the council arranged to set up the library in the "east rom in the second story of the city building" (Kemper 271). On June 1, 1875, the library opened with an accession catalogue of 2,190 books (Kemper 272). The library increased its circulation throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, and in 1902, the first designated library building in Muncie was built with funds from "steel industrialist Andrew Carnegie." Muncie's Carnegie Library is still functioning today ("History").

During the 1890s—from 1891 until well into 1903—the elected librarian of the Muncie Public Library was Katharine Wilson. According to her record in the "What Middletown Read" database, Wilson was a white female born in Ohio in 1839, making her around 52 years old at the time she was appointed librarian. She has 464 transactions listed, although the borrower name is typically someone other than herself, indicating that she lent her card to patrons who lost, forgot, or were missing their own so that they could still check out books ("WMR: Patron #78"). In
addition to being well taken care of by Wilson, the public library was strongly supported by the city; a member of the library board presented a request to the city council once a year, "stating the needs of the library and asking for an appropriation which was usually granted" (Henry).

Why is the Muncie Public Library so important to examine? Because looking at what people checked out from libraries can give great insight into their reading habits and can lead to generalizations about how certain books or authors were viewed or read. As Esther Dunn asks rhetorically in her history of Shakespeare in America: "How many grandchildren of present twentieth century Americans who own books will be likely to know whether grandmother possessed and, still more problematical, read a copy of Shakespeare?" (Dunn 27). Luckily enough, using the "What Middletown Read" database, the presence of Shakespeare in the Muncie Public Library's borrowing records can be analyzed. Although it is impossible to tell whether or not the books checked out were actually read by the borrowers, the database does share what types of people checked out Shakespeare-related material and what Shakespeare-related material was available to the Muncie public between November 5, 1891 and December 3, 1902.

The ledger data on the "What Middletown Read" database for the decade from 1890-1899 contains one gap in the library records, so not every single book checked out can be analyzed. The ledgers that recorded the period from May 28, 1892 to November 5, 1894 are missing. At this time, Muncie experienced a smallpox epidemic, so it is possible that the missing ledgers were burned or destroyed in order to reduce the risk of smallpox contamination ("User's"). Within the data that
the database does possess, however, there is an abundance of information about Shakespearean plays, books about Shakespearean study, and collections of Shakespeare that were available to the Muncie people, as well as information about what kinds of people checked them out.

There were twenty books available in the library that were accessioned before 1900. A table in Appendix A details the titles, authors, and accession numbers, and accession dates of each book, along with the number of times each was checked out between when the database records begin in November 1891 and the end of the decade in December 1899.

A set of *The Works of William Shakespeare*, published in Boston, Massachusetts by Little, Brown, and Company in 1889 makes up twelve of these twenty books. The editor of this set of works was Richard Grant White, and according to the database, volumes one through nine, plus volume twelve, were all accessioned on the same date, June 3, 1875. There are two missing accession numbers between volume nine and volume twelve, which may indicate that the library possessed a full set but for some reason, volumes ten and eleven were missing from the records. The library seems to have reacquired volumes ten and eleven quite a few years later, on June 23, 1890.

While these twelve volumes were available to the public through the library, not all of them were frequently borrowed and others were immensely popular in comparison. The most frequently checked out book in this series was volume ten, checked out 17 times and containing *Romeo and Juliet*, *Timon of Athens*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Macbeth*. Because *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* are some of the plays
most often referenced in newspaper articles and advertisements, it is no surprise that this volume was popular. The next most popular volume was volume one, which includes none of Shakespeare’s plays but contains his poems as well as a history of his life and “An Essay on Shakespeare’s Genius” by Richard Grant White. This is the volume most Muncie citizens would borrow first in order to introduce them to Shakespeare; it was borrowed 14 times. A close third place, with 13 transactions, is volume four, containing *A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. All four of these plays are mentioned in various articles and reports from the Muncie newspapers at some point during the decade, so this too is no surprise.

A lone copy of *The Merchant of Venice* was also available at the library, the only one of Shakespeare’s plays to be found in a single book. This book was published in Boston and included an introduction and notes by Rev. Henry N. Hudson for “use in school and classes.” (“WMR: Book #6098”). It was checked out seven times, which means that if everyone who checked out volume four did so because of *The Merchant of Venice*, this play could have been the most popular out of all of Shakespeare’s plays, at least with the Muncie people.

Volume two of White’s collection, which is the first of the volumes to contain some of Shakespeare’s plays (*The Tempest, Two Gentlemen of Verona, and The Merry Wives of Windsor*) was checked out twelve times. There is no other evidence of the popularity of these plays, as Falstaff was only referenced a minimal number of times and the only reference to *The Tempest* was one newspaper review during a club
meeting, but apparently the Muncie people enjoyed these more than the newspapers might reflect.

Volume eleven was checked out of the Muncie Public Library 10 times throughout the decade. This volume contains one of the most referenced and performed plays in Muncie, *Hamlet*, as well as *Othello*, which was also performed, and *King Lear*. Although *King Richard the Third* and *King Henry the Eighth* were never performed in Muncie in this decade, the volume which contained their texts—volume eight—was checked out six times, just a few less than the well-known *Hamlet*.

Most of the other volumes were checked out just a few times between 1891 and 1899. Volume three (*Measure for Measure, Comedy of Errors, Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*) was checked out three times, volume five (*All's Well That Ends Well, Twelfth Night*, and *The Winter's Tale*) was checked out three times, volume twelve (*Antony and Cleopatra, Cymbeline, and Pericles*) was checked out twice, and volume nine (*Troilus and Cressida, Coriolanus*, and *Titus Andronicus*) was checked out just once.

Volumes six and seven, the first of which contained the histories *King John*, *King John*, *King Richard the Second*, *King Henry the Fourth Part I*, *King Henry the Fourth Part II* and the second of which contained the histories *King Henry the Fifth*, *King Henry the Sixth Part I*, and *King Henry the Sixth Part II*, were not checked out at all during this decade. They both have zero transactions—though this is not to say that Muncie citizens couldn't have referenced the books while they were in the library, without borrowing them (Evans).
The library also possessed two copies of *The dramatic works of William Shakespeare: with a life of the poet, and notes, original and selected: together with a copious glossary*, both accessed on January 5, 1892. These books were published in Philadelphia and were categorized as “English Drama—Early modern and Elizabethan” and “Shakespeare—Criticism and Interpretation” by the library (“WMR: Book #7798”). The first copy was borrowed 13 times and the second was borrowed seven times.

A book which sounds similar in content to the previous books discussed was *The dramatic works of William Shakspeare [SIC]: accurately printed from the text of the corrected copy left by the late George Steevens... with a glossary, and notes, and a Sketch of the life of Shakspeare [SIC]; in two volumes*. This was published in 1827 in Hartford, Connecticut, and it was checked out of the library 15 times after its accession date on January 5, 1892. The book contains a “Sketch of the life of Shakespeare,” as well as the full text of each of Shakespeare’s plays, followed by a glossary at the end (“WMR: Book #8038”).

Another series of related texts recorded in the ledgers was a set of two copies of *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb, one copy that was illustrated by John Gilbert and accessioned on March 13, 1875 and one copy that was not illustrated and was accessioned on November 5, 1885. The first copy was borrowed three times and the second copy was borrowed a staggering 58 times throughout the decade. *Tales from Shakespeare* was an immensely popular children’s book published in 1807 and written by a brother and sister, Charles and Mary Lamb, who decided to retell the plots of Shakespeare’s plays in child-friendly form. As it was
meant for children, *Titus Andronicus* is left out of the *Tales, as is Coriolanus* and most of the history plays except for *King Lear*. The book was considered an "excellent introduction to the dramas of our greatest playwright," especially as "Shakespeare's own language is used as much as possible to accustom children to the English of the Elizabethan age and so make easier their transition to the reading of the plays themselves" ("Tales"). The Lambs do summarize the plots of the plays closely, translating a good portion of the dialogue from the original plays to narrative form.

