History of Minstrelsy, Its inner workings and business.  
"Minstrelsy is an ancient art."

This project is to explore the inner working of minstrelsy. During its heyday, from the 1840s to the end of World War I it was the major exponent of entertainment in America. Minstrelsy has been around for centuries -from King David, to the medieval troubadours and finally to the shores of America. In America it took place before, during and after the emancipation of the Negro slaves and spread across the continent both with professional white and Negro groups (both using black face) and with minstrel shows produced by churches, schools and social organizations. Etc. While professional minstrels became less popular, minstrels did last long into the 20th century. (Personnel note-My father played bones in a church minstrel in the late 1930s and my brother and I (playing accordions) played in the olio part of a church minstrel in the 1940s.)

Few forms or styles of entertainment last over generations. There are revivals but these are just points in time. An 'art' has an influence on a society. Rap music can be seen as a present day reversal of the minstrels.

Eventually the public had problems accepting the minstrel with its black faced individuals. Strangely the height of minstrel happened after the Civil War.

As with any art form, minstrelsy evolved, dropping its first part and became a spectacular revue taking the Olio into vaudeville.

Black face was a familiar theatrical device in Europe (Shakespeare's Othello) as black was not permitted to be onstage. Twenty years before Othello the blackface Moors was a figure in dozens of London plays. In New Orleans early Mardi Gras parades included whites in blackface and Negros in whiteface. As early as 1822, Charles Mathew traveled in a one man show in blackface. Solo acts, both white and black later entered vaudeville and one can recognize the face of one Al Jolson in blackface. When music and dance was added to the one man show this evolved into minstrelsy. Blacks accepted black minstrelsy as their own. (Black face was outlawed in the 1950s.)

The minstrel show attempted to bring the environment of the Negro slave's activities of the southern plantations to the populace of America. Many well known persons began in the minstrels-for instance John Wilkes Booth and many stars that later entered vaudeville. Many composers - such as Stephen Foster and Shakespeare Hays gained popularity with their musical being heard in the minstrels.
The purpose of the minstrels was for entertainment, not just a platform to characterize the Negro and his situation. Those outside of the south did not have the exposure to plantation life and minstrels brought this to the country with its customs and music. It pictured the Negro with a sense of humor and musical ability, but also was a caricature of his presence. Just as vaudeville did with sketches on the Irish, the Polish and others, so did they use the caricature of the Negro in minstrels.

I find no indication that their caricatures have any intentions of making a prejudice statement in their performance but just as vaudeville characterize the Irish, Germans etc. the minstrels did the same. I am sure some individuals looked upon the minstrels as a prejudice vehicle but many accepted in as pure entertainment.

In the 1914's the Original Creole jazz Band and the Tennessee Ten did a plantation act that could be called in reality a minstrel review. White dancer Mabel Elaine (with both of these bands) did a black face dancing and singing act. Minstrel music was an early influence on the development of jazz, first bringing Negro melodies to the country that was accepted with much joy.

The original minstrelsy was an entertainment of music, dancing and humor. Just like music and dancing, comedy changes with the times. The jokes in the minstrel might not be funny to us today but they were greatly laughed at during their time. Minstrelsy grew from the original four of the Virginia Minstrels of 1843 to a cast of over a hundred.

Jokes

Minstrel Joke:
Mr. Tambo: Say, boss, why did the chicken cross the road?
Interlocutor: Why, I don’t know, Mr. Tambo, why did the chicken cross the road?
Mr. Bones: To get to the other side!

Polish joke:
Q: How do you stop a Polish Army on horseback?
A: Turn off the carousel

Irish Joke:
Q: Why can't you borrow money from a leprechaun?
A: Because they're always a little short.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"
The Olio developed into a huge revue, adding scenery, larger orchestras and costumes, with the actors of the minstrels dressed in colorful dress. The public began to demand more than found in an original minstrel company. This led to the growth of revues outside of the minstrel situation and led to its inclusion into a full Broadway type review with the dropping of the first part of a minstrel performance.

The performance of a minstrel show must be understood in its own time period. As all arts evolve so did the minstrel show, with its acceptance in American society. How will the future be for rap music in a future century? What will take its place?

The arts move society both in a good and bad direction. It is a picture of the times. One can trace changes in society through its arts. Unfortunately we must look at the minstrels through our present eyes not in the eyes and feelings of the era of minstrelsy. It has its place in history. In the following articles we read about the inside ways of the minstrel business and its success and decline. The minstrel olio will last forever - 'its show business.' The American public always wants to be entertained. The minstrels were supplanted by vaudeville; Vaudeville was supplanted by the Broadway review: Radio was supplanted by TV. What is next?
Cullen's Minstrel Troupe
Daily Democratic State Journal - July 17, 1855 - Minstrels

The first of the farewell concerts by the Backus Minstrels will be given at the theater this evening. These will positively be the last concerts given in Sacramento by this favorite band, as they intend leaving soon for Australia.

Times Picayune - October 3, 1856 - The Christys this evening.
These celebrated pioneers in Ethiopian minstrelsy, commence their season at Armory Hall, in this city, this evening, under the management of Messrs. Pierce & Raynor. They put forth a programme replete with attractive features in all the branches of their popular art, and offer a great force of talent, in the list they give of accomplished performers in every department. They may anticipate a season of decided success in our city.

New Orleans Crescent - December 13, 1856 - Spaldings & Rogers' Museum & Amphitheater.

Mr. Nellis, the armless man, creates more genuine wonder by his feats with his feet, than any man who has been in the city for years. Mr. Matt Peel and his co-laborers in the art of Negro minstrelsy and burlesque, create more genuine merriment and delight than any similar band that ever visited the city.

December 26, 1856

Times Picayune - December 31, 1856 - Peel's Opera House

The performances of the Campbell Minstrels, at Armory Hall, continue to attract and delight the lovers of Ethiopian minstrelsy. Another bill of exceeding strength is to be given this evening, in which all the talented company appears. The burlesque of the occasion is one of the best in Matt's repertoire. Go to Armory Hall, and laugh at the old year.
E. P. Christy, the 'nigger singer' has acquired a princely fortune by his minstrelsy and now 'goes it' as 'strong' as the most fashionable of the New York fashionables.

Matt Peel's Campbell Troupe
Matt, with a stronger and more talented company than ever before, is delighting the down-easter's hugely. He will be in New Orleans in the course of the winter with fifteen star performers, including himself and Tom. One of his novelties is the "Serious Family" burlesque and the brass band is said to be very full and fine. Matt brags on his troupe as the best that ever existed since the invention of Negro minstrelsy.

Rumsey's & Newcomb's Minstrels
We dropped in at the Armory Hall, last evening, to hear Ramsey's and Newcomb's Minstrels, and found the house crowded. The troupe went through the usual Northern-Negro minstrelsy with much eclat. We may as well say just here, that Northerners have but an imperfect idea of a genuine southern Negro. We see something more natural and original on any plantation in Louisiana. We said we dropped in, and only, therefore, saw but little of the Armory Hall Minstrels. We did not know whether they cracked an original joke or not. Trusting, however, that they will do so, we shall honor them with another call. Little Robby and Newcomb were excellent in their role, if the term may be applied to this kind of performance.
Inside look at minstrelsy

Plain Dealer - December 31, 1857 - Negro Minstrelsy

Some curious individual has been ciphering the matter up, and says there are six thousand men who get their living in the United States by Negro Minstrelsy. We think it altogether probable that his estimate is accurate. The people incline favorably to burnt cork and touching melodies. The words of the popular Negro songs are generally stupid enough, but the music is sweet and natural, and readily reaches the public heart. The jokes of the amiable man, with the bones are usually abortions, but we like the jolly clatter of these same bones, and believe we can never fail to laugh at sight of his preposterously wide collar and absurdly frizzled wool. Though the admirers of Negro singing are wont to sneer at the opera legitimate, it is still a fact that the airs of most of the favorite Ethiopian songs are taken from the same aristocratic opera. Negro singing pays so well that men of talent are to be found engaged in it. We know of one company which embraces an ex-editor, an ex-lawyer, a poet of decided genius, and a composer whose sweetly beautiful ballads are to be found upon almost every piano in the country.

It is funny-some would say disgusting-to see these men, with blackened faces, solemnly bleating forth the premature demise of Lilly Date, or delineating the eccentricities of the inevitable Robert Ridley, but it pays, and that is principally why they do it. Negro Minstrelsy is as firmly rooted in American as the drama and we are rather glad of it. Gradually, but surely, it has popularized the glorious opera, and it is an exclusively American institution.

Plain Dealer (Cleveland) - September 4, 1858 - Negro Minstrelsy

There is no doubt that Negro Minstrelsy is a permanent institution in America. The venerable T. D. Rice little dreamed, years ago, when he commenced jumping Jim Crow, what a business he was laying to see the cork opera flourish. It is a purely American institution and we fancy that is why it is so popular with the people. "We have no drama. Our stage is thoroughly and intensely English. Several gifted Americans have been known to write fair plays, but so long as managers can steal by the wholesale from English dramatists they will not encourage home talent. Hence the American who should undertake to live by dramatic authorship would very properly be looked upon as a fit candidate for a confined position in some asylum for the insane, and an extremely dangerous man to be running loose. That an American drama could be established is sufficiently evidenced in the immense
success of Uncle Tom's Cabin and a few imbecile and trashy plays of that character. But it will take a long time to bring this about, if it is ever done. Meanwhile, we throw up our hat for Negro Minstrelsy. It is simple, natural, native. It touches people in the right place and they will sustain it. There is one thing, forever, that most cork opera bands lack and that is a proper conception of fun. It must be confessed that their jokes are ancient, grey-haired, and flowing-bearded—taken originally, doubtless, from the humorous works of the lamented Joseph Miller, and having enjoyed a protracted run in the circus before they were Africanized by the minstrels. What the minstrels want, then, is fun—original jokes with which to spice the now admirable musical part of their entertainments. We have no particular troupe in our mind's eye—the most of them are deficient in this respect. But anyhow, let Negro minstrels continue to prosper.

San Francisco Bulletin - October 21, 1858
Genuine Ethiopian Minstrels band of genuine darkies made their debut at Assembly, or Madame Pique's Hall last evening, and presented their auditory with a long programme of Simon-Pure Ethiopian music and minstrelsy. At the opening last evening, there were about a hundred spectators.

Times Picayune - November 18, 1858 - The Buckleys
In an amusing, and, at the same time, instructive, article on the "Negro Opera," contained in the New York Tribune of a late date, we find the following as a part of the history of Ethiopian minstrelsy:
"The Buckley family was among the pioneers of Negro Minstrelsy. Their first appearance was in the Tremont Temple, Boston, in 1842, under the name of "Congo Melodists," and proved immensely successful. Subsequently, they traveled through the south and west, and in 1846 visited England, where they performed successively at Drury Lane and the Princess's Theatres. Returning to New York, they located themselves in the Chinese assembly rooms, where they have since continued to produce burlesque operas, and become very popular with our citizens. They are assisted by persons of considerable taste and skill, and the entertainments which they nightly present attract numerous and respectable audiences."
The culmination of minstrelsy has been rapid. It was not longer ago than 1843, that Rice first sang and jumped "Jim Crow," and that Master Diamond danced 'Jim along Josey." A few years later, the Dumbletons formed a party called "Ethiopian Serenaders," and made their debut at Palmo's Opera House, in New York. About the same time, say 1842, the afterwards famous manager and composer, Christy, commenced the formation of a troupe of Negro singers and dancers in buffalo and both he and Dumbleton popularized several well known airs, by adapting to them appropriate words, which soon began to take the place of the stereotyped 'nigger songs" that had formed the staple of their predecessors' repertoire. Of these we may elude, by way of example, to "Rosa Lee,' "Dearest Mae," "Mary Blane," and the like. In 1845, the Dumbeltons went to Europe, and became prodigiously popular; and Ned Christy established himself in New York, where he became a fixture, keeping up a first rate company of its kind, and in the course of a few years realizing a handsome fortune. During all this time the class of music sung and performed by the minstrels was gradually went on increasing rapidly. The Buckleys (now performing in our city) were among the earliest, and were followed by White's, Ordway's, Campbell's, Peel's, Kunkle's, and others, "too numerous to mention."

All these bands have attached to them accomplished musicians and composers, who are constantly employed in adapting and arranging the popular and fashionable music of the day, including that on the Italian Opera, which they bring out in an amusing style, varying the plot so as to being it within the legitimate scope of Ethiople performance, and at the same time preserving the music of the original sufficiently to make it artistically attractive.

The Buckleys are giving us now a series of these operatic adaptations. Having succeeded satisfactorily with the "Cinderella," they produce the "Trovatore" this evening, and follow it up with the "Sonnambula" tomorrow.
Wood's Minstrels will give a grand Mélange of Negro Minstrelsy, Plantation melodies, Burlesques, Terpsichorean Exercises, and characteristics, Ethiopian peculiarities. At each performance an entire change of programme.

Plain Dealer - May 21, 1859
The Campbells drew a full and fashionable house last night, and gave unqualified satisfaction. The pieces long since when threadbare in this species of entertainment are thrown aside by the Campbells, and novelties are produced in rich and sparkling profession. Classically speaking, their entertainments are "bully." Few performers can so thoroughly amuse an audience as Add. Weaver. In his grotesque dances and as a delineator of the genuine, unadulterated darkie, he has hardly an equal in New York or out of it. It pleases us to observe that the star of this talented minstrel is in the ascendant. As for Hernandez, there is only one of 'em, and there probably won't be another in this generation. He is an entire show in himself-"Six companies in one," as the circus bills might say. The Campbell's make their last appearance tonight, presenting a new programme, in which Mr. Hernandez will do the magic Mill and introduce two of his superb guitar solos.

Alexandria Gazette (VA) - October 17, 1860 - Thackeray on Negro minstrelsy.
Thackeray thus speaks of the performances of an American company of Ethiopian minstrels who were recently in England: "I heard a humorist balladist, a minstrel with wool on his head, and an ultra Ethiopian complexion, who performed a Negro ballad that I confess moistened these spectacles in the most unexpected manner. They have gazed at dozens of tragedy-queens dying on the stage, and expiring in appropriate blank verse, and I never wanted to wipe them. They have looked up, with deep respect be it said, at many scores of clergymen in pulpits, without being dimmed; and behold a minstrel, with a corked face and a banjo, sings a little song, strikes a wild note, which sets the whole heart thrilling with happy pity. Humor! Humor is the mistress of tears; she knows the way to the fons lachrymalmarum, strikes in dry and rugged places with her enchanting wand, and bids the fountain gush and sparkle. She has refreshed myriads more from her natural springs than ever tragedy has watered from her pompous old uru."

New York Tribune - June 21, 1862
The performances of Mr. Christy and company will open at the "New Hall of Minstrelsy" No. 585 Broadway, on Monday evening. The hall has been ornamented for the purpose. The quality of the minstrels, however, is the recommendation of the entertainment. These singers have been popular for many years.


The circumstances attending the death, in this city, of the well known E. P. Christy, completes the singular fact that the three originators of one of the most prominent musical novelties of the nineteenth century, Negro minstrelsy, all came within a brief period of each other to a miserable end. George W. Dixon, who composed and sang the first Ethiopian melody ever heard upon the state, died, in a charity hospital at New Orleans. 'Thomas D. Rice, better known as, "Jim Crow Rice," who was the first to introduce Negro opera and farce, died in New York, of delirium tremens; and E. P. Christy, who elevated the idea to the highest point of which it was susceptible, that of burlesque on the grand opera, came to his end from injuries received while laboring under a species of Insanity, by throwing himself from an upper window of his dwelling.

It may not be amiss, from the wide spread popularity enjoyed but a few years since by this class of music, and which still has its admirers, to give a brief history of its origin. The first Negro song ever heard in public was Dixon's "Coal Black Rose," which was followed by others from the same eccentric composer and vocalist. About the same period, Thomas D. Rice, an actor, while on a summer tour with a strolling company in the South, was struck with the novelty of some of the melodies of the plantation Negroes, and selecting one of the liveliest and most grotesque in character, introduced it at the bowery theatre the following winter. It being regarded as a mere trifle that night, perhaps, amuse an audience for a few moments between the play; and the farce, not much was anticipated, either by manager of actor of "Jim Crow"- for it was that famous ditty - but it proved attractive enough in itself alone to fill the bowery, and Pelly's Theatre in Boston, on alternate weeks, for months succeeding. A more stupid set of dogged rhymes were never strung together, but there was something in the lively air, combined with the dance and ludicrous attitude of the singer at the conclusion of each verse, that took the popular fancy, and its fame spread far and wide. A Broadway music publisher lost no time in securing the copyright, and issuing in a showy form, with a vignette of "Jim" upon the title-page. Ere many days elapsed it was familiar as household words in every dwelling. The song was soon followed by
the "Jim Crow quadrilles" and "Jim Crow Gallop," and had such thing been familiar in those days in American ears, there would doubtless have been a "Jim Crow Polka" and a "Jim Crow Schottische." So generally did the idea pervade all classes? "Jim Crow" was quoted in the halls of congress, in the State legislatures, and almost everywhere else but in the pulpit. If a politician changed his principles or a clergyman his religious tents, he was said to have "Jumped Jim Crow." That the relish for this humorous oddity was not confined to any particular sphere, was illustrated at the time by the fabulous price obtained by the auctioneer for an automation figure of "Jim Crow" that adorned the table of Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, at the famous Faneuil Hall fair, got up by the ladies of Boston, in ski of the institution for the Blind in that city.

On the Thanksgiving evening that followed the advent of this popular novelty, one of the most singular scenes ever witnessed in a theatre occurred at the old bowery. While the seats to all parts of the house were taken, and the office closed, long before dark by some in advertence a larger number of admissions had been disposed of to the pit than that part of the house could by any possibility be made to accommodate and the consequence was that a hundred or more, while the throng was still pressing in from the street, were crowded out of the pit, and took refuge upon the stage-filling the entire space between the curtain and the footlights. It was too late to remedy the evil, as the performance was about to commence, and all that could be done was to dispose of the surplus part of the audience in the best way to prevent their obstructing the view of the remainder which was effected by seating the largest number upon the floor at each side of the stage, outside the curtain, and allowing the rest to take positions between the side wings on the stage. from the restlessness of this extra supernumerary force, composed chiefly of boys, Shakespeare's "Richard the third," even with the elder Booth, in his palmist days, as the "Hump-backed-tyrant," partook more of farce than tragedy but both actors and audience were in a holiday humor, and while the former rather enjoyed than otherwise the various mishaps that occurred, the latter were not disposed to be critical. The crowning point, however, of the amusement, was when "Jim Crow" made his appearance. the urchins who had been seated upon the floor, and those at the side wings, to whom he was, of course, the great attraction of the evening, then formed a semi-circle around him, and obliged him so many times to repeat his performance, that he was compelled at last, amid shouts of laughter from the audience, to resort to the Negro expedient of making a battering-ram of his head to effect an exit through the crowd, from the stage. A large and well executed lithograph of this curious scene, comprising an entire view of the interior of the theatre,
published at the time, is still preserved by a former generation of "Bowery Boys," as a memorial of their favorite place of amusement.

Rice's next production was an entire Negro opera, founded on an ancient legend of a man who sold himself to the Evil One for the compensation of enjoying for a stated period, a luxurious life; concluding with the colored hero being called for, at a moment when he had quite forgotten the terms of the bargain, and carried off in a balloon amid blaze of fireworks. nothing could be more ridiculous, as it was, of course, intended to be but the music was good, being a selection from the most favorite operatic and other airs, and was well executed; "Jim Crow" himself giving evidence the richness and power his voice of in the higher class of music, that he would have made no mean figure in the legitimate opera. From his great success in the principal cities of the United States and in Europe, he accumulated a handsome fortune; but in his later life he squandered his means by dissipation, and died in poverty. And the Jim Crow performances had lost their novelty Negro minstrelsy assumed a new and improved phase in the class of melodies that were for several years so universally popular. There was a mystery about the origin of the earliest of them that no one seemed able to solve. They were first heard, in the winter of 1843, among the private glee clubs of young men who cultivate music for their own and their friends' enjoyment. The following summer, a company of minstrels offered them as a public entertainment at a second-floor room on Broadway, and not with sufficient encouragement to induce the opening of two or three other similar entertainments. It was then that E. P Christy, the Julian of Ethiopian music, made his first bow to the public as a manager. Procuring a large hall, with galleries, in Broadway, he opened a permanent concert room, and so rapidly did the new order of music grow in public favor, combined with the good taste that pervaded Christy's entertainments, the place was crowded nightly for the two or three following years, by the most respectable classes of our citizens. In the instrumental part of the performances, the bands of Julian, Musard, Gung'I and Maretak, were successively burlesqued, and none enjoyed the rich humor with which it was done more heartily than those distinguished artists. The third year, after a most successful tour in the meantime in Europe, he erected an opera house on Broadway, and, with the accessories of scenery, etc., produced, in burlesque, the most popular of the grand operas. In this, as in every other enterprise he may be said, literally, to have "coined money," Rival establishments started into existence, but he always managed to take the lead among them. After acquiring a fortune of nearly a quarter of a million of dollars, he retired several years since from public life. A short time previous to his decease, he became possessed with the idea that he was fast coming to poverty, although
his property was chiefly in real estate of the most valuable description, and attempted suicide, receiving in juries, that, after great suffering resulted in his death.

The character of the Ethiopian entertainments has of late ears entirely changed, and the class of audiences who patronize them has, consequently, changed with them. "Instead of being, as originally, simply a concert of vocal and instrumental music, they have become, chiefly, exhibitions of negro farces, dances, etc. Judging from the advertisements in the newspapers, and the flaming show-b ills, in bright colors, that adorn the dead walls and show-boards in the streets, one is apt to suspect they are suited to every low order of taste.

Were it not for the acknowledged excellence of the music of many of them, the universal popularity, at one period, of the Negro songs, nonsensical as they were to the last degree, would at this distance of time seem quite in comprehensible. Everywhere, from the National Capital to the most remote country village, and not less so at the other side of the ocean, they took the place of almost all other secular music. Of the genuine merit, however, of a portion of the earliest, such as "Lucy Neal," "Dearest Mae," "Mary Blane," and others, there has ever been but one opinion. No truer test exists of the value of any music than the amount of repetition it will bear, without becoming like the ditties of Willie-we-have-missed-you school, wearisome to the ear. To the genuine lovers of music these old melodies, now but seldom heard, have lost most of the attraction they had for all in the heyday of their popularity. Regret has always existed that better words did not accompany them. Seventy years ago, or thereabouts, when Mrs. C. E. Horn was charming the public with her sweet voice at her husband's concerts, one of the most popular of her ballads, 'Near the Lake where drooped the "Willow," was written for her by George P Morris, adapted to the music of an antique colored melody Of the best song-writer of the age, as he has been termed, would rescue, in as agreeable a manner, some of these later productions, of the same school, from the darkness that surrounds them, he would confer. A favor not only upon the lovers of music the present, but future generations.
Augusta Chronicle - October 25, 1863 - Negro Minstrelsy

The "Iron Clad Trope Opera" a band of Southern minstrels of whom report speaks very highly, announce one of their popular entertainments at concert hall tomorrow (Monday) night. Our citizens proverbially fond of such performances as they are, will need no urging to attend. Everybody and is wife will be there.

We find an excellent view of the minstrelsy in the next few articles.

New York Herald - November 19, 1864 - The African Opera - Our Negro minstrels-who and what they are-Theirs salaries and duties-Ethiopian Minstrelsy and burned cork-glimpses behind the scenes, etc.

There are now in the city three places of amusement devoted entirely and exclusively to Negro Minstrelsy. In Philadelphia there are two; and Boston, 'Chicago, Cincinnati and other cities own their respective "colored opera houses."

The New York houses-Wood's and Bryant's in Broadway, and Campbell's in the bowery-are all attended, night after night, by crowded and delighted audiences. Everybody has been to the minstrels, and everybody expects to go again. In fact, Ethiopian Minstrelsy may fairly be called a national amusement. Opera, drama, prestidigitation concerts, balls, and every other species of entertainment which caters to the amusement of our citizens is imported, but Negro Minstrelsy is indigenous, and purely American. There are about twenty traveling companies of minstrels in the United States and three or four in England, but Negro minstrels is indigenous, and purely American. There are about twenty traveling companies of minstrels in the
United States and three or four in England, where the entertainment is becoming very popular. In Liverpool it is already a permanent institution—a band of so-called "Christy's Minstrels" playing there nightly.

The New York houses of the three minstrel halls in this city. Wood's is in every respect the finest. It is really a beautiful little theatre, light, cheerful and cozy, provided with attentive ushers and every convenience for the comfort of visitors. Bryant's Hall, on the contrary, is but indifferently adapted for this purpose. The ceiling is low, the ventilation bad, and the seats often narrow and uncomfortable. Yet the performances are so attractive that the room is crowded very night. Campbell's Minstrels, in the bowery, occupy a suitable hall, and seem to find permanent and remunerative patronage.

The programme of the Negro Minstrel entertainments are very much alike in all the companies. The "first part" includes ballads and songs, generally of a plaintive and tender nature, interspersed with occasional eccentricities, like "A little more cider too" and "O Flanigan's Bid," for the end men. The second part of 'Olio" consists of farces, bits of burlesque, tragedy, and duetts, in which an "intelligent contraband" seeks to impart musical instruction and general information to a companies, whose only merits are the stupidity and his singularly good luck is saying incredibly silly thing at the most critical moment. This olio is further versed by dances, and an occasional sentimental ballad or operatic aria of a more elaborate class than that usually termed "negro melodies." The programme always ends with a plantation breakdown—generally a pretty fair representation of a dance among southern slaves. In this the whole company participates, and the curtain falls while the dance is actively proceeding, leaving the visitors to imagine that dancing breakdown is the normal condition of Negro minstrels.

The Music

There is a great deal of really charming melody in Negro Minstrelsy, most of it contributed by the late Stephen C. Foster, who possessed a talent for this species of composition which has never been equaled. Keller, Tucker and others have some given proofs of similar skill.

In almost all the sentimental songs used by the minstrels, apart from the mere love ditties, the favorite sentiment is that of real affection. Especially is this the case since the breaking out of the war. In these ballads the soldier, dying on the battle is expires with his mo upon his lips—a beautiful tribute to that affection which always lasts the longest. "Take a letter to My Mother," "Who Will Care for Mother Now?," "Mother, I've Come Home to Die," are examples of this tendency. Almost all the favorite Negro melodies are followed
by a chorus, simple in itself, but rendered effective by the attention which a 
good band of minstrels always pays to dynamic expression. The repetition of 
the chorus as solos and without accompaniment is one of the surest plans to 
win the applause of the audience. Of late years the minstrels employ a more 
elaborate class of music than during the earlier days of the profession.

The Performers

People who go to the minstrels often wonder who they are. Where do 
these men come from who thus blacken their faces and appear nightly before 
the public as Negroes. They are gathered from every branch of trade and 
commerce. Clerks, mechanics out of situations, music teachers who cannot get 
any scholars, and young men who have good voices and but little else are 
included in their ranks. It is by no means a bad school for these latter, for 
they, at least, bears punctuality and attention to their duties. Many of our best 
singers - Castle, Campbell, Geary, J. R. Thomas and others-are all graduates 
of this college of burned cork.

Professional Courtesies

When a Negro minstrel learns and sings any particular ballad it 
becomes, as far as that troupe is concerned, his special property, and no other 
member of the company will attempt to sing it.

All minstrels, just like actors, are anxious for applause, and are annoyed 
and disappointed if they do not get it. Not only does the sable warbler of 
sentimental ballads yeas for a hearty recognition of his efforts, but even the 
"end man," who is never supposed to do anything that is not funny, is quite 
hurt if his buffo song does not receive an encore. The droll stories or "gags" 
that the end man tell between the songs depend for success entirely; upon the 
humor or even the temporary state of mind of the relater. A ridiculous 
anecdote will one night convulse the house with laughter, and perhaps the 
next evening, because it is told with less gusto and spirit, will fall dead upon 
the audience. Old gags are kept up for years, and the standard jokes are 
repeated, on an average, once n three weeks. The end men cherish their 
special gags with the fondest care, and are very indignant if anyone else 
should use them. It is the same with their songs; these gags are obtained in 
various ways. They are sometimes written by the "end men" but generally by 
the "middle men,' that personification of gentlemanly dignity, that oracle of 
correct grammar who always is in the centre of the company and asks the 
questions which enable the "end men" to make their funny replies. Not un-
frequently the gags are years old. They are repeated about once every three weeks; and, as before said, the end man cherishes his favorite 'gags" as fondly as the tenor singer cherishes his pet songs.

Salaries

These Negro minstrels, with their easy little songs, their unpretending choruses and their childish burlesque plays make more money than many skilled mechanics or hard working artisans. Their salaries range from twenty to thirty dollars a week, according to their ability to make fun or their proficiency on musical instruments. A cloggist-that is, a man who dances in clogs, gets paid from fifteen to twenty dollars. A wench dancer gets from eighteen to twenty-five dollar a week though this branch of the profession is not usually considered quite as desirable as the more musical callings. These 'wench dancers' are young men from fifteen to twenty-five years of age, and are generally noticeable for their love of fine clothes. they may be seen any clear day strolling up and down little canes, and gig us passers by the impression that they are "fast' youths. Yet few of those who thus meet them in the street imagine that at night these same young dandies black their faces, don feminine attire and burlesque as it were the premiere danseuse of the opera house.

The proprietors of the minstrel companies, most of them practical performers themselves, are rich men. They sport seven or eight hundred dollar diamond pins, and wears the most showy and elaborate clothes that fashion will permit. Indeed, it would seem as if the sable complexion they assume at night struck inwards and imbued them with that love of finery which is so well known a characteristic of the African race.

The Social Relations

The minstrel profession is now nearly as firmly elaborated as the theatrical, and the members of the two mingle together on a footing of perfect equality. Many minstrels possess historic ability which would fully qualify them for dramatic pursuits. Not a few-for instance, Dan Bryant, as is recent engagement at Wallack's showed-make admirable low comedians. This ability is frequently displayed in their burlesque plays, of which by the way, the "end men" are very fond and often show in them more historic than vocal accomplishment.

Their Musical Ability
Indeed, many minstrels are literally no musicians at all. Their songs are taught to them by rote. The better musicians among them are engaged on Sundays in our various church choirs, and the most devout congregations of New York and Brooklyn listen at their Sabbath services to the same voices which, at the minstrel halls, on week day evenings, warble 'Jennie Jane,' or make the popular vocal request to "Sally to Come Up," or "Sally Come Down." Two-thirds of the minstrels, however, cannot read at sight the most ordinary music.

The End Men

WE have often alluded to the end men in the course of this article. They are usually gay, cheerful fellows, though a few of them, when off the stage, are as sedate and solemn as Connecticut persons. Some of them are noted chiefly for their power of grimace, for distorting the mouth, or opening it to a prodigious with others an affect the most utterly idiotic expression which it is possible for the human countenance to assume, and which is far more provocative of mirth than the most extravagant movements of the facial muscles. In the burlesque plays these men wear old coats which are careful studies in the art of disputation. These grotesque garments, as indeed all others, including the conventional evening dress suit, are provided by the minstrels themselves and not by the management.

Cork

Cork is indispensable to Negro Minstrelsy. Some time ago a company attempted to give the usual programme in white face, but the public carefully abstained from attending until the black hue was assumed. This cork is provided in the shape of a pulverized powder, usually prepared expressly for the purpose. The minstrel places a little of it in one hand, drops some water in it and then, rubbing the hands together, reduces it to a watery paste, with which the face and neck is washed, and the "corking" is thus complete. This pulverized cork is not gritty like charcoal nor is it greasy, its nature, on the contrary, it feel rather pleasant, and the fact that it covers the face is soon forgotten by the wearer. It also acts as a preservative of the complexion rather than hurting it; and fewer men have faces free from pimples, tan or cetaceous disease, than the Negro minstrels.

