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## A Chronology and Itinerary of the Career of Bob Cole: Materials for a Biography

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**07/29/2016**

**A Chronology and Itinerary of the Career of Bob Cole:  
Materials for a Biography**

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This document is one in a series---"Chronology and Itinerary of the Career of"---devoted to a small number of African American musicians active ca. 1900-1950. They are fallout from my work on a pair of essays, "US Army Black Regimental Bands and The Appointments of Their First Black Bandmasters" (2013) and "Black US Army Bands and Their Bandmasters in World War I" (2012). In all cases I have put into some kind of order a number of biographical research notes, principally drawing upon newspaper and genealogy databases. None of them is any kind of finished, polished document; all represent work in progress, complete with missing data and the occasional typographical error. I invite queries, amplifications, and corrections, which may be directed to plefferts1@unl.edu. The present document is a first draft of July 2016.

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**Bob Cole (1868-1911)**

Lyricist, librettist, composer, actor, singer, dancer, comedian; active in musical comedy and vaudeville; a contemporary of Ernest Hogan, Will Marion Cook, and the Johnson brothers. His career has been well covered, especially through the scholarly contributions of Thomas Riis (see Bibliography). As a creative figure, he worked most closely with

Billy Johnson (1858-1916),  
and James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938),  
and John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954).

Name: Went mostly by "Bob"; his last name is sometimes, but rarely and mostly in his early career, "Coles"; references in the modern secondary literature say he also used the pseudonym "Will Handy," but that is only in reference to the song "Oh! Did't He Ramble" (1902), for which, see below.

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Robert Allen (Bob) Cole (Athens, GA, July 1, 1868 - Catskill, NY, August 2, 1911). Born and raised in Athens, GA. Learned piano, banjo, guitar, and cello as a child. Went to public schools and Atlanta University (alternatively, was an employee of Atlanta University but did not study there). By one account, "Cole was also at Atlanta University, where in the college glee club he learned that he had talent for the stage. He drifted into a minstrel show, and from there into the Black Patti Troubadours" (Washington (DC) Colored American, September 10, 1904, p. 2, 3)

Then a "singing bellboy" in Jacksonville, Fla. (alternatively, in Asbury Park, NJ). Then NY hotel work, then to Chicago. [[??then into work as a young professional musician in resorts, hotels, etc. in the northeast?? [CHECK]]. The story is told in what evidently was a wire-service filler that Rosamond Johnson "once held a position as bellboy in Young's hotel in Boston" and "took "the liberty of playing Paderewski's "Minuet" for the great pianist . . . who was staying at that hotel" (e.g., Cold Springs (NY) Recorder and Gully (MN) Sunbeam)

Vaudeville out of Chicago in the later 1880s [CHECK], culminating in his association there with Sam T. Jack's shows from 1891. He was in Chicago at the same time as his direct contemporary, Will Marion Cook, in the early 1890s, but they would in all likelihood have run in very different circles, and Cole would have been on tour much of the time.

1891-1892

First season with Sam T. Jack's Creoles company, from August. The 1891-1892 mini musical is Tropical Reveries.

In his early 20s, Robert (Bob) Cole (or Coles) is a regular with Sam T. Jack's Creoles for five seasons, from this first season of 1891-92 through 1895-96. Cole can be traced with Jack's company from August 1891, at first in the act "Cole & Staples" with John Staples (references in NY Clipper, August 15, 1891 and Indianapolis Freeman, August 22, 1891, p. 1; A&S, Out of Sight, pp. 156, 158).

1892-1893

Second season with Sam T. Jack's Creoles company. The 1892-1893 mini musical may have still been Tropical Reveries.

"Parthenia took a fancy to a coon," lyrics and music, Bob Cole (NY: Rossiter, 1893); his first published song;  
"sung with great success by Vernona Jarbeau."; Vernona Jarbeau (1861-1914) was a well known (white) light opera, musical comedy, and vaudeville singer;  
it was recorded during a recording session by the Unique Quartette for the New York Phonograph Company in fall 1893 for the Edison label (Gage Averill, Four Parts, No Waiting)

1893-94

Third season with Sam T. Jacks (Clipper ref.; A&S, Out of Sight, p. 162; and acc. Riis). The 1893-1894 mini musical is Aunt Jane's Wooden Wedding.

