

NARRATOR'S NOTES: Chautauqua...Rollin' On the River

It is a commonly acknowledged fact among scholars who have turned their attention to "the Chautauqua phenomenon" in America that there is a definable relationship between Tent Chautauqua and the Lyceum Movement of early Nineteenth Century. While the latter type of forum was not actually mobile, being rooted instead within a given community, the former was indeed what might today be characterized as "a road show".

The actual Lyceum as first organized in the community of Milbury, Massachusetts, was akin to the Junto of Benjamin Franklin in that it evolved as a place and opportunity for men to gather after their workday was finished to fellowship and share ideas. As such it evolved as a social club the mission of which was mutual Education. The Lyceum itself did not leave the community; rather other communities copied the idea for their own benefit, hence the inclusion of "Movement" as a descriptor.

For many Americans, the infamous War Between the States marked the dawning of a new mobility. For soldiers and civilians alike there was a new awareness of alternative lifestyles. Whereas in early-America family and home were the main focus for most citizens there was now awareness of opportunities beyond familiar boundaries. Moreover there was a widespread desire to