At the same time most of these same minstrels hate and abominate cork. some apply it night after night with feelings of unmitigated an loathing while
others, but only a small minority, are quite indifferent about it and use it without an special feeling of distaste.

The rehearsals

The minstrels rehearse four or five times a week, usually in the morning. If absent they pay a forfeit; but they are, as a class, very punctual. If late or absent from an evening performance they have to pay money fine. The middle-man or interlocutor, is the stage manager, and makes out he programmes, but each solo singer selects his own ballads. Composers often send their ballads in manuscript to popular minstrels, knowing that if sung a week or so, the sale of the composition when published is pretty sure to be largely increased.

Final Remark

There are probably over five hundred men constantly engaged in the minstrel profession in this country. Their besetting sin is intemperance; though of course there are many of them who are quite free from this habit, and are in private life real gentlemen. In all parts of the country Negro minstrelsy is finding its way and in towns and cities where the scientific lecturer, the panorama, or the concert troupe draw scanty audiences, there is always a large crowd of noisy and performances.

Daily Constitutionalist - December 1, 1864 - The African Opera

The New York Herald devotes over a column to "Negro Minstrelsy and burned cork."The programmes, the music, the performers, salaries, etc., are each the subject of a descriptive paragraph. A great deal which everybody knows is said, but some of the statements are curious, if not interesting.

'Most of the really charming melody in Negro Minstrelsy, says the Herald, was contribution by the late Stephen C. Foster, who possessed a talent for this species of composition which has never been equaled. The prevailing sentiment of the songs now used is that of filial affection. "Who'll care for
"Mother Now?" and "Mother, I've come Home to die" are examples of this tendency.

The men who blacken their faces and appear nightly before the public as negroes, are composed chiefly of mechanics out of situations, clerks, music teachers who cannot get any scholar and young men to folly inclined) who have good voices and but little else.

Old "gags" are kept up for years, and standard jokes are repeated on an average once in three weeks. The "end men" cherish their special gags with the fondest care, and are very indignant anyone else should use them.

The salaries of the Negro minstrels range from $20 to $30 per week, (in greenbacks)-a "wench dancer" gets only from $18 to $25. The latter are young men from 15 to 25 years of age, and are generally fond of fine clothes. They wish to appear as "fast youths." The proprietors of minstrel houses are rich men. They sport seven or eight hundred dollar diamond pins, and wear the most showy and elaborate clothes that fashion will permit. They seem imbued with a love of finery, which is so well known a characteristic of the African race which they mimic.

The best singers among the minstrels in New York and Brooklyn are engaged on Sundays in the various choirs. Two-thirds of the minstrels cannot read at sight the most ordinary music.

Cork is indispensable to Negro Minstrelsy. It is provided in the shape of a pulverized powder, usually prepared expressly for the purpose. A thin paste is mixed in one hand and then both hands are rubbed together. Afterwards, the face and neck are washed with the black mixture. It acts as a preservative of the complexion. Most of the minstrels abominate cork, and apply it night after night with increased loathing.

There are probably constantly engaged in the minstrel profession in the United States. Their besetting sin is intemperance, (though) of course, there are many of them who are quite free from this habit, and are in private life real gentlemen. Whatever may be the attractions elsewhere, there is always a large crowd of noisy and delighted patrons to attend and enjoy the Negro minstrel performance.

Daily Constituationalist - March 24, 1865 - Negro Minstrels

We are pleased to announce that a number of musical gentlemen connected with the various bands of Cheatham's division will give a concert this evening in the hall of the Augusta Hotel-entrance through the ladies door. We can safely promise all who may attend a select and pleasing entertainment.
The performers will appear as delineators of Ethiopian character, and our people will, we know, hail with delight once more the minstrelsy of 'burnt cork.'

Good order will be preserved, and the hall handsomely prepared for the accommodation of the audience. Let there be a rousing welcome given to these veterans of the Army of Tennessee.

Lowell Daily Citizen and News - January 10, 1867 - Minstrelsy
Charley Dwinell's great Western minstrels and Brass Band are announced to give an entertainment at Huntington Hall on Saturday evening next, at which they will introduce some of the choicest gems of Ethiopian minstrelsy. Several members of the company are well known in this city as performers of superior merit, and it is rendered certain that the troupe will meet with a liberal patronage. It is understood that the company will make but a short stay in this section, but will soon proceed westward, where at previous entertainments they have drawn crowded houses.

Daily Eastern Argus - December 18, 1867
City hall was well filled last evening with lovers of Minstrelsy to witness the concert given by Duprez & Benedict's company. It was the best show of the kind given in this city for some time. The jokes were new and spicy and music excellent. The audience was highly pleased with the exhibition.

Evening Post (N.Y.) - January 25, 1868 - Negro Minstrelsy-General Gricreda's(?) Band
The origin of Negro Minstrelsy has called out several correspondents of late. Youngstown can, however, lay claim to the first regularly organized amateur band of minstrels in this country, which was formed in 1843. In some of the theaters and circuses one and two persons delineated Negro characters and songs, but the following trained person constituted the first and largest band with their instruments: B. .H. Grierson, banjo; Isaac Barclay, first violin; Chanucey Jr. Crittenden, Jr., tambourine; Nathan Holland, castanets; Godfrey; King, jawbone (this instrument, a horse's lower jaw, is now obsolete amongst minstrels, but it was the tremolo in that band); Sheldon Medbury, cornet; Henry Holcomb, triangle; Charles Thoro, flute; A. J. Gardner, banjo; George H. King, second violin. The latter gentlemen did not don the cork, but the rest did on public occasions generally. Greirson and Holland did the dancing, and they were hard to beat. The old citizens of Youngstown will recollect the all. The organization held together about two years, but never traveled, and consequently had only a local reputation. There is at this day no
improvement in the singing or playing of the professional traveling bands over the "Youngstown Minstrels," except some specialty and the improvised 'hand organ solo' of Holland has never been performed by any troupe since, and perhaps never will be, as it was is original' patent. All of the above named had a natural talent for music, and those who are now living continue to cultivate the art more or less.

"Crittenden and Holland are dead. The rest are located and in business.

Jackson Citizen Patriot - February 23, 1869

Minstrel troupes are becoming common, so common in fact that they too common humbug the people. But last night, at the academy of Music, Emerson, Allen & Manning's Troupe gave the best entertainment that we have ever seen outside of Cincinnati. As a company it is full, and did splendidly. To pass over the Opening 'chorus, (and the ballad, Bessie Lea, and the comic Ditty, n the rendering of all of which the house was delighted, we must make special mention of Beautiful Annie which was given in style so exquisite by Dr. J. Hammer that the house gave him encore upon encore. The clog dancing was creditable, and the select ballad by R.T. Tyrrell was received with great satisfaction. The song and Dance by Billy Emerson was magnificent-especially the dance. As a comic performer he has very few equals. The audience would have kept him on the stage till midnight, if possible.

Providence Evening Press - October 27, 1869 - Kelly and Leon's Minstrels

Among the many troupes of minstrels that annually pay a visit to providence, Kelley and Leon's Minstrels are always sure of receiving a cordial welcome. Arrangements have been completed for a visit of this organization to our city on the evenings of Thursday and Friday, November 4th and 5th, when no doubt Harrington's Opera House will be well filled with the man admirers of minstrelsy. The leading artists are Melville, Brockway, Surridge, Meyers, Talbot and Fields, who will be assisted by twelve other first class performers The troupe is composed of none but artists well known to the public as capable in every way to cater most successful to the enjoyment of any audience. The troupe has been particularly successful on their present tour.

Evening Post (N.Y.) - Negro Minstrelsy

This species of entertainment will next season be presented to our public i an unusually elaborate style. Bryant's company will appear in the new hall now building for them in West Twenty third Street, near Sixth Avenue. This
building will be finished in November, and will accommodate ne thousand persons. It will be provided with a stage fifty feet wide by thirty deep. In the auditorium there will be a parquet and two galleries.

Towards the end of this month Kelly & Leon will open Dodworth's Hall, which has been refitted and enlarged for their express occupancy. A stage has been built and suitable arrangements made for escape in case of fire. This new minstrel theatre will seat about eight hundred people.

It is to be hoped that the managers of these companies will include in their programme some of the melodious music of the earlier days of Negro minstrelsy of late the minstrel halls have been given entirely over to attempts at opera bouffe in black faces and to stupid dances.


A Savannah (Georgia) paper gives an account of something actually new in the line of public amusements:

"This evening, at the theater, will be presented, for the first time in the history of the world, a new species of entertainment, and which has long been in course of preparation by the Skiff and Gaylord minstrel troupe. It will be a musical entertainment in which Mr. Lew Gaylord will appear as the "Albinos Chief," supported by the albinos Band, twenty-four in number.

"This new entertainment promises to outdo burnt cork and Negro performances of every description and every person in the troupe will be so disguised by costume and the general make-up of the faces as to resemble an Alabaster statue. There is not a particle of dress that is black. Every necktie, boot, coat, etc, is white, and we expect that the theater will be crowded, for very few there are but what are curious to see the grand opening of an entirely new class of entertainment."

Evening Post, N.Y. June 1, 1871 - Music and the drama- Negro Minstrelsy

Messrs. Newcomb & Arlington, by combining some of the best elements at hand, have got together a clever trope of dusky minstrels and comedians at Twenty-eighth Street, who continue to attract and amuse the public in spite of the thermometer. It would be too much to assert that the music recalls the strains of Mario and Nilsson, or the fun, the delicate, impalpable humor of Lamb or Sydney Smith. But there s an infectious swing and jollity I much of their drollery which may disarm the scruples of the sovercct purist. witness, in particular, Sam Price's laughable terror in the "Haunted Castle," the exaggerated graces of (Miss) Henry Rice in the "Ballad scene,' and the melodious discord of the Cow-bell-ogians, who succeed in making distinct and
coherent melody out of a lot of cracked cowbells, no one of which is capable of giving a musical sound. Altogether, for anyone who in these melting days would like a good laugh without "giving the whole of his mind to it," we can cheerfully recommend Newcomb & Arlington's.

**Cincinnati Daily Enquirer** - June 27, 1871 - Minstrels at Wood's Theater

Simmons & Slocum's ebony performers commenced their brief season minstrelsy last night at Wood's Theater as per announcement. The troupe is from Philadelphia and the entertainment was characterized by a general good taste and absence of all things likely to offend ladies or overly fastidious gentlemen. An audience which might be considered exceedingly good for the advanced season of the year was in attendance, and rewarded the performers with frequent laughter and abundant applause.

The quartette is equal to the average of the paripateties of the burnt cork profession, and the soloists are good. Several of the selections of the first part of this performance had, however, been made familiar to our public by Carncors and Dixie's Minstrels, and might with propriety be omitted from future programmes.

The double song and dance, "I really shall expire." by Welsh and Rice, was decidedly amusing as a dance, but lacking in vocal excellence. It was applauded loudly, and several encores given, which greatly delighted the audience. The "Serio-comic ode," by Bill Sweatman, excited shouts of laughter, and Billy was called out enthusiastically three times. Eddie Fox's violin solo also gave great satisfaction.

The programme concluded with the original pantomime, *The Village Blacksmith*, in which the author appeared as "Big Bob," the clown, and played his part very cleverly. The piece abounded in amusing tricks, and fittingly closed a very pleasing entertainment.

**Cleveland Leader** - July 7, 1871

Newcomb and Arlington's Minstrels-This rare combination of talented artists in the profession of Minstrelsy remains with us but two more evenings. So far the engagement has been a gratifying success, the audiences nightly being large, and admirable performances being received with one most enthusiastic favor. The troupe is one of uncommon excellence in all departments, and the entertainments are replete with the rarest enjoyment for the lovers of Minstrelsy.

**Cincinnati Daily Enquirer** - August 1, 1871
Minstrelsy - Hart, Ryman & Barney's Minstrels open at Wood's Theater on the instant for a brief season. The troupe is heralded as one of the very best in the country, and the names of Hart & Ryman go far with Cincinnatians to indorse the favorable opinion everywhere expressed of it.


We have to add our unqualified praise to that of the press generally, upon the superiority of Manning's Minstrels, and confess unusual satisfaction in Harrington's Opera House last evening, at the unsurpassed entertainment of that company. Composed of first-class artists, all displaying in an eminent degree marked originally the, entertainment was throughout one which fairly carried away the audience in the ecstasies of delight and peals and peals of laughter, and applause were frequent. Indeed, no company that has performed here has won such golden opinions as was bestowed upon Manning's troupe last evening, and they can justly lay claim to the crown of Minstrelsy. The sensation duet, 'Rebecca Jane," rendered by McKee and Rogers, is alone worth the price of admission, fairly convulsing the audience in laughter. In the first part of the entertainment there was some excellent singing, and there was a sparkling originality and happy thought in their jokes which render them irresistibly laughable. One more chance this evening to see this unsurpassed minstrel troupe, with the inimitable Billy Manning and that other prince of Ethiopian delineators, W. W. Newcomb, its "end men."

Minstrelsy is developing into a more elaborate amusement.

Quincy Daily Whig - June 25, 1872 - Minstrelsy and Minstrels

The basis upon which world famous American Negro Minstrelsy was planted and grew, until it occupied as prominent, if not as proud, a place among the amusements of the age as classic opera, was melody, without the sweet, pathetic airs to which were sung, "Old Folks at Home," "Way Down the Swanee River," and "Massa in the Cold, Cold Ground," and the semi-savage abandon of the gayer plantation songs, the original Christy never cold have become a season's sensation in New York. The dances, the jests and the character sketches would have fallen flat or soon have grown insipid. In fact, the latter were rated as of secondary importance, when Christy, the first Rayner and poor little Goldie, were the lights of the profession, and when the first streams was laid upon the grand harmony produced by well trained
quartettes and choruses devoted to producing in perfection the simple music of the slaves of the South.

Dan Bryant's Minstrels, who perform at the Opera House this evening, have so to speak, taken a step backward, and revived the melodies of the old Negro slaves of the south. Their entertainment is unexceptional and their music excellent throughout. Instead of the ridiculous nonsense which generally concludes the evening's performance of most minstrels, a most touching sketch of plantation life, entitled "Uncle Eph's Dream," introducing "Old Folks at Home" and other melodies.

_**Portland Daily Press** - October 7, 1872 - The Kings of Minstrelsy_

George Swail Buckley and Sam Sharpley, the great rival leaders in Minstrelsy have united their companies for the ensuing season, and will appear at City Hall tonight. There is a power in this combination that has not been approached for years, and the repertoire is filled with new acts. The entertainment will present some new and attractive features, and we hope the managers will call together all their old friends and admirers.

_Kalamazoo Gazette - October 13, 1872 - A new era in Minstrelsy_

Harry Robinson, more familiarly known as "the man with the silver horns," and his excellent troupe of Minstrels are announced to appear at Union Hall, on Thursday evening (next) Oct. 17th. Though lately organized, the Robinsons have made an impression on the people wherever they appeared, that will never be forgotten. Our contemporaries speak in glowing terms of the "show." prominent among the many novelties introduced by this stupendous organization, is that of "six end men," a sight never before witnessed on the minstrel stage. The comedians are Bill McAllister, Milt Barlow, Frank Carlton, John Henshaw, Billy Ginniven, Harry Robinson and Johnny Shen, the wonderful contortion song and dance artist. The brass band is said to be the finest on the road and the orchestra including Seymour, the great harpist, is hard to surpass. The novel style of advertising introduced by the agent, Mr. John Rickaby, is also an improvement, being done principal by handsome lithographs, representing the interior of Fisk's Grand Opera House, New York City. We clip the following from the Toledo Commercial of Oct. 9th.

Harry Robinson's Minstrels - Wheeler's Opera House was crowded boy the elite of our city last night, to witness the performances of the "Man with the Silver Horns," and his famous minstrel troupe. The entertainment was a success throughout, being entirely novel and free from the old time and worn out style
Robinson's trapeze and "musical acts" were much admired. We take pleasure in saying that this is one of the best Minstrel troupes that has yet visited us.

Another grand treat in Negro Minstrelsy awaits our citizens. The great combination of Welch, Clark & Hart is billed for an appearance at the Opera House on Monday evening, Dec. 23, when a chaste and elegant entertainment is promised. The troupe comprises a full and effective orchestra, an accomplished quartette, and four fine comedians, headed by Fayette Welch, of whom the San Francisco.

"Mr. Fayette Welch's reception at the Alhambra was bordering on an ovation; his mirth provoking comicalities were greeted with peals of plaudits from the entire audience. Even the ladies caught the infection, and clapped their delicate little hands in approval at every sally of wit and humor. His exquisite manipulations of his two tambourines elicited thunders of applause, and his "Last Sensation" was demanded with such gusto as rarely fails to the lot of delineators of Negro Minstrelsy and by happy hit and funnyism, he draws a appreciative approval from his enthusiastic audience. As a delineator of Negro Minstrelsy, Fayette Welch is the king bee, and the best we can wish him is as hearty a reception wherever he may go, as has been tendered him here in San Francisco.

Wilmington Morning Star - September 17, 1874 - When was Negro Minstrelsy first organized? (Interview with Sam Stanford.)

'It was on the occasion of Dick Pelham's benefit in the latter part of 1842. The band was composed of Pelham, Frank Brewer, now dead, Dan Emmet, now keeping a saloon in Chicago, Billy Whitlock, now in the customhouse, New York and myself.

To my knowledge the first man who blacked his face was T. D. Rice who became as famous as 'Jim Crow" and 'Long Tail blue." He was a lamp-lighter
in a theater in Louisville when Mrs. Drake, the ancestor of the Chapman sisters, was there. He first sung the song at a benefit.

**Cincinnati Daily Enquirer** - December 14, 1873 - Minstrelsy

Sharpel's Minstrels and Sheridan & Mack's Show, making up between them one of the most varied and attractive entertainments of the kind ever given here, closed their first week's business to a packed house last night. This week there will be an entire change of programme, including the great Sheridan and Mack sensations, "Don't Forget the Old Folks," "sliding on the Cellar-door," and the ever popular "Little Fraud."

At Pike's Opera House the great original San Francisco Minstrels, headed by such lights of the profession as Birch, Wambold & Backus began a season of six nights and a matinee tomorrow evening. Every man in the entire band is an artist in his line, and in view of the popular pieces we look for crowded houses.

*This article notes the minstrelsy business.*

**Indianapolis Sentinel** - July 25, 1875 - Burnt Cork-The Minstrel Business. Its rise, progress and decline-some eminent artists-How the business is managed-some fortunes that have been made out of it.

A writer in the Graphic does up in an entertaining manner the subject of Negro minstrelsy from which the following extract is taken: There are those who claim to be able to name the man who first gave burnt-cork performances; but more than one man has been mentioned in this connection. It is quite certain that the first exhibitions of Negro minstrelsy were made under a circus tent; but the art did not attract much attention while it was in its infancy. After a while it took an independent existence, and traveled as a separate show, with varying and never very brilliant success; but it was not until 'Edwin P. Christy, seeing the capabilities of this innovation upon the usual routine of amusement business, organized a company of very good performers, and opened his establishment in New York, that Negro minstrelsy really began to flourish. From this point Minstrelsy dates its existence as a popular minstrelsy entertainment, and it immediately became famous. Christy's Minstrels, so well known in New York during so many years, leaped at once into popular favor, and became not only a source of amusement to the multitudes in New York during so many years, leaped at once into popular favor, and became not only a source of amusement to the multitude, but a source of fame and fortune to many. Those who remember the early days of this new style of entertainment are not yet old men, and from that day to this
they have seen a great number of minstrel organizations rise and flourish and
decay. To Edwin P. Christy his business was a mine of wealth. He
accumulated a large fortune at his New York establishment, and was a
wealthy man when he retired. Although he lived very extravagantly, lavishing
his money as if he had no idea of its value, he was worth fully $50,000 when he
died. George Christy, Edwin's nephew, who took the name of Christy for
business purposes, was the more popular of the two, but he was not a
proprietor, and was by no means as wealthy as his uncle. Having thus taken a
fair start, Negro Minstrelsy improved its opportunity, and rose rapidly in
popular favor. Companies multiplied in all parts of the country until at one
time there were no less than twenty-three first-class troupes in the United
States, traveling and stationary, numbering from eighteen to twenty-five men
to the troupe. Now there are no more stationary minstrel entertainments, and
only two first-class traveling troupes, Haverly's and Dupres & Benedict's,
both of which are well and favorably known in St. Louis. The reason for the
failure of so many organizations is not that the public have lost interest in
Negro Minstrelsy or that they fail to appreciate a good entertainment, but
because so many managers have proved neglectful of their own interests,
abusing the profession to which they belong and the patronage of the public.
They fail to recognize the fact that the public taste is advancing, and that the
general desire for novelty must be indulged. They content themselves with
securing a few good artists, whose reputation they rely upon to carry them
through, neglecting to pay proper attention to the business of the stage, and to
provide such variety as an extracting public demands. The result is that these
carelessly managed companies die out, and that their few artists of good
reputation are irreparably injured through their connection with unpopular
companies. The success of a minstrel organization depends largely, almost
entirely upon the management. There must be one head, and that must be a
good one. The manager must have all the details of the business at his finger's
ends, must give his personal attention to very particular, and must possess
foresight that at least equals his hindsight.

Jack Haverly

Jack Haverly and C. H. Dupres, the latter of whom has been in the minstrel
business for twenty-three years, possess the managerial qualities in a
remarkable degree, and it is to their exertions that their respective troupes
owe their great and continued success. Minstrelsy, with a few exceptions, is no
longer a paying business, and it is only by careful, strict and economical
management that it can be made to bring in fair returns. The stage business
must be attended to in a progressive manner, novelties must be continually
produced, and that company is doomed which allows itself to fall into the rut
of routine. Economy manifests itself principally in saving time, in making every point tell, in allowing no lying over or delays in passing from place to place; in short, in keeping the company at work during every day of expense. The expense is no inconsiderable item. A first class company comprises from eighteen to twenty-five men, all of who are well paid in addition to their board and traveling expenses; Dupers & Benedict's company, for instance, has twenty-one men who do stage business, besides four outside, and the expense of the organization will average $300 a daily throughout the year. Salaries range pretty much as follows; Ballad singers, $15 to $30 a week, and all expenses paid; comedians, $30 to $50; song and dance men, $12 to $75, according to ability and reputations; female impersonators, $15 to $75; leaders of orchestras, $20 to $50; ordinary musician for each man. The season lasts from ten to twelve months, and the best and most energetic companies keep at work during the entire year. Dupers & Benedict's men had a vacation of eight week in the summer of 1874, being the first and only rest in 7 years, this vacation; they claim to have lost only four dates during the time mentioned. From this it will be seen that the life of a minstrel is not altogether as easy one, and it is especially hard on the married men, who may be said never to be at home. Their wives, however, can visit them occasionally, receiving the benefit of the reduced rates which the companies get from the railroads and hotels. Otherwise the life is not a hard one, as their rehearsals are not as frequent and difficult as those of theatrical people. when an entire new bill is to be gotten up, they rehearse two and a half hours a day, for about two weeks, until they are perfect, as it is necessary that the music and the whole business shall be committed to memory but their regular rehearsals, for the introduction of new pieces or sets, occur only three times a week. With stationary companies, however, this work is harder, as they are expected to rehearse and bring out an entire new programme every week. Negro minstrels having once gotten into the business, generally stick to it for life, and it may be said for them that they average very well as regards respectability and morality. As a rule, they are liberal, dress well, and wear expensive jewelry; but quite a number of them live economically, save their money and invest it carefully. As for morality, they are compelled to be reasonably moral in first-class troupes, or to cover their immorality with a safe cloak of secrecy, Such troupes are very strict, fine and discharge being the penalty of intoxication, and various other penalties being provided for offenses against morals and the good order of the organization. There have been erroneous opinions concerning the coloring matter which Negro minstrels use for the purpose of blackened their faces. Various pigments have been spoken of on this connection; but the fact is that only one substance is used, and it is the
same which has been in use from the beginning of the business. Cork is burned to a cinder, and is pounded until it is reduced almost to an impalpable powder. It is then passed through a fine selve, and is mixed with a little water, sufficient to form a paste, which is spread upon the skin, Minstrels claim that no substance answers their purpose so well as burnt cork, as it positively will not "stain or injure the skin." Men who have used it for twenty years have as good complexions as those of their fellow mortals who have never "changed their skin.' This paste is usually prepared in large quantities, sufficient to last two weeks or longer. An outsider might suppose that Negro Minstrelsy as there is so much of the performance there is a charm in the black faces, and it cannot exist without them. The end men with their jokes are necessities of the business, and a black face and the style of expression that accompanies it will sharpen the edge of many pointless witticisms. The reason that real Negroes do not succeed well as minstrels is because they are incapable of the requisite jokes. A Negro generally ceases to be funny as soon as he knows that he is funny. The jokes are infested in pretty much the same manner as the scintillations of newspaper paragraphists. The minstrels read the papers, and are struck by ideas which they may fairly claim as their own, or arrange the ideas of others to suit their purposes or 'crib' as story or a joke, and use it unblushingly. As for the songs, there are perhaps a dozen songs writers in the country, who work almost exclusively for minstrel organizations, and the troupes are never at a loss for fresh songs and ballads, as quantities of new music are continually sent to them by publishers and authors, who consider that the best way to put their productions before the public is to get them introduced upon the minstrel stage, and they are even willing to pay for the privilege. Song and dance acts are written by authors of that style, of whom there may be half a dozen in existences. Clog dancers invent their own business. Their work is very hard while it lasts; but the act is generally so short that it is not injurious to them. On a new act they practice two or three hours a day until it becomes perfect, and them, if it pleases the public, it will last them for years. If it does not please—a fact which they are quick to discover—they work upon it and change it until it appears to be satisfactory to their patrons. 'The minstrel business in England has been quite successful when carried on by Minstrels managers and performers. The native English not being "to the manner born," blunder considerably, and it seems impossible for them to become good Negro minstrels. There are now two stationary companies in England, one in London and one in Liverpool, which are manned and offered by Americans and which ;have been quite successful. The Liverpool company is managed by Sam Hague of New York, and is located at St. James Hall. It was originally known as the Georgia Slave
minstrels, and was first composed of genuine Negroes, but the performers are now mostly white men. That in London is known as the royal Christy minstrels, and is managed by G. W. Moore, formerly of New York. Both Hague and Moore have acquired considerable fortunes by means of the minstrel business in England, the former being worth about $65,000, and the latter perhaps twice as much. Minstrelsy in England runs to sentimental ballads, which please the people better than anything else, and the greater part of the entertainment is in this style, there being but little comic business and a light olio. The royal Christy Minstrels are largely supported by the higher classes of London society. Some pretty sizeable fortunes have been accumulated by the minstrel business. Tony pastor is probably the wealthiest variety manager, and is supposed to be worth about $100,000. Dan Bryant made $75,000 by the minstrel business, and $20,000 by delineations of Irish characters; but he was generous and liberal, and no money manager, and was by no means wealthy when he died, at the age of thirty eight, leaving a widow and four or five children. All sorts of amusement establishments in New York, and many outside of the city, gave entertainments for the benefit of his family, turning over to them the entire receipts, and some $20,000 were thus realized. Neil Bryant is said to be worth $50,000; Lew Morris, $100,000; W. W. Newcomb, $28,000; William Arlington, $10,000; Frank Brower (dead), over $15,000; Birch, Wambold and Backus, each, $30,000; Carneroas and Dixey, each over $40,000; Kelley and Leon, each, $18,000; "Ben cotton, $10,000; Lew Benedict, $25,000; Billy Emerson, $20,000, Simmons and Slocum, each, $10,000; Harrigan and Hart, $15,000 each. Hooley made $150,000 in Brooklyn, but has probably lost most of it in Chicago. Sam Sanford, once the wealthiest minstrel manager, lost over $60,000.

_Times Picayune_ - August 1, 1888 - Negro Minstrelsy and Melody. The originator of this class of entertainment and his followers.

Negro minstrelsy and melody are the early arts to which we have any original claim. Everything else is borrowed, says the New York Graphic. Negro melody belongs to the great family of folk songs and has no origin that does not be deep in the hearts and lives of the Negro race.

Negro Minstrelsy is the first native effort in a purely artistic direction. It deals with altogether new material. There were no precedents.

The Negro race, with its peculiar and strongly marked characteristics, was before unknown to the stage. But not only was the material fresh, but the method of its presentation was new.

As in all artistic work of value, it was studied from the life. To present the plantation Negro, his music, his poetry, his humor, his dialect, his
attitudes, was a taste of more dignity than it has ever been granted. Bones, banjo, and Mr. Johnson, with his dignity and poly-syllables, are three types which almost every plantation furnished and are worth perpetuation.

The original minstrel was Dan Emmet, whom a correspondent has recently unearthed in Chicago, a feeble old man of 78. Dan Emmet, according to his own story, was born at Mount Vernon, Ohio in 1815. His father was as blacksmith, and Dan was brought up to work the bellows, but at 19 could play so skillfully on the violin that he transferred himself and his violin from the blacksmith shop to Stickney's circus.

In 1843 he organized the first band of black cork minstrels, and produced these studies of darky life he had acquired in his travels with the circus. There were four members: Frank Brewer, bones; Billy Whitlock, banjo; Dick Pelham, tambourine; Dan Emmet, violin. It came about through an effort to serenade old man Howe, of circus fame, in the Bowery. The tune shown was "Old Dan Tucker," and they made it ring. "Boys," said old man Howe, 'You've got a blanked good thing if you only know it."

But no burnt cork was used until Pelham's benefit at the Chatham Street Theatre, when the public went wild over the great hit. No charge was made at the subsequent performances, which were in a gambling saloon, but a collection was taken up at the door. The four men were then engaged by Walsh's circus and paid $800 a week.

The company afterward traveled through the country, and in 1855 the first local minstrel show was started in Chicago, and was known as Emmet's Varieties. The success of Emmet's Minstrels was soon followed by the organization of other troupes.

One of the early famous organizations was Christy's Minstrels, which first brought into vogue a long succession of such songs as "Suwanna River," "Old Kentucky Home," "Massa's in the cold, Cold Ground," which brought reputation to Stephen Foster, the writer, who died a few years ago in Pittsburg. These are called Negro melodies, but are such only in name, Negro music having entirely different earmarks.

In the height of his success George Christy took his minstrels to London, where they became a permanent institution and are doubtless there still, in London they are called "nigger minstrels." this strikes American ears strangely, for even in anti-bellum days "Negro Minstrels" was the accepted term here.

For many years the minstrels and the traveling families, such as the Hutchinsons and the Swiss Bell ringers, were the only forms of public amusements the country outside of the cities knew. It is impossible today to realize the eager anticipation that the news of their coming gave.
The names of the old minstrels are household words, but they are now either dead or gone into other pursuits. Bill Lawrence is a letter carrier. Edwin Winchell is in the railroad business. Bill Manning is dead and the two best known men in New York-Dan Bryant and Charley Backus-are both dead.

Bryant's Minstrels, when they occupied the Twenty-third Street house, was one of the best organized, artistic and most creditable entertainments in town. Coarseness never passed for wit; the fun was wholesome and the music good. Professional men, worn out with burdens of law, medicine, writing, and for all one knows, with the care of souls, used to go to Bryant's as they took a tonic, and it was a tonic that brought refreshment to jaded mind and spirit as well as to the body.

