

advertised in the Easton newspaper, the *Republican Star*, that he had just left Philadelphia and was on his way to Easton with new performers, where he would appear on Wednesday evening, direct from a show in Centreville.¹² He could thus travel down the peninsula from Philadelphia, stopping in Chestertown, then Centreville and Easton, perhaps Cambridge, before crossing the Bay and making his way to Georgetown.

The same issue of the *Republican Star* advertised a similar evening of entertainment by Mr. Duff and his wife. The program would include magic, slack wire dancing, balancing, a display of philosophical apparatus with a variety of scenes, and a three-character farce, with Duff playing two of the characters and his wife the third. The wire dancing included backward and forward movement on the wire, sitting, kneeling, standing on one foot while playing the violin on the back of his head, playing the fiddle while lying on his back, and beating the tambourine in full swing. Lest the evening's entertainment be thought purely frivolous, Duff assured the *Star's* readers that he would explain "many maneuvers that will serve as a good lesson to the morals of Youth, against the pernicious destructive consequences generally attending on gaming, etc.," these being the more usual pastimes of the tavern in which he was appearing.¹³

Children, without the promise of moral instruction, were also solicited as part of the audience for a display of the Sajou Brown, "a wonderful animal from South America," on view from nine in the morning to nine in the evening for one week at Solomon Lowe's tavern. The animal was advertised as ten years old and eighteen inches high, able to understand and immediately obey any instruction from his keeper and to perform "many astonishing tricks, very diverting to gentlemen and ladies," as well as to the children admitted at half price.¹⁴ Residents of Washington had been similarly entertained by "the Learned Pig," on view at Conrad and McMunn's Tavern. The animal could read, tell time, distinguish colors, add, and subtract.¹⁵

In addition to supplying an audience for traveling performers, the growth of towns also made possible a new diversion in the form of sight-seeing, one already seen to have figured prominently in the activities of the Thorntons and their friends. The more sparsely settled rural environment of earlier times had offered entertainment in the form of extended visits to the plantations of kin and friends—a practice that continued into the early national period and beyond—but the greater concentration of population in towns and improvements in transportation made possible brief excursions undertaken solely for their entertainment value. For example, Samuel Davidson paid twenty-five cents for a tour of Henry Foxhall's foundry in Georgetown and also traveled by carriage to see the bridge at Little Falls.¹⁶ The availability of carriages for hire in the growing towns was another development that facilitated such sightseeing.

Davidson also patronized the various forms of traveling entertainment. In 1804 he paid another quarter to view the mammoth ox on display in Georgetown and in one month in 1807 paid a dollar to see the "wonderful lady,"