For example, a portion of the section of *Hamlet* from *Tales of Shakespeare* states as follows:

> But upon no one did this unadvised action of the queen make such impression as upon this young prince, who loved and venerated the memory of his dead father almost to idolatry, and, being of a nice sense of honor and a most exquisite practiser of propriety himself, did sorely take to heart this unworthy conduct of his mother Gertrude; in so much that, between grief for his father's death and shame for his mother's marriage, this young prince was overclouded with a deep melancholy, and lost all his mirth and all his good looks; all his customary pleasure in books forsook him, his princely exercises and sports, proper to his youth, were no longer acceptable; he grew weary of the world, which seemed to him an unweeded garden, where all the wholesome flowers were choked up and nothing but weeds could thrive. ("Tales")

The text clearly takes not only the plot of the first scenes of *Hamlet* and summarizes them in narrative form, but it also uses specific words and phrases that would be recognizable to anyone who had read the original play. In fact, the patrons who read or checked out one of these two copies may have been inspired to read the actual plays the stories were based on. Lovers of Shakespeare might also have checked out *Tales of Shakespeare* in order to read it for enjoyment and see how it compared to the actual plays or to introduce their children to the stories. Either way, there is a
definite relationship between the book by the Lambs and Shakespeare's actual works. For example, Mary E. Moore checked out *Tales of Shakespeare* on April 15, 1892, and later checked out *An introduction to the study of Shakespeare* on December 11th and 25th of 1895 and January 10th of 1896 ("WMR: Patron #51"). A borrower named India Linder but who used the I.D. of Harry Fox checked out *The works of William Shakespeare* on December 14, 1895, immediately followed by *Tales from Shakespeare* on December 23, 1895 ("WMR: Patron #1499"). Helen Hickman, a frequent user of the library who had 374 recorded transactions overall, checked out *The Merchant of Venice* on June 22, 1895, followed by *Tales from Shakespeare* on July 2, 1895 and then *The dramatic works of William Shakspeare* [SIC]; *accurately printed from the text of the corrected copy left by the late George Steevens... with a glossary, and notes, and a Sketch of the life of Shakspeare* [SIC]; *in two volumes* on July 6, 1895 ("WMR: Patron #2649"). These types of results are found over and over in the records.

A book titled *Characteristics of women, moral, poetical, and historical (Essays on Shakespeare's female characters)* by Mrs. Anna Jameson and published in Boston, was checked out once in the entire decade. The person listed as the borrower was Mrs. Charlott Pierce, but the listed patron name—and the linked information—was Emma Thompson ("WMR: Book #1886"). According to their respective database pages, Emma Thompson was a white woman and the wife of a blue collar glass blower, and Charlotte Pierce was a white woman and the wife of a blue collar glass cutter, but it is unclear which one of these woman actually borrowed this book.
The other books found at the Muncie Public Library that were related to Shakespeare were similarly academic and critical in focus. A book called *An introduction to the study of Shakespeare*, by Hiram Corson, was checked out 13 times. The book contained an assortment of information about the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, the use of verse and prose in Shakespeare’s plays, the authenticity of the First folio, the chronology of the plays, as well as sections on certain plays and characters (chapters include focus on elements from *Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, King John, Much Ado About Nothing, Hamlet*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*). This book was categorized under the subjects of “Shakespeare—Study and teaching,” “Shakespeare—Criticism and interpretation,” and most amusingly, “Shakespeare—Handbooks and manuals” (“WMR: Book #7014”). Just as scholarly research and newspaper articles show that Shakespeare at this time was seen as something to be studied in order to be properly understood, this book is actually catalogued as a handbook and manual on how to read and study Shakespeare.

The last of the twenty Shakespeare-related books in the library catalogue was *How to study Shakespeare*, written by William Hansell Fleming with contributor William James Rolfe. It was published in New York, New York by Doubleday & McClure Co. and was categorized as “Shakespeare—Study and teaching.” This book was checked out six times between its accession on November 10, 1898 and the end of 1899, which would have made it more popular than the low number of transactions seems to imply.

Another avenue of inquiry would be to look at the statistics about the individuals who checked out the books. Out of all of the Shakespeare-related
material, there were 175 transactions. Certain people who checked out a book more than once (four times is the highest number of repeat transactions on one book) or who checked out more than one Shakespeare-related book are included in this count, so that does not equal 175 separate people. 93 out of 175 transactions were by female patrons of the library, which means that 53.1% of the Shakespeare-related transactions were from female readers. 76 instances, or 43.4% of the transactions, were from male readers. The discrepancy of 3.5% is because in six of the transactions, the patron's gender was unknown. This shows that females in Muncie were slightly more likely to borrow a Shakespeare-related text from the library, though not by much.

In 144 out of 144 instances where the patron's ethnicity was known, the patrons were white. No non-white patron transactions were recorded for Shakespeare-related texts, though in 31 instances out of 175, the patron's ethnicity was unknown. In the library records at this time, 14 patrons were recorded as being black and one patron was mulatto, which indicates that unless a large number of patrons whose census data remains unknown were non-white, the number of non-white patrons of the library in general was very low. There is no other race or ethnicity-focused data about Shakespeare in the 1890s to compare these numbers to, so no generalizations can be made regarding these statistics.

The age break down for borrowers of Shakespeare-related texts is as follows: 3 instances of patrons ages 0-9, 24 instances of patrons ages 10-15, 64 instances of patrons ages 16-20, 14 instances of patrons ages 21-25, 9 instances of patrons ages 26-30, 9 instances of patrons ages 31-35, 3 instances of patrons ages 36-40, 9
instances of patrons ages 41-45, 4 instances of patrons ages 46-50, 0 instances of patrons ages 51-55, 0 instances of patrons ages 56-60, 1 instance of a patron age 61-65, and 4 instances of patrons ages 66-70. In 31 instances out of 175, the patrons' ages were unknown. To summarize these numbers, the most common age group of a borrower of a Shakespeare-related text at the Muncie Public Library between 1891 and 1899 was the age group from 16-20 years old, with 36.6% of the transactions falling into this category. This makes sense, as Shakespeare was so often studied in the high school and this is the age group that covers most of the students who would have been sophomores through seniors. The second most common age group would be patrons ages 10-15 years old, who comprise 13.7% of the total transactions. Most of these transactions, unsurprisingly, are those involving Tales from Shakespeare.

The last statistic to look at is the types of laborers that the patrons were. In 61 instances out of 175, the patrons who checked out Shakespeare-related texts were blue-collar workers. Comparatively, 81 instances out of 175 were white-collar workers, while the status of 33 patrons' transactions were unknown. 34.9% of the transactions were by blue-collar workers versus 46.3% by white-collar workers. This is an almost disproportionate number of blue-collar workers, as Shakespeare does not typically come to mind when one thinks of manual laborers. However, Anne Trubek from the New York Times stated that according to Dr. Jim Connolly from the Center for Middletown Studies, "blue-collar readers did not especially gravitate to best sellers. Indeed, they were slightly more likely to check out Shakespeare and other classic authors, perhaps, as Connolly speculates, because better-off households already had the books" (Trubek).
These statistics alone do not provide many new insights into the significance of Shakespeare to the people of Muncie, as they are fairly inconclusive. They do show that Shakespeare was checked out of the library, though it is unclear whether or not it was read, and that the majority of the people who checked out Shakespeare-related books were most likely white females between the ages of 16 and 20. Of course, the library is not the only place where Muncie citizens could have been exposed to Shakespeare. Shakespeare's works were also evident components of standard education in Muncie at the high school.

**Shakespeare in School**

An advantage of the kind of local reporting done in the newspapers from the 1890s is that from about 1895 on, the *Sunday Morning News*, the name of the *Morning News* on Sundays, provided a column of news about the Muncie high school, titled "High School Notes." This column gave readers information about what the students were currently studying in each class, what certain clubs did at their meetings, what events and programs the school was planning to put on, and a variety of other information about the students, teachers, and school.

One of the many clubs available for participation by high school students was the Senior Shakespearean Club. On February 24, 1895, the club met for its "regular weekly meeting" in the high school building on Thursday evening. On March 17, the news column notes that their meeting was "held in the superintendent's office Friday morning." While the club met weekly, it seems as though the meeting place
shifted from week to week. Very little information was given about what the specific club activities and goals were, however.

The Shakespearian Club is not only the high school club that includes Shakespeare at the heart of its activities. A note on March 17, 1895, about the Thelo Society, another group from the high school, stated that "last Friday was Shakespearian day," and that the special feature of the program was "a comparison between the theatre of the Elizabethan age and that of the modern time." This feature insured that it was not only literature in the club’s program but history and discussion of contemporary culture as well. Interdisciplinary education is important in order to tie together seemingly disconnected areas of study; the high school students in this club, then, would be getting high quality education not only in school but after school during their club meetings. Also included in the program was an oral review of *The Merchant of Venice* and a recitation of "Portia’s Plea for Mercy;" an oral review of *Hamlet* and a recitation of "Polonius' Advice to His Son;" a review of *The Tempest*; and music. *Hamlet* was certainly one of the most well-known plays at the time—much as it is today—and even the *Merchant of Venice* was performed on a fairly frequent basis throughout America in general during this period. This article is one of the only references in the newspaper in the whole decade to *The Tempest*, however, which might suggest that the review of the play would at least introduce it to members in the club who were previously unfamiliar with it.