It was here that "Dixie" first appeared as a walk-around in 1850. Dan Emmet was the composer and his only inspiration was Bryant's beseeching appeal for something new. This was one day. The next day, "Dixie" appeared. It was a hit. Everybody took it up, music publishers, bands, and the part it subsequently played among both combatants in the war is well known.

Dan Bryant died of consumption early in the '70s, and few men left more friends and grateful memories. The twenty-third Street place was then followed by Birch and Backus' minstrels, on Broadway. Charley Backus was the son of a Presbyterian clergyman, is natural mental equipment for an end man was assisted by a phenomenal mouth, which the arts of black cork made more phenomenal. "Charley Backus was particularly strong in commenting on passing events. The thing uppermost in the public mind was not exhausted until 'Backus had been heard on it. In this way the little house always had an audience of men of brains and affairs. The Beecher trial was a source of delight. Backus especially delighted in Mr. Evarts' long sentences. Everybody remembers Mr. 'Evarts' delivery of "falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus," and Charlie Backus' conclusion 'falsus in the street ears," delivered with such impressiveness and extent of mouth.

Even when Birch and Backus were not in character it was the custom of reporters to interview them on all important topics of the day.

Negro minstrelsy exists in name, but it is altogether a different thing. The old gags, jokes and songs have been worked over and beaten out to a thinness that has but little body left. The impersonator no longer studies from life, although there is a colored barber in Cleveland, Ohio, and an old oyster opener in Washington that are always interviewed by the end man for local gags or for matter for his topical song.

The topical song is the feature of the day, and it is generally an English song remodeled by the professional "hamfatter," whose business it is to furnish this sort of material to minstrel companies. The blacked faces are a
sort of survival, but by no means essential to the character of the performance. Billy Emerson's greatest hit is an Irish policeman. Thatcher's stump speeches, which are the best and most original efforts now heard at a minstrel performance, have nothing in them of the Negro character.

Thatcher's speeches are in great vogue in private life. Young men study them, practice them when they make their morning toilets, and then get them off for their mothers and sisters. Many, indeed, are not averse of an evening to giving them for the benefit of a circle of admiring friends.

St. Albans Messenger - October 10, 1889 - Negro Minstrelsy

Evolution works its changes in Minstrelsy as in everything else. A. M. Thatcher tells the St. Louis Globe-Democrat that Negro Minstrelsy is getting around to the point where it again truly represents the characteristic of the Negro, though the latter has changed. "Of course, to be natural to the manner and customs of the colored race, Negro Minstrelsy had to make a change and represent on the stage the enlightened Negro. But the change was carried too far; In Fact, Minstrelsy for a few years has been nothing out gross exaggeration in its tendencies. Why the burnt-cork fraternity represented Negroes dressed in rare silk costumes and acting in high capacities around European courts, and entertainments were given with Shakespearean setting of golden glitter. A strong reaction against this absurdity has now set in, and this season you will see the Negro represented as he is. True minstrelsy will not fall back to the web-wash style of the old days, but the Negro who has a smattering of books, and who hakes a 'bluff' at being a learned man by attempting to use big words, will still furnish much buffoonery for the stage. The Negro is on a much higher level than formerly, and his efforts to be more stylish and refined afford a new stock in trade for the minstrels.

The decline of Minstrelsy?

Philadelphia Inquirer - December 14, 1889 - Why Negro Minstrelsy is not popular?

The failure of the celebrated Dockstader Negro Minstrels, of New York City, may be regarded as indicating that this form of public entertainment is drawing rapidly to its end. For the last few years Negro minstrelsy as a paying attraction has been on the wane and its death has generally been predicted. Indeed it has been a long while since genuine Negro Minstrelsy held its sway. These latter day combinations have been remarkable in that they have been anything but Negro minstrels. They have taken on the methods and the attractions that rightful belonged to variety shows. They have given up
everything that belonged to Negro life except the burnt cork, and occasionally an old time Negro song. They have surrendered the dialect and the accent and the customs and the apparel of the Negro. They have done away with his old slouch hat and ragged garb, and nowadays they decorate him in silks and satins and velvets and fine linen and diamonds he springs Irish and German and Italian jokes and sings operatic selections and ballads. the negro minstrel of the present day is as thoroughly unnegroly as is possible, and to his failure as a delineator of the brighter and more humorous side of Negro life is attributable his failure as a drawing attraction.

Philadelphia Inquirer - January 26, 1890 - Negro minstrelsy. Decline of what was once a feature of our amusements. How it rose to popularity. Why it failed to hold its own. Lew Dockstader's failure in New York-digression from Negro life killed it.

The breaking up of Lew Dockstader's company some weeks ago is a pretty good sign that Negro Minstrelsy has gone or is rapidly going out of fashion and favor. Today Negro minstrelsy is little more than reminiscence and a name in New York. The burnt cork "artist" has been relegated either to the side show or to private life. The impersonator is no longer an original character and the occupation of the "end man," like that of Othello, is gone. The truth is that the so-called "variety" has usurped the place once held by the Negro Minstrel and it remains to be seen how long are the latter will again find favor with our fun-loving theatre going public.

Somehow the name minstrel takes us back to those feudal days when the troubadour wandered from castle to castle, singing his songs to the noble ladies and the robber barons. The Negro minstrel of ante-bellum days simply wandered from town to town. In the days "befo' de wah, sah!" the advent of a company of strolling players was hailed with delight. Then the Hutchinson family and the Swiss Bell ringers were about the only forms of public entertainment country people had and they wanted something different, something in another artistic direction. And, happily, in Negro Minstrelsy they found just what they wanted.

The Beginning of Negro Minstrelsy.

Few of us at this late day can adequately realize the eagerness with which the people in the country anticipated the coming of Negro minstrels. For days and weeks nothing else of importance in the places was talked of. On the night of the great event the barn or hall was crowded to its rafters. The exquisite fooling of the impersonator never failed to "bring down" the house,
and "Mistah Johnsing," with is big mouth and his big words, split the ears of the groundings.

But, above all, it was the simple folk songs with their mirthful and fluent melody that touched most deeply the sentiments and hearts of the listeners. The singer only needed the inspiring presence and applause of his audience to improvise some additional verses to the ca-like picking of his banjo. Very rarely an audience went away without the feeling that they had received the worth of their hard-earned money. After the minstrel troupe had departed the quips and cranks of the "end man" were on everybody's lips, and the questions, the gags, the attitudes of the interrogator were repeated for the Twentieth time with the same keen relish which they excited the very first time. Indeed, the latest it or comment or current events was not complete till Dan Emmet, Dan Bryant or charley Backus had added his say to it. Thus, Negro Minstrelsy was a success from the start. It was a purely native product, for it snacked of the soil. It presented a new and interesting type of character. It furnished fresh materials for the stage. It caught instantly the popular fancy and tickled immensely the public ear.

The Negro on the stage

Now, it was only natural that the plantation Negro, with all his faults, follies and fun should in time find a permanent place upon the minstrel stage. Fifty years ago plantation life in its various phases was a sealed look to the people of the North. Travelers who visited the Sunny South often imagined themselves in a land of milk and honey and of song. Yet there was something in the temperament of the Negro people, in the character of their history and in the nature of their folk songs that appealed to the dullest imagination. Besides having a dark and checkered career the Negro was a strange compound of many odd and strange marked characteristics. But over all there reigned a strange spirit of humor, of fancy, of music and of poetry. Added to all this there was burning, political and social conditions of Negro life, which later on found dramatic expression in Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Uncle Dan Emmet's discovery

Strange to say, a native of Ohio, Dan Emmet by name, is said to have been the first performer to present the plantation Negro on the stage. And as Emmet must stand as sponsor to Negro minstrelsy in this country. At an early age Dan cold play skillfully on the violin, and before he was twenty he was fiddling for Stickney's circus. It was in his travels with the circus that he
picked up those materials of Negro life and Negro character which so surprised, so delighted our Northern folk. 1842-3 is given as the years in which Dan and three others got together and presented their odd bits of darky dialect and music. These presentations first attracted the attention of old man Howe, who ran for many years a circus on the bowery. He advised the "boys" to go ahead and to enlarge their programme.

At first no burnt cork was used. One night Emmet and his band blacked up and took part in a benefit given to Pelham at the old Chatham Street theatre in New York. The change was received with shoots of delight and after that burnt cork minstrel was the only proper thing. For several years Emmet and his companions traveled through the country and, as we have already intimated, people in the country went wild over the great hit. So great was the success of the four minstrels that Welch engaged them to perform in his circus at a salary of $400 a week - a truly extravagant figure for minstrel talent in those days.

Minstrelsy in New York

The success of Emmet's minstrels led to the formation of many other troupes. One of the best known to New Yorkers was Charley White's minstrels in the Bowery, opposite the old theatre. The Hon. Amos J. Cummings says that on a big sign-board in the hall were the words, "Established 1846." it was there that Mort Saxon and Johnny Diamond made their mark in the profession. In dancing, the "Essence of Old Virginny" Saxon is said to have equaled the agility and ease of Daddy Rice himself. Those who can remember the farces like "The Magic Penny" and songs like 'hard times" still harbor a sneaking sympathy for Charley White and his minstrels. Another one of the early organizations was George Christy's troupe.

Christy's minstrels occupy an important place in the history of Negro Minstrelsy on account of one or two things. It was Christy who brought out a number of such popular songs as "Suwanne River, "Old Kentucky Home," "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground"-songs which gave to the late Stephen C. Foster not only a reputation and a name, but songs which will probably live as long as minstrelsy lives. Again Christy was bold enough to take his minstrel show to London, but is boldness was abundantly rewarded. The English people flocked to the house night after night to laugh at and applaud Christy's broad studies of darky life. The name of "Jim Crow" soon became a household word, and "wheel about, turn about," was in great vogue. I London "nigger minstrels" (as they are there called) are still a permanent feature.
Indeed some have gone as far as to say that several curious English ideas of our country and our institutions must have been obtained from the minstrels.

**First permanent organization**

It was some years before a well-organized minstrel troupe located permanently in a city. What was known as "Emmet's Varieties" settled in Chicago. It was the first local minstrel show to obtain lasting success. This was in 1855. Two or three years later Dan Bryant formed his famous organization in New York. It was in Bryant's that "Dixie" first came out as a walk-around. This song, perhaps as much as any one thing, brought Bryant popular favor. In the height of his success Bryant reached the high-water mark of Negro minstrelsy in this country. He gave to the people of our city one of the best organized and most creditable of entertainment they had. The songs were simple, catchy, but effective; the fun was wholesome and the music good. The home of Bryant's Minstrels was in Twenty-Third Street. Neither the merchant and the professional man, oppressed with the heat and the burden of the day, repaired of an evening to throw dull care away. Thus it was well said that Dan Bryant's prescriptions worked more cures than all the pills and powders of the doctor.

**Material from the Beecher trial**

After Bryant's death a first-class minstrel troupe was formed by Birch and Backus, on Broadway. Charles Backus was the son of a Presbyterian minister, and, if he did not wag his paw in the pulpit, he struck some comic attitudes on the stage. He was quite am original character himself. His strong point lay i making jokes and gags and songs upon the gossip and scandal of the day. Thus the Beecher trial furnished material for Backus and rich fun for a delighted audience. It took Backus to hit off some noted or notorious character. many recall with a smile how Backus followed the long and involved sentences of Hon. William M. Evarts during the course *celebre*; how, to Mr. Evarts' rendering of "fulsus in uno, falsus in omnibus," Charley Backus added with great unction and stress upon the "fal," the phrase "fulsus in the street cars." therefore, in name only were Birch and Backus Negro minstrels. The blacked-up faces of the men were by no means necessary for the characters which they intended to represent. 'Only in a small way were their materials taken from studies of darkey life.

In all this they have been followed by subsequent minstrels. The impersonator no longer directs is efforts to present Negro life and character.
Take Emerson and Thatcher both of whom have followed in the footsteps of birch and Backus. What are their greatest hits? Billy Emerson's greatest hit is an Irish policeman, while Thatcher's 'specialty' consists in making a stump speech.

Lew Dockstader's failure

A few years ago Lew Dockstader attempted to give to the people of New York what he termed "refined Minstrelsy." for a time the attempt met with success. But our people are inclined to judge Negro minstrelsy by the standard set by Dan Bryant. A minstrel show must be one thing or the other. It cannot be a vaudeville, or variety show, or comic opera. And so the other night Dockstader signal failed in his attempt to infuse life into Negro minstrelsy by interjecting into the performance an operetta. If old Dan Emmet or Dan Bryant could have witnessed the "Tallspoosa" they might be able to say why the show was a failure. Besides, as a comic opera, the piece cold not hold its own with others so familiar to New Yorkers. The breaking up of Dockstader's troupe should not be a death-blow to permanent Negro minstrelsy in this city. Plainly speaking, it is time that the minstrel took his studies from life.

The old and the new

In the early days of Negro minstrelsy the impersonator studied from life. To present the plantation darkey, his music, is attitudes, his dialect only three things were essential-bones, banjo and "mistah Johnsing." In ante-bell um days a man could form a fair idea of the Negro melody and Negro character by going to the minstrel show. In most cases the early minstrel succeeded in catching the very sound of negro-English, which is so rich and so racy when mouthed by a "new nigger"-that is, a Negro fresh from Africa. In a few rare instances our minstrels have succeeded in literally reproducing the melody and music of true Negro folk songs. In order to reproduce such songs you must hear them sung at home; sung by the girls as the; pick the balls off snowy cotton; sung by the men and women in the fields husking the yellow corn' sung by the old mammy to the master's children in her capacious lap; sung to the merry-makers as they clustered in the evening around the open fireplace.

The Negro singer is not, like the professional *improvisatore*, a performer always ready to show his skill. For he sings, as the bird sings, out of the fullness and gladness of his heart; or it may be from the sadness of his heart.
to know his repertoiore you must take him unawares; you must listen as the children are playing with the nurse or the "mammy," or wander in the fields where he is working in the cotton or corn, or go where he is holding merry-making through the summer days and on winter nights, singing and dancing in a manner that has seldom been reproduced on the stage.

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**Interviews with Lew Dockstader**

"The old fashion of Minstrelsy is not in demand except in a few of its features," said Lew Dockstader. "Negro Minstrelsy has advanced and is more refined. Perhaps the progress made by the Negro himself has had something to do with this change. The Negro of today, as we find him in the cities, is not the Negro of twenty years ago. He is getting to be a property older, a man of education, with ambitions like a white man. To find a Negro of the old fashioned stage pattern you will have to go into places remote from cities and railroads. Some of the old fashioned Negro comedians will ever be remembered. There was poor Bill Manning, the greatest I think I ever saw. He was born witty, and had the quaintest, richest humor. I saw him last in St. Louis a little while before his death. We got up a benefit for him. He had consumption and was dying on his feet, but as genial and witty as ever. Ad Ryman is an old timer who is still in the business. Dixey has retired. Bernard is worth $400,000 or more, and is dabbling in real estate in New York. Duprez is running a hotel in Lawrence, Mass., and his former partner, Lew Benedict, is yet in the minstrel business. Matt Wheeler is in Brooklyn, still a wonderful singer, is with the Cleveland Minstrels. Minstrelsy has given many bright men to the drama, opera and orchestra. William Castle and Theodore Thomas have both been Negro minstrels, and so has P. S. Gilmore, who is yet bright enough to work a good amount of Minstrelsy coloring into his music. Joe Murphy, who was great in Minstrelsy at one time, has made a fortune as a comedian in Irish characters, and Joseph K. Emmet, who was also a minstrel, is wealthy as 'Fritz.'
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New York Herald - July 2, 1893 - Dockstader's Ideas - The first minstrel band. By Lew Dockstader

Dockstader

How many minstrel performers now when and how the profession they are engaged in first arrived at the dignity of organization? I will tell you. The first band of minstrels was organized in the Bowery Amphitheatre in 1842--they were rehearsing to play for Dick Pelham's benefit, and their first public appearance was at the Chatham Theatre. It was composed of four members: Dan Emmet, violin, Dick Pelham, tambourine; Billy Whitlock, banjo, and Frank Brower, bones. They appeared in Boston in 1843 and thence to Europe. It was a grand success. Previous to that Negro songs had been sung n character, but a band of minstrels was a novelty. At the Federal Street, Boston, in 1799, a Mr. Grampner sang Negro songs. From this band of four
sprang numerous others. Daddy Rice sang Negro songs and danced "Jim Crow." for that matter Joseph Jefferson first appeared as a little darky carried on in a sack by Daddy Rice, I think, and little Joe sang a verse of "Jim Crow." I have a programme of "Ordway's Aeolians" of Boston, a very famous minstrel company. The late P. S. Gilmore, conductor of Gilmore's band, appeared with Ordway's troupe and performed a tambourine solo.

Evidently P. S. Gilmore aspired to be an end man. Strange that the newspapers failed to mention this in a sketch of his life, but the fact remains that P. S. Gilmore was a minstrel. Sher Campbell, Napier Lothan and, in fact, dozens of the great musical stars shone first in minstrelsy.

The first troupe to organize and attract attention was E. P. Christy's company. It was a fine troupe of dancers, singers and vocalists. The great George Christy (right name George W. Harrington) became the most famous man of his time and the greatest Negro delineator upon the stage. This troupe located in New York City at No. 472 Broadway, "Mechanics' Hall," and for nearly ten years was the rage and talk of New York. Dave Wanbold created a furore by his singing. In a short time another troupe appeared at No. 444 Broadway, called "Fellows' Minstrels." They had Billy Birch, Frank Brower, Eph Horn, T. B. Pendergast, John Diamond, J. H. Donniker and a host of very clever artists. They succeeded in creating dissension in Christy's ranks, and in a short time Henry Wood started a troupe called "Wood and Christys Minstrels." This was in 1857. The company was composed of Jerry Neil and Dan Bryant T. B. Pendergast, C. S. Fowler, Dan Emmet, G. W. Charles, W. Hobbs, James Carroll, Jim Unsworth, P.B. Isaacs, John Sivori (now Dr. wheeler of new York), S. S. Crosby, "Ed. Winchell and others. As if to follow suit the Ordway Minstrels, of Boston, dissolved, and in the same hall Morris Brothers' and Pell and Trobridge's Minstrels amused Bostonians for years. Here we also have three brothers in minstrelsy-Billy, Lon and Charley Morris. Then S. S. Sanford's Minstrels in Philadelphia were long a permanent and successful band.

S. S. Sanford is the oldest living minstrel manager. He had a grand troupe at one time, including Cool white, "Archie Hughes, Signor Gustave Bideaux, J. H. Kavanaugh, E. F. Dixey and others. The troupe multiplied thick and fast. There was a dozen Campbell Minstrels on the road, all claiming to be the "only and original one." matt peel ha a grand company and was a great artist. Poly Moore left Matt Peel's company and sailed for England in 1859, joining a troupe called "Rainor's Christy Minstrels." By the way, all minstrel troupes over there are called "Chisties," Probably because the Christy troupe was the pioneers. Pony Moore and Burgess, established a company in St. James Hall, London. It is still in full tide of succeeded and very
prosperous, the perennial "Pony" still rattling the bones, singing merrily and relating his "gags" with the brightest of the younger members. W. P. Greir, KM. Ainsley; Scott, Joe Norrie, Schwincardi, G. W. H. Grilron, Jack Hilton and Gonsalvo Bishop were great basse vocalists. Matt peel's widow married J. P. Hiutley, and both are living at Mamaroneck, N. Y., keeping a hotel. Matt peel, Earle Pierce, J. H. Budworth, Jerry Bryant, Frank Morgan, Frank Brower and Eph Horn were the stars of the profession at that time.

The Buckle Serenaders

Then came the Buckley Serenaders—a grand company, Fred Buckley was an artist on the violin and melophone. J. B. Donniker has Fred's melophone. Bishop Buckley was a very funny comedian and a musician, so was Swayne Buckley. They travelled all over. They went to Europe, and finally came to New York and built an opera house at No. 583 Broadway, where years afterward the San Francisco Minstrels flourished and grew famous. Just before the war the Ramsey and Newcomb Minstrels flashed upon the public and for a time swept everything before them. Jack Herman, a great singer, was the principal member of the star troupes at that time. Other members were G. w. H. Griffen, Master Eugene R. M. Carroll, Johnny Pell, S. C. Campbell, J. K. Edwards, E. W. Prescott, W. H. Brockway, Fred Wilson and A. R. M. Hooley. Christy's first leader and present manager of Hooley's Theatre, Chicago. Then came Hooley's Theatre, Chicago. Then came Hooley and Campbell's Minstrels; Hooley and Christy and Hooley alone. Edwin Kelley and Master Leon were prominent members of Ordway's Minstrels. Years afterward they opened No. 723 Broadway as Kelley and Leon's Minstrels.

At one time New York had four troupes—"Wood's" "Bryant's," "Kelley and Leon's" and the San Francisco Minstrels, and for a short time George Christy held forth where the Madison Square theatre now stands—it's the same building to some extent. I must not omit Charley White, a very talented and famous comedian and manager. His last appearance was with the "White Slave" Company, Charley White's Meldodcon. In the Bowery was the nursery for some of the greatest minstrel stars. John Diamond, John Duley, T. J. Peel, John Mulligan and others, first shown on white's stage. Talk of talent—these men were full of it—good singers, dancers and often skilled musicians. Dave Reed was the very first to introduce what we term neat song and dance. It was called "Sally Come Up," and created a sensation. Swayne Buckley imitated this, but Reed's was perfection itself. For years he was the "bones" of the Bryant troupe. Among the first companies to introduce a brass band was
Shorty Carle, Duprez and Green's Minstrels. This was considered a great innovation, and the rest all followed suit. This troupe was first called Duprez and Green's and finally Duprez and Benedict. Then as rivals to this band came Sam Sharpley's "Iron Clads," and these two companies locked horns at every chance. Duprez introduced the fur on the collars and sleeves of his company and silk hats, then called cadys or plugs. I remember well seeing their parade and longing to be the owner of a coat with white astrakhan trimmings, such as this band wore. Haverly about this time managed Arlington's Minstrels and also Cal Wagner's.

It was under Haverly that Harry Clapham first made is bow to the public as a tenor balladist, but a phrenologist told him that his bumps of "business" were too well developed for that line, so he blossomed out as a business manager, and today is accounted one of the shrewdest of them all. Duprez was a wonderfully clever man and Chapham was the only man he feared as an antagonist in Minstrelsy. during the war Buckely's, Skitt and Gaylord, Campbell's, Kelley and Leon's, Arlington and Donnike's, Hooley's Ramsey and Newcomb's, Johnny Booker's, Sam Sharpely's, Cal Wagner's and Larue's Minstrels, Cool burgess, Backus' Minstrels, Sanford's, Arlington, Cotton and Kernble's, Fred Wilson's and a dozen others flourished, and I have seen along the New York Central several troupes on the train and one coming out of a town as we were coming in.

Yet I say that Minstrelsy is not on the decline. We have but a few troupes at present. I grant you that many of these men have joined the silent majority and few take their places. It costs three times as much money to organize minstrel troupes now. Then a dozen men were accounted a big affair; now we have thirty or forty or fifty performers-enough in one band to make three of the old time concerns. Yet people were delighted then. Where can you hear songs like "Nelly Gray," "Hard times,' "Suwanne River," "Mocking Bird,' "Annie Live,' "Nelly was a lady,' and the war songs, "let Me Kiss him for His Mother." "When this Cruel War is over," "Mother kissed me in My Dream,' or ballads like "A Vacant Chair,' or "Do They Miss Me at Home?" and "Don't Be Angry, Mother." These songs were aimed at the heart and reached it every time. I don't say the singers or voices were better, for we have some grand singers in minstrelsy at present, but I do say the style and caliber of the songs were better. Mme. Patti always selects a simple song-"Old Folks at Home"-one of F. C. foster's songs and a tribute to Minstrelsy. New York, Chicago, Brooklyn and St. Louis supported minstrelsy permanently, and would again if the companies could be found.

Minstrel material scarce
The material is not at hand for such a purpose and cannot be obtained at any cost. The later-day companies represent a vast amount of talent, and fortunes are still made in a very short time. I must pay a tribute to Charley Backus—a grand mimic—to W. White known as W. H. Bernard, the greatest middle man who ever sat in the middle of a of a ____ part; to Billy Birch, a genius in his way; to Sam Wells, Tom Bridges, Nelso Seymour, Lattle Mac, and not overlooking Hughey Dougherty, who is the most natural stump orator of them all. Funny! Well, I guess he is. Add Hyman is in an entirely different vein. Tom Maguire in San Francisco gave Minstrelsy a boom. Lotta appeared with the minstrels—it being her first appearance on any stage, by the way. So you see we have graduated some clever people after all. It would take several columns to enumerate all who were famous then and who sprang from that sable quartet of humorists who afterward called themselves the "Congo Minstrels." John P Smith, now in this city was W. P. Christy's agent, and he will walk ten miles to see a minstrel show. So will John T. Ford, of Baltimore, who began life as a minstrel agent for "Kinkel's Nightingales," a very popular troupe. Henry Lehr was the principal comedian. Harry Sanderson, of Tony Pastor's Theatre, is Nelse Seymour's brother. Ned Bryant is still living—so is Billy Birch.

Minstrelsy in the South

The southern people love Minstrelsy and patronize it liberally. The extinction of slavery has not injured Minstrelsy in the least. Years ago I heard some talk of Minstrelsy being on the wane, yet fortunes have been made on it and fortunes are still being made. The first pathetic ballad was sung before the war, therefore no one how alive has the least claim to originality in the song and monologue as now presented by comedians. "Sandy's Mill," 'Johnny's Gone for a Soldier," "Our Good Ship Sails tonight," Hark, I Hear an Angel Sing," and other parodies were sung about forty years ago. In 18__ they were sung by Al Jones, one of Ordway's comedians, and Sharpley also. Frank Moran, Eph Horn and Billy birch produced stump speeches attired as grotesque women and called then "Woman's rights lectures,' and these were exceedingly witty and humorous. The funny quartet was introduced as a burlesque on the Hutchinson family, then famous New England singers. From four the act dwindled down to one, and thus we have a single funny monologue turn. Jig dancing was a great feature then and became the rage. Clog dancing, I believe, was the first introduced by Fred Wilson. Then Tim Hayes and Dick Sands, Delchanty and Hensler introduced it as a duo. Now
and then good clog dancers appear, but is a lost art. Banjo playing is still a
great feature. There are some excellent artists. E. M. Hall and Ed French are
noted. George Powers extemporizes rapidly and is an adept in harmony.

Minstrelsy is the most pleasing and wholesome entertainment before the
public when well rendered, and repelling when presented in a careless and
ignorant manner. It is a concentration of all that is funny, meritorious and
musical I hope that Dockstader's Minstrels will wear the mantle of the great
men who have preceded them and made minstrelsy famous i other days.
There were great artists in those days and there are great men, at present. I
do not believe in looking back only as a pleasant reminder. Onward and
upward is the watchword in minstrelsy and with that in view it must always
be the purely American and only original minstrelsy amusement before the
people. Lew Dockstader.

The Decline of Minstrelsy?

Boston Herald - August 30, 1893 - Death of Bones and Tambo. George
Thatcher talks of the decline of Minstrelsy. Kind of entertainment for which
people have little taste nowadays is-Apparent causes for this change-The San
Francisco Minstrels-new ideas from an Old-Timer.

Probably no distinctive branch of the theatrical profession has suffered
such a marked decline as minstrelsy. Black face entertainments were once in
nearly universal demand and a good minstrel show was certain to attract
immense audiences and make money for managers.

Now the reverse is true. theatrical capitalists hesitate and meditate long
before they put their money into such ventures; the few companies now upon
the road give entertainments which have largely lost their old-time plantation
character, depending on acts and people that have no more to do with the true
nature of minstrelsy than a song and dance in a Shakespearian tragedy.

Managers say they have been obliged to 50 chances the character of
minstrel shows owing to the demands of the public for novelty. While this may
be true, it must be acknowledged that such novelty has been the dagger which
has pierced the heart of the burnt cork entertainments. It may have served the
supposed appetite of the moment to present 'minstrels' gorgeously arrayed in
silks, satins and diamonds, and in white faces, and framed in a setting whose
garishness could only result in one thing-a most unpleasant picture to the
mind of the true lover of the theatre. These spectacular features died an early
death, as they deserved, for they have no place in such an entertainment; the
public would not tolerate them and with their demise minstrelsy was
practically disrobed and has disappeared under cover. How long it will stay
hidden is problematical. The tastes of a new generation may bring it to the surface.

Just at this time there is in Boston a gentleman who has been one of the best known and one of the most successful black face artists and minstrel managers. Mr. George Thatcher, now one of the owners and principal actors in "Africa," the current attraction at the Boston Theatre.

He talked charmingly about the decline in minstrelsy last night to a Herald reporter. Said he:

'Minstrelsy died hard. It died in a fruitless effort to elaborate itself. In its day there was no more entertaining or popular performance before the people.

"Then the band of farce-comedy came into the minstrel performance and stole away many of its most entertaining features and brightest lights. With the decline of minstrelsy came the rise and popularity of farce-comedy, which is now certainly having a remarkable run in the favor of the public.

"I have been identified with minstrelsy since 1863, when I first blacked my face in my native city of Baltimore. I was for four years a member of the old San Francisco minstrels, that famous company of jolly souls which numbered in its ranks the four greatest men who ever hid behind burned cork-Billy birch, Dave Wambold, Charley Backus and Billy Bernard. But fortune shone on them through the medium of public favor only for a limited time, and then their popularity began to wane.

The fickle public taste demanded a change. The great performers were at their wit's end as to what change to suggest. It was while searching for new ideas with which to revolutionize their performance that the hand of death entered their ranks and took away from the black-faced semi-circle forever Wambold, Backus and Bernard, and the San Francisco minstrels after that lived only in the history of their past merry making.

"Shortly after this Haverly inaugurated new features in having a large number of men. His widely quoted expression of "Forty-count them-forty' seemed to give minstrelsy new life."

Then primrose, West and myself added another innovation in having portion of the people in the first part appear in white faces and fancy costumes. Then came the farce-comedy. Bright, clean fun, good singing, graceful dancing and pretty faces constitute the bouquet which is to lay the most attractive to American theatergoers; yet they want a sequence of ideas, a connectinous story or semblance of a plot into which humor, singing, dancing and nearly all kinds of stage diversion can be happily and consistently introduced.
"In the amusement business no staid lines or rules can be followed to insure success. The things to be studied are the whim of the public. The manager, who caters to the public's ideas instead of his own, is the one who will find fame and fortune.

Sun (Baltimore) - September 19, 1893 - Changes in Minstrelsy - A talk with Mr. W. H. West, of the Primrose and West Company.

"Minstrelsy dead? Not a bit of it" exclaimed the minstrel, W. LH West, speaking for himself and his colleague, Primrose at Ford's Opera House yesterday. "Old-timed minstrelsy indeed, dead, but in its place has arisen a form of entertainment that bears little resemblance, except in name, to its parent, and has surrounded itself with an elaborateness that would have made the old-timed minstrels hide its diminished head. The old Negro minstrel, the big-mouthed "Pompey," with his cotton-field dialect, stuffed club, slap sticks and bed-ticking pantaloons has been consigned to the grave of obscurity. The reason is plain. The humor of old-timed Negro minstrelsy was but a reflex of the absurdities of plantation life, while its sentiment was drawn largely from the pathos of slavery. But the existence and the novelty of these conditions are over, and minstrelsy has had to look to other and newer sources for its inspiration. The former little semi-circle, with its middleman, its two end men bones and tambo-with big painted mouths and its quartette of singers, would play to empty benches nowadays, thought they were witty and clever.