The Willie Wayside tramp character is created in this season acc. Riis, but Russell obit of Cole says not until Black Patti run in 1896-1897 in At Jolly Coney Island (with Johnson as the bunco man and sidekick named Jim Flimflammer); the first ref. to this character in Old Fulton NY Postcards is NY Dramatic Mirror, September 19, 1896, p. 7, in that Black Patti show (At Jolly Coney Island, etc.), and in genealogybank.com in December 1896 in that show; He does an act with Walter Smart in Smart and Coles this season in Sam T. Jack's Creole Co. (NY Clipper, July 28, 1893, p. 324); also does an act with Stella Wiley, acc. Riis, but newspapers and obits point to 1895 for when he meets her, and frequent mentions of them together date from 1896, 1897

1894 SONGS

"Bill Johnson, the Monkey, and the Dago: song and chorus," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Cruger Bros., 1894).

Is this his [later] partner Billy Johnson being referred to?

NB: Isham's Octoroons later feature Brown and May in the olio, doing "The Dago and the Monkey," under which title nothing turns up in WorldCat;

This song was collected by a ballad hunter as a folksong in Bentonville, Arkansas in 1958 (University of Arkansas Digital Collections)

"Winsome Belle. Ballad," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Cruger Bros., 1894)

1894-1895

Fourth season with Sam. T. Jack's (Dramatic Mirror ref., A&S, Out of Sight, p. 388, 389; etc.). The 1894-1895 mini musicals are The Tropical Temple of Thespis and Plantation Pastimes.

Stella Wiley is with the company in an August 1894 roster (NY Clipper, August 18, 1894, p. 372) at the beginning of the season, and she is at Worth's with C. V. Moore's Colored Minstrels at the end of the season (NY Clipper, April 20, 1895, p. 102).

Cole also participates in Worth's first season with black troupes, and he appears with Billy Johnson (Abbott and Seroff, etc.).

NB: Lester A. Walton's obit in the NY Age says the troupe at Worth's, on Sixth Ave. and 30th Street, was the "All-Star Stock Company." The expression has yet to turn up elsewhere.

1895 SONGS

"Colored Aristocracy," or "I'm the leader of the colored aristocracy," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Brooks & Denton; London: Francis, Day & Hunter, 1895); new song in ad in NY Clipper, August 24, 1895, p. 397

verse: "The city is in an uproar"

chorus: "I'm the leader of the colored aristocracy"

Sung by the McNair Hose Minstrel company as the finale to the first part of their show (Warsaw (NY ) Wyoming County Times, December 5, 1895, p. 1)

"Dem golden clouds," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY and London, Brooks & Denton; London: Francis, Day & Hunter, 1895), acc. Riis, from sheet music cover publisher's reference; however, this song is not not paired up with "Colored Aristocracy" and "Fly, fly, fly" in NY Clipper publisher's ads

"Fly, fly, fly," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY Brooks & Denton; London:

Francis, Day & Hunter, 1895); it was sung in Nate Salisbury's Black America in September, 1895 (NY Herald, September 17, 1895, p. 7); new song in ad in NY Clipper, August 24, 1895, p. 397

1895-1896

Cole's fifth and final season with Sam. T. Jack's (Dramatic Mirror ref., etc.), and his second and last at Worth's, with Billy Johnson (and BJ also with Isham). The 1895-1896 mini musicals for Jack's company are Under the Weeping Willows and The Southern Sunset, the latter with buck and wing dancing and a cakewalk (NY Dramatic Mirror, December 28, 1895, p. 21).

Stella Wiley is one of the creoles and octoroons announced for Flynn & Sheridan's shows for fall 1895 (NY Clipper, August 3, 1895, p. 339), but she ends up with Jack's company again this season (see Chicago Daily Inter Ocean, August 25, 1895, p. 33; NY Dramatic Mirror, September 7, 1895, p. 4; NY Dramatic Mirror, December 28, 1895, etc.); lots of newspaper hits from this season, but not the last one; newspapers and obits put her together with Cole only from now, though Riis says it was earlier (and Wiley was with the company before now); e.g., Cole and Wiley are doing a new dancing specialty with the company (NY Clipper, November 9, 1895, p. 566); Russell obit says 1895 (Chicago Defender, August 12, 1911, p. 1)

1896, in March: Sam T. Jack's Creole co. is playing at Sam T. Jack's Opera House in Chicago; Robert Cole is one of "four comedians who can amuse" (NY Dramatic Mirror, March 14, 186, p. 21).

