

ACT ONE

1 — Overture

(Orchestra)

SCENE ONE

2 — Train Opening

(Orchestra)

(TIME: The morning of July 4th, 1912.)

AT RISE: Train effect scrim rises on a red-plushed, kerosene-lamped, enamel-drinking-cupped railway coach in full cry. One seat has been turned in the coach to accommodate a card game — the participants being three TRAVELING SALESMEN and a STRANGER whose back is to the AUDIENCE and who is concentrated throughout the scene on winning every pot, which he drops by handfuls into an open suitcase on the floor by his side. A FOURTH SALESMAN is kibitzing. A few seats forward in the coach a FIFTH SALESMAN is reading a newspaper, until he finds himself drawn into the conversation among the SALESMEN. Several other PASSENGERS are behind newspapers. We hear "train-slowng-down" MUSIC. The train slows and stops)

CONDUCTOR

(Poking head into coach LEFT)

River City Junction — River City next station stop!

(EXITS)

SALESMAN #1

You're crazy with the heat. Credit is no good for a notion salesman.

CONDUCTOR

(Poking head into coach again)

Boart! All aboard!

(EXITS)

SALESMAN #2

Why not? What's the matter with credit?

SALESMAN #1

It's old-fashioned. Charlie, you're an anvil salesman — your firm give credit?

(Train makes starting noise in ORCHESTRA)

CHARLIE COWELL

No sir!

SALESMAN #1

Nor anybody else.

(Train starting, dialogue in time to train acceleration)

CONDUCTOR

River City, River City next.

3 - Rock Island

(Salesmen, Charlie Cowell, Newspaper Readers)

SALESMAN #1

CASH FOR THE MERCHANDISE -

CASH FOR THE BUTTON-HOOKS -

SALESMAN #2

(Nodding)

CASH FOR THE COTTON GOODS -

CASH FOR THE HARD GOODS -

SALESMAN #1

CASH FOR THE SOFT GOODS -

CASH FOR THE FANCY GOODS -

SALESMAN #2

CASH FOR THE NOGGINS AND THE PIGGINS AND THE FIRKINS.

SALESMAN #3

CASH FOR THE HOGSHEAD, CASK AND DEMIJOHN.

CASH FOR THE CRACKERS AND THE PICKLES

AND THE FLY-PAPER.

SALESMAN #4

(Train at running speed)

LOOK WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK,

WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK.

SALESMAN #5

WHERE DAYAGITIT?

SALESMAN #4

WHADAYATALK?

SALESMAN #1

YA CAN TALK, YA CAN TALK,
YA CAN BICKER, YA CAN TALK,
YA CAN BICKER, BICKER, BICKER,
YA CAN TALK, YA CAN TALK,
YA CAN TALK, TALK, TALK, TALK,
BICKER, BICKER, BICKER,
YA CAN TALK ALL YA WANNA
BUT IT'S DIFFER'NT THAN IT WAS.

CHARLIE COWELL

(Ill-tempered)

NO IT AIN'T, NO IT AIN'T,
BUT YA GOTTA KNOW THE TERRITORY.

SALESMAN #3

CHI, CHI, CHI, CHI, CHI, CHI, CHI.
WHY IT'S THE MODEL T FORD
MADE THE TROUBLE,
MADE THE PEOPLE WANT TO GO
WANNA GIT WANNA GIT
WANNA GIT UP AND GO
7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 22, 23
MILES TO THE COUNTY SEAT -

SALESMAN #1

YES, SIR.
YES, SIR.

SALESMAN #3

WHO'S GONNA PATRONIZE
A LITTLE BITTY TWO-BY-FOUR
KINDA STORE ANYMORE?

*(As each NEWSPAPER READER speaks he lowers his paper long enough to
say his line, then it goes back up before his face)*

SALESMAN #4

WHATDAYATALK, WHATDAYATALK.

NEWSPAPER READER #1

WHERE DAYAGITIT?

CHARLIE COWELL

NOT THE MODEL T AT ALL,
TAKE A GANDER AT THE STORE,
AT THE MODREN STORE,
AT THE PRESENT DAY STORE
AT THE PRESENT DAY
MODREN DEPARTMENTALIZED GRO'RY STORE.

SALESMAN #4

WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK,
WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK.

NEWSPAPER READER #1

WHERE DAYAGITIT?

SALESMAN #4

WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK.