"The public demands mastodonic minstrels, and would no more be satisfied with the old form than would circus audiences think they were fairly treated if the 'greatest show on earth' consisted of a single small ring, a clown, two acrobats and a 'bareback lady.' Gradually the minstrel show has elaborated its features, dropping old forms as they became obsolete, and adding spectacular, operatic and dramatic elements.

"The Negro character impersonation or burlesque was the main card of the old minstrel, but the new minstrel is simply a clever general actor, a fine singer or a specialty performer with a blackened face. Even this last element is gradually disappearing, for an actor finds his burnt cork a disadvantage at times in hiding facial expression, and I believe the black face will eventually be done away with, though the minstrels will stay. In our own minstrels, for example, all of the performers in the first part are white-faced except the comedian end men, and I have noticed the same tendency to combine the two in other minstrel companies/ We always endeavor to present at least one genuinely characteristic bit of old-timed negro minstrelsy and it has proved a successful experiment.
"As to the spectacular character of the new minstrels i have found that the public wants that sort of ting, for beautiful costumes and scenery detract nothing from fun and music, but instead form an interesting background. That infallible critic, the box-office, nightly tells us what the people want. This is a progressive age, and minstrelsy must keep up with the times. As sit is the peculiarly American form of entertainment, I believe that it will continue to live and prosper, increasing in magnitude each season."

The performance of Primrose and West's company was a pleasing illustration of the tendency of minstrelsy. The Negro "The Christening of the Baby," was one of the most successful acts. The performers were Messes. Primrose, "West, Van, Wall, Burke, Randall, Garland, Lewis, Ller, Castle, Windom, Ward, Cronin, Howe, Evans, MoLeod, Rice and Elmar, with Robert Carmichael as musical director.

Idaho Statesman - May 21, 1895 - Minstrelsy of Today. It is very different from the old time entertainment. Spectacle and variety now. Billy Van, a veteran minstrel, says there is no longer any such thing as real Negro Minstrelsy-He points out some of the many changes.

Minstrelsy is, to my mind, beyond the last shadow of doubt on the decline, and it is my belief that before many years the old time minstrel performance will be a thing of the past. In the days of Eph Horn, Delahanty and Hengler, Morris Brothers, and Pell & Trowbridge minstrelsy was at its zenith. It was the aim of all of the artists to closely study the Negro character, to get his ideas and endeavor to reproduce them intact. To witness a performance in those days was to see the Negro depicted in is happiest moods, to see him a happy, rollicking person, full of wit and humor and at all times ready to contribute is portion toward the amusement of his fellows.

The "old time" minstrel performance commenced with the usual first part, which consisted of about 40 men sitting in a semi-circle. At each end there were three men who were called bones and tambo, according to the "instruments" they played. At the rise of the curtain the interlocutor would say, "Gentlemen, be seated," then the orchestra would play a Galop, which the end men would accompany with bones and tambourine. At the conclusion of the overture, songs would be introduced by the different members of the company, interspersed here and there by jokes from the end men. "The dialect of the Negro was perfect, the songs characteristic, and the entire first part only tended to make one believe he was witnessing a Negro jubilee. The costumes of the end men were not particularly picturesque. They consisted of black pants to the knees, red coats, yellow vets and large collar, the wig black and very bushy, while the others were dressed simply in a full suit of black.
The stage setting was nothing but a simple interior, with elevations at the rear of the semi-circle where the orchestra sat. Everybody was in black face, and everything had the aspect of the Negro. The first part generally concluded with a humorous skit by two or three members of the company, in which their costumes were entirely changed, and then they had the appearance of what they were intended to represent, true types of the Negro. The many specialties which followed consisted of songs, dances, plantation scenes, quartets, etc., each one being intended to represent the Negro in his native home. The jubilee singers, the buck and wing dancers, the stump orators, were all represented in turn, and the entire performance would conclude with a humorous sketch in which all the members of the company would take part. Such was minstrelsy in the days gone by, simply a tableau representing a series of divertissements which one can see daily among the genuine Negroes of the south.

Look at minstrelsy of the present day. What a great change. We still have the first part, but not as in the days gone by, for only the end men are in black face, while the other members are white. The Negro character is almost lost, and instead of the songs and jokes being of that order they deal with topics of the day-in fact, anything that may seem to be funny is told in a minstrel show at the present day as being a Negro joke. There is no dialect necessary to been a minstrel now, simply blacken your face and the trick is done. Even the costuming is different, and the end men being dressed in some handsome design, while the others are either picturesquely costumed or representing some historical event. the scenery, too, is elaborated. Large plush or velvet curtains, elegant draperies, magnificent scenery and other appurtenances go now to replace the simple interior which was originally used as the entire scenic embellishment of the minstrel show. the atmosphere of the negro character is completely gone, and what would once take the auditor back to the Negro in his plantation home now only tends to make him cat away is idea of minstrelsy and look upon the scene as a pretty spectacle. The performance does not consist of Negro specialties, but is simply a series of marches, richly costumed, and artistic songs and dances, and, in fact, any and everything that one would see in a high class vaudeville performance.

Take a Negro from his native state and let him witness a minstrel performance of the present day and his eyes would open with wonder. He would neither understand nor appreciate the fact that he was witnessing a performance which purported to be a representation of his race. He bears no Negro dialect, sees no Negro characters. All is lost, and nothing remains but a spectacular vaudeville entertainment. Such being the case. I expect in a very few years to see minstrelsy even more embellished with scenery and costumes.
The first part will be more massive and gorgeous, the costumes more elaborate and the entire scene emblazoned by electric and calcium effects. The specialties will be of a higher order and much farther away from the Negro character. Everything will be on a grander and more elaborate scale. 'In other words, the performance will be a grand scenic production of high class vaudeville masquerading under the name of minstrelsy.

As evidence of the fact that I am sincere in this opinion I may state that I have determined to depart from so called minstrelsy and will next season present to the public a spectacular entertainment introducing high class vaudeville and transformations. I shall endeavor to give the public what I term "a twentieth century minstrel entertainment." I do not wish it understood that I intend to revolutionize minstrelsy but that I am simply expressing my views, and as a proof of my belief in my own prediction. I shall combine the minstrel, vaudeville and spectacular and endeavor by so doing to please not only those in search of minstrel or vaudeville amusement, but even those who are the most critical.

The old school of minstrelsy has passed away. The new "up to date" ideas are gradually coming more and more into use. Scenic embellishments are an absolute necessity. The public demands it, therefore there is nothing left but to submit to the inevitable and give a massive scenic and vaudeville entertainment, at the same time retaining the name of minstrelsy.

Kalamazoo Gazette - February 27, 1896 - The Negro Minstrel. His days on the stage are numbered. The younger generation of impersonators fail to perceive that the people always want something new—wail of an Old Timer.

One of the things that puzzle some observers of the minstrel stage is the entire decline of Negro minstrelsy. Time was when the personation of the Negro was regarded as an incident of an actor's work. Edwin Booth in his younger days played a Negro role and Lawrence Barrett did the same. This was not looked upon as undignified for any actor, and many actors began their apprenticeship in this line of work. Negro fun was for a long time the one distinctively American school of stage humor. Within the last fifteen years, which about measure the period in which its fall had been accomplished, there have been numerous minstrel companies traveling over the country. Now there are probably not as many as three that find their way to the first-class theaters in any cities of the country. There is one prominent organization of the kind, and it seems about all that the country can support.

The amount of genuine Negro fun in any of the Negro performances are more like a vaudeville act done with the aid of burnt cork. This fact is mentioned often as the most potent reason for the decadence of the
amusement, which was at one time the most popular form of comic entertainment in this country. Some say, however, that the introduction of features not distinctively characteristic of the Negro did not begin until it had begun to be manifest that public taste was drifting away from minstrelsy. In the attempt to win that back the minstrels took on features that and become popular in other forms of amusement, and ended by absorbing so many of these that the old time Negro flavor was crowded out. Spectacular display was called in to help the waning popularity of; the songs and dances. The genuine Negro dresses gave way to satins and velvets. Men rattled bones and beat the tambourine dressed as Hamlet, Macbeth and other Shakespearean characters. Every innovation of this kind seemed to hasten the end. Declining interest was not to be revived by any such devices. Multiplication of performers did no more to win back popularity to the Negro minstrels. They seemed doomed. So it happens that one of the questions of the "show business" today is: "What killed Negro minstrelsy? Whatever the answer may be, its inference is invariably that nothing will revive that old-time diversion it has had its day. It was a long one and a prosperous one; but there is no doubt that it is gone for good.

An interested observer of this present condition of affairs, is William, or rather, "Billy" Birch, who, with Backus, Wambold and Bernard, founded the old San Francisco minstrels, which from 1865 until 1885 played in New York City. Birch is an old man now for the minstrel business, and his three partners are dead. Despite his bad health, birch finds its way to the theaters two or three times a week, and his reflections on the minstrel business are more cheerful than those of most of the men who have been in it, even if they are not flattering to the men who are engaged in a similar line of work today.

"The end of Negro minstrelsy came," he said to the writer the other day, 'not because the people grew tired of it, but because the younger men who took it up were not able to create any new fun, but went on doing year after year just the same things that had been done by their predecessors. They did the same old acts, told the same old jokes, and expected people to keep on laughing at them. Even if the jokes had kept amusing, they ought to have remembered that the way in which a joke is told has a good deal to do with its effect. You know how much an ordinary story depends on the way it is told. In the old days we were always on the lookout for something new. Sometimes we had to work hard for it. The people would laugh just as much now as they ever did at Negro minstrels if the men would give them something new. But they won't. They tried to cover up this lack of a novelty, with marches and lots of men. But one good joke that they weren't tired of and one good man to tell
it would have been worth all these things put together. They won't get the new jokes, and minstrelsy is dead for that reason."

**Philadelphia Inquirer** - April 5, 1896 - The origin of minstrelsy, its rise and fall since 1842.

The first minstrel troupe was organized by four men who had appeared with banjo, bones, violin and tambourine upon the stage single. These four men met accidentally, and while performing upon these instruments originated a form of amusement which has delighted the two hemispheres ever since. No form of amusement met with such emphatic success. It was purely of native minstrel growth, originated and fostered by minstrelsy and depicted scenes in song and story of American life-southern life. 'Tis true, redolent of the cotton field, the plantation and of slaver, but withal it was minstrelsy and as such it grew in favor and was and has been endeared to us ever since. Nothing has flourished and prospered like it, and it has made vast fortunes for the men most prominent in it mankind seeks to be amused, and is ever striving to laugh. Our humorous weeklies are proof enough that minstrelsy lean towards the funny side of life and eschew ears and melancholy. The early minstrels were quick to note that their patrons sought laughter, and it was provided for them even in the incipient stags of minstrelsy. First, by short jokes, stories and funny songs: then by short farces or burlesque upon topical subjects. First we will take the originators of minstrelsy. As previously stated they were four in number: Dan Emmet, author of "Dixie" who played the violin, Dick Petham, tambourine; Billy Whitlock, banjo, and Frank Brower (of Philadelphia), bones. Dan Emmet in a letter dated March 19, 1896, writes me the following:

"In the old times each circus company had one or more performers who were called "Ethiopian Delineators," in other words, singing of Negro songs in character. In the summer of 1843 located in New York and played the violin and also banjo and thus became acquainted with others who, like myself, performed here and there throughout the city. In the spring of 1843 I was residing at No. 37 Catharine Street, and one day, while playing upon my violin, and accompanied by Billy Whitlock on the banjo, the door opened and Frank Brower entered. For awhile he listened and then joined in with the bones. We were delighted with the idea and the music, and were again going through our performance when Dick Pelham entered and with his tambourine the fourth man joined in this impromptu ended in forming a partnership. We performed in several places, but the first appearance in public was made at the Chatham theatre, and for the benefit of Dick Pelham."
Charley White places the date in 1842 and in the bowery Amphi
Theatre—certain it is that the four performed several times in minor places
before appearing upon the stage of a recognized theatre such as the
"Chatham" was in those days. They styled themselves the "Virginia
Minstrels" 'of these four pioneers must be awarded the credit of originating
the new form of amusement called Nold a fe jokes, danced and performed
upon the instruments then forming their sole orchestra. Dan Emmet is still
alive and traveling with Al G. Field's Minstrels." His song, "Dixie" first sang
by Bryant's Minstrels as a walk-around before the war, was seized upon by
the Southern army and used as a war song," and it to this day identified with
all things relative to the late unpleasantness. The New York Clipper first
published the words of the song in its issue of January 26, 1861.

You will note that some of the lines were very apropos to the cause-In
Dixie land I'll take my stand," etc. Etc. Emmet was a Northern man, but his
song became the war cry of a section for four years battling on sea and land-
with that melody as an inspiration. Once it was treason to sing it north of the
Mason and Dixon's line, but times have changed and "Yankee Doodle band
"and "Dixie" are often blended together. I mention this to show that
minstrelsy furnished a war song in addition to its great amusement.

Emmet resumes: "We gave concerts in the Tremont Temple, Boston, for
six weeks, the new amusement, "minstrels, "they made a fortune in simple
minstrelsy, built a new opera house across Broadway, and then sought to
"educate" the people to minstrelsy of a higher plane. They enchewed
minstrelsy and with white fades tried to force opera upon their patrons. They
lost about $80,000, lost their opera house, and were forced to go traveling and
thus recuperate their fortunes.

It is needless to say that fortune seldom knocks twice at a man's door,
and the Buckleys gradually dropped out of sight as important factors in
minstrelsy. The fourth company was E. P Christy's Minstrels. They consisted
of E. P. Christy, George N. Christy, Tom Vaughn and L. Durand. They
organized in Buffalo and traveled principally in the southern and Western
country. They first called themselves the Virginia Minstrels, but after adding
Enom Dickerson and Zeke Backus they styled themselves "Christy's
Minstrels." They first appeared in New York at Pahoo's Opera House
(Barton's Theatre) in 1846. They appeared at other places in New York, but
finally opened Christy's Opera House at 472 Broadway. Mr. Donniker was
the violinist, sometimes appearing under the name of Young Sivort. Donniker
blanked up Theodore Thomas when that gentleman was in minstrelsy and
long before he established Theodore Thomas' orchestra. Great improvements
were made in the performances. Violins, cornets, flute, double basses,
violoncellos and accordions were added from time to time. A new instrument called the melophone was introduced. It resembled a guitar, with accordion reeds inside of it, and bellows were used (within) to furnish the power for the reeds. It was a most beautiful instrument for singing purposes, and combined the soft chords of a guitar and English concertina. Fred Buckley and J. B. Donniker were skilled performers on the melophone. I saw one of these instruments lately in the shop of a violin maker in the Bowery, New York.

A company called the "Ethiopian Serenaders" was next in the field. They would be Tony Winnemore and E. Quinn. This company sailed for Europe with J. I. Dumbolton as their agent. They met with great success at St. James Hall, and were summoned to perform before the Queen. This was a great honor, and the minstrels were famous at once throughout England. Each received a beautiful crest ring as a token of her Majesty's approval. J. Dumbolton shortly afterwards took another company to England, in which were Jerry Bryant and Sam A. Wells. The next company of note was organized in Philadelphia and called themselves the "Virginia Serenaders," Jim Sanford (Cool white), Richard Myers (Ole Bull Myers) and Robert Edwards were in the company. They were very successful. Next came a company called the "Harmonians," consisting of L. V. H. Crosby, Frank Lynch, Marshall Pike, powers and others.

Next came "White's Serenaders," Charley White, manager (1840). This was a famous company and opened White's melodeon in the bowery. White introduced Master Juba, a colored boy, and the greatest dancer the world had ever seen. They remained in New York eleven years.

Next comes a company called the "Sable Brothers." Cleveland, Turpin, Evans and a few others were members. A change was now coming over the style and dress of the minstrels. They sat in a circle in plantation costume, checked shirts, striped pants, straw hats, etc. This was called "Plantation Darkies of the south." In the second part they were called "Dandy Negroes of the North," and were in full evening dress.

"The Sable Harmonians" were next and included Plumer, Archer, Jim Farrell, Nelson Kneasa, Joe Murphy (The "Kerry "Gin" Irish comedian), and several others. They performed for a long while at the Minerva Rooms on Broadway. We now come to the "Original Campbell, proprietor of a hotel, corner of Bowery and Bayard Street. The list includes Wm. H. Donaldson, Jerry Bryant, John Rea (Judge Res of Patterson, N. J.), James Carter, Harry Mestager, and David Raymond. Rea withdrew from the company and joined the original "Christys." Luke West joined the Campbells, and for a long time they performed at Barnum's Museum.
I believe that "Dumbolton's Serenaders" were the first to dress the first part in this manner, although the Buckleys laid claim to the innovation. However, the plantation dress was dropped and the first part appeared in evening dress as seen in later years. The plantation costume was retained for the olio or second part on lay, wherein comic sketches and farces needed such costuming.

We now reach a point where the companies will appear in rotation as organized. The "Nightingale Serenaders" own as "Kunkel's Minstrels; then Sanford's "Opera troupe. This is S. S. Sanford's company, of the eleventh Street opera House. Same is still alive, hale and hearty, and takes an active interest in all things appertaining to Minstrelsy. The Eleventh Street Opera House was formerly known as Cartee's Lyceum (1854), then as Sanford's opera House. In 1862 it was building known as Carneross and Dixey's Opera House. Sam Cartee changed the building suitably for minstrel performances, and opened it in 1854. He had organized a company in providence, R. I. At that time it was quite the fad to burlesque the "Old Folks," a company the costumes of the last century, and the minstrels burlesqued this concert and called it "Ye Olde Folkes Concert," Cartee brought a company of this kind in Philadelphia and with it came E. E. Dixey, Ben Cotton and others of note. The enterprise was not successful and Sam S. Sanford assumed management and brought out some very clever singers and comedians. Sam had several irons in the fire, and allowed the eleventh Street house to pass from his control in 1876. Dixey withdrew.

Tony Pastor has played an important part in Minstrelsy. He has given a great deal of his earlier years to it and is today one of the most active managers in the world. His theatre in New York is patronized by the best people of that city, and Tony proudly refers to his early minstrel career. In tracing up minstrelsy we must take the companies as organized in order to trace it to the present time. After Sanford came Sitter's empire Minstrels, Ordeay's Acorlians, Fellow's Minstrels, Horn and white's, Murphy, West and peel's, Campbell's Minstrels, 1852; Backus' Minstrels, 1853; George Christy and Woods' (1854), at 444 Broadway; Perbani's Serenaders, 1854. Pierce and Raymor's Christy Minstrels, who went to Europe and were afterwards known as Moore and Burgess Company, St. James Hall', London. Bryant's Minstrels organized in 1857, at 472 Broadway. Hunsey and Newcomb's (Campbell) Minstrels, 1957. Morris Brothers. Pell and Trowbridge, Boston, 1857, Mrs. Matt Peel's Campbell Minstrels, 1850, George Christy's Minstrels, 1850, and Hooley and Campbell's Minstrels, 1860.

With the celebrated Morris Brothers, Pell and Trowbridge, Boston, the great F. S.Gilmore, the band leader, performed upon the tambourine, known
as Pat Gilmore. The celebrated comedian, George Holland, performed with George Christy and Woods Minstrels. The greatest of singers and musicians were being constantly added to its ranks. Napleer Lothian, a famous musicians and now musical director of the Boston Theatre, was for years in minstrelsy as an orchestra leader. Nelson Kneass, who wrote "Ben Bolt," was also a singer and musician with the early minstrels. Jacob Tannenbaum, the wealthy southern manager, was Sam Sharpley's leader for many seasons.

An original comedian was Matt Peel, a quaint-looking genius and a man of rare abilities. Matt Peel's Campbell Minstrels were very successful everywhere. Matt died in 1859.

About this time all the minstrel companies added "Campbell" to their title as a trade mark. The Campbell minstrels had become famous and hence the reason for the addition. Their posters and bills bore the legend. "The Campbells are coming." On some big posters there were several camels or large bells, to illustrate the title, the "Campbells." Companies went to law about a right to use this title, and Rumsey and Newcomb were compelled to drop the word "Campbell" from their bills. Mrs. Matt Peel is still alive and resides in Mamaroneck, N. Y.

Another old genius was Charley Fox, tall, angular and gawky in the extreme, with a very funny face when blackened and ready for the stage.

Frank Moran, one of the wittiest, liveliest and withal a meritorious performer, is still alive. He went to Australia in the wish for gold and returned with three thousand dollars in gold—a large sum for those days. Moran has been connected with all the famous troupes of the country, performed in every clime upon the globe and has a host of friends here.

Hughey Dougherty began with Sanford's company and is still very popular and energetic. He is the most sought-after performer for his comic lectures and his song of "Evalina" will bring in your ears for weeks after hearing it.

We now reach a period just prior to the war. Dozens of troupes were traveling east and west, and very prosperous. Too-George Christy's Johnny booker's, Rumsey and Newcomb's, Ordway's, matt peel's, the Buckelys and others equally as well known. When the guns opened fire on fort Sumter in 1861 George Christy's Minstrels were in Charleston, S.C. and it was a ticklish place indeed. The band of the troupe played "Dixie" and John P. Smith, who is still alive, used his Virginian eloquence to assure our seceding brothers that the minstrels were neutral. John P. Smith was a fire eater in those days and the business agent of the troupe. His 'Southern proclivities gave the troupe a safe passport out of 'Secessia," but for a long time George Christy was under
the ban on account of his serenade to the south Carolina officials in Charleston. I rather think he had to come to the front then.

Duprez and Green's Minstrels were in New Orleans when the war began, and had a hard time reaching the Northern States. Strange to say it was the last troupe to leave the south in 1861 and the first to re-enter it after peace had been declared.

Skiff and Gaylord's Minstrels were the next to visit the south. Disbanded confederate soldiers gathered around the band as it played before the theatres and yelled for "Dixie," and shoed by their manner that it had to be played or someone would get hurt. The bands played it. When the war began the troupes gave benefits for sanitary fairs and the hospitals for wounded soldiers. They took the names of the new navy, then attracting the attention of the world. for instance, posters would announce the coming of "Sam Sharpley's Ironclads," "Cal Wagner's Pontoons," "La Rue's Monitors," "Duprez and Green's big gun of minstrelsy," Campbell's floating Batteries" and other titles appertaining to the military spirit then rampart. During the war minstrel companies were organized in the different camps of the army, and were the source of much enjoyment to the boys in blue. Sam Devere played the banjo while wearing the blue in grant's Army, on the Peninsula. I find records of Lew Simmons and R. N. Slocum upon old bills prior to the war, but I don't see where Lewis performed soldier duty except in the burlesques then very popular on the "draft" and other topics of war times.

Arlington and Donniker's Minstrels were famous in 1862, and in this company was Leon and Kelly, who afterwards located in New York as Kelly and Leon's Minstrels.

During this period the troupes numbered about fifteen and often twenty. The first person to dance a clog dance was Fred Wilson. He is the undisputed pioneer of that-style of dancing, and is still alive and residing in New York. The first couple to introduce a clog dance was undoubtedly Delahanty and Hengler. The first pair to execute a double song and dance was Thompson's Band, is still alive.

I have been asked who was the originator of the present style of monologue such as rendered by Dockstader, Sweatman and Thatcher, and others. I can safely say that it was presented before either of these gentlemen trod the boards.

Looking at old bills long before the war I see pathetic ballads announced. This constituted the monologue act. Charley Fox, Sam Sharpley, Billy Birch, John Mulligan, all sang pathetic ballads interspersed with a few jokes or "talks" to the leader of orchestra. The only change in it is the modern
comic song added to it and a mannerism of the performer. Beyond this he can claim positively nothing in this style of act. In fact, Sam Sharpley, one of the greatest wits of the age, gave it the only change it ever possessed. Some of the later day artists are really clever in this style of act and add plenty of new stories or songs, but I am merely speaking of its origin, and many of the older minstrels now living will bear testimony to this.

Sam Price will ever be remembered as the frightened darkey in the "Haunted House." He had a very expressive face and could depict fright in a very funny manner. Harry Lehr was one of the best comedians of his day. He was with Kunkel's Nightingales and drifted to Philadelphia, and for years was a great local favorite. So was Charley Reynolds, who first come to Philadelphia with Duprez and Benedict's Minstrels in 18__ and located in the Seventh Street Opera House (near Arch Street). He became a great favorite here and is now living in Vineland, N. J. Duprez, by the way, first introduced the brass band parades now in use by the traveling companies. He added the band to his company and originated the parade. He also added forty performers to his company. This was done at the chestnut Street theatre in 1872. Years afterwards Haverly took the hint and announced "count them 409," but the idea is Duprez's.

Eph Horn was a peculiar genius and exceedingly comic. He belonged in Philadelphia, although he was for many years with the Bryant's Minstrels in New York. Frank Brower's last appearance in this city was with Duprez and Benedict's Company, about 1870. During the war the companies flourished rapidly, but death thinned the ranks and it was difficult to find men to take the place of the established companies. In 1865 Birch Wambold, Bernard and Backus opened 583 Broadway and met with instantaneous success. The four partners earned a fortune estimated to $100,000 each. Birch is the sole survivor of the four. He dabbled in Wall Street and there sank most of his capital. The death of Backus, Wambold and Bernard was too much for the San Francisco Minstrel and they disbanded: Luke Schoolcraft was a most original darkey and I find his name as far back as 1861, where he is mentioned as a member of a New Orleans company of home guards; organized by the members of the theatre and called the "Cocktail guards." For a long time members of this company did not dare appear in public in New York. Feeling ran strong against them for their "Secesh" proclivities. Mark Smith and A. H. Davenport were in these guards.

I must speak of Stephen C. Foster, whose beautiful songs added so much to Minstrelsy. He was a native of Pittsburg and began to write songs which became very popular in the 1850s. E. P. Christy himself sang the most popular of Foster's songs - "Nelly Bly," "Nellie was a Lady," "Oh, Susanna," "Nancy
Till," "Way Down on the Swanee Ribber" (Old folks at Home), "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground," "Old Dog Tray," "Old Uncle Ned," "Old Kentucky Home," "Willie, We Have Missed You,' 'Old Black Joe,' "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming," and "Hard Times come Again no More." He died neglected in 1864 at the age of 37. He was the author of about one hundred songs but the above are the best known and identified with minstrels. A monument is about to be erected to him in Pittsburg. The American people owe it to Foster for his ballads of the home will live as long as sentiment endures and the love of country dwells in the human heart.

Among the early and best-known minstrel ballad singers were jack Herman, E. P. Christy, Dave Wambold, Jules Farrenburg, Charles Henry, C.C. Templeton, etc. (list of over a hundred names)

Coal Oil John (John Steele) organized Skiff and Gaylord's Minstrels. He presented each member with a diamond ring or pin and the company was well equipped with cast and printing. Lew Gaylord died about ten years ago.

Early in the war times the ballads were mostly written upon incidents of the conflict, such as "When This Cruel War is Over," "Brother's fainting at the door," "Mother Kissed me in My dreams," "Mother, is the Battle Over?" "We Were Soldier Boys Together," "Kingdom Coming," "Tenting on the Old Camp Grounds," "Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching," and hundreds in the same vein. During this period Billy Emerson was a balladist, the developed into the greatest song and dance artist of the world. He was quite original in character sketches, and dialect stories. Emerson, Allen and Manning's Minstrels flourished for a long time in Chicago, as did Arlington, Cotton and Kemble's Minstrels." partnerships between comedians do not exist very long. The old saying that "two of a trade seldom agree" holds good in all branches of business.

Emerson today is sprightly, and his wonderful tenor voice clear and ringing as a bell. Bobby Newcomb was the nearest to him in dancing or singing. Billy Manning has been selected as the quaintest and most original darkey comedian ever seen upon the American stage. Having often seen Manning, i must add my testimony to the general opinion was without doubt odd and remarkable for his spontaneous fun and mannerisms. Francis Wilson began his career in Minstrelsy with a partner named Mackin. At the close of the war the troupes best known were LaRue's Minstrels, Cool Burgess' Minstrels, and Callender's Georgia Minstrels, which brought Dan and Charles Frohman into theatrical affairs. They were first with Callender's company, acting agents and business managers for him. Then Haverly's, Cal Wagner's, Lloyd and Bideaux's, Pettingill and Allen's, Sharpley and cotton's, Birch and Cotton's, Moran and Sharpley, Moran and Dixey, Burgess Hughes,
Prendergast Hughes, Donniker and LaRue's Minstrels, Fred Wilson's Morris Minstrels, Anderson's Minstrels (Boston), California Minstrels, Hod Chase's Dingess and Green's Johnny Booker's, Simmons and Slocum's, Hooley's (Chicago), Horn and Briggs, Horn and Bray's, Byron Christ's, New Orleans Minstrels, Barlow Wilson, Primrose and West, Thatcher's, Thatcher and Ryman, Hi Henry, Billy McAllister, Lew Dockstader's, and by degrees down to the present time, members leaving one organization to form another under a different title as often done in mercantile affairs. For a while the mothers' songs raged furiously, then the "baby" songs had an inning-then came the songs about a dead darling, or a lost love-or a buried sweetheart-then the craze for waltz songs, with jealousy as the prime cause of the ditty and the poem. The old-time comic quartettes were inspired by The Hutchinson Family-(Tribe of Asa). They sang quartettes and met with much favor. The minstrels burlesqued them and hence the funny quartettes and the forerunners of the monologues.

The Eleventh Street Opera House has been the cradle and nursery for all the great minstrel artists in this country - every one of many prominence whatever has appeared upon its stage during some period of his career, and not to have been in this famous place as a performer is something to be regretted by the minstrel artist of ability. He is a skilled performer when he leaves this abode of amusement, and constant toll for advancement. Here, appeared Chauncy, Olcott, Frothingham, of the Bostonians, Edwin Foy, Weber and Fields, Rice and other celebrities. It is the only located home of Minstrelsy in America, and is the Mecca of all fun-loving people throughout this country. Everything is prepared with great care, constant rehearsals are going on-every subject of local interest is seized upon and quickly presented in the most humorous manner imaginable. "We go to the minstrels to have a good laugh," is verified here at every performance. Nothing uncouth or in any manner bordering upon suggestiveness is ever permitted. In fact, the vast throngs of ladies and children at the matinee is ample proof that the management is in careful hands. Having traced Minstrelsy from its inception to the present time, it is but appropriate to add a few words about the comedians engaged at the Eleventh Street Opera House, which presents an entertainment under the title of "Dumont's Minstrels." Matt Wheeler is well-known to Philadelphians and Harry C. Shunk has worked himself into the good graces of the public. Lew Sully and tom Lewis are a team of comedians without peers-quaint, original and intensely ambitious to excel and furnish new fun. They stand without doubt, head and shoulders over any in their peculiar line of business. The ballad singers are selected for their fresh and cultivated voices. The management is in the hands of George S. Hetzell and
Frank Dumont. Mr. Hetzell has been in the box office and in the business department of the Opera House for over twenty years, and is well-known to every patron. Frank Dumont is the stage director and middle man (interlocutor).

The Photos

The four originators of Minstrelsy
Primrose & Dockstader's company and production last season created considerable talk of how different it was from what had gone before. The public, not unnaturally, perhaps, inquired somewhat doubtingly how, after all, one minstrel show could differ from another. Primrose's and Dockstader had positive opinions on this subject. Their idea of Minstrelsy was that it must exceed in novelty anything known in vaudeville, that it must retain all the picturesqueness of the plantation, that it must please the ear by vocal and orchestral beauty of its costumes, and stage settings, and must astonish the mind by the absolute novelty of its special features and the spectacular character its finals. They believe in fact, that Minstrelsy or rather the Minstrelsy of the future, such as they have angulated should draw all that is best from every form of entertainment known to the stage, uniting them in a pot pourri of up-to-dateness. All should go with dash, rapidity and sparkle; the brightest, latest jests, a touching ballad, a screamingly funny song, a refrain of the old-time dark, a monologue of quaintest humor, the twinkling of dancing feet, grace, skill, melody, fun, all the wise following on one another's heels; with electric swiftness, with color, light, beauty and brilliancy everywhere; that's Minstrelsy in black-face, avowed primrose & Dockstader,
and they have carried their idea into effect, an effect that leaves no disappointed one in any of their many and large audiences, In Augusta next Saturday.

