#### Illinois State University

#### ISU ReD: Research and eData

Faculty and Staff Publications - Milner Library

Milner Library

6-3-2021

#### Sideshow Sounds: Black Bandleaders Respond to Exoticism

Elizabeth C. Hartman bibliorg@gmail.com

Angela Yon Illinois State University, ayon@ilstu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/fpml



Part of the Digital Humanities Commons, and the Library and Information Science Commons

#### **Recommended Citation**

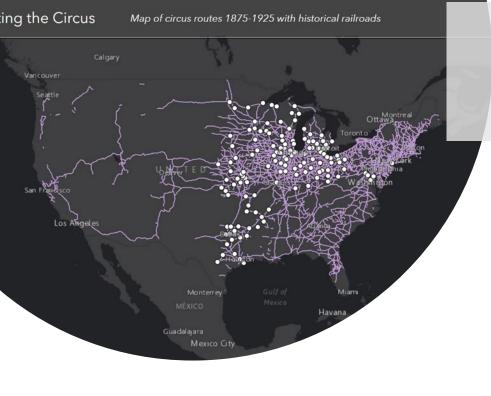
Hartman, Elizabeth C. and Yon, Angela, "Sideshow Sounds: Black Bandleaders Respond to Exoticism" (2021). Faculty and Staff Publications - Milner Library. 187. https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/fpml/187

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Milner Library at ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty and Staff Publications - Milner Library by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUReD@ilstu.edu.

# SIDESHOW SOUNDS: BLACK BANDLEADERS RESPOND TO EXOTICISM



PROF. J. O. McNUTT'S COLORED BAND.



## **Project Details**

**Agency Through Otherness:** 

Portraits of Performers in Circus Route Books 1875-1925



#### A SOUVENIR

FOR AND DEDICATED TO

THE WHITE TENT FOLLOWERS

SEASON OF 1900.

ADAM FOREPAUCH
SELLS BROTHERS.

WHO THEY WERE. WHERE THEY WERE. HOW THEY WERE.

> HOW IT HAPPENED, WHEN IT HAPPENED, WHERE IT HAPPENED.

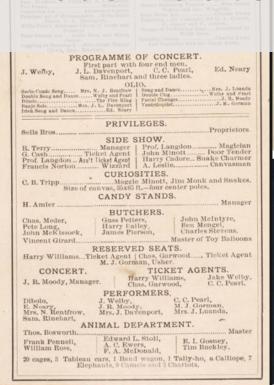
THIS LITTLE BOOK TELLS IT ALL.
WHAT MORE COULD IT DO?

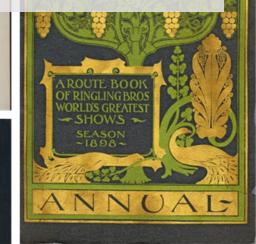
PUBLISHED BY R. C. BALL AND FRANK O. MILLER.

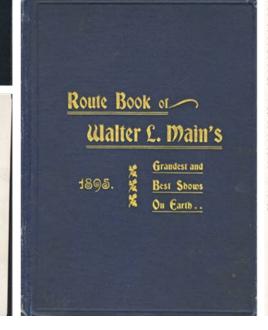
PRINTED BY
THE AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
COLUMBUS, OHIO.



## Circus Route Books



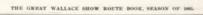






	JULY.			
	CITY. Railroad	i. 1	Miles	
1	Adrian, MichLake Sl	nore	67	
2	Ypsilanti, MichLake Sl	hore	39	
3	Coldwater, MichLake Sl	nore	85	
4	Sturgis, MichLake Sl	hore	23	
5	Battle Creek, MichLake Sl	hore	42	
6	Albion, MichMich. C	ent.	25	
8	Bay City, MichMich. C	ent.	136	
9	Saginaw, MichPere Ma	arqt.	12	
10	Greenville, MichPere Ma	arqt.	82	
11	Big Rapids, MichPere Ma	arqt.	57	
12	Cadillac, Mich		42	
13	Traverse City, Mich	& I.	46	
15	Manistee, MichPere M	arq.	114	
16	Ludington, MichPere M	arq.	44	
17	Muskegon, MichPere M	arq.	92	
18	Allegan, MichPere M	arq.	59	
19	Benton Harbor, MichPere M	arq.	83	
20	LaPorte, IndPere M	arq.	43	
22	Hammond, IndL. S. & I	. н.	50	
23	Joliet, Ill	ent.	60	
24	Streator, Ill	¿ A.	57	
25	Kewakee, Ill Burlin	gton	79	
26	Canton, Ill Burlin	gton	76	
27	Monmouth, Ill Burlin	gton	67	
29	Burlington, Ia Burlin	gton	27	
30	Washington, Ia Burlin		53	
31	Oskaloosa, Ia Burlin	gton	90	
	AUGUST.			
	CITY Pailron	4. 1	Miles	

2 Grinnell, Ia...... Rock Island 20





B! ACK HUSSAR BAND, C. W. JCNES, Director.