NB: Sylvester Russell in obit (Chicago Defender, August 12, 1911, p. 1) says that next, "Sam T. Jack had taken the Savoy theatre on Broadway in the neighborhood of 27th street for a run of his creole company" and Russell would know, since this troupe included the young Russell himself, with Cole, Wiley, etc. as stars; I cannot trace this elsewhere; it could be a run of just one or a few weeks, and thus during one of the five seasons above.

1896 SONGS

"Move up, Johnson," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Brooks & Denton; London: Francis, Day & Hunter, 1896). "As introduced by Sam.

Jack's Creoles, "Georgia Jubilee Singers," "Black America," etc. etc." Brown Library reports a publication date of 1900, but this song appears in a list of new music received by The Editor in late 1896, and it is called a new number in the most up-to-date version of Hoyt's A Trip to Chinatown in newspapers in January 1897 (e.g., Ithaca (NY) Daily News, January 16, 1897, n.p. [p. 2?])

1896-1897

1896, in September: George Walker and Bert Williams came to New York and got a flat on 53rd Street in fall 1896, and an article by George Walker says that Will Marion Cook hung out at their NYC flat on 53rd Street then along with Dunbar, Burleigh, Bob Cole and Billy Johnson, Jesse Shipp, and Will Accooe

#### AT JOLLY COONEY ISLAND

Cole and Billy Johnson this fall are with the Black Patti Troubadours in a mini musical called At Jolly Cooney Island; the show began rehearsals in NYC on August 20 (NY Dramatic Mirror, August 15, 1896, p. 18) and opened in September; Cole is definitely Willie Wayside and Johnson is Jim Flimflammer from this point on in the newspapers (e.g., Washington, D.C., Evening Star, December 8, 1896, p. 16); Russell obit says it is now that he creates this character. The mini is the first item on the bill of Black Patti's show (Part I out of three).

[In genealogybank.com, Stella Wiley does not show up until here, in the fall of 1896, but see above.]

Ten songs are identifiable with this mini musical through web newspaper searches of titles; it is evidently a compilation score; some of the original Cole and Johnson numbers are re-used in next year's A Trip to Coontown:

"At Jolly Cooney Island"

"The Belle of Avenue A," lyrics and music Safford Waters (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Dresser, 1895); sung by Stella Wiley

"The Black Four Hundred's Ball: march song and chorus" (The Black 400s' Ball), lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley,

Haviland, and Co., 1896); see 1896-1897 ref. in Indianapolis  
Freeman, March 13, 1897, p. 5

"Black Gal Mine" (I'll Make Dat Black Gal Mine), Ward & Reed (NY: NY  
Music, 1896)

Comic Song

"Down to Coney Island"; possibly this is "Take Me Down to Coney  
Island," lyrics H. Morton, music G. Kerker (NY: Harms, 1896), from  
The Belle of New York

"4-11-44: a coon ditty," lyrics and music Bob Cole (Milwaukee: Joseph  
Flanner, 1897); later re-used in A Trip to Coontown; Indianapolis  
Freeman, March 13, 1897, p. 5 names Bob Cole of the Black Patti  
Troubadours as the author of the song "4-11-44")

"Honey Does You Love Your Little Man," Bratton & Ford (NY: Witmark,  
1895)

Red Hots

The Three Little Kinkies

Riis (ISAM Monographs 1992) identifies seven songs (\* for the five also  
above):

\*At Jolly Cooney Island

\*Black Four Hundred's Ball

\*4-11-44

\*Red Hots, Red Hots

\*Down to Cooney Island

PLUS

Song of the Bathers

Song of the Bloomers

NB: more colored aristocracy: 1897 song with words and music by Irving Jones,  
"The black four hundred: song and chorus," (or "a comic Negro march song") (NY:  
George L. Spalding, 1897); on the cover it says "Dedicated to the Colored  
Aristocracy" and "To the public: there are three clubs in New York city composed  
entirely of colored men, and consequently there is much rivalry and jealousy  
between them for first honors with the dusky belles of "Little Africa" with whom the  
'black 400' at the present time seem to be slight favorites."