NEWSPAPER READER #1

WHERE DAYAGITIT?

SALESMAN #1

YA CAN TALK, YA CAN BICKER,
YA CAN TALK, YA CAN BICKER,
YA CAN TALK, TALK, TALK, TALK,
BICKER, BICKER, BICKER,
YA CAN TALK ALL YA WANNA
BUT IT'S DIFFER'NT THAN IT WAS.

CHARLIE COWELL

NO IT AIN'T, BUT YA GOTTA KNOW THE TERRITORY.

SALESMAN #3

WHY, IT'S THE U-NEEDA BISCUIT
MADE THE TROUBLE.
U-NEEDA, U-NEEDA,

PUT THE CRACKERS IN A PACKAGE, IN A PACKAGE,
THE U-NEEDA BISCUIT
IN AN AIR-TIGHT SANITARY PACKAGE
MADE THE CRACKER BARREL OBSOLETE, OBSOLETE.

CHARLIE COWELL

OBSOLETE, OBSOLETE, OBSOLETE.

SALESMAN #4

CRACKER BARREL WENT OUT THE WINDOW
WITH THE MAIL POUCH CUT PLUG CHAWIN' BY THE STOVE...
CHANGED THE APPROACH OF A TRAVELIN' SALESMAN,
MADE IT PRETTY HARD -

CHARLIE COWELL

NO IT DIDN'T, NO IT DIDN'T,
BUT YA GOTTA KNOW THE TERRITORY.

SALESMAN #3

GONE, GONE.

SALESMAN #1

GONE WITH THE HOGSHEAD, CASK AND DEMIJOHN,
GONE WITH THE SUGAR BARREL, PICKLE BARREL, MILK PAN,
GONE WITH THE TUB AND THE PAIL AND THE TIERCE.

SALESMAN #5

(Elder statesman)

EVER MEET A FELLA BY THE NAME A' HILL?

SALESMAN #1

HILL?

CHARLIE COWELL

HILL!

SALESMAN #3

HILL?

SALESMAN #4

HILL?

NEWSPAPER READER #1

HILL?

NEWSPAPER READER #2

HILL?

NEWSPAPER READER #3

HILL?

SALESMAN #5

HILL!

ALL BUT CHARLIE COWELL

NO!

(ALL NEWSPAPERS go back up. There is a WHISTLE and ORCHESTRA is heard)

CHARLIE COWELL

JUST A MINUTE, JUST A MINUTE, JUST A MINUTE --

SALESMAN #4

NEVER HEARD A' ANY SALESMAN HILL --

SALESMAN #5

NOW, HE DOESN'T KNOW THE TERRITORY --

SALESMAN #1

DOESN'T KNOW THE TERRITORY?

SALESMAN #3

WHAT'S THE FELLA'S LINE?

SALESMAN #5

NEVER WORRIES 'BOUT HIS LINE.

SALESMAN #1

NEVER WORRIES 'BOUT HIS LINE?

SALESMAN #5

OR THE CRACKER BARREL BEIN' OBSOLETE,
OR THE UNEEDA BISCUIT
IN AN AIR-TIGHT SANITARY PACKAGE,
OR THE MODEL T FORD --

CHARLIE COWELL

JUST A MINUTE, JUST A MINUTE, JUST A MINUTE --

SALESMAN #5

NEVER WORRIES 'BOUT HIS LINE --

SALESMAN #3

NEVER WORRIES 'BOUT HIS LINE?

SALESMAN #5

OR A DOGGONE THING.

HE'S JUST A BANG BEAT, BELL-RINGIN',

BIG HAUL, GREAT GO,

NECK-OR-NOTHIN', RIP-ROARIN',

EVER'TIME-A-BULL'S-EYE SALESMAN,

THAT'S PROFESSOR HAROLD HILL, HAROLD HILL.

NEWSPAPER READER #1

TELL US, WHAT'S HIS LINE?

WHAT'S HIS LINE?

CHARLIE COWELL

HE'S A FAKE, AND HE DOESN'T KNOW THE TERRITORY!

SALESMAN #4

LOOK, WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK,

WHADAYATALK, WHADAYATALK.

SALESMAN #5

HE'S A MUSIC MAN.

SALESMAN #3

HE'S A WHAT? HE'S A WHAT?