#### ROUTE BOOK.

#### SEASON OF 1893.

At the conclusion of the dress rehearsal the annual inaugural banquet was tendered the assembled party in the Forepaugh camp, at the invitation of the proprietors, James A. Bailey and J. T. McCaddon. For several years past these affairs have always taken place at the Continental Hotel, but this year the guests were given some idea of how their host and his army of followers live for thirty weeks of every year. The novelty of the surroundings, together with the excellent quality of the menu prepared by the shows' famous caterer, Mr. Judd Webb, and his efficient corps inspired the bright wits assembled, and many a clever toast was proposed and answered. The banquet was presided over by Mr. Whiting Allen, the general press agent of the shows, who, as on previous occasions of this kind, did himself proud, while Ganweiler's band provided appropriate music.

The following menu was discussed;

MENU.

Blue Points.

Green Turtle Soup.

Sauterne.

Hors d'œuvre.

Baked Salmon Trout, Shrimp Sauce.

St. Julien.

Sweet Breads.

Mountain Oyster.

Old Burgundy.

Punch.

Roast Spring Lamb.

Green Peas.

Spring Chicken.

Pommery Sec.

Lobster Salad.

Louie Hunting. Bertie Cobb. CARCUS BAND. Prof. Louis Heck. .Leader Harry Ramsbrook, Will M. Hoge, Frank Taylor, Harley E. Hamilton, John J. Grunz, Wm. L. Mead, Frank Andress, G. F. Grunz, Nick Henry, Ben Roderick, Barney Heck, Wm. M. Owen, J. M. Rorick, A. Simpson, John Richardson, W.P. Acton. Charles Baker,.... ...Steam Pianist SIDE SHCW BAND (Colored.) T. S. Roadman ..... R. N. Thompson .... B. A. McDonald, I. J. Collins, Lorenzo Dow, Levi McQuann. John Truss. PROGRAMME. Overture ...... Prof. H. Orchestra Huntings, Clarice and Robert. Grand entree.....by Company Equestrian Monkey, introduced Brusted the Giant, and Che Mah by James Robinson. the Dwarf. Cannon balls.......Herr. Drayton Hippopotami...Introduced by J. Principal Bareback Act.......by R. Moody Esq. Miss Pauline Lee.

Batoute leap, led by G. M. Kel-Clown.....Robert Hunting ley, Butler and Howard and T. Balancing Trapeze.....by Charles Performing Colorado Cattle....... Granam and Butler, Crack Rifle
Trained and performed by Shots of the World.
Willis Cobb. Grand and Lotty Tumbling by Japanese King Sarbro ...... Slack Compay, led by Jas. Bell and Willis Cobb's Miniature Circus of Clowns......J. N. Rentfrew and Dogs, Monkeys and Goats. Bareback Horsemanship, Willie Champion Bareback Rider of Sells.

Clown Pete Conklin Clown Pete Conk lin Contortion Net by Wm. Troupe of Performing Dogs. Double Trapeze.....by the Signor Mendoza, Master of Circle CONCERT PROGRAMME. J. R. Moody.......Manager John Foster.......Stump Speech J. N. Rentfrew..... 'tage Manager Dutch Song and Dance.....George 

(Under)Representation et of this sketch is perhaps the most widely known lady performer in the circus business. Lottie Aymar comes from a family noted for its connection with the circus in America, Her father



was the well-known circus rider, Walter Aymar, She commenced her professional career as a rider at the age of seven years, and her superb and graceful acts as an equestrienne have been performed with the leading circuses of this and other countries. In 1891, Miss Aymar rode her act with the Ringling Brothers, but since that time has devoted her time and talents to her highly artistic and finished aerial acts. Miss Aymar is an artist of rare gracefulness and style.

MISS LOTTIE AYMAR.