**Evening Post** - February 7, 1900 - West's Minstrels

It is peculiarly appropriate that during a time which was saturated with the patriotism aroused by the war with Spain should see a revival of minstrelsy started by the revolutionary formation of William H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee, which is to appear here tomorrow night.

Minstrelsy is the only form of the drama that is of American origin, and the Negro melodies that were once its sole attraction are the only truly national music of this country. Now that the North and South are more firmly united than ever before by the Spanish American War, it is pleasant to recall that "Dixie," the stirring battle song of the Southern confederacy, was composed by a Northern minstrel, Dan Emmett, one of the immortal four forming the first Negro minstrel company ever organized. Minstrelsy, as has been said, is essentially an American institution, and as such Mr. West firmly believes that his first individual effort to raise the standard is most happily omened. Minstrelsy brought an absolutely native and national music, and it developed the genuine American Negro own invention, the banjo. With such a record, inseparably connected with American life, its death would have been a national loss, and Mr. West deserves the gratitude of all Americans for having started its revival upon a broader and more artistic scale than ever before.

Herrmann, the Great

"Herrmann the Great" and his big company of entertainers will appear at the Academy Monday, matinee and night, February 12.

The present "Herrmann the Great" Leon, is the most expert conjurer the world has ever known. His sleight-of-hand and planning borders on the marvelous and grand that only be the Master Herrmann himself would attempt. Several sensational illusions are also on the program, which are inexplicable and unexplainable.

**Trenton Evening Times** - February 7, 1902 - Decline of Negro Minstrelsy

The death of Billy Emerson, in poverty, instances the decline of Negro Minstrelsy of which he was for so many years an ornament. At one time he earned $1,000 a week. Emerson, the philosopher, the brightest mind that America produced, was at the same time reputed to be earning an average of $30 a week. Evidently people would rather laugh than think and people did laugh at bill Emerson, and they enjoyed the minstrels, too. Every big town
had them—New York had Bryant's and birch, Wambold & Backus; Brooklyn had Hooley's; Boston had Morris Brothers, Pell & Trowbridge's; even London had Christy's, and others hardly less famous were in Philadelphia and the west cities.

But they are all gone. There is not one old-time minstrel company left. The people who black their faces nowadays and dance and sing are merely vaudeville performers, corked; they wear velvet and satin clothes; they dance precise and difficult steps; they enact farces that have none of the Negro character; they play on orchestral instruments instead of bones, tambourines and banjos; they strive for elegance and spectacular effect; they no longer dance the old hoe-downs; and ragtime is largely an affectation and is composed to order by cheap bards in the metropolis.

Minstrelsy has disappeared because it no longer reflects a part of the national life. If the youth of today were to see a real, old-fashioned minstrel show, it is quite likely that they would not care for it. They would not recognize the quaint, simple old uncles and mammies, nor the smart yellow boys and girls; the strumming of the banjos might seem tiresome, and the log cabins and cotton fields would be less to their taste than the halls hung with pink tapestries that absurdly environ the minstrels who sing today.

Old-fashioned minstrelsy reflected the life of the quarters in slavery; days. Those days are gone forever. The Negro is no longer the simple, faithful, I trusting respectful, humorous, ragged fellow that he was. He is a citizen and in some parts of the land a citizen who makes trouble. He differs less and less from the white man in his dress, speech, way of living and employments, and as a stage figure he differs not at all. Indeed, he has grown monotonous on the stage with his everlasting cakewalk and his insufferable coon song. Why does not some genius devise for us a minstrel corps that will exploit some newer phase of our national existence? Why not Chinese minstrels? Why not Italian? Why not Irish? Why not Yankee? Or have the Yankees also lost their savor?

Omaha World-Herald - March 19, 1900 - Old-Time Minstrelsy - William West talks of changes modern public demands.

"There are but two or three of the old-time minstrel kings left and the old-time minstrel show of a generation ago has been relegated into a mixture of extravaganza, opera and vaudeville," said William H. West, probably the greatest and best known of the old-timers. In a short talk on the subject of minstrelsy."This branch of the profession had to keep up with the times and the every crying demand for something novel and entertaining and a distinct
departure from old methods. Minstrelsy of the old school would have survived to the present time had it not been abused.

"In the variety theater, music hall, private theatricals, vaudeville house and in concert work the 'nigger- were much in evidence. performers of little merit and much nerve resorted to burnt cork to hide their faces while inflicting on their audiences alleged 'nigger comicalities' to such an extent that today a 'nigger' or 'blackface act' is looked upon with a great deal of suspicion by an audience, and well they may be shunned, for the average actor who essays 'blackface' work now as little of what is expected of him as the many who essay Irish or other character roles. This cheapening and debasing of the Negro character had much to do with the decline of the altogether Negro minstrel show. Negro minstrelsy was in its prime just prior to and after the war in those times the Northerners knew little of the Negro race as compared to their knowledge of them today, and the comical side of the darky, when presented by artists who knew how to depict the character, was altogether novel and entertaining. that novelty has been gradually wearing off, hastened, of course, by the causes already enumerated and by the closer knowledge the northerner now possess of is dark-skinned brother until today only the recognized artists who established themselves with the people of long ago have the power to draw an audience. Even these artists have to depart every materially from the old, beaten paths to satiate the demands of theater-goers. One would commit financial and profession suicide, no matter what his prominence, were he to attempt the strictly old-time form of Negro entertainment.

"Negro minstrelsy has kept pace with the circus. The old methods with us would no more be tolerated than the old-time wagon show, with its one ring and antiquated methods of entertaining would be.

"I believe, however, that in time, perhaps ten years hence, that the old-time minstrel show could be revived and find favor with theater-goers-that is, if n the meantime the limit shall have been reached on new forms of amusement, as i think it has. I realized that Minstrelsy had to be made up to data and to be kept up to date some time ago, and was the first to give the gorgeous spectacles and operatic and vaudeville adjuncts to a show that everybody i snow copying."


About thirty or forty years ago, when Edwin Forrest was in the heyday of his popularity, he went into a western town, the exact location of which I do not recall, says a writer in the Saturday Evening Post, and played to such
large audiences during his stay that on the morning he was to leave he remarked to the manager that he was surprised to find such a cultured town and that it could furnish such large audiences for Shakespearean plays,

"The minstrels are her," replied the manager.

"What has that got to do with it?" asked the tragedian.

"Why, the minstrels play in the afternoon, and the people come into town to see the then, having nothing to do in the evening, they come here."

Perhaps the manager was attempting to be funny and exaggerated matters. But there is a foundation for the story, as one whose memory goes back thirty or forty years will admit.

Negro Minstrelsy today has settled into a regular things; people go to a show to enjoy it, memorize the 'gags,' work them off with an unconscious and spontaneous air on less fortunate friends, and then wait for the return of the show to lay in a new supply. But there was a time when Minstrelsy had a beginning, just like the earth and Adam and Eve, and it was a beginning with a boom, and everything else gave way before it.

There is some disagreement as to which was the first minstrel organization, but undoubtedly it was Christy's Minstrels that first spread the fame of the organized trope and made an impression on the country. And as for its impression on the old world, where the band made its home for several years, Thackeray himself stands witness. Christy became synonymous with the word minstrel, as my own experience well attests.

A minstrel in this country has the satisfaction of knowing that he is working in a kind of amusement that is the genuine product of America. I suppose, however, that Shakespeare put the first Negro on the stage (a Moor to him was a Negro), but Othello was not a minstrel; he played a heavier line of business. From almost the beginning of Minstrelsy stage history there were Negroes of the minstrel variety resonated on the stage, though it was not until about the '40s that they were organized into bands. Some of the greatest actors of later days had their experience a minstrels, among them Joe Jefferson and Edwin Forrest.

Forrest was given a Negro "song and dance act" to do when he was very young, and after he had studied it up he asked where was the "old Negro lady" that was to act as his assistant in the piece. The management tried several of the women, who were members of the company, but none of them would consent to blacken up, and, in fact, they were very indignant over the proposition. The actor, however, was not easily discouraged, and on the night of the first performance he blackened up and went around the corner to an old Negro woman who did his washing.
"Hello, Dinah," he said on entering. "How you been feelin' dis bevy fine ebening?"

I'se no nigger," answered Forrest; and then, time being rather short, he assumed his natural voice, and told Dinah, much to her surprise, that he was Forrest, the actor, and that he wanted her to go on the stage with him that night, and laugh loudly at frequent intervals—which was all the female part called for. The two made a great hit, and were kept on for some time, which goes to show that Forrest might have been a good minstrel had he been of an ambitious nature.

The point is that when the minstrel bands were taking on character and shaping themselves for the future the women refused to take part, which, without being ungallant, I think was just as well.

The minstrel organization as sit is known today was brought about by the wonderful success that certain men made as individuals. Most of these men are dimly remembered today. One of them, curious to relate, was John B. Gough, afterwards famous as a temperance orator. Another was the famous Thomas D. Rice, whose Jim Crow belongs to the history of nations. How Jim Crow found his way on the stage is an interesting part of the story of Minstrelsy.

In 1829, while Rice was doing a small Negro act at the Louisville Theater, he happened to look out of the back window, which faced a stable kept by an old and broken down Negro called Jim Crow. One of Crow's shoulders was much lower than the other, his left leg was stiff and crooked at the knee, and so that when he walked he went up and down in a most ludicrous fashion.

This day he was standing in the yard, humming a peculiar tune to himself, the words of which were his own. When he had finished a verse he would give a jumping step, which has since become famous as rockin' de heel." The refrain of is song was:

"Wheel about, turn about, do jes so.
An' ebery time, i wheel about I jump Jim Crow."

Rice saw that there was something good of new verses and copying the original very closely in Make-up appeared as Jim Crow at the Louisville Theater. He was recalled more than twenty times the first night, and always after was known as Jim Crow Rice.

In 1833, when Joe Jefferson was only four years of age, Rice appeared at a benefit at the Jefferson Theater in Washington, and carried the little
fellow on the stage in a bag, costumed and blackened exactly like the Jim Crow Rice. As Rice shambled on the stage he sang this couplet:

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd have you for to know
I'se got a little darkey here to jump Jim Crow

Whereupon he emptied the band, and those who were present say that little Joe immediately assumed the attitude of the older Jim Crow, and danced and mimicked Rice in a way that caused the audience to cheer. So there was a great minstrel left to the world.

**Anaconda Standard** - August 1, 1903 - Minstrelsy will never Die. Fortunes made by the burnt cork artists. Richard J. Jose Minstrels said to be largest and best equipped organization on the road at present time.

  Minstrelsy, like the circus, will never die. It will outlive Punch and Judy and be alive when baseball is forgotten.

  Burnt Cork may not be classic, but fortunes have been made in it and reputations also.

  Among the latest to achieve wealth and fame though it is Richard J. Jose, the famous contra-tenor. The minstrel company of which he is the proprietor and head is one of the largest and most perfectly equipped organizations upon the road.

  The great electrical first part in which over 40 artists and singers of national reputation figure, is said to be a bewildering picture of stage effects never before realized, over 200 incandescent lights being used. The company carries its own orchestra and its own band. Richard Jose, William MacDonald, basso, late of the Bostonians, Frank Cushman, the famous minstrel and William Keller Mack, the well known comedian, are only four of the strong galaxy of talent with which Mr. Jose has surrounded himself. The company has meet with crowded houses everywhere, the demand for seats being in most places greater than the supply.

  It is a large, costly production, and Manager Selby Oppenheimer is deserving of great credit for bringing such a startling feature as this before the public.

  Those who thought the era of minstrelsy was past should wake up and attend the performance at the Margaret Theater this evening. The demand for and the delight in judging by the phenomenal success of this company, stronger than ever before.

**Cleveland Leader** - August 23, 1903
Minstrelsy is the only form of drama that is of American origin, and the Negro melodies are the only true national music of this country. Now that the North and the South are again comrades it is pleasant to recall that "Dixie" that stirring battle-song of the southern confederacy, was composed by a Northern minstrel, Dan Emmett, one of the immortal four forming the first minstrel company ever organized. Minstrelsy, as has been said, is essentially an American institution, and as such Mr. Dockstader firmly believes that his individual effort to raise its standards is most happily omened. Minstrelsy brought an entirely new form of the drama on the stage. It made public an absolute native and national music, and it developed the genuine Negro's own invention, the banjo. With such a record inseparably connected with American life, its death would have been a national loss and Mr. Dockstader and his manager James H. Decker, deserve the gratitude of all Americans for having started its revival upon a broader and more artistic scale than ever before. Lew Dockstader and is great minstrel company will appear at the Opera House the week of September 7.

Plain Dealer - September 10, 1903 - Hasn't head of inquest. Lew Dockstader rises to remark that minstrelsy is not dead.

Lew Dockstader takes exception to the statement made recently by a former minstrel to the effect that minstrelsy is dead. He was asked as to his view on the situation yesterday.

Minstrelsy dead?" he echoed in some surprise, "Well, if it is I haven't seen any preparations, for the coroner's inquest. However, minstrelsy must be kept up to date just like any other branch of business. This is vital when success is the object in view. And it is no easy matter, I can assure you. To have a show that follows the trend of the times requires an expenditure of money that is startling. We are now at an era of minstrelsy where big spectacles are the vogue. People talk of the halcyon days of minstrels if some of those old timers could awake and see the present day minstrelsy they would hook their shrouds to stay awake.

"Show me the comic opera or burlesque production without its coon songs, cake walks and Negro business that peculiarly belong to minstrelsy. Farce comedies now-a-days are nearly all old Negro acts worked over again. Anyone who remembers the old coon turns can pick out the situations and recognize the comedian's horse play in the burlesques and farces of the present day. I tell you the minstrel chicken has been almost plucked clean. I'm trying to graft a few new feathers, that's all.

Minstrelsy is not dead. It is like a gold mine. Some dig superficially and find nothing. They abandon the mine. But underneath are the nuggets of new
ideas, new spectacles, up-to-date features—and hard digging will get them out. And as long as the public likes to laugh and so long as people enjoy beautiful music, I'll be found digging in the mine, proving every day that minstrelsy is very, very much alive and kicking.

Duluth News-Tribune - April 22, 1906 - What the stage owes Minstrelsy. Al G. Fields gives chatty history of dramatic and musical indebtedness to the blackface men-stars who graduated from burnt cork productions.

The stage has ever been an index to the people and of the times. The drama of today covers a wider scope than ever before and many times honored precedents have been obliterated by modern methods and innovations.

In an interview with Al G. Fields that gentleman gave some of his recollections of the stage and particularly of minstrelsy covering the last 20 years. He said:

"When I broke into minstrelsy at the age of 14 there were some 14 minstrel companies in this country, all upon a solid basis and known as money-making concerns. New York City had their permanent minstrel halls, Boston, St. Louis, Philadelphia and Chicago each had one. There was one in the far west, at San Francisco. There were also several small minstrel bands touring the country. Among the members of the minstrel shows of those days, many who now grade the stage in other lines were leaders then. Among those whom I can remember who were in minstrelsy when I entered it were the Frohman's and Al. Hayman. The wealthy New York managers were minstrels. R. M. Hooley began as a manager of minstrels. "Fritz" Emmett was with a St. Louis show when I remember as doing a bone solo with the Bryant minstrels. Francis Wilson, the comic opera star, when then a member of the team of Mackin and Wilson, song and dance men. Jeff de Angells, whom we all know, was an acrobatic song and dance man, with the Haverly Minstrels. Gustava Lunders, the composer, who has written the numbers for the operatic selections success "The Prince of Pilsen," and other operas, played the fiddle in the Haverly Minstrels. Chauncey Olcott blacked up and did a little of everything in the minstrel show before he sang a solo as did Andrew Mack. Our old friend Pete Daily was one of the song and dance men who composed the "American Four."

The long list could be continued," said Mr. Field, "to embrace scores of others in the public minds today."

Mr. Fields became reminiscent again after a few moments of silence.

"Twenty years ago when I entered the minstrel managerial field there were eight minstrel companies touring the country playing the high priced
houses. Today there are but two that confine their bookings to the high priced houses, yet n the two organizations there is much more money invested and there are nearly as many persons employed as there were in the eight shows of a century ago.

"Magnitude in amusement enterprises can be no more strongly contrasted than in the two lines of amusement embraced in the circus and the minstrel business. Fourteen years ago there were eighteen circuses and menageries touring about the classed as high-priced shows; today there are four. Yet in those four shows there are more people employed than in the ten shows of former years. Six years ago there were but four theatrical companies touring the country that had on their salary list to exceed fifty persons each; companies that had to exceed seventy people in each production, and some four or five had a hundred and fifty. Everything theatrical had a tendency to magnitude."

"Has quality been ____ lity?" was asked.

"No, I do not think son," replied Mr. Field. "Of course, there are persons who sigh for the "good old day and plays," as they termed them. Yet I venture to say that but few of the good old players and plays would satisfy the patrons of the theaters today. This applies more particularly to the mounting music and costuming of the plays. The acting in my mind has to improve. Our combination system preventing the actor from playing more than one part in a season is as detrimental to the advancement of the actor as the study of one subject would be to the student who wishes to acquire a general fund of knowledge.

"But i am getting off the subject," said Mr. Field. "I started to talk minstrelsy and have been all over the stage. The most notable improvement in minstrelsy is in the music, both vocal and instrumental. The minstrel show today is a salad with a little of everything i it. And it should be. Again our old friend sighs for the good old days of black faced minstrelsy, and yet in the past twelve years every manager who has endeavored to cater to the lovers of old time minstrelsy has had to take to the tall timber or go back to the farm. They have found that two comedians, a quartette of singers and several dancers cannot give an evening's entertainment that will satisfy the menu. The old-time minstrel show has had to enlarge its bill of fare until today the up-to-date minstrel show is the family show of the times, embodying as it does all the best features of fun as put forth by the uncous humor of that most humorous and happiest of all earthly hum being, the American Negro.

"Do you know that there are no persons on earth so susceptible to humor as the Negro? Even the most ignorant among them will see a joke as quickly as the average white person. Comedians who delineate the Irish,
Hebrew, German or English character on the stage complain that there are localities where their impersonations are not understood by the public. Not so the Negro characterization. Go where you will, the humor of the happy-go-lucky fellow is caught up by the audience and applauded.

"Minnesota, with fifty-five per cent of her population foreign born, mostly Norwegians, are among the best patrons of a minstrel show. Hardly understanding English yet convulsed at the absurdity of Negro comedy.

The singing in minstrels of today ranges from operatic selections to the popular songs of the day. The latter of course predominating. The orchestras are large and the specialties are of the highest class. The scenery and the electrical effects conform to the splendor of the productions. Therefore I claim that it is the people's family entertainment of the day. And no better proof can be offered than the crowds that flock to the theaters to enjoy the entertainment of the up-to-date minstrels. Minstrelsy, so long as it is kept up to the standard of the taste demanded by the people, will hold its place in the amusement world.

"Minstrelsy is considered to be of recent origin. Dan Emmett is credited with originating it, and rightly, particularly in so far as the black faced first part is concerned. But, my boy, minstrelsy has been a recognized factor in every country since the human voice found itself attuned to singing songs proclaiming the prowess of warriors and accentuating the noble sentiments of the human heart. From the days of Homer, before history recorded the happenings of the times, strolling bands of minstrels wandered from one place to another and sang of the events of the times.

"Thus it was that news of one country was made known to another by the minstrels' song. In these songs all that was of importance was put into verse, accompanied by the lute and lyre, and later by the harp. The wandering minstrels told the world's news to the passing throngs, but I doubt in all these years if the minstrels were as popular as they are today. I doubt if the songs were as tuneful of the music so entertaining as that of the modern minstrels. There is something about the music of the minstrels of more property speaking, the music we term meager melody that appeals to all.

"Sitting in an auditorium in Germany an orchestra of 60 musicians was giving a concert to a cultured audience. Classics were applauded and the more popular music of the day familiar to German audiences was recognized by generous applause. Near the end of the program a selection was made termed "American Echoes." The first air was "Way down upon the Sewanee river." Immediately the melody, a cake walk following a plantations song, the feet of the hundreds there gathered were beating time to the music. When the selection concluded with "Dixie" the greatest applause of the evening went
from the audience, not ten of whom knew anything of the found their way into their hearts. When the glamour of years has thrown its veil over the tunes of the times, some day in the future they will be received as classics and revived accordingly. Negro melody, Negro songs and antics will amuse in the future as in the past.

"When the farce comedy the city directory' was launched, all nationalities known to theater goers were caricatured. A Negro servant was put into fill up the back-ground of the picture. To aid as a sort of servant to all. One morning the talented company woke up to find Luko Schoolcraft, the old minstrel man engaged to play the old Negro character, the star of the show. The unctuous eccentricities of the Negro humor had eclipsed the comedy of the Dutchman and of the Irishman.

"George Ade, the modern slangologist, wrote a rural comedy portraying rural life in Indiana. All of the eccentric people who usually exist in the rural districts were given a place in the limelight. At some time or another during the play the old judge who is the sir oracle of the settlement; the pretty milliner, the pothouse loafer, the horse trading lawyer the foxy drummer, all kinds of familiar conventionalities; in fact all types of characters, were drawn upon to give the piece color and life. A Negro character was grafted upon the main plant to give the production color. Broadway proclaimed "Sassafras," the Negro impersonation, as the star part. And Willis S. Sweatman, the old minstrel man is gone from us.

'What the minstrel stage has lost is the legitimate stage's gain. Minstrelsy in some form has endured, lived on and pleased the masses, from earliest recorded time until today and so it will flourish until human voice loses its spell to entertain and this will not be while times run on.'"

Duluth News-Tribune - July 27, 1906 - Oldest living minstrel. Sam Brock had a blackface wagon show on the road in 1856.

One of the oldest living originators of minstrelsy today is Samuel a.
Brock, of Rutland, Vt., says the Boston Globe.

He was a member of the first wagon show that ever started out in the United States, in 1856. Brock's Broadway Minstrels were organized, with the following glaring announcement, in wood type, on their handbills, which were distributed to the eager populace of rural towns in days preceding the Civil War.

"This troupe comprises the following talented artists, long and favorably known to patrons of Ethiopian Minstrelsy and individuality recognized as stars of the profession: George M Cark, ballad singer and bones; A. White (familiarly known as 'Hank' White), tambourinist and prince
of comic vocalists; S. A. Brock, champion banjo player of the world; Billy McGarrett, clog dancer, late of Campbell's European Minstrels; O. A. Whitmore, of Boston, the unrivaled clarinet solo player; G. A. Thompson, violin soloist.'

Mr. Brock, speaking reminiscently, said: "Those were the days when minstrel shows were it, and there were no stirring melodramas, about 'No Wedding Bells for Her,' 'Why Girls Leave Home' and that stuff. You could not give the public such stuff in those days and make your bread and butter.

"I remember well the first wagon show that ever started out and the manner in which we billed the towns ahead, filling in the blank date lines by the use of pen and ink. Maybe we would show in the town hall, the front room of a tavern, or any place we could get that seemed best adapted to our limited requirements.

"Our repertory consisted of such selections as "Lemuel," opening chorus with "Hunter's Life," 'Meet me Tonight Love," "She Sleeps in her grave," 'Louisiana Lowlands," plantation chorus and so forth. The for the second part we used to give the people double violin, trick playing and Clark or somebody else would give them "The Essence of Old Virginny" and "Dixie's Land."

"Sometimes-in fact quite frequently-we would give an open air concert on the village green and collect the curious in that way.

"This, you remember, was half a century ago and there were no such things then as the trust, vaudeville houses or theatrical circuits. If the opera house had been full of hay for a couple of years, owing to a lack of 'talent' coming that way, we found it up to us to remove the hay and get busy for the evening's performance.

"When I run down to Boston or New York now and contrast the present magnitude and glittering splendor of stage productions with the days when our stage dress was the same as we wore in the wagon from town to town, the growth and development of the theatrical business astonishes me. Men have put their lives into the work and realized the possibilities of the business.

Years ago I used to say that the people, Tom, Dick and Harry, found the ever increasing demand was to be amused or entertained. It is perfectly natural and to be expected, especially from the minstrel people, who try to accomplish so much in a day or an hour. The inevitable result when evening comes is the desire and demand for relaxation and enjoyment.

"If I had persisted in my belief half a century ago that the great minstrel public wanted to be amused more and more I would have taken advantage of
the time and the opportunities to have reach out in the business and secured interests that would have been unpurchasable today."

**Kalamazoo Gazette** - February 22, 1907 - Minstrelsy born way back in 1816. Will J. Donnelly tells how and where blackface shows originated. Originator of painted face. Actor named Herbert was first to do burnt cork stunt in Albany, New York-original Company was called "The Virginia Minstrels."

According to Will J. Donnelly, the big noise herald of A. G. Field's Greater Minstrels, has the distinction of being the birthplace of minstrelsy in America.

"That the capital of the Empire State," said Mr. Donnelly to the Gazette, "should have been the birthplace of American Minstrelsy, is befitting for much that is good in the life of our country had its travail in New York state; in fact, our dramatic and musical knowledge was rocked in the cradle of New York public approval before it was permitted to wander in the wake of suspiring civilization.

"And minstrelsy," said "Billy" emphatically "is the diapason of the polygiot folk lore which the nation has digested in the last few hundred years in its assimilation of the people of all ands. Events of the revolution afforded subject matter for many plantation songs. One of the most stirring ditties was about General Lord Cornwallis and the recital of his surrender, the chorus being:

"He am cob Wallis,
He am cob Wallis,
Massa Washington, he shelled
All the corn off of him."

The first minstrel

"But getting back to 'Albany," said Mr. Donnelly, "old time newspaper records will prove that in 1815 an actor named Herbert appeared before an audience in the Old Trimble Theater in that city with a blackened face, and sat in a chair in front of the curtain while he sang. "Herbert had been a cook in his early days and was famous for cooking pot-pies; therefore, he was familiarly called 'Pot-Pie Herbert.' His song was entitled 'The Battle of Plattsburg.' Herbert painted his face with black paint, the use of burnt cork being unknown at that time.

"Then there was another singer, a native Albanian, Thomas S. Blakeley, who is buried in St. John's graveyard in Albany, and who created a furore in the Park Theater, New York, in 1828, by his singing of "My Coal Black Rose." He was followed by George Washington Dixon, a Kingston, New York, singer, and who later came within eight votes of being elected mayor of
Boston. Then came Dan Rice in 1831 with the "Jim Crow" song, and in 1842 the first band of Negro minstrels was formed with Dan Emmett, Frank Brower, Billy Whitlock and Dick Pelham, under the name of "The Virginia Minstrels." The style of performance adopted by them has remained the same ever since, for they danced, sang, played their instruments and carried on a running dialogue of jokes.

A Minstrelsy Innovation

"Regarding jokes and end men as being a part of the minstrel show," continued Mr. Donnelly, "that is peculiarly a minstrel innovation, and was brought about by Dan Emmett when he formed his little company. He told the story, when last he appeared with field and which, by the by, was the final appearance of the famous minstrel. It appears that one night when the company was appearing in New York, Emmett started to tune up his banjo, when the 'E' string snapped. The string was short and it took him a long time to fix it.

"When he had, as he thought, fixed it, it snapped again, and Pelham and Brower began to josh Emmett in a bantering way, but in undertones. Emmett was exasperated at the delay he was causing and losing his temper, answered back in kind, which the audience appreciated to such an extent that every evening thereafter they started their performance with a fund of jokes and witticisms. This was the beginning," said Donnelly, "of the end men and interlocutor."

Plain Dealer - September 6, 1908 - Some fact about Minstrelsy by Lew Dockstader

"The present day minstrel might trace his profession as far back as 2357 B. C. Chinese records show that at that time one of their emperors disguised himself and played on two small sticks, which he placed between his fingers and rattled in the same way which the modern end men do with their bones. At a still earlier date, in 3468 B. C. a Chinese emperor is said to have fixed the twelve degrees of the chromatic scale.

"In the fourth century symptoms of minstrelsy were noticed in Germany, when twelve prominent men banded together, calling themselves the German Meistersingers and gave entertainments similar in many ways to the American minstrel exhibition. The most prominent Venetian minstrels have displayed their skill for ages, while riding to and fro on the gondolas in the canals of Venice."
"Minstrelsy has played a prominent part in English history since the time of Alfred the Great, when that ruler, disguised as a minstrel, entered the camp of the Danes and from information thus gained regarding the battle plans of the Danish army he succeeded in subduing them in the battle. The victory of King Alfred was the greatest victory of minstrelsy. From that early date the English have been regarded as the leaders in the minstrel field. One of the first black faced minstrel companies was organized in an old church in Normandy. The company was under the direction of Nelson Kneass, who carried his troupe by stage coach through the villages of England in 1845-6.

"The first big minstrel venture in this country was in the early 50s, when Wambold's minstrels toured the states. From that time until the present season all minstrel shows have been alike as to the manner of their production, having the performers arranged in tiers with their interlocutor and end men."

**Trenton Evening Times** - November 28, 1910 - Early History of Negro Minstrelsy.

Lawrence Hutton, in his work on "curiosities of the American Stage," published Harper Brothers, has the following to say on the early history of Ethiopian Minstrelsy.

"Thomas D. Rice is generally conceded to have been the founder of Ethiopian minstrelsy. Although, as has been seen, it did not originate with him, he made it popular on both sides of the Atlantic, and his image deserves an honored niche in its cathedral. The history of "Jim Crow" rive, as he was affectionately called for many years, has been written by many scribes, and in many different ways, the most complete and most truthful account, perhaps, being that of Edmon S. Conner, who described in the columns of the New York Times, June 5, 1881, what he saw and remembered of the birth of Jim "Crow. Mr. Conner was a member of the company at the Columbia Street Theatre, Cincinnati, in 11828-29, when he first met rice, 'doing little Negro bits' between the acts at that house, notably a sketch he had studied from life, in Louisville, the preceding summer. Back of the Louisville Theatre was a livery stable kept by a man named Crow. The actors cold look into the stable yard from the windows of their dressing rooms, and were fond of watching the movements of an old and decrepit slave who was employed by the proprietor to do all sorts of odd jobs. As was the custom among the Negroes, he had assumed his master's name, and called himself Jim Crow. He was very much deformed, the right shoulder was drawn up high, and the left leg was stiff and crooked at the knee, which gave him a painful but at the same time ludicrous limp. He was in the habit of crooning queer old tune, to which he
had applied words of his won. At the end of each verse he gave a peculiar step, 'rocking de heel,' in the same manner since so general among the many generations of his imitators, and these were the words of his refrain:

"Wheel about, turn about, do jis so,
An' ebery time I wheel about i jump Jim Crow."

"Rice closely watched this unconscious performer, and recognized in him a character entirely new to the stage. He wrote a number of verses, quickened and slightly changed the air, made up exactly like the original, and appeared before a Louisville audience, which, as Mr. Conner says, "went mad with delight," recalling him on the first night at least twenty times. And so Jim Crow jumped into fame and something that looks almost like immortality.

"Rice was born in the Seventh Ward of New York in 1808. He was a supernumerary at the Park Theatre, where 'Sam' Cowell remembered him in 'Bombastes Furioso,' attracting so much attention by is eccentricities that Hilson and Barnes, the leading characters in the cast, made a formal complaint and had him dismissed from the company; Cowell adding that this man, whose name did not even appear in the bills, was the only actor on the stage whom the audience seemed to notice.

