

Tent Show: Arthur Names and His "Famous" Players (West Texas A&M University Series)

Donald W. Whisenhunt

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Before movie screens filled the country and television screens filled our homes, entertainment had to travel to the people. The traveling tent show was a popular form of melodrama and variety entertainment through much of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. One of the last of these shows belonged to Art Names and His "Famous" Players, a show that played to venues in Kansas, western Oklahoma, eastern Colorado, and West Texas from about 1920 to 1945.

Tent Show captures the glamour the shows held for audiences and the hard work and financial jeopardy faced by their performers. Donald W. Whisenhunt, whose father was one of Names's partners, draws on family papers, letters, original documents, and interviews to shed light on this form of entertainment.

Anyone interested in the entertainment business—or curious about life before television and movie theaters—will find *Tent Show* to be an unaffected look at this fastpaced, often unglamorous business and the people who chose this way of life.



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