Doc. Aymar is another one of the array of arenic talent who prides himself on being a Baltimorean. Mr. Aymar started in the amusement profession some ten or twelve years ago in conjunction with Carl



Sources:

Official Route Book of the Adam Forepaugh Shows: Presenting a Complete Chronicle of Interesting Events and Happenings, and Valuable Data, for the Season of 1893, page 93

https://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/digital/collection/p15990coll5/id/1371/rec/1

Route of the Sells Brothers Great European Millionaire Museum, Menagerie, Circus, and Stupendous Confederation of Railroad Shows for the Season of 1881, page 2 https://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/digital/collection/p15990coll5/id/6064

Official Route Book of Ringling Brothers' World's Greatest Shows Season of 1893, page 119 https://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/digital/collection/p15990coll5/id/12777

Official Route Book of the Walter L. Main's Grandest and Best Shows on Earth: Presenting a Complete and Truthful Chronicle of Interesting Events and Happenings of Interest, Cities Visited, General State of Weather, Railroads and Other Valuable Data for the Season of 1895, page 65 https://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/digital/collection/p15990coll5/id/18521/rec/1

## Visibility



#### Performance Act Name



Earl. Hazel Earl. Maude Kelly, Patrick B. Maretta, Edna Miner, Charles Sharrock, Harry

Donardje, rrimani

Annex Band

Arthur Borelly Principal Talking Clown Breseno and Lola Cuban Artists Concert Orchestra