SALESMAN #5

HE'S A MUSIC MAN,

AND HE SELLS CLARINETS TO THE KIDS IN THE TOWN,

WITH THE BIG TROMBONES AND THE RATATAT DRUMS,

AND THE BIG BRASS BASS, BIG BRASS BASS.

AND THE PICCOLO, THE PICCOLO, UNIFORMS TOO,

WITH THE SHINY GOLD BRAID ON THE COAT,

AND A BIG RED STRIPE RUNNING --

SALESMAN #1

WELL! -
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT BANDS,
BUT I DO KNOW YOU CAN'T MAKE A LIVIN'
SELLIN' BIG TROMBONES. - NO SIR!
MANDOLIN PICKS, PERHAPS,
AND HERE AND THERE A JEWS-HARP -

SALESMAN #5

NO, THE FELLA SELLS BANDS.
BOYS' BANDS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DOES IT,
BUT HE LIVES LIKE A KING,
AND HE DALLIES AND HE GATHERS,
AND HE PLUCKS AND HE SHINES,
AND WHEN THE MAN DANCES,
CERTAINLY, BOYS, WHAT ELSE:
THE PIPER PAYS HIM.
YESSS - SIR.
YES SIR, YES SIR, YES SIR.
WHEN THE MAN DANCES,
CERTAINLY BOYS, WHAT ELSE:
THE PIPER PAYS HIM.

ALL

YES SIR. YES SIR.

CHARLIE COWELL

BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW THE TERRITORY!
(ORCHESTRA button. Train stops)

CONDUCTOR

(OFFSTAGE)

River City! River City!

(ENTERS)

River City! We're 'cross the state line into Iowa. River City! Population
twenty two hundred and twelve. Seegarettes illegal in this state. Booart!

(EXITS)

CHARLIE COWELL

All right, if you're all through I'll tell you about Harold Hill!

SALESMAN #5

You really know Harold Hill?

CHARLIE COWELL

Never saw him in my life but I know this much — he's giving every one of us a black eye! After he's worked a town over, the next salesman to arrive gets automatically tarred and feathered and rode out to the city limits on a rail.

(THEY laugh)

You think that's funny. Well, wait till it happens to you!
Your hair never grows back.

(COWELL pulls off hat.)

THEY react)

SALESMAN #1

But why should he get rode out'a town on a rail?

CHARLIE COWELL

Because in order to sell band instruments, and uniforms, and instruction books, he has to guarantee to teach the kids to play.

SALESMAN #3

Well?

CHARLIE COWELL

And to form them kids into a band! With himself as the leader!

SALESMAN #5

What's wrong with that?

CHARLIE COWELL

He don't know one note from another that's what's wrong with that! And he can't tell a bass drum from a pipe organ! I'll catch up with that swindlin' two-bit thimble rigger, and when I do I'll squeal on him so loud —

SALESMAN #5

(Laughing)

Wow, you're mad, Charlie!
Sure like to be around when you catch up with that fella.

CHARLIE COWELL

Well it won't be on this trip. Not in Iowa. Even the great Professor Harold Hill wouldn't try to sell them neck-bowed Hawkeyes out here.

CONDUCTOR

(OFFSTAGE)

Booart!

(The STRANGER makes a fast decision and grabs his suitcase)

STRANGER

Gentlemen, you intrigue me. I think I'll have to give Iowa a try.

CHARLIE COWELL

(Coldly)

Don't believe I caught your name.

4 - Iowa Stubborn

(Townspeople, Farmer, Farmer's Wife)

(STRANGER turns and we see him for the first time. It is our hero. HE flashes suitcase which bears the legend "PROF HAROLD HILL" and he EXITS from train as all heads go out the windows.

Coach splits in two to reveal a full stage view of River City's Main Street immediately following. The town is in 4th of July bunting and the stubborn Iowans are out in force)

END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

(TIME: Immediately following.

AT RISE: River City, Iowa, center of town, exterior.

TOWNSPEOPLE are seen en tableau.

MAYOR SHINN ENTERS from the Billiard Parlor, leaving the door open for 2 WORKMEN who ENTER carrying a large crate containing a visible pool table which they take into the Billiard Parlor)

TOWNSPEOPLE

OH, THERE'S NOTHIN' HALFWAY
ABOUT THE IOWA WAY TO TREAT YOU,
WHEN WE TREAT YOU,
WHICH WE MAY NOT DO AT ALL.