"He went to England in 1836, where he met with great success, laid the foundation of a very comfortable fortune, and professionally he was the buffalo Bill of the London of half a century ago. Mr. Ireland, speaking of his popularity in this country, says that he drew more money to the Bowery Theatre than any other performer in the same period of time.

"Rice was the author of many of his own farces, notably "Bone Squash" and "The Virginia Mummy," and he was the veritable originator of the 'genius,' known to the stage 'as the 'dandy darky,' represented particularly in his creations of 'Danny Jim of Caroline' and 'Spruce Pink.'

"He died in 1860, never having forfeited the respect of the public or the good will of his fellow men."

Times Picayune - October 19, 1913 - Minstrelsy - An exclusively southern institution, says veteran Al G. Field. Based on Dusky Dixie, and greatest interpreters come from this section.

In the early 40s of the last century American minstrelsy, that is, imitating the idiosyncrasies of the Negro, had its inception, and it is an exclusively Southern institution, according to Al G. Field, who is on his way to New Orleans.
The Negro, happy and humorous, afforded a ready subject for the white man to burlesque, although in its beginning American minstrelsy did not attempt to burlesque the Negro character—simply to imitate him in his songs, mannerisms and dances.

"Minstrelsy became immensely popular soon after the origination," declares the veteran minstrel. "Negro impersonations were introduced between the acts in many of the first-class theatres. Thus it was that many afterward noted actors begun as minstrels. Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth, Barney Williams, William Florence, Edwin Adams, Frank Cahufrau, J. K. Emmett, Joseph Murphy, Francis Wilson, Harrigan and Hart, Chauncey Olcott and many others began their stage careers as black-faced minstrels.

"For years minstrelsy flourished as never did a special stage amusement. New York had five permanent minstrel companies, Philadelphia two, Boston one, San Francisco one, Chicago had as many as three located companies at one time.

"In those days many talented writers were busy at all times producing material for the various minstrel companies. The burlesque of the opera bouffe of "The Grand Duchess," as produced by the Kelly and Leon Company in New York, compared favorably with the best of the music offerings of today; in fact, comic opera was embodied in the minstrel program of that day.

Favorites were soon developed in the various organizations. Money rolled in and many of the minstrel managers-performers who had made themselves popular-began heading their own companies. A specialty or a good voice, nimble dancing or a comic bit with which they had identified themselves made these performers famous for a brief time. The performer with a stunt that caught the popular fancy drew the money to the box office. The writers who had made American minstrelsy famous were neglected. The popular performer with his own little stunt did not require anything from the producer. He held the stage center year after year with the same old stuff. He did not realize that the procession was passing him. Comic opera, farce comedy with tuneful music and variety-in many respects indifferent comedy—had supplanted the minstrels. Those who had produced for the minstrels previous to the advent of the one or two-man show had found other patrons for their offering, or rather the loss of prestige of many minstrel organizations. Even the circus of the older days that had depended upon the one or two favorites to attract patronage noted the handwriting in the empty seats. The former favorites of the minstrel stage simply faded away."
There was one notable exception, the Al G. field Greater Minstrels, never depending upon the personal popularity of any one person, always offering a company of competent performers year after year, offering something new, productions better than those of the year previous, establishing the title as one of the sound financial theatrical attractions of the times. The history of this company simply proves the statement made at the beginning of this article, namely, the minstrel show will note thrive unless it presents up-to-date entertainments.

Al G. Field has not only demonstrated his ability to produce entertaining minstrelsy, but has established a reputation as an author. His book, "Watch Yourself Go By," has met with ready recognition and comes very near being a best seller. It is the talent of originality that has made the field organization successful. It is to His ability as a producer that the success of the al G. field Greater Minstrels is due.

**Dallas Morning News - May 30, 1915 - Passing of Negro Minstrels**

Of all the varied and manifold kinds of theatrical entertainment Negro minstrelsy is the one which is absolutely native to these States and which could not have come into existence anywhere else in the civilized world. Here in America alone has the transplanted African been brought into intimate contact with the transplanted European. Other nations may have disputed our claim to the invention of the steamboat and the telegraph, but Negro minstrelsy is as indisputably due to American inventiveness as the telephone itself. Here in the United States is had its humble beginnings; here it expanded and flourished for many years; from here it was exported to Great Britain, where it established itself for many seasons; from here it made sporadic excursions into France and Germany, and here at last it has fallen into a decline, a degeneracy and a decay which seem to doom it to a speedy extinction. Its life was little longer than that vouchsafed to man, threescore years and ten, for it was born in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, and in the second decade of the twentieth it lingers superfluous on the stage with none to do it reverence.

**Plain Dealer - December 20, 1915 - The Cheer of Minstrelsy**

In a very dandy way, seven old friends of the late George "Honeyboy" Evans are preserving the torch of minstrelsy that Evans carried so long and made burn so brilliantly. The seven also perpetuate the name affectionately bestowed on their late chief by the public that loved him. They call themselves the "Seven Honeyboys."
Well, they played last week at the Hippodrome, did these old minstrel friends of Evans, and while it was just a little bit affecting to see so small a delegation representing Evans' old troupe, still it was kind of like old times after all. A minstrel show of seven people, we had, but it was a good show at that and the; Hippodrome audiences liked it immensely. William H. Thompson was interlocutor and on the ends were Slim lee and Bill Cawley, all minstrels through and through, and known all over the country.

"Isn't it funny, and a bit too bad, that this form of entertainment, once so popular, is so rapidly dying out," somebody commented one afternoon while Sam Lee and Bill Cawley were within earshot and Lee was after him in a minute.

Minstrelsy will never die out," he contended, earnestly. "The last year of the Evans troupe was the best year, financially, in its history, and that at a time when the show business was popularly supposed to be a little 'off' all over America. This, too, in spite of the fact that George was sick, so sick that almost the first week out, in Cleveland, he had to drop his 'afterpiece' that was so intimately connected with his name and fame, and all, the time he was so weak he could hardly stand up; and given his monolog.

"True, one of the troopers, White, was able to pick up the 'toreador' afterpiece and go ahead with it, but the point is that Evans had his best year in the face of fearful physical odds, and bad theatrical business generally."

Sam Lee is a tall, thoughtful chap who has made his own way in the world and in minstrelsy. he is a Kentuckian, was left an orphan in Lexington when he was 3 years old, and while relatives gave him a lift when the little lad was left alone, he quickly shifted for himself and began to buck the world alone when he was nothing more than a boy. He has never stopped.

Always a Minstrel Man

"A boy friend of mine was in Denver," Lee explained, and had joined a minstrel show. He wrote me of the wonderful life, and I went to Denver as fast as I could. Anyway, I got there, joined one of the old Baird shows, and was given my first training in the delights of minstrel life, and also its hardships. They call me a comedian, but I am a comedian in black face only, and am proud and glad of it.

"It is a funny kind of thing, when you stop and consider that a minstrel show is basically nothing more than a lot of men with burnt cork on their faces, who sit around and crack jokes and sing and dance. It is a distinctive form of entertainment, but I am for it. I'm not given to boasting, either, but I think you are right when you say that even our little "Honeyboy" show gets
over the footlights. Minstrelsy is different from the hundreds and thousands of comedy entertainments that are alike in type, and that's why people like it.

"Now, mind you, I am not arguing that the public would care to see a minstrel show every week of the season, not by any means, but I do insist that there is a clearly defined field for the minstrel show, and that the public will never give it up entirely. I grant that there is a certain fixed minstrel method, and maybe it could be changed, but I am not going to give up the essentials of the game, which is black face comedy, an all male company and old-fashioned minstrelsy. As you recall, George Evans long ago dropped dialect, and minstrelsy is singing and jesting and dancing with black paint on your face. That's all.

"I don't know how the idea started, but it did-that of blacking up, I mean, find it will be retained as a landmark of the game, a little peculiarity that distinguishes it."

One feature of the minstrel troupe that always appealed to the writer, regardless of the merits of minstrelsy, is the good comradeship, an almost free-masonry that exists among minstrels. Sam Lee, for instance, very seldom talks about himself-a too common failing of actor people—but almost invariably of other men, and almost always of other minstrels. It is always the good in them that he talks of and this is true of most minstrels.

Minstrel Kindliness

Sam Lee never married, and says that if he has a home at all it is in Cincinnati, where he has some cousins living.

"I love Minstrelsy," he said, thoughtfully, "but the reason I never married is that in my profession a man must travel around too much. It wouldn't be fair to a girl for me to marry her and then go out on the road and travel all over the universe, leaving her alone. So Sam Lee just stays single, wanders around blacking up and going on with his show, and everybody is happy. By the way I wish you would correct one thing about our business. The public has an idea that we use burnt cork. Not anymore. It is some sort of patented paint that comes in paste; form and has no cork in it at all.

"Another thing, too, about George Evans. As you know he never took a drink in his life and was an ideal man in every particular. I've known him to keep his show going somehow at a loss to himself, just so as to keep the boys working. Naturally we all thought the world of him, and; quite as naturally we all like to talk about him. Minstrelsy suffered a severe loss when he died, but no one person, or group of them, even is essential to it. I say this with all
fairness to him, but with justice to our profession, one that he loved as much as anybody could."

They are all gentle and genial fellows in the fame, patient, unselfish, and considerate of the other chaps. I Lee didn't tell, but I may, that in Evans' last season, when he was forced to delay his opening some nine weeks, as I remember, his troupe stuck by him to a man, and nine weeks of idleness at the start of a season which you haven't worked all summer, means something. It is also true that Evans was deeply affected by this fine loyalty, and actually did start the season before he was well enough to work, just because he worried about "the boys" not working.

"They've been for me," he told the writer one day, "and sick or well, I'm going to start." The boys have come through for me, and I'm going to do the same thing for them" He did, and died in the performance of this duty that he believed he owed his boys.

Whether minstrelsy is going backward or not, you may be assured that the spirit which animates its devotees is too splendid a thing to be lost in the show world. not that there aren't plenty of instances of heroic and unselfish acts on the part of big showmen in all branches of the world of amusement, but this spirit is peculiarly that of the minstrel men, in the writer's observation.

Trenton Evening Times - January 7, 1917 - Clever comedians with Al Fields.

The Al G. Field Greater Minstrels come to the Trent Theatre, Friday and Saturday, with a matinee Saturday, and the dean of minstrelsy announces that his production this year again measures up lavishly to the "Field Brand."

For more than 30 years, Al G. Field has been fulfilling such promises. Today the name of his show, "The field brand," stands for a definite quality. This year as heretofore, field has associated with himself leading lights from the entertainment world-singers, dancers, comedians, specialists.

Hence, when the advertising campaign for this season was being planned, field directed that the names of the artists in the company be used rather than superlatives in the way of description. "Tell the public who the comedians are, and you won't have to tell it how funny they are. Tell the public who our singers are and you won't need to tell it how well they can sing. The public will know," he said.

The first part this season is entitled "Minstrelsy, Past and Present," and it gives opportunity for a succession of picturesque settings. Among these are three animated tableaux presenting the developments of minstrelsy from plantation life in "Dixie land." The conclusion of this number is "A Modern
Minstrel Cabaret," in which Field presents what he regards as the zenith of minstrelsy up to the present time.

The spectacular feature of the olio is "Christmas Eve at Home." a fantasy based on a Negro folk-lore story, which Field himself contributed to "The Progress Magazine" sometime ago. Other high spots in this part of the performance are Bert Swor's monologue; a saxophone sextette, led by T. Murphy; and the side-splitting American travesty, "The Battle of the Bats-Our national Pastime or 'chasing Villa' which has a wealth of fun with the American pastime of baseball, the situation in Mexico, and other topical matters.


The Jews have an old tradition that when god created man, minstrelsy was born. There have been minstrels since the early days of the world. In those days the wandering minstrel was the only means of spreading the news of the world. He wandered from place to place and in verse and melody, retold the happenings of the times. Kind David, with his harp of a thousand strings sang his way into the hearts of the multitudes, says Al G. fields in the New York Age.

Therefore the history of American minstrelsy is all the more interesting. American minstrelsy is the only distinctive American stage amusement. It had its origin in 1840. However, long before 1840 several actors blacked their faces and appeared in legitimate theaters between the acts, impersonating the plantation and roustabout steamboat darky of the South.

Among the most prominent of those was "T. d. Rice, nicknamed "Jim Crow" Rice from a song of that name which lie sang n character. This song made Rice famous. Rice's impersonation of the plantation Negro was true to life. It was an innovation and took the public by storm. He was more popular than the legitimate actors of the times. Rice success influenced many actors to become Negro comedians. Many persons credited him with the origin of minstrelsy, and so he was in so far as a single performer was concerned.

One night Rice carried on the stage a large bag. A small boy rolled out of the bag, costumed and blacked up to represent Rice. The boy imitated Rice in his singing and dancing. That boy was the late Joseph Jefferson of "Rip Van winkle" fame.

Among those who took up black-face impersonations was Billy Whitlock, Dick Pelham, Frank Brower and Daniel Decatur Emmett, all doing single turns. These four men were all talented musicians and comedians.
Early in the year 1840 a benefit performance for R. W. Pelham was given in the National Theater, Chatham Street, New York City. Pelham, Brower, Whitlock and Emmett were to appear in this performance. Emmett suggested that instead of appearing singly, they arrange songs, choruses and instrumental music, both comic and sentimental, and appear together. Emmett has often explained that the idea was to have a little fun with the actors appearing with them. Even the arranging of the chairs in a semi-circle for a first part, a custom which has been adhered to ever since was accidental.

This minstrel first part was the first ever presented and captivated the public. It was the talk of New York City and engagements were offered them from all over the country. On a program dated January 1843, they are billed as the Virginia Minstrels. Their entertainments were out of the beaten path. Money flowed in upon them. Prosperity turned their heads. In the night of their success they sought new worlds to conquer. They sailed for England where they duplicated their American success, but prosperity was too much for them. They quarreled separately and returned to America, each one determined to form a minstrel company of his own but their absence a dozen companies had been formed and the originators of American minstrelsy found themselves laboring for others and not one of them ever achieved very great financial success. Thereafter, Dan Emmett, the author of that most spirited of songs, "Dixie" became famous the world over, but died penniless.

Emmett made his last professional appearance with the Al G. Fields minstrels and is buried in the city where he was born, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Emmett was greatly beloved by all. A monument has been erected to his memory.

To trace American minstrelsy from its origin is interesting. The Negro, its inspiration, is the most tractable and imitative of all humans. On the plantation, long before the white man began to imitate him, the Negro sang the songs and performed the dances that have made minstrelsy so entertaining.

When the Huguenots fled their country and settled in South Carolina they brought their customs and religious ceremonies with them. They danced the stately minuets, serving refreshments, particularly a large fruit cake made for the occasion. From this custom came the cake walk dance of today. The Negroes imitating the minuet of the white folks with that animation characteristic of their race made the dignified minuet of the courtly Huguenots the grotesque dance of the slaves of those days and of minstrelsy today.

In the minstrels of the plantation slaves were introduced. The bones the Negro slaves rattled were imitations of the castanets of the Spanish and
French dancers of those days. The tambourines were imitations of the tambourines of the Spaniards and in imitation of the guitar the plantation Negro gave it its name-banjo and the significance of the word has never been traced beyond the origination of that crude instrument.

There is no race so universally endowed with musical talent as the Negro. Music is a part of their nature; hence they soon mastered the tuneful instruments in lieu of the bones and tambourines. There is no race so humorous nor a humor so infectious as the unctuous fun of the Negro.

There is no section in the world where the English language is spoken that the wit of the Negro is not appreciated. The actor who impersonates the German, French or Irishman, the Englishman or the Jew may find localities where his impersonations are not fetching to an audience, but the talented imitator of Negro life and fun finds ready response everywhere. The very simplicity of the Negro character is provocative of laughter.

Minstrelsy is responsible for many of the sweetest songs. Minstrelsy has always furnished music for the common people. The folklore songs of our country are of minstrel origin, and have made their authors beloved by all. When Minstrels was originated this country had but tragedy, comedy and farce as stage diversion. From minstrelsy came farce comedy and the musical shows of the times and in minstrelsy was born comic opera in so far as this country is concerned, the minstrel sketches of 40 years ago forming plots for them.

And the stage is indebted to minstrelsy for Joseph Jefferson, Stuart Robson, Edwin Adams, Edwin booth, Tony Pastor, bob hart, a Methodist minister; Robert Fowning, a teacher; P. T. Barnum and Patrick Gilmore; Sousa as a member of Simmons and Slocum's minstrels when Al G. Field was serving his apprenticeship with that company. J. K. Emmett was a minstrel yodler and a drummer in the band. Johnny Hyams, of McIntyre and Hyianis, was a minstrel with the Al G. Field Company. Signor Colloni of the Metropolitan opera company was popular Will Collins when a tenor singer with Al G. Field.

Dan Rice, the famous circus clown, began as a minstrel. Neil Burgess, Joe Murphy and Raymond Hitchcock began on the minstrel stage, as did George M. Cohan and Dilla Collier, Chauncey Olcott, Eddie Foy, William Harris, Charles and Dan Frohman, all began their theatrical career as minstrels. Francis Wilson, Frank Daniels and James Powers, Al Jolson and many others whom I cannot recall graduated from the minstrel stage.

Boston Herald - August 10, 1919
Many a memory got a jog the other day when the death of George Primrose was announced. Along with Thatcher and West, his partner, Lew Dockstader, Jack Haverly and others well known to fame, he ranked as a pioneer in burnt-cork entertainment. He was only 66 when he died, yet it was 23 years ago that his friends and West's packed Madison Square Garden from floor to roof to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the start of that pair as a clog-dancing team. Many a man—and a lot of women—sighed as they read his obituary. "This was the happy days!"

Evidently the minstrel show awaits the coming of some new genius who, like the theatrical men of the couple of generations ago, is capable of devising a production that will entertain a somewhat sophisticated nation. That such a genius may yet appear is within the bounds of possibility for it was less than a century back that the minstrel show in something like the form we know was evolved—almost overnight. Shakespeare knew nothing of this form of stage entertainment; and probably he never could have devised it. For one thing, the Negro was not of is intimate acquaintance, and for another thing, and perhaps this is the real reason, when the great playwright lived the American Negro had not developed that distinctive racial life on which the minstrel show is based. The word minstrelsy meant a far different thing in Shakespeare's day—the art of a rather romantic rather erratic wandering musical entertainer.

The southern Negro, even while yet in slavery, became a unique character; and upon his picturesque peculiarities the white man built up the structure of modern minstrelsy as we understand the term. He blacked his face with burnt cork, widened his lips with red paint, pulled over his head, be it blonde or bald, a curly black wig, attired himself in grotesque, exaggerated clothes, and worked, presently, their scheme of a semi-circle of made-up darkies, with a white interlocutor, pompous and precise, as the keystone of the arch. And at the springing points of the arch were placed the end-men, while the curve was made up of the rank and file of the singers and specialists in entertainment. The scheme was wholly new, something entirely American without prototype in all of history, or on the stage of any other nation, ancient or modern. It was bound thus to be; for only in America was the Negro ever found in a state of civilization or of near-civilization that could furnish the substance of the idea.

Edward Leroy Rice, who has compiled the history of minstrelsy black-faced comedy in his book, "Monarchs of Minstrelsy," shows that burnt cork was used for years before the minstrel show was evolved. He credits, in particular, the portrayal of the black man in dress, accent, gait, dialect and manner to the actor Edwin Forrest, and gives the time and place as July 17,
1823, at the Globe Theatre in Cincinnati. He says, furthermore, that new Harper, on Feb. 22, 1837, at the Lion theatre in Boston played Gumbo Cuff in "O Hush," one of the early blackface plays, which antedated minstrelsy, is indentified.

Curiosity enough the author of "O Hush" was Thomas Dartmouth Rice-"Daddy" rice-original "Jim Crow." And Boston, identified in this way with pre-minstrel blackface comedy, was to be identified quoted, the first recorded black-face act ever given on hte3 minstrelsy stage, was presented at the old federal Theatre in Boston on De. 20, 1799.

"Daddy" Rice the Original Jim Crow

"Daddy" Rice, we are informed was born in New York City May 20, 1808, and died there Sept. 19, 1860. He was known as a rather mediocre actor until his introduction of "Jim Crow." He was eccentric, too, and is said to have worn &5 and $10 gold pieces as buttons on coat and waist-coat and to have given these away freely as souvenirs.

While playing in Cincinnati in the summer of 1830, Rice, one day, on the street, heard a Negro stage driver singing a bit of a song that ran something like this:

Turn about an' wheel about an' mo jist so,
an' ebery tie I turn about I jump, Jim Crow.

In Pittsburg, where Rice opened a new engagement the following autumn, he electrified his audience one evening with his rendering of this song. Just before the curtain rose he ordered a Negro boy named Cuff to disrobe, and Rice, clad in the rags thus obtained, made a tremendous hit. The frequent appeals of the Negro for his clothing during the act only added to the sensation.

The author of the book attributes to four men, Billy Whitlock, dick Pelham, Dan Emmett and Frank Brower, the first actual performance of an orthodox minstrel show, and assigns to this the date of Feb. 6, 1843. It took place in New York, City.

In the mind of the reader of "Monarchs of Minstrelsy" however, some doubt is liable to arise as to the title of priority given to these men. for we learn that in that same year, 1843, James Buckley organized in Boston the Buckley Serenaders, a group of performers whose entertainment was not widely different from that of the New York quartet.

James Buckley, born in England, was, in 1840 leader at Harrington's Museum in Boston. In 1943 he organized the Congo Melodies in this city, giving the first performance at the Tremont theatre. In October they were
playing at the tabernacle, the site of the present Howard Athenacum. After going to New York and to England, and making the first trip of a recognized company to California, they had a brief engagement at Ordway Hall, Boston, in May, 1858, and in November, 1858, at Allston hall, on Tremont Street.

On the occasion of another trip to England they encountered the jealousy of rival producers, who dug up an ancient law forbidding the presentation of any opera other than the royal Opera, and on their forced return to America they began an engagement at Allson Hall, Oct. 13, 1962, appearing, June 15, 1863 at the new hall at summer and Chauncy Streets.

James Buckley, born in March, 1903, in England, died at Quincy, April 27, 1872. Previously he had retired from the stage; and with the death of two of his three sons, all of whom had been partners in his enterprise, George Swayne Buckley, the surviving son, was left to carry on the Serenaders. This family was the first to produce burlesque opera on a scale of magnificence.

R. Bishop Buckley, born in England in 1826, died at Quincy, June 6, 1867. He began his career in Boston in 1943, as a member of the serenaders. He was excellent as a mimic, musicians and actor; he had a good tenor voice and skilled in performance on the Chinese fiddle, Fred Buckley, born at Bolton, Eng., Oct. 12, 1833, died at Boston, Sept. 12, 1864. His wife was Fanny Brown, the actress. He was, for seven years, orchestra leader of the Serenaders and composed some of the early ballads of minstrelsy. He was widely known for several years under the name of "Master Ole Bull."

Versatile Minstrel Man

George Swayne Buckley, after the retirement of his father and the death of his brothers, managed the company, with variations of success and failure. Born in Bolton, Eng., in August 1820, he died at Quincy June 25, 1879. Until as late as 1845 he was known as 'Young Sweeney." His chief fame rests on his performance on 12 different instruments, playing several of them at one time. In a single performance he sang a song, did a banjo solo, a kitchen bellows solo, a bones solo, a locust hum, dance, a part in a burlesque opera and imitations of drums and horses racing. In 1871 he portrayed seven characters in a sensational melodrama, called "On the Track." His reorganization of the company took place in Boston, July 8, 1867, with himself in the solo remaining member of his famous family still left in the organization.

In the early days E. P Christy and his minstrels were widely popular, Christy claiming that he was the first to organize a minstrel show, and giving 1842 as the date. It was 1847 and after, however, that they became famous.
E. M. Hooley was one of the men associated with the best traditions of minstrelsy. He played his first engagement in 1845 in Buffalo, as leader of the Christy minstrels. In 1862 he opened his famous minstrel hall in Brooklyn and continued there for several years. His ventures were always popular and successful and he died in Chicago in 1893, lamented by all.

George Thatcher made his debut in Baltimore in 1863, doing a jig in blackface. He got his first important engagement at Tony Pastor's in 1873 and later went with Jack Haverley's famous minstrels. Thatcher and Johnson's Minstrels followed after various tours with different tropes, and Thatcher gained a wide reputation by his originality and wit.

Lew Dockstader's name has been a household word of minstrelsy for over 40 years. He started way back in '73, and in the course of his long career under the ebony paint he toured with George Thatcher's trope, with Primrose and West; joined Primrose and Dockstader Minstrels and of late years headed his own company with entire success. Dockstader hails from Hartford, Ct.

There were many others among the old-timers-Frank E. McNish of "Silence and Fun" fame John Wild, who played colored lead parts with ears. McNish, in addition to his dancing abilities, was an excellent singer; originally he was a plumber, but before he got through he had every would-be star copying him.

Johnny Wild was considered a remarkable impersonator of the Negro. Unlike most of his contemporaries he did not essay to act the plantation Negro. The town Negro was his specialty, he having made a close study of that character in New York.

Among the old-time minstrels are some who now are on the legitimate stage. A shining example is Dave Warfield. It may be noted that Haverly, an old-time minstrel, became a great producer, with a string at one time of 92 theaters. He introduced the 10, 20, 20 idea, and helped in time to prepare the way for the moving picture show.

The list of men who at one time were associated with minstrelsy and who later won distinction in other fields of stage effort includes, Andrew Mack, Francis Wilson, Eddie Foy, Jerry Cohan, McIntyre and Heath, Montgomery and Stone, Chauncey Oclott, James T. Powers, Macklyn Arbuckle, Henry E. Dixey, Joseph and Herbert Cawthorn, Billy B. Van, Pete Dailey, Tom Lewis, Jefferson de Angelis, Wilton Lackaye, Raymond Hitchcock, Bert Williams, Nat Goodwin and many others.

Charles Frohman and his brothers Gustav and Daniel gained part of their experience as managers in the field of Minstrelsy. Charles was treasurer for Haverley's Mastodons in 1878 and went to Europe with them in 1880. In
1882 he joined his brother Gustav in the management of Callender's colored minstrels and projected that organization through a tour of three years.

Even old John L. Sullivan did his turn in the olio. In the season of 1885-86 he was the feature of Lester and Allen's Minstrels, giving statuary poses that displayed his powerful physique. It will be seen that even in those days the champions were not ignorant of the way is of capitalizing their fame, even through vaudeville hadn't stepped to the front as yet.

Fortunes made in Minstrelsy

Dane, one of the oldest of the old-timers, lived to be a good age, and is remembered by many men not yet very far advanced in years. Other names that are more recent include Neil Bryant, George Primrose, whose recent death removed one of the best-known artists in blackface, Jack Haverley and George Wilson; and still later came such favorites as Neil O'Brien, Eddie Leonard, "Honey by" Evans and others.

In the old days 25 cents was the standard price of admission, yet E. F. Christy was able to retire with a fortune. The San Francisco Minstrels each had $100,000. Bernard Wambold and Backus retained their wealth, while poor Birch sought Wall Street and left his fortune with the brokers.

The darkies of the south first introduced the instrument called later the banjo. At first it was made of a gourd, and was probably related to the tom-tom or wild instrument of that family used by the native Africans, says Lew Dockstader. By degrees this "banjo" was improved upon, strings were added, and a process of tuning was worked out after the style of the Spanish guitar.

Texas was inhabited by many Spanish settlers and they may have introduced the guitar, tambourine and castanets, which were widely imitated by Negroes. The bones of an animal were made to serve for castanets, hence the name "bones," and "Mr. Bones."

The songs were principally comic or sentimental slave songs, at first, or a series of wild chants, until Stephen C. foster, the song writer, began to compose and write. His melodies jumped into popularity at once, and were singing throughout the country. These songs were a great aid in popularizing minstrelsy, for the minstrels were in those days the only one who gave voice to the ballads and sang these in public.

Photos
New Orleans Item - December 14, 1919

Black-faced minstrelsy traced to New Orleans Negroes.

How many of all the thousands who have laughed at the antics of Negro roustabouts, dancing or shootin' craps on the deck of a river packet, or "jes restin" on the levee have ever thought that here was the origin of minstrelsy, that black-faced humor of word and song and dance that within the last 75 years has spread the fame of the a Negro as a humorist from Spitzbergen to Shanghai and from pole to pole?

How many Orleanians to whom these sights are of so common occurrence as to fail even to excite a laugh, know that new Orleans gave to the world minstrelsy, the original New World minstrelsy, of a different kind from that which the minnesingers of the Middle Ages scattered all over Europe? Yet, in addition to being the birthplace of Jazz, generator of the gin fizz and the parent of the praline, the Crescent City is the mother of minstrelsy.

Not only that, but to this day, though three-quarters of a century have passed, leading minstrel scout's in Louisiana, at for new Negro melodies, jokes, "gags" and dances, with which to supply the burnt-cork imitators of the Ethiopian. One of these was in New Orleans recently, sending out a collection of darktown humor which he had been collecting for some six months in the Negro settlements of Louisiana. His name is Bert Bedwards, and is apt art as alliterative as his name. Here is his story of modern minstrelsy and its origin in New Orleans.
"While minstrelsy is the oldest form of mental amusement known to man, its modern application, which originated in New Orleans, is vastly different from the work of the minstrels of the Middle Ages, who, wandering from place to place, with harp or mandolin, sang the stories of their heroes and heroines, who in turn, fed them and gave them a place to sleep. In the New world, the first minstrelsy originated in about 1835, as the result of a trip which T. D. Rice, then a comic actor-as comedians were called-took a boat down the Mississippi river. he made a study of the Negro, his joys, his sorrows, his songs, his dances and his jokes, and when he returned forthward, devised the burnt-cork blacking which was used for nearly a quarter of a century until a black grease paint was invented.

"Jump Jim Crow"

"The main part of his show came from New Orleans where the Negroes on the levee and in their dances in the public quarters as well as in their cabin life, gave him the vast majority of his material. His impersonations were so laughable, and so true to life, that he took the country by storm. His great hit was the singing of 'Jump Jim Crow,' in which he carried a sack on the stage and dumped there from a small blacked-up boy, who imitated him in his choruses. 'That boy was the late Joe Jefferson, of Rip Van Winkle fame."

"From this song, rice came to be known as "Jim Crow" Rice, and he traveled by wagon train from one end of the country to the other, scoring tremendous successes with this, the first American minstrelsy, the idea for which was born in New Orleans. famous, imitators, of course, arose by hundreds, among the first to take it up being Billy Whitlock, Dick Pelham, Frank Bower and Daniel Decatur Emmett, the latest named destined to become the greatest of all, the one who really made an art out of New Orleans minstrelsy.

"Early in 1840 a benefit performance was to be given for R. W. Pelham and Dan Emmett suggested that instead of appearing singly, they arranged songs choruses and instrumental music, both comic and sentimental and appeared together. They by accident arranged the chairs in a semi-circle and this custom has been adhered to ever since.

"This minstrel 'First Part' was the first one ever presented and it captivated the public. It took New York by storm and engagements were offered the performers from all over the country, and they formed into a company calling themselves The Virginia Minstrels. Money flowed into their pockets like water and prosperity turned their heads. Seeking new worlds to conquer the sailed for England where they immediately duplicated their American successes. this unheard of flow of wealth was too much for them, they quarreled, separated and returned to America, each determined to organize a company of his own; but during their absence a dozen other
companies had sprung up and the originators of American minstrelsy were
soon only laboring for others and not one of them ever achieved very great
financial success. Dan Emmett, the author of Dixie, became famous the world
over, but died penniless.