Delavoye and Frits

Earl Sisters Peerless Lady Acrobats

Eccentric Comedian Harry Sharrock

Holmen Bros. Triple Bar Experts

La Rue Bros. Premier Acrobats

Leo Blondin Acrobat and Black Face Comedian

Milvos Merry Kings of Momus

Miss Edna the Girl Who Rides

Patrick B Kelly Feats on the Lofty Ladder

## Band Leader Wolfscale, James

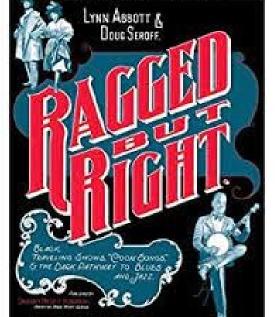
E. H. Schloeman

Halliday and Myon

## Previous Scholarship

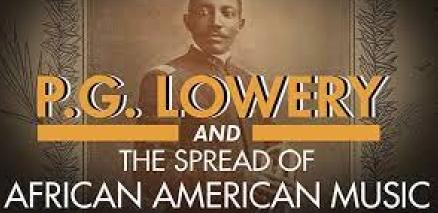






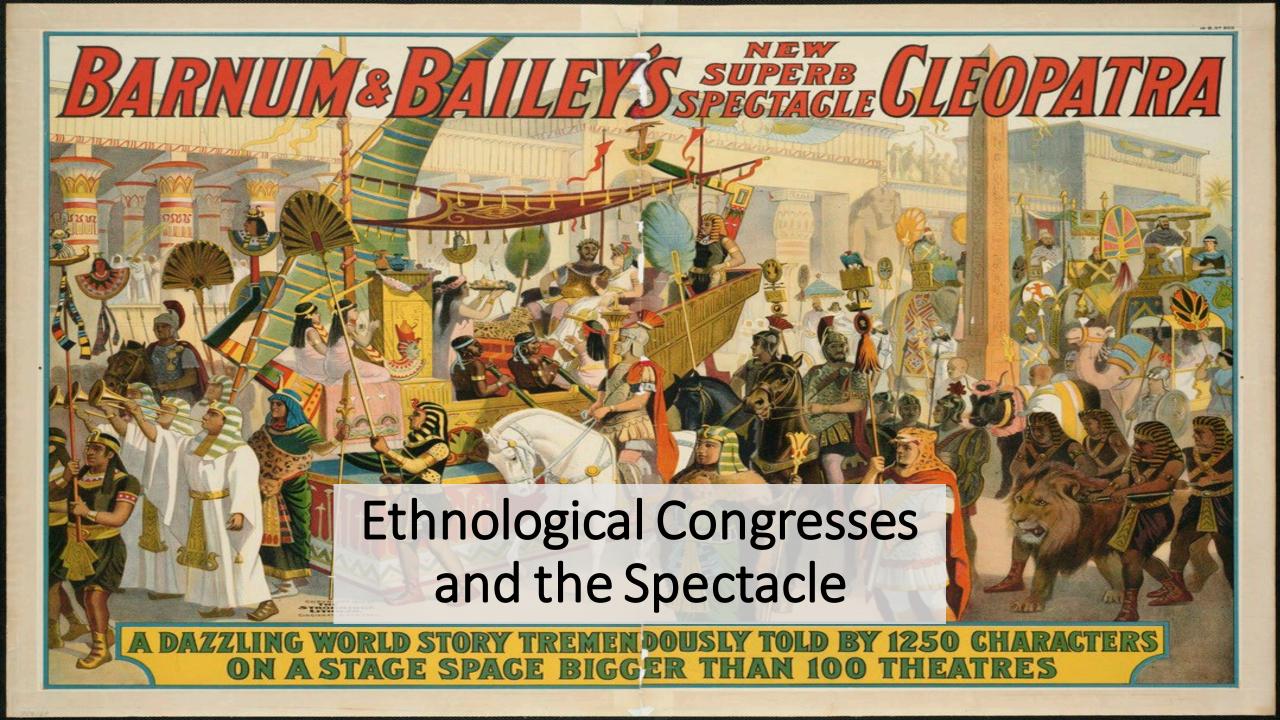
FROM THE ACTHORS OF OCT OF SHOUT





CAKE WALKS, BRASS BANDS





## **Economic Underpinnings**

"The earliest records of black participation in circuses dates back to Europe in the late 1700's, where black equestrians performed tricks on horseback. In the mid-1800's, American circuses employed black performers. However, they were usually presented as oddities ... [and] commonly given strange names and presented as savage creatures from Africa, "the dark continent.""

("Eph Williams: The Legend of the Tent." Daily News, May 4, 1997.)

Page 7 of Hunting's 1893 circus route book listing the performers within Griffin's Wizard's Annex. Includes an illustration of Griffin's Famous Congo Band, comprised of white and Black musicians.

https://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/digita l/collection/p15990coll5/id/4348



Living Curiosities.

Prof. JOSEPH HATCHER, Expositor of Natural History and Feejee Curiosities.

S. S. SMITH, Exhibitor of Human Curiosities.

ADMIRAL DOT, Famous California Dwarf.
ZULUMA AGRA, Circassian Lady.
CHARLES TRIPP, No-armed Boy.
FEEJEE CANNIBALS, Zip, the "What Is It?"

H. H. HATCHER, Keeper of the African Wild Boy, or "What Is It?" Geo. Hays, assisted by Valora, Impalement Act Isaac Jones, - - One Legged Dancer Gleason, - - Strongest Man in the World Faust, - - - The Fire Fiend

#### OLIVIA, THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WONDER,

With her Hypnotized Serpents and Gila Monsters

Griffin, - - - The Wonder Worker Prof. Geo. T. Hays, - Bohemian Glass Blower



GRIFFIN'S FAMOUS CONGO BAND.

Abraham Tony, Fife; Burt Landrum, Snare Drum; Bob Lundrum, Snare Drum; Steven Burbis Jackson, Bass Drum and Cymbals.

## **Economic Underpinnings**

"Nearly every circus had a black sideshow band. Their presence became so expected, in fact, that no self-proclaimed big show traveled without a black band ... show proprietors recognized that black bands had become a part of circusgoers's expectations, the bands existed as part of the sideshow."

Childress, Micah. "Life Beyond The Big Top: African American and Female Circusfolk, 1896-1920."

Statistics of P.T. Barnum's Great Traveling Exposition and World's Fair for the Season of 1873, Page 15

https://digital.library.illinoisstate.edu/digita l/collection/p15990coll5/id/5237/rec/2

### Owning Oneself: Entertainment as Empowering Enterprise

"I am very proud to know that the Hagenbeck-Wallace management are forced to seek Prof. P. G. Lowery's services to regain the patronage of old that they have failed to get this season without him and his classy company of musicians and singers."

"[Lowery] refused the engagement because the manager requested his men to double canvas. P. G. informed the manager he would leave ... the same was heartily endorsed by his band and every band director in the circus business — such as Mr. Wolfscale, Ray Pope, James Harris and others."

#### NOTES FROM R. ROY POPE'S BAND, RINGLING BROTHERS BAND, RINGLING BROS. CIRCUS.

I am very proud to know that the Hagenback-Wallace management are forced to seek Prof. P. G. Lowery's services to regain the patronage of old that they have failed to get this season without him and his classy company of musicians and singers.