On September 15, 1895, it was reported that a senior reading circle, later called a "Senior literacy society" as well as a reading circle, was created by Ms.
McClelland, Ms. Metts, Mrs. Ivins, and Ms. Cammack, who was the high school English teacher at the time. They chose *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to be the first play studied, and Ms. Cammack had “already written to Chicago to secure the required books.” On September 22, the newspaper notes that the group met on the previous Thursday to read and discuss the first act of *Midsummer*. Winton Hawk, age eighteen, was mentioned as rendering his part especially well. Interestingly, Hawk’s library records show that he was a regular visitor to the Muncie Public Library and checked out *Tales from Shakespeare* earlier, on April 16, 1895 (“WMR: Patron #2526”). Therefore, it is possible that Hawk was already familiar with the plot of *Midsummer* before studying it in class, although the language and poetry of the original play would be fairly new to him.

The next few weeks of “High School Notes” continue to report on the group’s progress with the play. On September 26, they met in the evening to read act two and scene one of act three, with a note that “Ben Hubbard, as Demetrius, and Mildred Eastlake, as Helena, created a favorable impression. Mr. Hawk’s standard of excellence remains the same.” Neither Hubbard nor Eastlake has library records to investigate.

On October 6, it was reported that the Senior Reading circle met on October 3 to read and discuss scene two of act three. Interestingly, the note mentions that “It is proposed to organize a dramatical club in the Senior class and to present a play at the Wysor Grand in the near future.” The Wysor Grand is the premier opera house in Muncie during this decade and is discussed later in this thesis, in the section regarding Shakespeare in performance. For students to present a play—most likely
a Shakespearean play, as the topic arose during Shakespearean study—at the Wysor Grand would have taken an enormous amount of work but would have given students a practical avenue for the use of their accrued skills in studying Shakespeare. The Reading Circle’s study of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was finished by October 17.

Unfortunately, there is no other mention of the Senior Reading Circle until the following year, on September 13, 1896. The “High School Notes” column stated as follows:

The Senior Reading Circle which caused such a diversity of comment last year and which threatened to disrupt many High School affairs, will again be established on next Thursday evening. The first play to be taken up will be *As You Like It*, after which others of Shakespeare’s works will be considered.

The newspaper, however, makes no mention of how the Reading Circle had “threatened to disrupt High School affairs.” It is interesting to see that *As You Like It* was studied, as that has already been seen in one of the serial advertisements in the *Morning News* the previous year, as already discussed.

Later, on October 6, 1896, at which time the “High School Notes” column was published on a Tuesday instead of its regular Sunday, another announcement about the study of *As You Like It* appears. This note gives far more details about the performances of the readers in the club, noting that “Clifford Taylor, Maggie Windsor and Omar Weir all are bright successes in their way. Mr. Weir’s rendition of ‘Orlando’ would make an angel weep. Miss Windsor as ‘Rosalind’ is very effective. Mr. Haymond’s excellent playing of the part ‘Oliver’ evoked unbounded applause which threatened to demolish the kitchen furniture.” As a further note, the article
states that "Miss Emma Cammack has charge of the work and probably will be instrumental in having 'As You Like It' played at the opera house by her pupils, for the benefit of a foreign missionary society." Performances put on in order to benefit a charity or public service were commonplace at this time, just as lectures for the same purpose were. Having As You Like It performed at the Wysor Grand for benefit would have raised money for a worthy cause while also educating the students in the Reading Circle about Shakespeare on stage. Unfortunately, the play was not performed in Muncie during this decade.

Another instance of a study of a play in collaboration with seeing it performed was in February 1897. The Senior Reading Circle met on February 4 as usual, but instead of reading "the outlined work," which remained unmentioned, the article notes that "Shakespeare's 'Othello' was studied, as several of the students expected to see it played by Walker Whiteside's company." Whiteside's performance in Othello is discussed later in the section on Shakespeare in performance. The combination of reading and seeing the play would be mutually beneficial; studying it during the meetings of the Reading Circle would help prepare the students for what they would be seeing at the theatre, and seeing it in performance would enhance their reading and analysis.

The Seniors did not only read Shakespeare as an extra-curricular activity but also studied Shakespeare within the context of the classroom. The newspaper on November 3, 1895, notes that the Senior class finished reading The Merchant of Venice, under the instruction of Ms. Cammack. Additionally, they debated "the comparative virtues of cunning Shylock and deceptive Antonio," further proving
that Shakespeare in the 1890s classroom could be interdisciplinary and teach a variety of skills other than just analysis of text. This particular article also notes that “Miss Pershing and Fredie Metts, defenders of Faith, Justice and Law, upheld Antonio, while Handel Hubbard was prominent among the supporters of the Jew.”

Miss Pershing was most likely Minni C. Pershing, who was born in 1877 and would have been about eighteen at the time of this article’s publication. Her library record notes that she was a voracious borrower of books, and census data indicates that she went on to become a school teacher (“WMR: Patron #2478”). Additionally, the choice of *The Merchant of Venice* as school study is somewhat curious since it is regarded as one of Shakespeare’s more controversial plays today for how the Jewish character of Shylock is characterized. During this time period in Muncie, although the population of Jewish individuals never exceeded two hundred people, they were still a present force in the town. By 1900, Jewish citizens “operated a large proportion of downtown businesses” (“Delaware”). Therefore, studying this play might have given the students a chance to talk about contemporary issues and the ways in which Jewish people were treated in both society and in the text of the play.

The Seniors from the next class read *The Merchant of Venice* the next year in September 1896 as well, suggesting that the high school curriculum does not vary much from year to year. In October 1898, the Senior literature class studied *Macbeth*, followed by the study of *Hamlet* in November. It should be noted that during these studies, the students not only studied Shakespeare in class but were also assigned work to complete out of class, being the study of *Ivanhoe* during *Macbeth* and *The Vicar of Wakefield* during *Hamlet*. This indicates that the
instructors believed Shakespeare to be either more difficult for the students to comprehend, which is why they would study it in class instead of outside class individually, or that they believed it to be more important than the outside work. Other options may be that Shakespeare is more suited for group study, as well, as the newspaper gives repeated mentions of reading it aloud in class, which could be more difficult to do on an individual basis.

On April 21, 1895, the “High School Notes” column announced that on the previous Friday, April 19, a woman named Mrs. Branch gave a lecture to the sophomores, juniors, and seniors on “Why and How to Study Shakespeare,” which "showed a better insight into the works of that author than most people possess.” Teachers, it seems, are not enough when it comes to adequately teaching students how to study Shakespeare; outside lecturers must come visit as well in order to share their “better insight,” again making the reading of Shakespeare distant and unreachable for casual readers or viewers.

Finally, in December 1897, the Seniors (and the students in general, as the Senior class population shifts each year and every class seems to be as invested in Shakespeare as the last) were reported to be pleased to have “received the bust of Shakespeare which was ordered some days ago. It is pronounced the finest in the city and all honor is due the class for this effort in securing the beautiful piece of work, which adds to the classical appearance of the Senior's room.” Here again is the repetition of the idea that Shakespeare brings “class” and heightens the intellectual atmosphere of the classroom, signifying his place in the establishment of high literature.
According to the newspapers throughout the decade, Shakespeare was an integral part of high school education in the 1890s. Through classes, lectures, and clubs, students studied both literary, theatrical, and historical aspects of Shakespeare's works. Students, however, were not the only citizens of Middletown to take part in Shakespearean study through the environment of a club.

**Shakespeare in Clubs**

Literary clubs in the 1890s were some of the most popular cultural and social gatherings of the day. The American desire for self-improvement directly led to the creation of clubs and societies that were devoted to studying and discussing literature, music, current events, and other topics of interest to an educated public (Shakespeare Societies 154). At the beginning of the decade, it seems as though there was a lack in literary-based clubs in Muncie, as opposed to previous years. An article published in the *Muncie Daily News* on October 6, 1890, stated:

> There was a time when Muncie had several good literary societies that tended to both socially and educationally benefit the members, but the prospects for anything of this kind for the coming winter are absent. Why cannot we have at the present time as much as we have enjoyed in the past, I would like to know. A good literary club would help to advance all the members, and thereby benefit the city.