'Daniel Emmett was the undisputed originator of the 'first part' or
'semi-circle.' Emmett left his home while quite a young man, joining the
orchestra of a small traveling circus. From the circus he changed to
minstrelsy, finally becoming leader of Bryant's Minstrels, a trope that was
very popular for many years. While with this company he wrote the song
"Dixie."

All minstrel entertainments were finished, in those days with a walk-
around Dan Bryant, the manager of Brant's Minstrels desiring a change in
the music for this number on his show called upon Dan Emmett to provide the
required song; and at a Monday morning rehearsal he played "Dixie." The
melody was fetching. That night the song was put on. The program
announced it as a song entitled "Away Down South in the Land of Cotton."
Later the title was changed to "Dixieland" and still later 'Away down South in
Dixie" but since that time it has been generally given the title of "Dixie."

Authorship established

"No song of the kind ever met with such general favor. It is recognized
as a song of the 'southland; it is a popular favorite all over America. Emmett
never reaped a pecuniary reward from the song. Many person laid claim to it
authorship but the New York Herald, assisted by Al G. Field, established
Emmett's claim to the authorship beyond dispute.

"Dan Emmett in his eightieth year made a tour of the country with the
Al G. Field Minstrels after which he retired. He is buried near his old home at
Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and over his grave is a monument erected to his memory
by James Smith of Ashtabula, Ohio.

"To trace American Minstrelsy from its origin is interesting and is the
most traceable and imitative of all human beings. On the plantation, long
before the white man began to imitate him, the Negro sang the songs and
performed the dances that have made minstrelsy popular. When the
Huguenots left their country and settled in South Carolina, they brought their
customs and religious ceremonies with them. They danced the stately minuet,
serving refreshments, particular a large fruit cake made for the occasion.
From this custom came the cake walk dance so long a favorite with the Negro.
The Negroes imitating the minuet of the white folks, with that animation
characteristic of their race, made the dignified minuet of the courtly
Huguenots, the grotesque dance of the slaves of those days and of the
minstrels of today.
"In the minstrels of the early days all the customs of the plantation slaves were introduced. The bones the Negro slaves rattled were imitations of the castanets of the Spanish and French used by dancers of those days. The tambourines were imitations of the tambourines of the Spaniards and in imitation of the guitar, the plantation Negro originated the banjo. The Negro gave it its name—banjo—and the significance of the word has never been traced beyond the origination of that crude instrument.

"Old Jaw bone"

"The songs of those days is often referring to 'the old jaw bone' used by the Negroes and copied by the early minstrels. It was the jaw bone of a horse, cow or mule. A small piece of iron was used to rattle the teeth and small sleigh bells were attached to it. These crude instruments were greatly admired by the Negroes of our southland. However, those instruments, excepting the banjo, can be traced to the uncultured tribes of Africa and other countries.

'There is no race so humorous nor humor as infectious as the unctuous fun of the Negro. There is not section of the world where the English language is spoke that the wit of the Negro is not appreciated.

"Minstrelsy is responsible for many of our sweetest songs; Minstrelsy has always furnished music for the common people.

"From minstrelsy came farce comedy and the musical shows of the present time, the minstrel sketches of forty years ago furnishing the plots for many of these shows today.

"The stage is indebted to minstrelsy for Joseph Jefferson, Stuart Robson, Edwin Adams, Edwin Booth, Tony Pastor, Bob Hart, Robert Downing, P. T. Barnum, Patrick Gilmore, and Sousa. John Philip Sousa was a member of Simmons and Slucum's Minstrels when Al G. Field was serving his apprenticeship with that company. Johnny Hyams, of McIntyre and Hyams was a minstrel with the Al G. Field Company. Edwin when Al G. Field was serving his apprenticeship with the Al G. Field Company. Signor Collini of the metropolitan Opera company, was popular Will Collins, when a tenor with the Al G. Field minstrels. George M Cohan, Willie Collier, Chauncey Olcott, Eddie Foy, Francis Wilson, Frank Daniels Jimmie Powers, Jimmie Powers and Al Jolson all graduated from the minstrel stage.

Macon Telegraph - October 17, 1920 - A Brief history of Minstrelsy

American Minstrelsy had its origin in 1840. the circumstances surrounding its birth, its rapid growth in popularity and its continued prosperity throughout the four-score years that have clasped since its inception are narrated by Al G. Fields, dean of minstrelsy and the oldest and most popular producer of minstrels in the nation.
"Modern Minstrelsy traces its lineage back to the person or the world's history which time and change have enshrouded in the haze of mystery and antiquity," says Mr. Field. "Its forbears were the itinerant Minstrels of old, who wandered from place to place and in verse and improvised melodies narrated the happenings of the times and the glories of the past.

"In America, minstrelsy turned to the enslaved 'African on the plantations of the South for its source of inspiration. The impersonation of the plantation darkey which constitutes modern Minstrelsy is the only really distinctive an American stage amusement. It has its inception in 1840.

"Long before that, however, several American actors had blacked their faces and appeared in the legitimate theatres, between acts, impersonating the southern steamboat roustabout and happy-go-lucky darkey of these who took up this form of 'specialty,' the first was T. D. Rice, nicknamed 'Jim Crow' rice, after a dance he introduced. In his act he carried a sack on the stage, and, emptied of its contents, a divulge a small boy, who imitated Rice in his songs. This boy was the late Joseph Jefferson, of glorious memory. Others who gave burnt-cork impersonations included Billy Whitlock, Dick Pelham, Frank Brower and Daniel Decatur Emmett, all of them doing single turns.'

"In 1840 a benefit performances was planned for R. w. Pelham. Dam Emmett suggested that, instead of appearing singly the entire company of entertainers appear together, arranging songs, choruses and instrumental music, both comic and sentimental, for ensemble presentation.

"The participants were seated on the stage in a half-circle and ever since the minstrel show has retained this arrangement in the 'first part.' This first presentation of ensemble minstrels captivated the public. It took New York by storm and the company organized as The Virginia Minstrels. The S. R. O. sign was never taken in during its long run and it later duplicated its success in England. When they returned to America these original minstrels found that a dozen similar organizations were doing a thriving business.

"Emmett later became the head of Bryant's Minstrels, an organization which led in popularity for many years. All minstrels were concluded, in those days, with a 'walk-around' featuring a medley of choruses and dance numbers for the entire company. Bryant, the owner of the show, desired a new popular hit for this phase of the performance and called upon Emmett to provide it. At a Monday morning rehearsal the latter introduced his new song "Dixie.' The melody was infectious and it was used in the performance that night, programmed as "Away down south in the land of cotton."

"No song ever met with such general favor all over the country, in spite of the fact that it was recognized as a song of the 'southland. Emmett never reaped any pecuniary reward for his creation and later many laid claim to its..."
authorship. The New York herald finally established Emmett's claim beyond dispute.

"Mr. Emmett made his last tour of the country with the Al G. Field Minstrels in his eightieth year, retiring thereafter. he is buried near his old home at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and over his grave has been erected a monument to his memory, the donor being James Smith of Ashtabula, Ohio. The stage is indebted to Minstrelsy for many of its brightest stars of comedy.

**Montgomery Advertiser** - October 19, 1920 - Field Minstrels at the Grand next week. "Dean of Minstrelsy" reported to have best show of career.

For a full third of a century Al g. field and his incomparable minstrels have entertained America. Mr. Field has well earned the sobriquet of "The Dean of Minstrelsy" and the announcement of the impending arrival in any city is the signal for congratulations on the part of that large percentage of the American people which loves to be entertained with a good song, a witty joke, a clever dancer and general, all-round wholesome fun.

Mr. Field is celebrating the thirty-fourth year of his producing career this season. His minstrels, 1920-1921 editions, will be in Montgomery Oct. 26 for a two days' engagement at the Grand theatre.

The present version of the field Minstrels is the very last word in this form of theatrical entertainment. It has been staged by Mr. Field with an eye to all that is best in the traditions of minstrelsy with all the frills and up-to-date theatre innovations consistent with the high standard set and maintained by this organization during the past third of a century. It will give local field 'fans' a new show, one that has never been rivaled and one that they will not soon forget.

The big 'first part' this year is nautical in character and is programmed as "The Regetta," being founded on the last international cup race between the American defender and sir Thomas Lipton newest pride of yachts, "shamrock IV." The opening scene shows the American yacht arriving for the start of the race. A scene of mirth ensues with the Jackies ashore and the fun moving fast and furious in true sailor fashion. There follows a naval review, which concludes with a mimic scenic reproduction of the great yacht race.

Next is to be found a highly diverting burlesque on the presidential contest of 1920, the convention of the two great parties and American politics of the day. Presidential candidates are burlesqued with apt characterizations.

The next scene introduces Henri Nellser, the Human Spider, in a mystifying mid-air performance, with the spider feverishly active in the predatory meshes of his aerial web.
The Arkansas Traveler and the hospitality and merry-making incident to a holiday on rumpus ridge next claim attention. The old back-0contry dances of the days of '61 are here contrasted with those of the present. There is to be found the watermelon patch and the fun-loving darkey of the old days. The Arkansas Traveler is a creation that, for wholesome entertainment and genuine artistry has never been equaled in the annals of Minstrelsy.

The fun then delves upon Bert Swor, the production's generalissimo of unctuous comedy, presented in a monologue which is programmed as a "Concoction of conceits all His Own." The musical bellboys come next in high class offerings.

At the conclusion of these and other good things of the minstrel menu comes the delectable dessert- the after piece of classic minstrel tradition. Without it no production of this kind would be complete. Many novelties have been stored up for this phrase of the entertainment and there is a whole bouquet of surprises for the audience.

As has been said Bert Swor heads the company. He is one of the best impersonators of Negro character on the American stage. Others in this year's company are: Harry Srunk, the Caruso of Minstrelsy, who sings everything from grand opera to ragtime. Johnny Healy, famed as the "Parson" and a lifetime member of the 'Field organization; Jimmie Cooper, versatile minstrel comedian and vocalist, wench impersonator, dancer and vocalist; Jack Richards, peerless Welsh tenor: Billy Church, contra-tenor, who has popularized many of the sweet songs of America. Lloyd Gilbert, powerful dramatic tenor; Dolf Kastor, Harry Frillman, popular basso; Grover Schepp, basso; Leslie D. Berry, baritone and interlocutor and John Cartmel, interlocutor and baritone.

No minstrels is complete without its band and in this particular, also, Al G. field's organization is pre-eminient, William Walters has been bandmaster for the field entourage for twenty years and his famous Cold Hand is a synonym for the very best in that delightful form of music which associates itself with the joys of the minstrel parade.

Thomas B. Bryan is in charge of the large and excellent orchestra which the company carries with it and which is responsible for so much of the pleasure of the entertainment.

Trenton Evening Times - April 7, 1921

Negro minstrelsy was never really dead, despite the many times its obituary was written so long as Al G. Field was alive. When it had passed as an institution and an entertainment in New York City and the East, when Colonel Jack Haverly, Billy West and George Primrose were gone. Field was
still gathering his troupes of black-face artists at Columbus, Ohio, for a tour of the Middle West. For thirty-five years he did this and he built up a clientele as loyal to himself and minstrels as Barnum had to his name and the sawdust ring. Down through the Ohio and Mississippi valleys his "unparalleled daily street procession" with band and actors in high silk hats and drab overcoats was a survival of the past as marked as the occasional boat show was of the monster floating palaces of circudom of the fifties.

To Field the traditions of minstrelsy were fascinating and he knew them all. This may have had something to do with his adoption of the show business and his abandonment of banking and farming. Columbus was then the showman's Western centre. At Mount Vernon, not far away, still dwelt old Dan Emmett of Dixie fame, an inexhaustible source of American minstrel lore, who lived over his days of picking the banjo to his own darkey melodies in recounting them. To Field, old Dan was an American troubadour and a minstrel more entitled to fame and recognition than the players who entertained the knights and ladies of medieval castles.

He found, too, that there were distinguished actors who were not averse to acknowledging their indebtedness to early training in Negro Minstrelsy. Edwin Forrest, one of America great tragedians was said to have been the first actor to represent on the stage the plantation darkey in accent, gait and dialect. There was also a tradition that in his boyhood struggles Edwin booth served a short apprenticeship in a wandering Western minstrel troupe. Joseph Jefferson is claimed by Negro minstrels as the youngest actor who ever appeared in burnt cork features. The late William Harris, theatrical manager, enjoyed telling of his days in the '60s and '70s when he was a burnt cork artist, and one of the best known of comic opera stars in one of this season's revivals was a member of a black face song and dance team in the early '80s.

Negro minstrelsy had become a more or less historic institution long before Field formed his company. The first black face act in this country is supposed to have been given at the Federal Street theatre, Boston, in 1799, when a comedian named Young made a great hit by his singing of "The Gay Negro Boy." From then Negro minstrel history is somewhat sketchy until 1842m when Dan Emmett, Frank Brower, William Whitlock and dick Pelham formed their company and a y ear later came to the Chatham Street theatre in this city. One of the high marks in this call of entertainment was the performance of "Daddy" Rice, who is sometimes wrongly credited with being the father of black face minstrelsy. Rice's "Jim Crow" made him famous and the Negro comic opera "Oh Hush!' was written for him, with several songs, such as "Coal Black Rose," that have lived for years.
Whether Field's minstrels, now that its originator and proprietor is dead, will continue is not definitely stated of it passes it will leave the Negro minstrel field without one large remaining similar organization. As an entertainment Negro Minstrels was at its height more than a quarter of a century ago. Primrose, who had been a blackface artist for more than fifty years, died three years ago. He was one of the last of the old-time Negro minstrels.

Black face minstrelsy did its full share to make the world forget its cares and troubles. By its passing vaudeville was the greatest gainer, but there are still old timers who, with a questionable allegiance to movies and modern plays, doubt if the theatregoer benefited greatly by the change.

**Evening Star - October 22, 1922 - Blackface Minstrelsy**

In the business depression which hit the theatrical world, as well as other lines of endeavor, as a natural aftermath of the Great War, it is said, only the old-time minstrel companies failed to suffer.

The public still marched up to the box office and registered it was approval of the time-honored black-face comics and the producers of these attractions were undisturbed by the general cry of hard times.

Many have tried to figure why this era of minstrelsy seems to perpetually touch the public pulse. Emil (Jazz) Casper, whose professional lifetime has been spent in entertaining with the feature concealed beneath a burnt cork surface, has his own theory.

"It registers primarily because it is clean," says Casper, "Your real southern Negro has an exceptionally well developed. Naturally happy-go-lucky and care-free, he is prone to quaint sayings asides, which inevitable hit the funny bone. His laughs are not labored or forced, but come naturally. There is drollness in his languid manner and seeming perpetual fatigue. He is just naturally a humorous character.

"The old-time minstrel shows stress this side of the Negro race. Your modern minstrel, if he would succeed, must also mimic the character as he really is. In that ability was the secret of the wonderful success some of the old-time minstrel men made."

Casper has been a black-faced comedian for nearly a score of years. He began in St. Louis with a Missouri boat show and has appeared continuously since that time with an ebony hue.

**Daily Illinois State Journal - February 20, 1923 - Wilson in plan for minstrelsy**

"America is permitting her famous form of entertainment to die," says Wilson. "This should never be tolerated. Minstrelsy is distinctively American.
It is an American institution, and my hope and prayer to the younger generation of Americans is to keep Minstrelsy forever as their form of amusement.

The great blackface who started in the show business fifty-eight years ago in San Francisco as a spear carrier for a John McCullough show, is just as active as many a performer many years his junior. Wilson was a member of the Haverly show before he, Barlow, Primrose and West formed their organization. With this organization was Beach and Bowers, singers, who later formed their own organization, and then the original; organization later became known as Primrose and West.

"When we appeared as minstrels," said the veteran, "we had to have training. We did not have a wealth of scenery and a bevy of pretty girls to carry us through. The comedians had to be real comedians and the singers had to be real vocalists and harmonists. We had such famous men as Rice, Emerson, Schoolcraft, Cartwright and other great minstrel luminaries of years past.

"Many the day we tread cobblestone pavements in a parade and felt more like going to bed than preparing for two shows, but we gave the shows because we were all enthusiastic. Any number of places we visited we could only procure hard water to wash the black off our faces and we paid a boy a dollar and a half to go a long distance and get us a bucket of rainwater. I think if all the mileage that I have paraded as a minstrel could be totaled it would equal the distance of three times around the world"

Macon Telegraph - March 13, 1923 - Al G. Fields minstrel at the grand theater for two performances today.

The dances of Minstrelsy are virtually all the lineal descendants of the eccentric dances of the colored race. They were first brought to the attention of the American people on the southern plantations and here it was that the first of the great minstrels of this nation copied the forms of dancing which have since become traditional in Minstrelsy.

Negro dancing in the varied and various forms has been the chief feature of the minstrel stage ever since the origin of this form of entertainment, and without the dance of the plantation darkey Minstrelsy would never have attained the place and the popularity it enjoys.

Foremost and well nigh alone, out of the host of contemporaries and imitators of years gone by, the A. G. Field Minstrels, coming to the Grand Theater today, matinee and night, is famous for its gifted and famous exponents of minstrel dances. It returns this season with all its stars intact and Macon is promised a production outclassing anything offered heretofore.
Much of the credit for the fame of the A. G. Field terpsichorean contingent is due to William Doran, who has been with the organization for many years as its dancing director and the originator, instructor and exponent of all the clever dance features in the show. Associated with him are some of the cleverest dancers on the stage today.

May 16, 1924
San Diego Union - June 7, 1925 - Old time song and actors when minstrelsy as in flower.

Patrons of theatres from 1860 to 1900, when minstrelsy was in flower, will smile when they recall Billy Emerson, one of the most popular men ever on the stage singing his big sunflower song. It seems as far back as "Jim Crow" or "Shoo Fly, Don't Bother Me."

Minstrelsy was at its peak in the seventies and eighties. So popular was this kind of entertainment there were more than 30 minstrel companies on the road and several in the cities, like Christy's. Bryant's moved from lower Broadway up to fourteenth Street, a swell uptown locality of that time.

Birch, Wambold and Backus organized the famous San Francisco Minstrels in California in 1864, and after traveling across the country to one and two-night stands they located at 585 Broadway, new York, and remained there for a number of years. Bill Birch making the old house vibrate with his bass voice that was like a great melodious deep-toned bell in "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep." During the nineties Minstrelsy began to disintegrate and very little of it was carried over into the present century. Except in small acts in vaudeville, none of the 30 and 40 men companies with their big orchestras
and brass bands and fancy street parades held together until 1910. The Georgia minstrels, a company of real Negroes, are still traveling.

Old Performers

Nearly all the old performers have passed over the great divide. Many of them were earnest, practical Christians. Take George Wilson, the original monologist and almost incomparable in that line. He got the people in a jolly good humor and receptive frame of mind ready to catch anything he said, and he would drop the comedy for the tragic and recite "Make a Pal of Your Wife," in such an impressive way it stayed with them. Dan Emmett did the same thing relating "Life is a Funny Proposition After All." Those two men did more good in the world than a dozen long-faced, narrow-minded preachers who create the impression that anyone who sticks his nose inside a theatre is going to the everlasting bow-wows.

"Dixie" was written by Dan Emmett as a minstrel marching song and it was first sung in public in New York in 1859. It was later adopted by the south as its war song. Why is it, since minstrelsy went out, we do not have any songs that everybody sings, hums or whistles "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," "Uncle Ned," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Miss Lucy Long" and many others? A well known woman writer had to go down a dark, narrow street to her home one night and was terrified to see a shadowy form moving along ahead until the boy broke out whistling "Little Brown Jug." She got brave and caught up with him, and when she reached home she wrote a poem on "The whistling boy," which closed with, "Heaven will not be Heaven to me unless there's a Boy Whistling there."

Created laughter

Anyone who can create laughter is a benefactor to the human race, and Lew Dockstader did his share of that not only as an end man but by standing up before the audience and prompting to join in the choruses of such songs as "Everybody Works But Father."

There was an out-of-the-way restaurant on Haratio Street in Greenwich Village called "The Ham Bone end," reached across a littered yard, where a lot of cronies, artists and writers used to meet at meals and most anything was likely to happen. One winter night in 1868 a young man stood up and declaimed is verses in such a passionate manner and they seemed to have so much merit, I asked him for a copy and took them to Ben Hogan, an instructor in and composer of banjo music in the village. Hogan never has had an equal as a banjo player in this country. he never thumped or strummed the banjo but played it with that rich, sweet melody of the old-time cabin Negro of the south, and when he brought that song out in the reign of the Mulligan
guards at Harrigan and Harts he held the audience entranced with his clear baritone singing:

**A Fisherman's Daughter**

"I've been caught in a net
By a dear little pet.
Her eyes are as bright
As the deep rolling sea:
She's a fisherman's daughter,
who lives o'er the water.
She's going to be married
next Sunday to me."

Hogan's banjo playing stirred up the real "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny" feeling.

**Primrose and West**

Primrose and West's minstrels were a household word throughout the land and children looked forward to their coming, Knowing they would see and hear the very best in that line of amusement. After being together for 30 years they had a friendly separation. Primrose had a good company and introduced many novelties. Primrose's dancing was beyond compare. In his poetry of motion act he introduced the soft shoe silent style of dancing. He was a perfect fashion plate and a revelation in a street style of suit of shimmering gray silk and a white straw hat, an innovation and a departure from the fancy colored tights they had been wearing for dancing acts.

Primrose would never allow thundering playing by an orchestra that drowned everything but its own noise for his dancing in the scene. For his dancing in the scene "Down Where the Cotton Blossoms Grow" he had a medley of in the Sweet Bye and Bye," "Grandfather's Clock" and "Swanee River," played soft and low and the artistic easy grace of his movements have not been duplicated. He could have been engaged permanently in New York but had retired to San Diego and died here in 1919.

Most all our actors of today who have gained prominence in white-face in different times have done their bit in burnt cork. Julian Eltinge, Chauncy Olcott, Raymond Hitchcock, Denman Thompson, Francis Wilson, Eddie Foy, father of a whole company of Foys, and many others, first did "Old black Joe," "Down on the Wabash," or some such in black-face. It will be hard to equal Delahanter and Hengier in "My Little Bunch of Roses," or "Oh Jane,
She Isn't Just the Same," "Honey Boy." Evans caught the people singing "We sat by the river, you and I." or his own composition. "In the Good Old Summer Time," which was one of the most popular songs of the time.

Minstrelsy is the only thing women did not seem to take to or make a success off. Lotta, Loie Fuller, Trixy, Friganzi and a few others tried it, but soon gave it up. Loie Fuller told the writer in Paris where she was doing her famous serpentine and fire dances, that the great objection to it was "the burnt cork took too kindly to long tresses."

There are very few of the old time minstrel performers in action today. McIntyre & Heath, after more than 50 years together are still before the public and one can almost imagine he can hear their joyous, cheerful voices in "There Will be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight."

**Repository (Canton, Ohio) - April 16, 1930**

Among the quaint old institutions which may be revived and become popular after a long rest among the moth ball is Minstrelsy. At least a minstrel show is to be staged in New York at one of the so-called legitimate theaters in the "Roaring Forties."

It is not easy to conjecture just how New Yorkers will take to any kind of entertainment, but if they show a liking for "Kilpatrick's Old Time Minstrels," which will open next Saturday night it is altogether possible that other troupes of the same character will be organized.

Minstrelsy once occupied an important place in the amusement world. Its death knell was sounded when the public began to go i for musical comedy and revue in which the glorified American girl became the object of high powered exploitation. With such competition the entirely a male cast of minstrels held little attraction.

For many years it was an unwritten law that Canton's Grand Opera House should open its fall season with a minstrel show. There were numerous companies offering that type of entertainment-Al G. Field, Primrose and West, which was later primrose and Dockstader, Hi-Henry and many others. The arrival of those shows was awaited with keen expectancy.

They always carried a band which paraded the streets at noon each day of the engagement, and which again played in front of the theater before the matinee and evening performances. The bands were noted for the lively tempo at which they invariably blared out their music. The accentuation of the slide trombone sections was a characteristic feature of their style. Their cadence and colorful costumes together with their swaggering bearing made those parades an institution that never failed to draw large crowds.
Another reason for the passing of minstrelsy was the fact that little effort was made by the producers to keep abreast of the times. When ragtime passed out of the picture to make way for jazz the managers seemed unable to find any means of coping with the newer idiom.

If the Kilpatrick show proves able to bridge the chasm of the two eras, it is quite probable that the blare of the minstrel band may again be heard on the streets of Canton.


We attend the public concert on Tuesday evening and were there led to some reflections on our American minstrelsy; by which, we mean the songs, ballads and airs, national, sentimental and humorous, which are peculiar to our country. We might better have said we were reflecting upon our want of an American Minstrelsy. For there is probably no civilized nation on earth which is no destitute of national songs and airs as our own. A taste for music is not wanting in our country as is evinced by the general lore for instrumental performances, and the excellence of our sacred music. But we have no originality in our music, we have no popular songs and national airs of our own, but have imported from abroad all the songs and ballads which are general favorites. Moore's songs and Barry Cornwall's are as well known and as much sung in this country as in England. Songs: "Auld Lang Syne" "Bonny Doon," and "John Anderson," in spite of the Scottish idiom, are sung with so much enthusiasm by a certain class of our people, so they are among the hills of Scotland. But where are our own popular songs. We have to think hard to find more than two or three to place upon the catalogue. We name first and foremost "Yankee Doodle," then "Hail Columbia," "Adams and Liberty" and the "Star Spangled Banner," and then we are at a stand.

But who can sing even these? The first verse of words of the former, "Father and I went down to camp along with Major Goodwin."

We believe are pretty generally known, but who knows or sings "Hail Columbia" or the noble national song which would rank with the finest national songs of any country, "The Star Spangled Banner." They are as much unknown as if written in a foreign tongue or as if the sentiments they breathe were such as Americans are stranger to. We have indeed within a few years past introduced a national patriotic song which has become a general favorite. It is called "America" and is sung with great patriotic fervor at all the Fourth of July celebrations in our churches. What must be the surprise of an Englishman who heard the singing of this ode to find that we had stolen the
English national air of God save the King, and arranged it to a song dedicated to America the "sweet land of liberty." So little, do we preserve this national spirit in our music, that we have never appropriated to ourselves any other national air than Yankee Doodle, and are indebted to the courtesy of the English bands play this air with wonderful effect. Although we may be digressing a little from our subject, we cannot forbear speaking of the effect which this air had upon us, as we once heard it played by the band of an English regiment at Montreal. We went with a party of ladies and gentleman from the States, two or three years since, to see the parade of some British troops, at their barracks. They were commanded by a noble looking officer of Grenadiers who had lost his arm at Talavars. A superb band of thirty or forty performers was playing as the troops were going through their exercise. After the parade, the commanding officer came up to the ladies and with great politeness expressed his pleasure at seeing the American ladies at their parade, and remarked that the band was at their service, and he would thank them to suggest any air which would be agreeable to them. A bright eyed, quick witted girl in the party, instantly said that she would like to hear "God save the King." the officer bowed and turning immediately, said to the leader of the band, "Play God save the King, but first play Hail Columbia," and in an instant the air of our nation was echoing through the walls of the British garrison from a band of British soldiers, and with such a thrilling effect as we never before had known in music and as we marked the kindling looks of the Americans and the Englishman as these two airs were playing, we felt that music could touch a chord of patriotic feeling which nothing else could reach.

We were wrong when we said that we had no more native songs than those we mentioned. We forgot the music which is at present making the most important figure in the American Minstrelsy. We mean those sublime effusions of which "Jim Crow," "Zip Coon," and the "Raccoon Hunt," are the best specimens. These have had an unparalleled popularity. Every boy in the street sings them. The most polished belles in the city have not disdained to carol the sapient and polished language of Messrs. Crow & Coon at their piano fortes. A foreigner, a German we believe, who had lately visited this country, carried home with him an immense collection of these Negro songs and very seriously exhibited them to the amateurs as a choice and valuable collection of the most popular Native American melodies.