#### P. G. LOWERY RETURNS TO THE

After forty-eight successful weeks with the Richard & Pringle Minstrel as band master and soloist, P. G. Lowery is returning to the Hagenbeck & Wallace circus. It may prove to be interesting information to know the cause of his leaving the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in 1915. He refused the engagement because the manager requested his men to double canvas. P. G. informed the manager he would leave, his



#### PROF. P. G. LOWRY, Who Will Be Seen This Season With Hagenback-Wallace Shows.

men double canvas and at once notified his band of his firm stand and the same was heartly endorsed by his band and every band director in the circus business—such as Mr. Wolfscale, Ray Pane, James Harris and others.

Ray Pope, James Harris and others. Mr. Lowery excepted the position as band master and soloist with the Richard & Pringle Minstrel and made many friends and expressed his regret to leave the minstrels and spoke in the highest terms of the management, Holland & Felkins.

### Owning Oneself: Entertainment as Empowering Enterprise

"Prof. Wolfscale's band this season of thirfy-two pieces is a credit to all colored traveling musicians inasmuch as it shows how much they are in demand."

"As a rule most side show managers just want noise from a colored band. The reason for this is because they don't have a large enough band to do anything but jam. Prof. Wolfscale has shown the management of the greatest show on earth that with a big number of colored musicians you can play concert music and other kinds and with as much expression as the big show's concert bands."

#### NOTES FROM WOLFSCALE'S BAND, WITH BARNUM & BAILEY.

We are bound for the coast now in the state of Ohio. Although we are getting plenty of rain in this state, business continues to be great, and an added feature to the big spectacle seighteen musicians out of Wolfscale's band, taking part in the march around the big hippodrome, playing with the big show concert band. Before the opening of the season if you would have told any one that a circus would use a band of thirty-two pieces they wouldn't have believed it. Prof. Wolfscale's band this season of thirty-two pieces is a credit to all colored traveling musicians inasmuch as it shows how much they are in demand. Mr. Wm. Moorhead sends best regards to Prof. Timmons and Titus Tripletts of Busby's Minstrels. Up to this date Mr. Wolfscale has his full number of people, thirtystwo, and as this is the middle of the season this is remarkable amongst this many colored musicians. They are featuring the heaviest marches, latest popular music and rags. Wolfscale's two bands are two of the features of the parade. As a rule most side show managers just want noise from a colored band. The reason for this is because they don't have a large enough band to do anything but jam. Prof. .. Wolfscale. has shown the management of the greatest show on earth that with a big number of colored musicians you can play concert music and other kinds and with as much expression as the big show's concert bands.

## Lewis Williams, clarinet player, writes to the Freeman on December 10, 1904:

Prof. Wm. Blue – Dear Sir: I received your favor and I appreciate your valuable offer, but at present I must decline the same as I am under contract with Mr. Pat Chappelle, and I have no desire to give up my job here for several reasons...

I would never persuade a member of a colored man's show to join a show run by a white man, as you know that the white man bought and sold our fore-parents, and I thank the Lord to-day that there are some young Negros in the world that they cannot buy. ... I earnestly trust that this will be a lesson to you in the future – to hunt a black man for a white man. ... I trust, in the future, you will try to get other people from other places for your white bosses instead of trying to break up a colored show.

... and we get the money [so] the colored people do not have to go up the side fire-escape or in back door and set in the gallery to see show. They set where they pay for.

READING, PA., MAY 1.—Weather warm. Business great. Hot in north end of city. Frank Green promoted from black top door to main entrance. Tom Washburn goes to black top. The police disperse a

22

gang of rowdies who wanted to "wild west" the black top. All the excitement today seems to be centered at Charley Thompson's fiery

A Souvenir of the Season of 1900 Adam Forepaugh and Sells Brothers, Pages 22-23

All colored performers, musicians and managers are called to the following letter: "Prof. Wm. Blue – Dear Sir: I received your favor and I appreciate your valuable offer, but at present I must decline the

Chappelle, and I have no desire to give up my job here for several reasons.

First. I am a black man, and I am interested in anything that a black man has, and will do ail in my power to make it a success.

Second. I have been with Mr. Chappelle over four years, and have always found him to be a perfect gentleman; he is always ready to help his people in any way he can; he has helped me and most every one of the company, as well as some not here who did not appreciate the same, like our friend Amos L. Gilliard, who did not appreciate the kindness shown him.