The clubs in Muncie, as this article notes, were places to both socialize with other citizens and educate themselves in order to become more cultured and intellectual people; and apparently, the author of this article believes that the clubs have declined in quality and existence. However, as the decade progressed, a number of clubs were mentioned on a regular basis in the newspaper, from the Blue Ribbon Club to the Dickens Club to the Epworth League, and so on.
Shakespeare societies made up a number of these literary clubs in America, some of which are still active currently. Shakespeare clubs were specifically focused on bringing a collaborative element to Shakespearean study, which was seen as a way to fashionably socialize as well as improve the intellectual capabilities of members. For example, an 1898 pamphlet from Doubleday that explained “How to Organize a Shakespeare Club” noted, “The pleasure and profit from the study of Literature increase if congenial persons meet to read together the same authors. The Shakespearean Drama especially encourages the formation of such clubs and classes by offering exceptional opportunities for instruction and entertainment” (“Shakespeare Societies” 156). Both education and entertainment were vital to club activities.

Members of these clubs “did more than learn about the Bard; they also consumed a lot of food and drink and created entertaining traditions and rituals” (“Shakespeare Societies” 154). One specific instance of such food and rituals in action was a report by Henry Savage on the Shakespeare Society of Philadelphia from 1852; this was earlier than the Gilded Age, but acts as a clear example of the typical rundown of a meeting. This society’s meeting began with dinner of soup, terrapin, salad and cheese, and ice or meringue for dessert, followed by coffee and cigars. Then they would read a Shakespearean scene, after which the Dean of the club set the terms for analysis and members could jump in with observations or commentary. Disciplinary measures were in place to maintain order, as the discussion could become intense at times. Savage also noted that “at its best the Society combined a high-brow sense of leisure... with scholarly intensity” (Desmet).
Some Shakespeare clubs were specifically for men, while some were for women; others were open to members regardless of their gender. The age range of members for Shakespeare societies was also large; some Shakespeare clubs were even developed for girls as young as twelve, who began by reading the *Tales of Shakespeare* by Mary and Charles Lamb before moving on to study the plays in greater depth (Whetstone and Leahy 200). Shakespearean study was serious no matter the age of the members in the society. A standard rundown of a typical Shakespearean society meeting would be to read a play aloud at one meeting and then discuss and critique the play at the next meeting; sometimes, analytical papers by experts were read at these follow-up meetings, and sometimes the members read papers written by one of their own (Desmet). Characters were studied critically, plays were analyzed from various perspectives and standpoints, settings of plays were sketched and described, and Shakespeare's life was written about many times over (Whetstone and Leahy 200).

Why was the study of Shakespeare so popular in a club setting? The people of the nineteenth century believed that "the study of Shakespeare stimulates the mind, broaden and uplifts it" (Whetstone and Leahy 198). These clubs were vehicles for personal improvement, a vital element of American life at this time period. Shakespeare meant intellect and he meant culture; Americans, in their quest to better themselves, turned to him and his works for the chance to improve themselves while also socializing and enjoying themselves.

One of the specifically Shakespeare-related clubs during the 1890s in Muncie was the aptly-named "Shakespeare Club." This club seems to have met to read and
discuss a variety of Shakespeare's plays. For example, in the report published on April 25, 1894, in the *Morning News*, titled "Shakespeare Club.—Interesting Meeting with Dr. and Mrs. Winans," the article states that "The club read Henry VIII. Mrs. George O. Cromwell rendered Hamlet's soliloquy in a masterly style. The night scene from Macbeth was given by the following cast," with the cast published.

Mrs. George O. Cromwell's library record from the "What Middletown Read" database shows that many of her library transactions were either children's novels by Horatio Alger or issues of *St. Nicholas*, a children's magazine, which most likely indicates that she used the library primarily to get books for her children. None of her library transactions show links to Shakespeare, and yet she evidently gave a "masterly" rendition of one of Shakespeare's greatest speeches. Cromwell, then, is proof that the library records may not be a primary indicator of the meaning of Shakespeare to certain individuals. The record for Dr. Winans, who was mentioned in the article as either hosting or leading this particular meeting of the Shakespeare Club, also lists no Shakespeare, though he does have 108 transactions and a great deal of them are related in some way to English literature.

The same article also gives a list of all of the members of this club at the time, which are as follows: Mr. and Mrs. F.O. Granniss, Mr. and Mrs. T.F. Rose, Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Kitts, Mr. and Mrs. George O. Cromwell, Mr. and Mrs. N.F. Ethell, Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Bard, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Olcott, Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Marsh, Mr. and Mrs. George F. McCulloch, Mr. and Mrs. Thad A. Neely, Mr. and Mrs. H.M. Winans, Mr. and Mrs. W.M. Marsh, W.D. Kuts, and J.W. Ryan. In 1894, then, the membership of the Shakespeare Club numbered at least twenty-six members. A similar notice of a Shakespeare Club
meeting from February 26, 1895, gives the following members: Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Tyler, Mr. and Mrs. George Ball, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Over, Miss Alice Foulke, Edna Streeter, Sarah McCulloch, Carrie McCulloch, Fannie Shipley, Blanche Shipley, Grace Coffeen, Addie Hathaway, Anna Bailey, Pearl Bailey, Mae Heath, Miss Painter, Ed Hill, Arthur Huffer, Robert Sheffield, Harry Streeter, A.M. Wagner, Will Goddard, Hal Kimbrough, Joseph Crews, and W.P. Stevens. The number of members is similar to the previous year—twenty-seven this time instead of twenty-six—but nearly all of the names are different, which might mean that members were married, member turn-over was high for some reason, or something else entirely.

Another article about a meeting of the Shakespeare Club, published on May 2, 1894 in the Morning News, noted that the club read a paper on King Henry VIII, which shows that they connected the events in the plays to the historical events or figures on which they were based. The club members also read the last two acts of Henry VIII and listened to selections played on an Italian harp. Music was often incorporated into the programs of these literary club meetings, possibly as another way to enhance the overall cultural feel of the meetings. On December 10, 1894, the Shakespeare Club met with Willis D. Kouts as the host or leader of the meeting in order to read the last three acts of Richard II. The members of the club also acted out the first scene of act four of King John. It seems as though in 1894, the history plays were popular focuses of study for the club. In February 1895, an article in the Morning News noted that the Shakespearean Club was reading As You Like It, which shows that they read more widely than just the history plays.
The Shakespeare club’s activities were not limited to reading the plays at their regular meetings. An untitled article from the *Morning News* on May 3, 1894, stated as follows:

It is probably that the amusement lovers of Muncie will be given a rare treat in the way of a home talent Shakespearean production before the present theatrical season ends. The Shakespeare club, while its membership is small, contains some exceptionally fine talent, and the members are being urged to produce one of Shakespeare’s plays, or to give an entertainment comprising the best scenes from several of the great author’s dramas. Properly costumed this club could render the Immortal Williams's [sic] lines in a very creditable manner, and the public would be doubly interested, from the fact that the roles were assumed by local talent.

However, there was no mention of a Shakespearean entertainment provided by the Shakespeare club until January of 1895. The *Morning News* notes that “The Shakespeare Club of Muncie gave an entertainment last evening [January 14] at Mrs. G.F. McCulloch’s to a limited number of invited guests.” The article gives a list of scenes performed, as well as who played each character. The "Trial Scene of Shylock" from *The Merchant of Venice*, the “Ghost Scene” from *Hamlet*, the first scene of act four of *King Lear*, and the “Sleepwalking Scene” from *Macbeth* were the main focuses of the program. Each of these plays is one that is mentioned in the newspaper various other times, either because it was studied in class or school or because it was referenced in advertisements or other articles. This means that it is most likely the most well-known and favorite scenes that the group chose to put on, out of either enjoyment or familiarity. Additionally, the scenes were given in costume and were accompanied by vocal and instrumental music, which shows that the club was invested in putting on an entertainment that closely mimicked that of a full stage production rather than just an elocutionary reading.
The Shakespeare Club also secured outside entertainment for the city. On April 16, 1895, an article in the *Morning News* noted that the Shakespeare Club secured Miss Minnie M. Williams of New York City to give a Shakespearean recital in Muncie. It states that “Miss Williams, who is a sister of Hannibal Williams, comes most highly recommended by leading literary people of the eastern cities. All who are in any manner interested in Shakespeare will find this entertainment a real treat.” A later article from a few days later revealed that she performed from *A Winter’s Tale*, which is stated as being “one of the least known, yet one of the strongest [sic] and at the same time one of the most touching works of Shakespeare.” It is fitting that a woman would perform *A Winter’s Tale*, as the character of Hermione is one of the strongest female characters in literature. The play is one of the lesser known and less frequently performed Shakespearean works during this time period, so seeing it would have been a treat for the Muncie people.

