

THE MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

And

HISTORYONIC THEATRE COMPANY

Present

ELIJAH'S AMENDMENT

By:

Mr. John Contini

The scene: In front of a backdrop of Elijah Lovejoy's shop. It is in shambles.

VOICE *(from behind backdrop)*

Well...we've put this Negro-loving editor out of business!

PARISH'S VOICE *(from behind backdrop)*

What's going on down there?

ELIJAH PARISH LOVEJOY enters his shop, carrying a cane to use as a weapon...the date on the calendar reads June 1837.

PARISH

Get out of here...Dear God! What have they done? Look at this...my papers...my printing press! You think that you can silence me? You think that you can stop me from printing whatever I want to print? You can't! This is 1837, not the Middle Ages! This will not stop me. I will continue my work...if not here, then I'll just go somewhere else. Maybe I need to pack up and move across the river. I'll do my printing from a free state.

JOHN'S VOICE *(from behind the backdrop)*

Hello! Anyone there? Hello!

JOHN enters left as PARISH waits up by the backdrop to come at him from behind and then pins him with his cane

PARISH

You've done enough tonight!

JOHN

What in God's name? Parish? It's me. Your brother John!

2

PARISH

John?

JOHN

Yes!

PARISH

What a wonderful surprise!

JOHN

I feel surprised! If this is how you greet everyone who comes calling, it's no wonder you don't have many friends.

PARISH

I thought you were some of my earlier visitors coming back to finish what they had started.

JOHN

Parish, what happened here?

PARISH

Some upright citizens wanted to put my newspaper out of business.

JOHN

Looks like they succeeded.

PARISH

No. Not completely. I can still print. They haven't stopped me from saying what I have to say.

JOHN

Since when was printing what you want to print a crime in a religious newspaper?

PARISH

It's not suppose to be a crime in ANY newspaper. But the other religious newspapers in St. Louis will not permit the discussion of slavery in print.

JOHN

Ah, slavery.

PARISH

It's a sin against God and man, John. If these, so called, Christians cannot bear the discussion of the sin they should give up printing their religious newspapers altogether.

JOHN

So what we're really talking about here is your being an abolitionist.

PARISH

I don't like that label, John.

JOHN

Why not? If the label fits...

PARISH

I am not an abolitionist. Those people are dishonest and foul-mouthed...most of them.

JOHN

Parish, our brother Joseph is an abolitionist.

PARISH

I swear, I am not an abolitionist!