The Americans often rebut the charge of the English critics, that we have no literature, but surely we cannot boast much when we are wanting in the simplest and most important branch of literature, the songs and ballads. The person who said, "give me the songs of a people and I care not who makes their laws," did not over estimate their influence upon a national character.
We want some genius like Burns to rise from the people, with a heart glowing with the purest and best of American feeling who shall strike in his songs those chords of love and patriotism which vibrate in the hearts of the whole people; one who shall be the minstrel, not of the refined few, or of the vulgar many, but of the whole American people. How much such a post might do for our institutions, how much might he elevate our national feeling, how much refine and purify the people? We see the power of the minstrel in marking the effects of the poetry of Burns, Beranger and Dibdin. How many a hero has Burns made by his "Scots who has;" How much peaceful domestic feeling by his John Anderson; how much has he diminished the dread of departure to 'that undiscovered country, by his "Land of the Deal," and how much sentiment and poetry has he broadened over homely, humble life, by his thousand other immortal songs. Beranger, the present powerful song writer of the French people, has by is political songs, exerted a complete control over the popular mind. Although confined in prison for his political influence, he would circulate his songs among the people-They would be sung in every part of Paris, until the people were sometimes lashed into a perfect frenzy. The effect of Dibdin's nautical songs was no less remarkable. It has been said that the peculiar bravery of the British seamen might be attributed in a great degree to the effect of these songs. Their value was so much appreciated by the British government, that a pension was settle upon him for the national service which his songs had rendered. Low as this branch of poetry is with us now, we de for poetry and music is growing in our country, and we hope yet that some Burns or Beranger may spring up from among us who will give a character to the American Minstrelsy.
Black Jupiter - 1848
1863
Police Minstrels

Minstrel Songs

1829 - The Coal Black Rose

1830s

1830 - Fair Ella Lee
1832 - Clare de Kitchen
1833 - The Bee-Gum
1837 - Zip Coon
1837 - Backside Albany
1837 - Crow Quadrilles - Zip Coon, My Long Tail Blue, Jim Brown,
Gumbo Chaff, Dinah Waltz, Long Time Ago, Sambo’s Dress to
He Bred’ren, Black Sit of Albany

1840s

1840 - Jonny Boker
1840 - The Female Auctioneer
1840 - Ole Tare River (Sweeney)
1840 - Ole Virginny Break Down (Sweeney)
1840 - Tell Me Josey when You Bin
1840 - Ride On Darkies
1840 - Jumbo Jum
1841 - The Millers Maid
1841 - The Alpine Hunters
1841 - Was it Not At One
1841 - The Tyrolese War Song
1841 - The Sweetheart
1841 - The Sailor’s Boys Carol
1841 - Tyrolese Melodies - Felix Waltz, Margaret Lisette, Lonis
1841 - Moonlight Boat Glee
1841 - When the Matin Bell
1841 - The Mountain Maid’s Invitation
1842 - Miss Lucy Long
1842 - Evening At Home
1842 - The Blind Boy
1843 - “Twill Nebber Do To Big It Up So (Virginia Minstrels)
1843 - Ethiopian Quadrilles - Whar Did You Cum From, Jenny Get Your
    Hoe Cake Done, Charleston Gals, Dandy Jim From Carolina,
    Old Tare River
1843 - Mother’s Bible (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - Our Father’s Hearth (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - Stop Dat Knocking
1843 - We Are happy and Free (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - Old King Crow (Virginia Minstrels)
1843 - O Lud Gals Big Me (Dan Emmett)
1843 - My Old Aunt Sally (Dan Emmett & Virginia Serenaders)
1843 - The Old Granite State (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - The Snow Storm
1843 - Young Bowshins Bride
1843 - Cape Ann (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - Boatman’s song (Virginia Minstrels)
1843 - De Boatman’s Dance (Dan Emmett)
1843 - Axes to Grind (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - Vespers Sung at Sea (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - We’re All Cutting (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - The Cot Were We Were Born (Hutchinson Family)
1843 - Cujos Wild Hunt (Lutzows (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1844 - Dandy Jim of Caroline (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1844 - Negro Medley - The Boatman’s Dance, Jimmy Come Along My Darling, Dan Tucker, Dandy Jim, Lucy Long
1844 - Oh Poor Miss Lucy Neale, Dandy Jim
1844 - Whar Did You Come From (Virginia Serenaders)
1844 - Mrs. Tucker
1844 - Alabama Joe (Virginia Serenaders)
1844 - The Band of Niggers From “Old Virginia State)
1844 - Old Bull & Ole Dan Tucker (Buckley Family)
1844 - The Old Gray Goose
1844 - Walk Along, John (Virginia Serenaders)
1844 - Ole Pee Dee (Virginia Serenaders)
1844 - Miss Lucy Neal
1844 - The Jolly Raftsman
1844 - Songs of the Congo Melodists
1844 - Do Come Along Old Sandy, Boy
1844 - Lubly Fan Will You Cum Out Tonight?
1844 - Nigger Put down Dat Jug (Virginia Minstrels)
1844 - Phillissee Charcoal
1844 - Cynthia Sue
1844 - Going Ober de Mountain
1844 - It Will nebber Do To Big it Us So.
1844 - The Yaller Gal
1844 - The New York Gals
1844 - Quick Step Motion
1844 - The Charleston Gals
1844 - The Indian Nation
1844 - Dance on the Flat Boat
1844 - Dandy Jim (Virginia Minstrels)
1844 - Corn field Green (Dan Emmett)
1844 - Charleston Gals
1844 - The Raftsman
1844 - Walk Jaw Bone (Virginia Serenaders)
1944 - Pompy O’Smash (Dan Emmett)
1844 - Who’s Dat Digga Dar a Peepin?
1844 - Yaller Corn
1844 - Yaller Gals (Virginia Serenaders)
1844 - Boston Gals
1845 - Years Ago
1845 - Where Can the Soul Find Rest?
1845 - The Wooneac Serenade (Baker Family)
1845 - The Mountain Ware
1845 - The Banjo
1845 - Miss Nancy Paul
1845 - I’m Smilin’ on de Old Canal
1845 - O Where is the Spot That I Was Born
1845 - The Sailor’s Boy’s Lament
1845 - Miss Julia is a Handsome Gal
1845 - Oh Give me A Home If In Foreign Land
1846 - O Lady, Sweetest Lady
1846 - Ethiopian Medley - Lucy Long, Lucy Neal, Jim Crack Corn,
       Going Ober de Mountain, Rosa Lee, Dearest Mae, Oh Susanna
1846 - The Rose of Alabama
1846 - The Bridge of Sighs (Hutchinson Family)
1846 - A Farmer’s Song
1846 - She Sleeps in the Valley
1846 - Oh! Wake me Up In De Morning
1846 - De Skeeters Do Bite
1846 - De Banks ob de Ohio
1846 - De Blue Tail Fly
1847 - De Color’d Fancy Ball (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1847 - The Barber’s Shop
1847 - Walk in the Parlor (Christy Minstrels)
1847 - Sleeping I Dreamed Love
1847 - Alleghanians Boat Glee
1847 - The Shepherd’s Cottage
1847 - Away in Mexico
1847 - Away to de sugar Cane field (Virginia Serenaders)
1847 - Picayune Butter
1847 - Carry Me Back to Virginia (Christy Minstrels)
1847 - At Eve I Miss Thee when Alone
1847 - The Old Bell
1847 - The Parting Requiem (Baker Family)
1847 - Oh! Home of My Boyhood
1847 - Take Me Back To Old Virginny
1847 - Oh Lubly Fanny Let Me In
1847 - Uncle Gabriel (Ethiopian Singers/Christy Minstrels)
1847 - My Pretty Yaller Gal (Christy Minstrels)
1847 - My Lovely Virginia Gal (Christy Minstrels)
1847 - Jamie’s on the Stormy Sea
1847 - Plantation Melodies (Virginia Serenaders)
1847 - The Lament of the Blind Orphan Girl
1847 - Old High Rock (Hutchinson Family)
1847 - Old Joe (Ethiopian Singers)
1847 - The song of the Shirt
1847 - The Spider and the Fly
1847 - The Lilly of the Valley (Christy Minstrels)
1847 - Rosa Dear (Christy Minstrels)
1847 - Billy Boy
1847 - Brother, Come Home
1847 - The Burman Lover
1847 - The Negro Fisherman (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1848 - The Dark Sett - Mary Blane, Old Joe, Carry Me Back, Stop That Knocking, Darkeys Polka, Phantom Chorus, Dear Uncle Ned, My Sally I Shall See.
1848 - My Skiff is on the Shore (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1848 - Stop That Knocking
1848 - Rosa Lee
1848 - Julius Quadrilles - A Life By the Galley fire, My Lubby Mae, Racoon Hunter, Jim Crack Corn.
1848 - Tambourine Polka
1848 - Snow Drop Ann
1848 - Gone to Alabama
1848 - Julin’s Polka (Christy)
1848 - Oh Susanna (Christy)
1848 - Let’s Be Gay (Christy)
1848 - History ob de world
1848 - Come Back Steban
1848 - The Cottage of My Mother (Hutchinson Family)
1848 - Buffalo Gals
1848 - Black Jupiter (Campbell Minstrels)
1848 - Roll On Silver Moon (Marker Family)
1848 - Poor Nelly Ann (Campbell Minstrels)
1848 - De Ole Jaw Bone
1848 - The Old Gum Tree
1848 - Way Down South In Alabama (Christy Minstrels)
1848 - Oh Sally Wite
1848 - Bella Rosa (Campbell Minstrels)
1848 - Belle of Baltimore
1848 - Oh Carry Me Back (Christy Minstrels)
1848 - Oh Dearest Joe, You Look So Hansum (Christy Minstrels)
1848 - Susan Dear (Campbell Minstrels)
1848 - The new Mary Blaine (Christy Minstrels)
1848 - My Lubby Dinah Mae
1848 - Let’s Be Gay
1848 - Oh Come to de Husking (Christy Minstrels)
1848 - Revolutionary Echoes
1848 - Rosa May (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1848 - Suke of Tennessee
1848 - Wake Up Jake
1848 - We’ll Have A Little Dance Tonight (Christy Minstrels)
1848 - Brack Eyed Susianna
1849 - Salut A Washington, or, Gems of the South
1849 - Two Ethiopian Polkas
1849 - The Bonnie Blue Eyes
1849 - We Parted Forever
1849 - Commence ye Darkies All! (White Serenaders)
1849 - Coralie (Ethiopian Serenaders)
1849 - The California Gold Diggers (Hutchinson Family)
1849 - Rosa’s Wedding Day (White Serenaders)
1849 - Ten Years Ago (Baker Family)
1849 - The Red Man’s Chant
1849 - Old John Brown
1849 - The Virginia Rose bud (Virginia Serenaders)
1849 - The Styrian Exile
1849 - The Song of Blacnhe Alpen
1849 - The Old Pine Tree (White Serenaders)
1849 - Julius Bride (Christy Minstrels)
1849 - O come To me My Own True Love (White Serenaders)
1849 - Not For Gold or Precious Stones
1849 - Ladies won’t You Marry
1849 - The Lone Starry Hours
1849 - The Mackerel Catchers

1850s

1850 - Massa Sound is Sleeping
1850 - Gal From the south (Campbell Minstrels)
1850 - Old Sam Grid Iron (New Orleans Serenaders)
1850 - What Shall this Darkey Do (Christy)
1850 - Poor Aunt Dinah (New Orleans Serenaders)
1850 - Binger on the Rhine (Campbell Minstrels)
1850 - Brother speak in Whispers Light (Hutchinson Family)
1850 - Good Old Days of Yore *Hutchinson Family)
1850 - Happy Are We Tonight
1850 - The Hunter’s Bride
1850 - Home Again
1850 - Horticulture Wife (Hutchinson Family)
1850 - I'm off For Charleston
1850 - Jane Monroe (Christy Minstrels)
1850 - Jenny Lane (New Orleans Serenaders)
1850 - Jimey at the Gate (New Orleans Serenaders)
1850 - Katy Dean (Christy)
1850 - The Lone Starry House
1850 - If I Were A Voice (Hutchinson Family)
1851 - Good Bye Linda Love
1851 - I’m Only Sixteen
1851 - Songs of the Alleghanians
1851 - Faded Flowers
1851 - Fi, Hi, Hi (Fellows Minstrels)
1851 - Old Virginny Never Tire (Christy Minstrels)
1851 - She Sleeps in the Grave
1851 - Nancy Till
1851 - Come Take A Sail (Woods Minstrels)
1851 - The Haunted Ground
1851 - The Laughing Darkies (Fellows Minstrels)
1851 - The Angelic Guardian
1851 - Poor Old Slave
1851 - Sensitive Coon
1851 - She Sleeps in the Grave
1851 - The standing Collar (Hutchinson Family)
1852 - The Fairy’s Serenade
1852 - Massa’s In the Cold Ground (Foster)
1852 - A Little More Cider (Fellows Minstrels)
1852 - Jenny Rose (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Tilda Horn (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Jordan Am A Hard Doad to Tabel
1852 - Julius Trip To the World’s Fair (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Old Jessio Ethiopian song (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Poor Uncle Tom
1852 - Hush A By Baby (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Fare Thee Well Kitty Dear
1852 - My Mother! She is Aged No
1852 - Hush A By Baby (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - The Household Clock
1852 - The Dismal Swamp
1852 - Down on the Farm (New Orleans Serenaders)
1852 - Each Deed That We Do
1852 - De Old Corn Mill (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Off for Baltimore My Sally Dear (White’s Ethiopian Serenaders)
1852 - Christy’s Old Folks Are gone
1852 - Phoebe Lee (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Old Jessy (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Poor Uncle Tom (Wood’s Minstrels)
1852 - Dinah’s Wedding Day (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - The Colored Orphan Boy (Campbells Minstrels)
1852 - Tom Loker’s Song (Uncle Tom’s Cabin)
1852 - The Georgian Slave
1852 - The Returned Californian
1852 - Cic’ly Dear (Christy Minstrels)
1852 - Young Folks at Home (Woods Minstrels)
1852 - The Billet Doux (Wood’s Minstrels)
1852 - I’ll Throw Myself Away (Christy Minstrels)
1853 - I’m Going Home
1853 - Yes ‘tis true That Thy Katy now is Sleeping (Woods Minstrels)
1853 - Uncle Tom’s Gone To Rest (Malden Megatherian Minstrels)
1853 - Good Old Jeff (Christy)
1853 - Come Take A Sail (Woods Minstrels)
1853 - Lilly Bill (Buckley’s New Orleans Serenaders)
1853 - Darkies Boat Song (Murphy, West & Peels Original Minstrels)
1853 - Yo Yah Yo Strike the Old Banjo (Christy Minstrels)
1853 - Do They Miss me At Home
1853 - Ella Rae (Woods Minstrels)
1853 - Etty Way (Christy Minstrels)
1853 - Yes, We Miss Thee (Buckley’s Minstrels)
1853 - Annie Leigh
1853 - Carolina Belle
1853 - Yo! Yah! Yo! Strike the Old Banjo (Christy)
1853 - Rosa May (Buckely’s Serenaders)
1853 - She’s Black, but That's No Matter (Christy)
1853 - Songs of the Campbells
1853 - The Melodies of Kunkel’s Nightingale Opera Troupe
1853 - Poor Sister Sue
1853 - Christy’s The Other side of Jordan
1853 - The Grave of Ben Bolt
1853 - Old River Farm
1853 - Little Topsy’s song (Hutchinson Family)
1853 - We Are Coming Sister Mary (Christy's Minstrels)
1853 - Julius From Kentucky (Christy)
1853 - Kitty Crow Ballad
1853 - Sweet Home Receive Me (Woods Minstrels)
1853 - We Are Coming, Sister Mary (Christy)
1853 - Poor robin’s Growing (Wood’s Minstrels)
1854 - Old Uncle Samuel
1854 - Poor Elsie Ballad (Campbell Minstrels)
1854 - Let Us Speak of a Man as We Find H8im (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1854 - Down the river down the Ohio (Christy)
1854 - The Ghost of Uncle Tom (Hutchinson Family)
1854 - And Dat’s Another Pull Back (Campbell’s Minstrels)
1854 - Home Delight (Christy & Woods Minstrels)
1854 - Hop De Rood’n Doo (Campbell Minstrels)
1854 - Lilly White (Buckley’s New Orleans Serenaders)
1854 - Topsy Never Was Born
1854 - We Meet Again (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1854 - Wait For the Wagon
1854 - Wake! Dinah, Wake! (Christy, Woods Minstrels)
1854 - The Wanderer’s Return
1854 - Olive Brown
1854 - Mary Gray
1854 - The Old Cottage Clock (Campbell's Minstrels)
1854 - My Old House (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1854 - Oh Bid Me Not Forget (Buckely’s Serenaders)
1854 - The Dear Old Home We Loved So Much (original Georgia Minstrels)
1854 - Old Josey
1854 - Few Days (Christy Minstrels)
1854 - Susan Jane (Christy Minstrels)
1854 - Susy Anna Simson (Christy & Woods Minstrels)
1854 - Soft Glides the Sea
1854 - Be Cheery Boys, Be Cheery
1854 - Gently down the Stream (G. Christy & Woods Minstrels)
1854 - Keemo Kimo (G. Christy)
1854 - Ring the Bell Fanny
1854 - Carry Me Home To Tennessee (Christy Minstrels)
1854 - Better Times Are Coming Friends (Dumbleton’s Minstrels)
1855 - Softly, Lightly, Sweetly Sing
1855 - Twinkling Stars Are Laughing (G. Christy 7 Woods Minstrels)
1855 - Song For Mayor Wood
1855 - Luta (Campbell’s Minstrels)
1855 - Old Play Ground
1855 - She Had Such Wheedling Ways (Burkley’s Minstrels)
1855 - Old Aunt Neal
1855 - Poor Charlie
1855 - Father John (Christy & Woods Minstrels)
1855 - Blue Violets (Campbell’s Minstrels)
1855 - Old Bob Ridley
1855 - Massa’s Old Plantation
1855 - Hast Thou Forgotten (Christy & Woods Minstrels)
1855 - Minnie Moore
1855 - A Country Home
1855 - My Mother’s Memory (Hooley’s Minstrels)
1855 - Old Aunty Neal (Amateur Minstrels of New Orls.)
1856 - Samuel Johnsing
1856 - Gentle Jenny Gray
1856 - When I Saw Sweet Nellie Home
1856 - Loose the Reins & Let her Went (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1856 - Lubby Cynthie
1856 - Cheer Up Sam
1856 - Root Hog, or Die (Christy & Woods Minstrels)
1856 - Where Dwell The Dead
1856 - The Old Brown Cow
1856 - Little Ones At Home (Christy Minstrels)
1856 - The Old Old Home
1856 - My Mary Ann
1857 - My Grandma’s Advice
1857 - The Aristocratic Nigger (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1857 - Oh Darkie don’t You Linger
1857 - If Your Feet is Pretty, Show It (Campbell’s Minstrels)
1857 - Oh May Jane
1858 - Mrs. Lofty And I
1858 - Tilda Horn (Christy Minstrels)
1858 - The Old Mill Wheel
1858 - Folks That Put on Airs
1858 - Peter Gray-The Music of Morris Bros. (Pell& Huntel’s Minstrels
1858 - Down in Alabam (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1858 - A down Easter’s Visit to St. Louis (Birch & Bowers Minstrels)
1858 - Johnny Equal is Not Here (Wood’s Minstrels
1858 - Johnny’s Equal is Not Here
1859 - On Old Potomac’s Shore (Woods Minstrels)
1859 - Sally Primer (Christy)
1859 - Gentle Millie Gay (Morris Bros. Minstrels)
1859 - With My Banjo On My Knee
1859 - Hannah’s at the Window binding Shoes (Hutchinson Family)
1859 - I’m turning Gray Dear Kate (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1859 - In the Louisianna (Morris Bros, Pell & Trowbridge Minstrels)
1859 - Come sit By My Side

1860s

1860 - Ella Leene (Buckley Serenaders)
1860 - Away Down in Dixie Land (Hooley & Campbell Minstrels)
1860 - Tapioca
1860 - Up the Hudson (G. Christy’s Minstrels)
1860 - Happy Land of Canaan (Original Campbell Minstrels)
1860 - Billy Patterson (Dan Emmett-Bryant’s Minstrels)
1860 - The Octroo1860 - Old K-Y-Ky (Dan Emmett/Bryant’s Minstrels)
1860 - Over the River (Hutchinson Family)
1860 - Jenny The Pride of the Glen (Morris Bros. El & Trowbridge Minstrels)
1861 - Mabel Clare (Skiff & Gaylord Minstrels)
1861 - Raw Recruits (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1861 - Whack Rou’ De-Dow (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1861 - Aura Lea (Hooley & Campbell Minstrels)
1862 - The Little Market woman (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1862 - Gentle Ammie Ray (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1862 - Sally come Up (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1862 - Song of the Negro Boatman
1862 - Poor rosy, Poor Gal
1862 - Isn’t It a Wonder (Wood’s Minstrels)
1862 - I Can’t Help Dat
1862 - Come in and shut The Door (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1863 - High Daddy (Dan Emmet/Bryant’s Minstrels)
1863 - I Am Dreaming Sally Dreaming (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1863 - The Ham Fat Man
1863 - Katie Lee & Willie Gray
1863 - Kiss Me Mother, Ere I Die (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1863 - I’d Dream forever More (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1863 - The black Brigade (Dan Emmett/Bryant’s Minstrels)
1863 - Dearest Sister Think of Me (wood’s Minstrels)
1863 - Come Back Massa (Woods Minstrels)
1863 - Com Back Massa, Come Back (Wood’s Minstrels)
1864 - Her Name was Isabella (Buckley’s Serenaders)
1864 - Will You Remember Me? (Wm. Hays/Arlington, Kelly & Leon’s Minstrels)
1864 - Polly Perkins of Abington Green
1864 - Road to Richmond (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1864 - Isabella and her Gingham Umbrella
1864 - My Polly Ann
1864 - Nancy Fat
1864 - Nigger Will Be Nigger (W. Hays/Arlington & Kelly & Leon Minstrels)
1864 - Oh! Think of Me (Wood’s Minstrels)
1865 - I’m Happy the Day is Long (Wood’s Minstrels)
1865 - Pleasant Dreams of Long Ago (Hooleý’s Minstrels)
1865 - The Jersey Lovers (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1865 - That’s What’s the Matter with Hannah (Murphy & Smith’s Minstrels)
1865 - Nicodemus Johnson
1865 - Fred
1865 - Striking Ile (Dan Emmett/Bryant’s Minstrels)
1865 - Susan’s Sunday Out
1865 - The Gal With the Rogueish Eye
1865 - That’s what The Niggers Then Will Do (Arlington, Kelly & Leon Minstrels)
1866 - Foot Prints on the Snow (Duprez & Benedict’s Minstrels)
1866 - Young Ephs Jubilee (Kelly & Leon Minstrels)
1866 - My Little Mary Ann (San Francisco Minstrels)
1866 - I’ll Never forget Thee
1866 - Waterfalls & Frizzes
1866 - O Would I Were a Fly (San Francisco Minstrels)
1867 - O What’s This World Coming To (Carnecross & Dixey Minstrels)
1867 - Old Roger the tin Maker Man (Hutchinson Family)
1867 - Pretty Little Sarah (Griffin & Christy Minstrels)
1867 - Little Sam (Wm. Hays)
1867 - Nell the Little Belle (Newcomb’s Minstrels)
1867 - Two O'clock in the Morning (Newcomb’s Minstrels)
1867 - The Two sisters (San Francisco Minstrels)
1867 - I’se a Travlin’ to de Grave
1867 - Wreck of Charlestown Bridge
1867 - The Yaller Gal That winked At Me (Sam Sharpley’s Minstrels)
1867 - The Black Cook
1867 - Cinda Slow
1867 - Little Sam (Wm Hays)
1867 - Bonnie Scotland, I Adore Thee (Newcomb’s Minstrels)
1867 - Happy Uncle Joe
1867 - Don’t Bet Your Money on a shanghai
1867 - Early in the Morning O’ (Kelly & Leon’s Minstrels)
1867 - She’s Lovely as a Rose
1868 - The Gay Young Clerk in the Dry Good Store (Wm. Hays/Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1868 - Jennie Gossen (Carncross & Dixey Minstrels)
1868 - George Erastus William Henry Brown
1868 - Darkey’s Suffrage (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1868 - Then the Band Played
1868 - Waiting for a Broadway Stage (San Francisco Minstrels)
1868 - Gustavo’s Adolphus Green (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1868 - I’ll Be Waiting in the Dell (Newcomb's Minstrels)
1868 - Jenny Gossen
1868 - Josiphus Orange Blossom (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1868 - Mistress Jinks of Madison Square (Wm. Hays/Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1868 - My Father Sould Charcoal (Cotton & Sharpley’s Minstrels)
1868 - Adolphus Morning Glory
1868 - The big sunflower (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1868 - My Jenny Jerusha Jane (Hooley’s Minstrels)
1868 - Who Say the Darkies won’t Fight? (Wood’s Minstrels)
1868 - Personal in the New York Herald (Kelly & Leon’s Minstrels)
1868 - Pop, Pop, Pop (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1869 - Minstrel Nobby Samuel (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1869 - He Talks Out in His sleep (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1869 - I fancied her An Angel (Newcomb’s Minstrels)
1869 - They Say My foot is Big
1869 - Coming from the Matinee (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1869 - Down in the Valley where the Daisies Grow (San Francisco Minstrels)
1869 - Clemetina Moored-Girl in the Dollar store
1869 - The Girl with the Grecian Bend (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1869 - The Girl with the Roman Nose (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1869 - Have Charity (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1869 - Shew Fly
1869 - She’s Such a Pretty Blonde (Duprez & Benedict minstrels)
1869 - Something Good to Wear (Emerson, Allen & Manning Minstrels)
1869 - Old Uncle Ben (Wm. Hays)

1870s

1870 - Strawberry Joe
1870 - The Way My Daddy Went (San Francisco Minstrels)
1870 - Never Push a Man going Down Hill (Skiff's & Wheeler Minstrels)
1870 - Oh! Hannah! How’s Your Ma? (Carncross & Dixey’s Minstrels)
1870 - Carry me Back to Old Virginny (James Bland)
1870 - Carry the News! (Simmons & Slocum’s Minstrels)
1870 - Fly Shoe
1871 - Norah Mavoureen (Durpez & Benedict’s Minstrels)
1871 - We’ll Be Dar!
1871 - The Little Old Cabin in the Lane (Wm Hays/Manning’s Minstrels)
1871 - Put Yourself in His Place (San Francisco Minstrels. Newcomb’s & Arlington’s Minstrels)
1871 - The Orphan Emigrant
1871 - Good Bye, Liza Jane
1871 - The Last Great Sensation song “Good Enough”
1871 - Sitting by the Fireside
1872 - Under de Mango Tree!
1872 - Oh! Sam (Wm. Hays)
1872 - Rosey Posedy (San Francisco Minstrels)
1872 - The Old House ain’t What It Used To Be (Org. Georgia Minstrels)
1872 - The Old Home ain’t what It Used To Be (Original Georgia Minstrels)
1873 - Avoidupois (Frank Dumont/ Duprez & Benedict Minstrels)
1874 - Old Caleb (Wm. Hays)
1874 - What Little Sweetheart Said (Bryant’s Minstrels)
1874 - Who Struck My Mother’s Only Son?
1874 - Trabling Back to Georgia
1874 - The Old Man and What he Used To Be
1874 - I’m A Gwine Down South (Wm. Hays)
1874 - I’se Gwine Back To Dixie
1875 - She’s A Bright as the Morning Star
1875 - Angels, Meet Me At the Cross Roads (Wm. Hays)
1875 - As Pretty as a Little Butterfly (Bluff City Minstrels)
1875 - I’ll Be Dar (Chas. Benedict)
1875 - Emancipation Day
1875 - De Old Church (Haverly’s Minstrels)
1875 - The Old Log Cabin in the Dell
1875 - Carve Dat Possum (Sam Lucas)
1875 - Dar’s a meeting Here tonight (Callenders Original Georgia Minstrels)
1875 - De Day I Was Set Free (San Lucas)
1875 - I’ve Mortgaged That Old Cabin in the Lane
1876 - Happy times in Dixie fo’ de War
1876 - Get Along Old Mule
1876 - Who’s A Gwine to Take Care of Me” (Wm. Hays)
1876 - Dem Good Ole Days Afo de War (New Orleans Troubadours)
1876 - Down Among de sugar Cane
1876 - The Acrobatic Nigs
1876 - Angels Hover O’er Our Darling (New Orleans Troubadours)
1876 - Poor Ole Uncle Rufe
1876 - Since I Saw de Cotton Grow (Duprez & Benedict Minstrels-Frank Dumont)
1876 - My Dear Old Southern Home
1876 - My Ole Home in Alabam Fo’ De War
1876 - Away Down south
1877 - There is Sunshine in the Heart (Emerson California Minstrels)
1877 - Sunlight of My Soul
1877 - Old Uncle Dan (Barlow, Wilson, Primrose & West Minstrels)
1877 - De Banjo am de Instrument For Me
1877 - Dem Good Ole Days
1877 - Oh! Don’t Get Weary
1877 - Down south Where the Sugar Cane Grows (Wm. Hays)
1877 - Darling Isabel (Billy Emerson)
1878 - Maggie Juda
1878 - Keep in de Middle ob de Road (Wm. Hays)
1878 - Somebody’s Coming When the Dewdrops Fall
1878 - De Gospel Raft (Frank Dumont/Duprez & Benedict’s Minstrels)
1878 - I’m going Back To Alabam’ to Die
1878 - Dancing Blue Eyes
1878 - Let me Dream While Life Shall Linger
1878 - Sunrise in the Morning (Primrose)
1879 - Put On The Long White Robe (Sam Lucas)
1879 - I’m Going Home To Clo
1879 - Billy’s request (Bill Birch/San Francisco Minstrels)
1879 - The Immensely Pop end song “In the Morning by the Bright Light (James Bland)
1879 - I’se Gwine to Leave Old Dixie
1879 - Rambling Thro’ the Clover (James Bland)
1879 - O Blow de Horn! (George Root)
1879 - Oh Dem Golden Slippers (James Bland/ Spragues Georgia Minstrels)

1880s

1880 - That Old Cabin upon the Hill (Frank Dumont)
1880 - When Am You Going (Waverly’s Georgia Minstrels)
1880 - The Dandy Colored Waiters March Song (San Francisco Minstrels)
1880 - Ella Rae (Wood’s Minstrels)
1881 - Old Nicker Demurs) Sam Lucas)
1881 - Uncle Tom’s Gwine to Stay (Sung by Sam Lucas)
1881 - Old Joe’s Dream
1881 - Put On de Golden Shoe (Barlow, Wilson, Primrose & West Minstrels)
1881 - Little Baby Joe
1882 - De Ole Home Am Gone
1882 - Old Uncle Jim (Emerson Minstrels)
1882 - De Coon Dinner
1882 - Put on de Golden Crown
1883 - Hand Me Down de Golden Shoes
1883 - The Click at The Garden Gate
1883 - On de Golden Shore
1884 - Setting on the Golden Fence (Leading Minstrels)
1884 - Uncle Adam’s Going Home
1884 - We’ll Raise de Roof Tonight (Barlow & Wilson Minstrels)
1884 - Aunt Dinah’s Birthday Party (Thacher, Primrose & West Minstrels)
1885 - Put on de Golden Sword
1885 - The Old Cabin Home
1885 - The butterfly Dude
1885 - Liza Loves You (Lester & Allen Big Minstrels)
1886 - The Black Wedding (Thatcher, Primrose & West Minstrels)
1886 - Pick Up Your Duds And Go (Haverly’s Am. & European Minstrels)
1886 - The Black Knight Templar (Thatcher, Primrose & West Minstrels)
1891 - The Colored Millionaires (Sallem Amateur Minstrels)
1894 - Who’s Dat Huggin You (Malden Megatherian Minstrels)
1896 - I’ll Make dat Black Gal Mine (Primrose-Coon Song)
1896 - When Miss Maria Johnson Marries Me (Wm & Walker)
1896 - I’ll Make dat Black Gal Mine (Primrose)
1896 - 9th Ballallion on Parade (E. Hogan/B. Wms/Moore & Burgess Minstrels)
1897 - Nigger, Nigger Never Die (Primrose & West Big Minstrels)
1897 - De Swellest Ladies Coon in Town (Primrose)
1897 - I’m A Peach (Primrose & West Minstrels)
1897 - Nigger, Nigger Never Die (Primrose)
1897 - Every Nigger Had a Body (Dockstader-Coon Song)
1898 - My Honolulu Lady (West Minstrels)
1898 - Hea’ Comes Ma Baby (A. G. Fields Minstrels)
1898 - Whar De Watermolon Grow (Primrose & Dockstader Minstrels)
1900 - Just Because She Made Dem Goo-Goo Eyes (West Big Minstrels)
1901 - When Mr. Shakespeare Comes To Town
1901 - Good Morning Carrie (Wm. & Walker)
1901 - If I Only Had a Dollar Of My Own (Primrose & Dockstader’s Minstrels)
1902 - We Are Coming Sister Mary (Christy Minstrels)
1902 - That Certain Party (Bob Cole)
1903 - Moonlight on Mississippi (Dockstader’s Minstrels)
1903 - Tildy Ann (H. Henry Minstrels)
1903 - My Dixie-Land Daisy (Ned Wayburn’s Minstrels)
1906 - Shavellin’ Coal (Dockstader)
1907 - I Wants The Love That Loves To Love Me All The Time
1908 - The Gibson Girl (Cohan & Harris Minstrels)
1909 - The Brinkley Coon (Cohan & Harris Minstrels)
1919 - Kinky Koo (Gus Hills Minstrels)

Minstrel Songs With No Date

Minstrel Echoes (c1880s)
Ethiopian Quadrilles (1880s)
My Blue Eyed Nelly
Branigan Band
Cheer Up Sam
Ching a Ring Chow
Climbing Up de Golden Stairs
Come Darkies All sing Halleluyerum
Dan Lewis Songs
Darkies Our Masters
Darling Jeannie
Emma Dale
L’Esctave Affranchi
Fair Ella Lee
De Floating Scow
Get Along Black Man, don’t You Cum a Nigh Me
Goin Ober de Mountain
Gaugen Napper
Gumbo chaff
Hey Get Along Rosy!
Hurrah For My Hanson Car
I Really Shall Expire
I Wouldn’t Like to Tell
I’m Leaving Thee in Sorrow, Annie!
I’m Off To Charleston
I’se Gwine Back To Dixie
It’s Hard to Be a Nigger
Katy Darling
A Life by de Galley Fire
My Charming Lilly Crow
De Lip Hung Down
In de Darkey’s Life Your Read
Settin’ On a Rail
I Dreamed dat I Libed in Hotel Halls
Ren You’ll Remember Me
Come With the Darkey Band
De Ole Jaw Bone
Tis Sad To Leabe Our Tater Land
Lon Time Ago
Long Tail Blue
Love Among the Roses
Uncle Ned
My Old Aunt Sally
The Old Gray Goose
‘Twill Neber To Gib It Up so
Ten Little Niggers
The Crow Quadrilles (1880s)
Dearest Mae
The New Navarino March
Our Alabama Homes
Aunt Harriet Becha Stowe