The Shakespeare Club is also not the only literary club to engage the Muncie residents in Shakespearean study. The Women’s Club in Muncie (or the Woman’s Club, as it was called) studied Shakespeare on a fairly regular basis. Women’s Clubs were another subcategory of nineteenth-century culture to prove immensely popular as social and educational facilities. In fact, by 1895, over 100,000 American women had become involved with women’s societies, hoping to “encourage the discussion of literature, history, the arts, and current events for one afternoon a month” (Blair 30).

Women were expected to “cultivate refinements in modest doses,” though it should not interfere from their domestic work; young women were “assigned the
duty of becoming repositories of the cultural frills that few men cared to cultivate, but now expected their households to offer" (Blair 3). This new duty of women, which grew in important from the 1880s through the 1920s, kicked started the rise in popularity of women’s clubs and associations all across the country, especially in areas where the majority of women—and therefore, women’s club members—were white middle-class women (Blair 3). These clubs also gave women the opportunity to engage in educational and cultural study for their own personal enjoyment and growth. Additionally, most women’s clubs were concerned not only with educating themselves but with “improving the moral and social structure of the country” as well (Whetstone and Leahy 196).

Unfortunately, these women’s clubs were not always taken seriously by the society that they endeavored to improve. Cartoons and newspapers by male authors often caricatured and poked fun at women’s clubs, even to the point of ridiculing women’s clubs’ names (Whetstone and Leahy 197). Although most women in these clubs wouldn’t refer to themselves as feminists, they all strove towards a greater appreciation of women’s intellectual capabilities. The mottos of these clubs reflected this idea; some example mottos include “Tell them the world was made for women also,” “Step by step we gain the heights,” “The temple of knowledge is within our very midst,” and “The destiny of nations is in the hands of women” (Whetstone and Leahy 197).

Among the women’s clubs’ wide range of studied topics was usually Shakespeare. Almost every group spent some time reading and discussing Shakespeare, even if it was only every few years. For example, one club from
Arkansas—the Philomathic Club—studied Homer and Plato for four months, then botany for two months, then Shakespeare for a year, followed by Italian plays and study of various magazines. While they studied Shakespeare, they appointed a leader for each play whose job was to give each member questions to be answered about that play at the meeting (Whetstone and Leahy 199).

Perhaps one reason why Shakespeare was so popular with women's clubs was that women found themselves similar to Shakespeare in that they too lacked a formal education. According to historical examples, women in these societies often presented essays on the female characters in Shakespeare's plays who are "literate, challenge authority, take on men's roles in their own feminine manner, yet maintain their honour and virtue" (Whetstone and Leahy 198). They also used these plays as starting points for discussion about contemporary issues such as the education of women, the ideals of womanhood, marital and family relationships, and more. Through studying Shakespeare, women could develop their reading, writing, research, critical thinking, and public speaking skills, even without access to higher education. In doing so, they spread Shakespeare across the country and further appropriated his works the middle- and upper-class Americans; women's clubs continued to elevate Shakespeare from "being a staple in popular lowbrow entertainment performed in saloons and barns to being an elite element in the highbrow culture in salons and grand theatres" (Whetstone and Leahy 193).

The women's club in Muncie (called the Woman's Club) followed these trends. It was formed under the leadership of Mrs. Emma Mont McRae, who went on to become the English literature chair at Purdue University, and according to a
Morning News article from June 22, 1891, the club was started "with the modest intention of 'learning something.'" In order to achieve this goal, the Woman's Club studied literature, history, law, science, and, of course, Shakespeare.

Newspaper articles about the Woman's Club in Muncie frequently mentioned Shakespeare as a part of their meetings and programs. For example, an address presented in honor of the nineteenth anniversary of the Woman's Club, given by Mrs. Mont McRae and published in the Sunday Morning News on January 27, 1895, stated that it is the club's ambition to study literature, from Shakespeare to lesser prose, in order to educate themselves and prove that "life is worth living." Shakespeare is meant to represent "greater" prose here and is set up as the height of literary worth, and they intended to incorporate his works into their club as a way of bettering themselves. Indeed, during their first meeting after the anniversary, the Woman's club gathered to spend "an evening with Shakespeare." No details about what activities they participated in were given, but the article from the Morning News on February 12, 1895, stated that "when the meeting adjourned all felt that a profitable evening had been spent with the Immortal Bard."

A later Woman's Club meeting from February 25, 1895, focused on Shakespeare as well. At this meeting, included in the program were presentations about the "Character of Macbeth," "View of Human Society in King Lear," "Othello—Its Rank. Its lessons," "Your Own View of Hamlet," and "Recitation—Polonius' Advice to his Son," as well as quotations and music. Another one of their meetings, reported in the Morning News on July 31, 1894, included a "study in Shakespere [sic] with the character of Horatio as the theme." Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, and Hamlet are
over and over again found in the course of Shakespearean study in Muncie, but
*Hamlet* most of all. Why was that play so popular? Perhaps because it dealt with so
many issues—love, death, power, revenge—that were still relevant in the
nineteenth century, and even today. The monologues and soliloquies, too, are
particularly striking, which would make the play a good target for one to be read aloud.

The Women’s club stated in a history of the club, published in the *Morning News* on December 7, 1895, that this year they have “‘crossed the Alps’ with Napoleon; waded through Russia’s snows and inspected Siberia’s prisons; have studied the social problem with ‘Marcella’; wept with ‘Ophelia,’ and gleaned wisdom and mercy from ‘Portia’ [SIC].” Two of their major points of summary for the year are their reading of *Hamlet* and of *The Merchant of Venice*, emphasizing how key their Shakespearean study was to the course of their yearly activities. An important note is that they don’t weep with Hamlet, but with Ophelia; they don’t glean wisdom from Antonio or Shylock, but with, presumably, Portia; as a women’s club, they are sure to sympathize with the female characters of the literature they experience.

Over Halloween of 1898 the Woman’s Club also celebrated with a series of impersonations and scenes from various Shakespeare plays at the home of Mrs. W.A. Meeks. According to the report published in the *Muncie Morning News* on November 1, 1898, the plays focused on were *Othello, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, As You Like It,* and *The Merchant of Venice.* Impersonations included that of Othello and Desdemona, Ophelia, Rosalind and Celia, and Jessica and Lorenzo, while scenes included the closet scene from *Hamlet,* the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet,* and
the court scene from *The Merchant of Venice*. What is interesting to note is that the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* still remains one of Shakespeare's most well-loved and well-known scenes today. Additionally, the article gives a list of who played each character, and as the club members are all women, women played both the male and female roles in each scene.

One of the most noteworthy contributions of the Woman's Club to the culture of Shakespeare in Muncie was their preparation for a performance of "Shakespeare's ideal comedy, 'As You Like It,' by Mrs. Hannibal A. Williams, accompanied by the vocal and instrumental music to the play" in June 1898, the advertisement published on June 9 in the *Muncie Morning News*. The performance was given at the First Baptist church on June 14 at 8 o'clock, and admission was 50 cents. This is certainly an affordable cost, as tickets for most public entertainments were sold at similar or higher costs. Being held at a church would also make this entertainment more accessible to the general public. Much like any other entertainment given in Muncie, the performance was followed by a review in the *Muncie Morning News* the next day. The review stated as follows:

The Shakespearean recital at the First Baptist church last evening was one of the most successful affairs of the kind ever held in Muncie. The elite of the city were in attendance to hear a beautiful and characteristic rendition of Shakespeare's popular play, 'As You Like It.' The piece was beautifully portrayed by Mrs. Hannibal A. Williams, accompanied in vocal and instrumental music, incidental to the play, by excellent local talent. The affair was given under the auspices of the Woman's Club, of this city.

