

RHUBARB ON THE STAGE



Vaudeville Humor That Became A Catchphrase

Before radio, TV or the internet, there was a national entertainment network called vaudeville. Thousands of actors, singers, humorists and entertainers crisscrossed the country staging performances in cities and small towns.

Sumner was on the circuit. Old Sumner newspapers frequently mention tent shows and performances in local fraternal halls or on the small stage of the local picture theatre.

Catchphrases like “Do you think the rain will hurt the rhubarb?” were spread by vaudeville humorists throughout the country.

That includes Sumner where locals remember having used it as a device to keep a conversation going or to change the subject. In the Sumner area it was usually used in a high, nasal voice. That is a hint back to it's vaudeville origins.

(Thank you Linda Sader and Ron Leslie for this piece of rhubarb history in Sumner)

RHUBARB ROOTS ~ PAST & PRESENT

From a private collection, Sumner, Washington.

www.rhubarbroots.org