My third reason is I was learned wit this show, and it belongs in Florida, wher I do, and I know that Messrs, Rusco an Holland would have never ploked me up a Mr. Chappelle did and learn me, so I wil frankly say that, if you were to offer m \$20 per week, I would consider it an insul

I am sorry that Mr. Gilllard formed bac opinions of me. I would never persuade a member of a colored man's show to join a show run by a white man, as you know that the white man bught and sold out fore-parents, and I thank the Lord to-day that there are some young Negroes In the world that they cannot buy. I am one o them that Messrs. Rusco and Holland can not buy. And, as for yourself, Mr. Blue, earnesty trust that this will be a lesson to you in the future—to hunt a black man fo a white man. As for Mr. Gilllard, he i not my friend nor has he ever been. H is one of those young men that has no re gard for himself or any one else or h would still be with this show if he ha carried himself like a gentleman. Mr. Gilliard acled bad until Mr. Chappelle was forced to put him off the train betwee stations. There were five young men fror Amos Gilliard's home who were raise with him, and they approved of Mr. Chaj

w, for Mr. Jones' part, I cannot say
ch about him, only I don't think that h
u d be so footish to quit his job Pere as:
admaster to work under some one else
on't think that your company could pay
n any more than he is getting here. S
hink you had better get Mr. Gilliard t
er you to some other show to get wha
pole you need.

Just a few more remarks before I close, wish to inform you that "A Rabbit's Foot ompany" is now a responsible show, and am satisfied that the income is just as uoch as Rusco and Holland's show if no rore. I cannot see where the Rusco and olland show can pay more than this show trust, in the future, you will try to ge her people from other places for you hit bosses instead of trying to break up colored show.

cars, over sixty people, four horses, four ubber-tired buggles, automobile, two wagons, band of eighteen pieces, drum and buggle corps of six pieces, and we get the money for the colored people do not have to go up the side fire-escape or in back door and set in the gallery to see show. They set where they pay for.

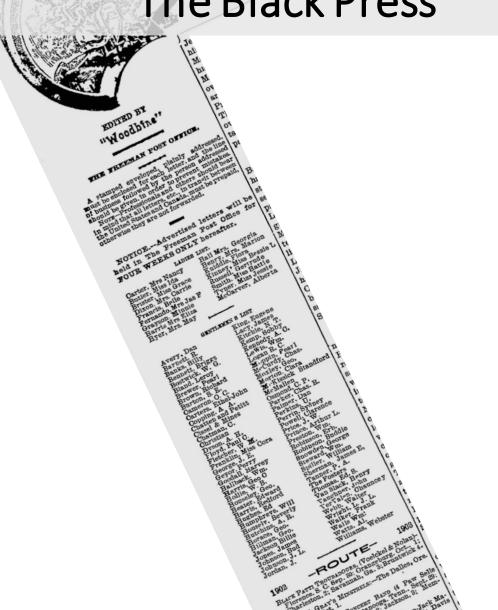
LEWIS WILLIAMS, Clarionet Player

# Circus Musicians & The Black Press

Hustling Boys and Girls can make money representing The FREEMAN. Send for special Instuctions



## Circus Musicians The Black Press







# A WORD OF COMMENDATION.

To the Editor of the Freeman anu Prof. Wolfscale and members of his band wish to compliment you on your promptness in getting the Freeman to us this season and the wonderful tains. Of course every reader of this wonderful paper knows it to be the tains. Of course every reader of this wonderful paper knows it to be the greatest Negro theatrical paper in the world. Wishing you success and hoping you will keep up the good work,

ing you will keep up the good work, we beg to remain,
PROF. Professionally yours,
BAND, Care Barnum & Bailey Circus.
Troy Wolfscale, Agent.



ENO JAPANESE TROUPE ational Nipponese Equilibrists and Acrobats



MISS MAUD HAYWARD. like peace, and if so, the ONE OF ABBRICA'S PRESURE LADY CORNET SO









BILL'S WILD WEST ROUTE BOOK SEASON OF 1896.

## EXHIBIT WALK THROUGH

PROF. JAMES V Leader of Annex Band.





THE **JAPANESE** WONDER.

World's Greatest High-Wire Walker.





A Sensational Free Attraction with the Barnum & Bailey Gre



PROF. J. O. MCNUTT'S COLORED BAND.





## Thank you!

Elizabeth C. Hartman bibliorg@gmail.com

Angela Yon ayon@ilstu.edu