The rest of the article gives a list of the characters, scenes, and the music program, as well as everyone who participated in the musical program.
And yet there are still more clubs that partook in Shakespearean studies. The E.S.A. Club, which was "among the smaller clubs which meet for literary culture" and met every two weeks, both read and discussed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at their meetings in November 1896, as stated in a report from the *Sunday Morning News* on November 15. Only six members were present at this meeting. One of the members, Pearl Bennett, would have been seventeen years old at the time of this study, according to Census data from 1899-1900. This indicates that perhaps the reason why Muncie citizens between the ages of 16 and 20 checked out so much Shakespeare from the public library was because people that age were heavily involved with Shakespeare-related club activities as well as studying his works in school.

The Epworth League, another literary club in Muncie at the time, also brought entertainments and lectures to the city for the benefit of the general public. In April 1897, the *Morning News* announced that the Epworth League was sponsoring a lecture course consisting of seven attractions that would all be held in the Wysor Grand opera house. One of the highlights the article mentions is George Riddle, the "celebrated reader, who will read 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' with an orchestra accompaniment." This play is mentioned again and again as a subject for discussion and entertainment—with its combination of high and low culture in the characters from varying classes, it certainly reflects the current position of society and acts as a symbol of Shakespeare's tottering on the edge of both cultural realms.
Shakespeare in Performance

Shakespearean plays were performed in Muncie not just as related to club activities but as entertainment in their own rights. On May 22, 1894, Mr. William S. Battis visited Muncie to perform in *Much Ado About Nothing* at the First Presbyterian church. This would have been a strictly one-man performance, something that wouldn’t be uncommon during this time period. Shakespeare’s pieces were incredibly popular for declamation, especially because they provided a strong vehicle for impressing the audience with the speaker’s elocutionary skills (Windhover 31). These entertainments would have lacked the grandiosity of a full stage performance, but they still would have given the audience the chance to experience the brilliance of Shakespeare’s language.

Hannibal A. Williams was a speaker of note who also performed in Muncie on a fairly regular basis. His wife had given a performance of *As You Like It* for the Woman’s Club, and his sister Minnie Williams had also been secured by the Woman’s Club to give a recital of Shakespeare in performance. Hannibal Williams himself, however, was well known of his own account for giving “superb reading[s]” of Shakespeare’s works. An article from the *Morning News* on June 1, 1894, noted that he gave a reading of *Julius Caesar* at the Ball Business College for the benefit of Grace church, and that “a good-sized audience was in attendance and every one was more than delighted with Mr. Williams’ masterly handling of the difficult passages of the drama.”

Williams returned to the city in 1895 to give readings on January 16th and 17th of *The Tempest* and the *First Part of King Henry IV*, the proceeds of which were
to be devoted to the Public Library for the purchase of new books. The article that states this information also gives a short reminder of his performance in *Julius Caesar*, stating that his rendition “charmed one of Muncie’s most intelligent audiences.” Intelligence is again and again tied to Shakespeare, this time to the audience of Muncie people who attended the entertainment. If Williams can impress the audience, clearly that is a feat to be applauded, as the audience *must* be intelligent in order to attend a Shakespearean performance. This is the type of cultural shift occurring throughout this time period, subtle as it may be in the newspaper articles of the time. An article from the next week published on January 8, 1895, in the *Morning News* noted that “his rendition of Falstaff in [Henry IV] is said to be one of the finest things ever presented to an audience,” and that the “’reading’ is really a recitation, the whole play being committed to memory.”

The review of Williams’ reading of *The Tempest* was published in the *Morning News* on January 17, 1895 noting that because of a different entertainment in the city—*Ben Hur*—not many people attended the readings. However, the review stated that his “naturalness of manner and evident mastery of his subject won the attention of the audience and by investing each character with an individual tone of voice, gesture and facial expression, suggesting a clear-cut and well defined personality, he was enabled to make his auditors forgetful of the artist and the means employed.” On January 12, 1895, the *Morning News* printed an article titled “Shakespearean Recitations,” which was another article about Hannibal A. Williams doing readings Wednesday and Thursday nights, with tickets at 50 cents each and the surplus “given to the Public Library for the purchase of books.” Williams’
repeated entertainments prove that Muncie was willing to welcome he and his Shakespearean interpretation back into town again and again.

The greatest and grandest performances of Shakespeare, however, were performed at Muncie's premiere theatre, the Wysor Grand. An article published on September 16, 1892, points out that "the Wysor grand is the prettiest, neatest and most complete theatre in the State." It describes the theatre as having thirty divans on the parquet, which would seat 60 people, just behind a section of 158 opera chairs and 40 sofa chairs. The parquet circle had 231 upholstered chairs and the balcony held 341 chairs, with extra benches in the gallery. The article notes that "the elevations is such that from every one of the 1400 seats in the house, a plain, clear view of the stage can be had, and its hearing facilities are excellent." There were 225 electrical lights in the house, along with a grand chandelier, and steam heat was used. This opera house, which opened in 1892 on the corner of Mulberry and Jackson streets and was managed by Henry R. Wysor, attracted a variety of touring productions for all types of theatre, Shakespeare included.

For example, a striking advertisement was printed in the Muncie Daily News on April 7, 1892, stating that the "Brilliant Artist and Tragedian, Walter Whiteside, Assisted by William Humphrey And an Excellent Company," would be putting on a "Grand Production" of Hamlet at the Wysor Grand Opera House on April 12. This would be the first time Walter Whiteside would appear in Muncie, though it was noted that the editors of the newspaper understood "through our exchanges and special correspondents that Mr. Whiteside has achieved in a short time an enviable reputation as an artistic and powerful actor."
Whiteside certainly lived up to his high reputation. The night after the performance, on April 13, 1892, a review was printed in the *Muncie Daily News* which stated that “One of the most cultured and refined audiences that has ever assembled in Wysor’s opera house was in attendance last evening, to witness the rendition of Hamlet, by the talented young actor, Walker Whitesides [SIC]. His interpretation of the character was considered by all to be of an exceptional quality.” Whiteside, a native of Logansport, Indiana, actually went on to star as Hamlet in a Broadway production of the play in the early 1900s (“Walker”). Surely, his interpretation of the character would have been a treat for all audience members, whether they were familiar with *Hamlet* or not.

1892 was not the only year in this decade that Whiteside would perform *Hamlet* for the people of Muncie. Another advertisement was printed in the *Morning News* on March 20, 1896, stating: “Special Dramatic Attraction! The American Tragedian, Mr. Walker Whiteside Assisted by Miss Lelia Wolstan And the same Selected Company of players that appeared with Mr. Whiteside during his engagement at the Herald Square Theatre in New York this season, presenting Shakespeare’s Immortal Creation, Hamlet,” to be performed on March 26.

In the days leading up to this performance of *Hamlet* were a series of articles and reviews of Mr. Whiteside’s work. One from March 21 notes that “There is not in the whole of Shakespeare’s characters one so exacting, one requiring so much experience and art as Hamlet, yet Mr. Whiteside exhibits in it a marvelous talent.” The article also contains a line about how no one attending the play will deny that Whiteside is both an artist and a devout student. This brings up the notion that
already at this point, to be an expert performer, one has to "study" Shakespeare. Did artists have to be students for works of all playwrights? This is doubtful. Therefore, this can be read as another instance of Shakespearean "high" culture coming about.

The performance debuted on Friday, March 27, 1896, to a large audience at the Wysor Grand. No other details about the performance were given but that by special arrangement, Whiteside and the company would be staying another day in order to "give a rendition of the Merchant of Venice with all the accessories and detail that is given in the largest cities." With all of its drama, The Merchant of Venice would have been an attractive entertainment. Whiteside as Shylock was able to give an entirely different performance than he did in Hamlet, according to the show's review in the newspaper on March 28, 1896. The article notes that while he was able to show off his acting ability better as Hamlet, he was still able to please the audience with his rendition of Shylock.

Whiteside returned to Muncie the following year, in 1897, to present another Shakespearean play. This time, according to an advertisement published on February 3, he starred as Iago in Othello, with Chas. D. Herman as Othello. Charles Herman was a white actor who was a "player of prominent stage career," and playing the Moor as a white man would not have been uncommon. African-American actors did perform Shakespeare, Benjamin J. Ford and J.A. Arneaux being two of the more prominent tragedians, but white actors were more readily accepted and respected (Morrison 244). The black population of Muncie increased from 187 people in 1880 to 418 people in 1890; even so, the total population in Muncie in
1890 was 11,345 (Blocker). African-Americans in this area of America would have been rarer than white citizens, even in touring productions.

The review of this performance, published in the *Morning News* on February 10, 1897, was extremely positive, stating that “Mr. Whiteside as ‘Iago’ was supported in an exceptionally pleasing manner, and his excellent interpretation left no reasonable doubt in the minds of his audience as to his right to the above title [America’s representative tragedian] or dramatic ability and every person present was justified in speaking of the play as being in many respects the most important dramatic event of the season.”

Another “eminent tragedian” to visit Muncie was Thomas W. Keene, who appeared in an article in the *Muncie Daily News* in July 1892. The article from the *Muncie Daily News* on July 24 states that “Negotiations are pending between Harry R. Wysor and the Manager of Thomas Keene to have that famous actor open the Wysor Grand early in September. It is to be hoped that matters will be so arranged that the people of Muncie will be given the privilege of seeing Mr. Keene in some of his Shakespearean tragedies.”

Indeed, it would be a privilege for the citizens of Muncie to witness a production starring the tragedian. Thomas Wallace Keene, who lived from 1840 to 1898, was a well-known actor who was “best known for his robust style,” especially when playing characters such as Richard III, Hamlet, Othello, and Romeo. He worked with the California Theater Stock Company in San Francisco from 1875 to 1880 supporting even more famous Shakespearean actors such as Edwin Booth. From
1880 to the end of his life, then, he toured both the United States and Canada, starring in a variety of Shakespearean plays ("Shakespeare on Tour" 138).

Evidently the negotiations worked out, as Keene opened the season as the titular character in Richard III. The article in the Muncie Daily News published on September 16, 1892, noted that every seat in the house had been filled for his performance, and that "the audience was a cultured and appreciative one, and the most prettily costumed ever assembled in the city." Keene also appeared in Muncie in 1896 to perform in Julius Caesar on December 16. In another article published on December 13, the Sunday Morning News notes that "As Cassius, in 'Julius Caesar,' which he has not presented often in late years, he won some of his first laurels and considered ideal in that character."

The review of Keene's performance of Julius Caesar notes that there was a large assembly of "Muncie's fashionable people" to see the show, again enhancing the idea that Shakespeare was high culture. Unfortunately, the review for this version of Julius Caesar was less than stellar, noting that many in the audience were disappointed that Keene did not live up to his last performance from four years ago. This article, from The Morning News in December 1896, also gives an interesting note about one of the complaints from the audience:

The most disgusting occurrence of the evening was the laughing indulged in by the actors while they were on stage. There is no portion of the play when such actions are called for, and yet three or four members of the company continued their giddiness throughout the play, causing much comment in the audience.

The audience's distress at this impropriety and unprofessionalism could perhaps show that Shakespeare, at this time, was seen as something that must be performed
properly and in a certain manner. It is doubtful that original audiences would be disturbed by the actors' bit of fun on stage, as the general atmosphere of the performance would have been wilder and less formal. But in 1896, when this "fashionable" audience came to the opera house to view a Shakespearean tragedy, it seems that they expected it to be appropriately tragic.

In addition to attending great stage tragedies, the Muncie people occasionally enjoyed lighter, comedic entertainments. In January 1890, the Two Johns Comedy Company, cited as the "Falstaffs of Merriment," came to perform at the Wysor Grand, as publicized in the Muncie Daily News on January 18. It is unclear whether or not their entertainment actually connected to Shakespeare in any way, but their company name clearly references Falstaff from the Henriad and The Merry Wives of Windsor, and the advertisement contained a quotation from Comedy of Errors ("And I was taken for him and him for me, / And therefore these errors arose") and a quotation from Henry IV ("Banish not Jack Falstaff thy company; banish plump Jack and you banish all the world"). Additionally, the Two Johns are cousins, Philip and Peter Johns, who each "weighs about 300 pounds, and both are brimful of jolly, good-natured fun," according to an article from the Muncie Daily News on January 23, 1890, which points to the similarity between them and the character of Falstaff. The Two Johns were apparently fantastically well received in Muncie, as a news article from January 25, 1890, notes that "from the time the curtain rose until it fell in the third act—it was nothing but laugh, laugh, laugh."

One example of a performance not of Shakespeare but of something based in Shakespearean works was a lecture by Mrs. Maud Conway Blanchard at the
Meridian street M.E. church, in which she presented “Shakespeare from the new standpoint, that of a musician,” as “he was familiar with musical instruments,” since “music and singing is shown in numerous places in his plays and sonnets.” For the lecture recital, Mrs. Blanchard sang a variety of songs based on certain plays of Shakespeare’s, which are reported in an article from February 21, 1899, in the *Muncie Morning News* and include the following songs: “‘When Icicles Hang by the Wall,’ by Arthur Foote, of Boston, from ‘Winter’s Tale;’ ‘Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind,’ by Dr. Arne, from ‘As You Like It;’” and “Hark, Hark the Lark” by Schubert from *Cymbeline*. All of these plays are somewhat obscure compared to the more commonly discussed and mentioned plays, except for *As You Like It*, which had some aspect of popularity. This particular entertainment connects Shakespeare to other high forms of art, in this case being orchestral music.

Another example of a performance that may have been based on Shakespearean work was “Queen Mab,” performed by Waite’s company. An article in the *Muncie Daily News* from April 3, 1890, states that the show was a melodrama which proved the “real ability” of the company, especially that of Miss Neilson in the title role. Queen Mab is the fairy queen described by Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, and therefore this show has a definitive link to Shakespeare, though whether or not the show’s content was actually connected remains unknown. Another possibility is that this show was instead a dramatization of “Queen Mab,” a poem by the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, instead of being based on Shakespeare in any way. Other sources describing this production note that “Queen Mab was a midget who traveled with Waite for several years, acting children’s roles in the plays and singing for her
specialty act,” though they do not cite Miss Neilson by name, so this may or may not be the same Queen Mab (Waite 41). From this information, it is still unclear whether the entertainment was related to Shakespeare, Shelley, or neither.

Additionally, the Muncie newspaper occasionally reported instances of Muncie citizens travelling to nearby cities to witness Shakespeare in performance. For example, under the “Personal” section of the Morning News on November 2, 1894, Mrs. And Mrs. F.L. Wachtell visited Indianapolis to see Adah Rehan in *Twelfth Night*. One of the most highly advertised Shakespearean performances in the whole decade of newspapers, in fact, was the performance of *Macbeth* in Indianapolis starring Edwin Booth and Helena Modjeska, America’s “greatest living artists.”

Edwin Booth was indeed one of the most well-known Shakespearean actors of the century. He portrayed the character of Hamlet more times on stage than any other actor in history, and took *Hamlet* and other Shakespearean productions on tour across both the United States and Europe (“Edwin”). Modjeska, on the other hand, was one of Poland’s most distinguished actresses; she gained immense popularity in America after touring the country, playing a variety of roles from Shakespeare, classic, and contemporary theatre (“Helena”).

There were advertisements in the *Morning News* almost daily from April 7, 1890, until their performance on April 29 at English’s Opera House. “The presentation,” one advertisement from April 9 states, “of this deeply complex and metaphysical creation of Shakespeare’s brain, by two such artists as Booth and Modjeska, with the assistance of a superb company, must be a revelation in dramatic art and no one should fail to see the performance.” These advertisements for this
show further explain how this “deeply complex” play combined with such a highly
talented cast was indeed something to be praised. One from April 14, 1890, states
that Booth alone “seems to have fully comprehended the many sided-ness of the
part [of Macbeth] and possessed the ability to define it entirely. His performance is
an inexhaustible study, affording ceaseless pleasure to the student of Shakespeare,
being better in analysis and illustration than any or all of the scholarly
commentaries to which the play has given rise.” From the comparison of Booth’s
performance to a study and analysis of the character rather than simply a
passionate portrayal, it can be assumed that at this point in time Shakespeare is
already something to study, to be a student of, rather than just to see and enjoy. This
performance was also “elaborate and historically correct in detail” regarding
costumes and scenery in order to keep with the “necessities of an absolutely perfect
performance of the great tragedy,” stated an article published in the *Muncie Daily
News* on April 21, 1890. No reviews of the actual Indianapolis performance
appeared in the Muncie newspapers, but on April 30, 1890, there were two separate
notes in the *Muncie Daily News* that “Mr. and Mrs. A.A. Wilkinson” and “F.W. Watson
and wife” traveled to Indianapolis to attend the entertainment and returned the
following day.

The Muncie newspapers actually published multiple stories about Booth and
Modjeska, especially near the beginning of the decade before Booth died in 1893. On
March 5, 1891, there was a note that Modjeska would be performing in Berlin,
speaking English while her company spoke German. A note about Edwin Booth’s
failing health also appeared in the *Muncie Daily News*, on April 6, 1891, stating that
he wouldn't be appearing again until after the next theatrical season in order to get well-needed rest. Yet another article, this one from December 12, 1891, detailed Booth's early career, before his first performance as Richard III. The appearance of these articles in the Muncie newspapers show that Shakespearean stars of the time like Modjeska and Booth were celebrities that the Muncie people were interested in hearing about.

Whether the performances were put on by the Muncie people or touring companies, and whether they were solitary readings or full-fledged productions, the Shakespearean entertainments in Muncie throughout the last decade of the nineteenth century show just how integral Shakespeare was to the culture of American theatre. The wide range of Shakespearean plays performed, as well as the focus and attention given to each production, prove that they were noteworthy public events. Finally, the descriptions of these productions, and even the audiences of these productions, also bring to mind images of elegance, sophistication, and refinement, all of which would reemphasize the work of Levine and other scholars to prove Shakespeare's emergence at the top of the cultural hierarchy.

Conclusion

This inquiry does not investigate the extent of Shakespearean research in either this time period or in Middletown. Even looking at 1890s Muncie, there are a surplus of other examples of Shakespearean connections, especially references in the newspaper articles, which are interesting but don't necessarily fit within one of these categories. The Muncie news reported an article about translations of *Hamlet*
from English into French (June 20, 1895); a report about Verdi giving up his work on an opera version of *King Lear* (December 26, 1896); a reprinted story from the *Atlanta Constitution* about an actor playing Richard III who broke his leg before a show but as the character was "bad," the play simply continued without him (March 8, 1898); and an article about how Lord Randolph Churchill walked into the dressing room of the man playing Hamlet to find out how the play ended because he couldn’t stay (March 20, 1895).

The news ties Shakespeare to a number of cultures, too, by sharing that Japanese artists depicted the "Seven Ages of Man" far earlier than Shakespeare included them in *As You Like It* (December 15, 1891); that *Comedy of Errors* was performed at Kendall Green at the Deaf and Dumb Institute only in sign language, with full costumes and set (January 2, 1890); and that a theatre company had been composed completely of "Hebrews save one and this man is an Irishman," and that the company was giving *Merchant of Venice* with the Irishman starring as the villain Shylock (April 4, 1897).

Other articles comment on more historical connections within Shakespeare's works, such as one which notes that "Those familiar with Shakespeare remember that the two antagonistic houses of York and Lancaster had their followers distinguished by one side carrying white roses and the other red roses," and one which notes: discusses Malcolm, the king of Scotland, and whether or not *Macbeth* was historically accurate (February 19, 1894, and May 16, 1896, respectively). Another explains the history of *Henry VIII* in performance, telling the story on how the Globe theatre caught fire during its production in 1613 (April 27, 1898).
One of the most entertaining articles is a story from *Harper’s Magazine* in which “an amateur actor playing Cassio, forgot his lines and therefore when he was supposed to break up the fight between Othello and Iago, he shouted ‘Cheese it!’” Following this, “Booth and the other actors lost their self-control, and the remainder of the scene lacked much of its accustomed dignity” (August 31, 1894). There are countless other examples of articles and stories that include and reference Shakespeare—so many, in fact, that to include all of them in a study of this scope would be impossible.

Shakespeare pervades so many aspects of Middletown cultural life in this decade that it is also impossible to state with certainty that his works had already become something alienating and foreign to the general public by this time period. Though this research does show that Shakespeare had become a more “sacred author” by this time period, and while reading or studying his works did indicate a degree of cultural refinement, they were still popular nevertheless.

And while Shakespeare was indeed regarded as something to be decoded and studied in order to be understood and enjoyed—a note from the *Muncie Daily News* on August 14, 1891, noted that “Doctor Horace Furness, the Shakespearean scholar has counted the lines in Shakespeare’s comedies and found a total of 32,000, and in all that number finds but 19 lines that are hopelessly obscure”—what is abundantly clear from the information about Shakespeare in Middletown is that throughout this decade, Shakespeare was a vital part of the culture of Muncie life. Students studied his works in class and used them as avenues to study life; women used his works as a form of initiating dialogue about contemporary issues and as a way of improving
their own education; Muncie theatre-goers flocked to performances, professional or not. No matter the time period, Shakespeare "depicted human nature in universal situations... he inscribed timeless moral truths in immortal poetry" (Belsey 3). The people of Muncie in the 1890s latched on to these timeless truths and used them in order to better themselves, and while Shakespeare did rise in the public eye to a heightened level of culture, his works still strongly influenced the life of the average citizen.
Appendix A

Information from the “What Middletown Read” database about the Shakespeare-related books borrowed from the Muncie Public Library between November 5, 1891 and December 31, 1899.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accession Number</th>
<th>Accession Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Number of transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>918</td>
<td>March 13, 1875</td>
<td>Tales from Shakespeare: designed for the use of young people.</td>
<td>Charles Lamb, in collaboration with Mary Lamb. Illustrated by John Gilbert.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>April 6, 1875</td>
<td>Characteristics of women, moral, poetical, and historical. (Essays on Shakespeare’s female characters.)</td>
<td>Mrs. Anna Jameson.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2311</td>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume One of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare. Contributor: Richard Grant White.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2312</td>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Two of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare. Contributor: Richard Grant White.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2313</td>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Three of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare. Contributor: Richard Grant White.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2314</td>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Four of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare. Contributor: Richard Grant White.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Five of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Richard Grant White</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Six of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Richard Grant White</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Seven of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Richard Grant White</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Eight of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Richard Grant White</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Nine of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Richard Grant White</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1875</td>
<td>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Twelve of Twelve.)</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Richard Grant White</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5, 1885</td>
<td>Tales from Shakespeare.</td>
<td>Charles Lamb</td>
<td>William Shakespeare and Mary Lamb</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5, 1885</td>
<td>Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.</td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>Henry Norman Hudson</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 28, 1889</td>
<td>An introduction to the study of</td>
<td>Hiram Corson</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7233</td>
<td>June 23, 1890</td>
<td><em>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Ten of Twelve)</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare. Contributor: Richard Grant White.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7234</td>
<td>June 23, 1890</td>
<td><em>The works of William Shakespeare. (Volume Eleven of Twelve)</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare. Contributor: Richard Grant White.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7798</td>
<td>January 5, 1892</td>
<td><em>The dramatic works of William Shakespeare: with a life of the poet, and notes, original and selected: together with a copious glossary.</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7799</td>
<td>January 5, 1892</td>
<td><em>The dramatic works of William Shakespeare: with a life of the poet, and notes, original and selected: together with a copious glossary.</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8038</td>
<td>January 5, 1892</td>
<td><em>The dramatic works of William Shakspeare [SIC]: accurately printed from the text of the corrected copy left by the late George Steevens... with</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Cited


"Delaware County." *Department of Natural Resources*. State of Indiana. Web. 27 Apr. 2014.


“Our New Story.—A Rattling Good Novelette Begins Tomorrow.” The Morning News


Schlereth, Thomas J. Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915.


"The Dante Class.—Mr. Elbert Hubbard, the Philistin With Us In Behalf of the Propylaeum.—At Oakhurst He Talks of Mrs. Browning and Shakespeare To a Large and Appreciative Audience Both Afternoon and Evening." *The Morning News* [Muncie, IN] 15 Jul. 1897: 1. Print.


"The Plot Was Interesting.—Lord Randolph Churchill's Opinion of One of


"The Shakespeare Club.—It Meets at Hon. J.W. Ryan's Last Evening." The Morning


Print.


"The Woman's Club.—It Is Handsomely Entertained by Mrs. Koons Last Evening."


Olivero 94


“Wins the Prize—Fred Metz Gets the Set of Encyclopedia Britannica.—Offered by the News.—He Formed the Correct Sentence and is Now the Ownder of a Valuable Library. Something About Him.” *The Sunday Morning News* [Muncie, IN] 29 Sept. 1895: 5. Print.


"Womans [SIC] Club.—Preparing a Treat for the Lovers of Shakespearean Plays."