1896, in December: forecast of a comic opera, King Eat 'Em-All, i.e., as the opening mini musical, for the next season of Black Patti Troubadours: "Bob Cole, producer and stage manager, with Black Patti Troubadours, is preparing a comic opera, entitled: "King Eat 'Em-All," which will be produced by Mme. Jones and the Troubadours next season" (Indianapolis Freeman, December 19, 1896, p. 5)

1897, at end of the spring season: Cole & Johnson break with Black Patti in late spring (May/June), after just one year; there were issues about contract renewals, but there was also a public spat about the "theft" of some music by Cole that was central to the rupture (see Lee, Sissieretta Jones, pp. 112-14)

## 1897 SONGS

This is Cole and Billy Johnson's big break-out year for published songs, with many this year and then about as many in 1898 and still some in 1899; As here, some were for Tin Pan Alley, and not originally or necessarily for the 1896-1897 or the 1897-1898 musicals:

"Baby Will You Always Love Me True?" lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Broder & Schlam, 1897)

"The Czar of the Tenderloin: march song," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Spaulding, 1897; NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1897); a two-step; LoC has on-line copy from which it can be seen that neither the cover nor the first page distinguish composer from lyricist; verse: "America has a President and England has a Queen"; sung by the Rogers Bros. at Koster and Bial's in July and August, 1897, and by Lew Hawkins at the Grand Republic floating roof garden in late July, and by M. S. Whallen at Tony Pastor's in August, 1897; the song refers to a real historical character much in the news just then; re-used in the fall in A Trip to Coontown

"Queen of Shinbone Alley" [Shinbone Alley], lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Rossiter, 1898); new in later 1897 and published in 1898; not an 1893 song [Walton obit in NY Age says that this is his next published song after "Parthenia" but that is an errant recollection]; published 1898 but already in circulation in 1897; advertised multiple times by Rossiter as the new coon song hit,

sung by a variety of named singers, in NY Clipper, including Dec. 4, 1897 and Dec. 25, 1897; "Sung by Gertie Carlisle of Palmer Cox's Brownie's Co."---a very famous star is a very well-known extravaganza; called "his latest hit" on the sheet music cover

1897-1898

### SEASON ONE of A Trip to Coontown

1897, in fall: A TRIP TO COONTOWN

Leaving the Black Patti Troubadours, Cole & Billy Johnson work together for four seasons as a comedy team in their 3-act musical comedy, A Trip to Coontown: 1897-98, 1898-99, 1899-00, 1900-1901.

Cole was Willie Wayside (in white make-up = whiteface, inebriated, hobo = a white drifter) and Billy Johnson was Jim Flimflammer (a black dandy, the "bunco steerer," a bunco artist = con man = a kind of "Bunco Bill"). This is the first "big time," "full show" black farce comedy. Said to be "the first African-American musical comedy" in Riis (2011). Not counting all the mini-musical comedies, that seems to hold true. Note, though, the contents of the first iteration of the show (below), along variety-show lines.

-Note: A program survives for the run at the Third Avenue Theatre in NYC in April 1898, near the end of Season One.

-Note: A full script turned up in 2008 in an archive of typescripts submitted for copyright deposit at LoC (Moon et al (2011); Riis (2011)). The LoC date stamp of September 27, 1899 suggests that this text could be the point of departure for Season 3, but in fact it appears to be virtually identical to Season 1, and thus to not have most of the songs documented for later seasons.

This first iteration of the show is a conflation of what is actually a relatively short musical comedy---almost just a tab, at about a dozen musical items, thus hardly any bigger than At Jolly Cooney Island---together with a final act of concert numbers. The model here is based on Jack's and Isham's, Black Patti's and burlesque models (and ultimately, the minstrel show). They used a three-part structure with a mini as Part I, a variety olio as Part II, and "A Tour Around the Operas" with more serious recital fare as Part III. Here, elements

of olio are interpolated into the mini, and the final act is mostly recital fare, with some framing elements to associate it with the mini.

## SONGS:

From the number of songs that get published and advertised on sheet music and in newspapers, it appears that the mini musical part of the show grew dramatically in Season 2---probably to a full evening, with a growth from around 12 musical numbers to around 18 (and presumably, the cutting of the final act "recital").

In Season 1, five or so new published Bob Cole & Billy Johnson songs and two older published Bob Cole & Billy Johnson songs are used; "Two Bold Bad Men" is probably an unpublished Bob Cole & Billy Johnson number.

The musical numbers are in an April 1898 program (Norton (2002), I: 623 [1898.22]), a two-act version of the show from near the end of SEASON ONE, which is virtually identical to the later September 1899 script, irrespective of its division into three acts. See:

### Act I

"The Famous Black Moguls: song and chorus," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley Haviland, 1897, 1898); new

"I Hope These Few Lines Will Find You Well," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897); new

[[script calls for a song here]]

Old Kentucky Home [Foster]

[[Rube sings a song here, in script]]

Two Bold Bad Men

"A Trip to Coontown" (solo), lyrics Bob Cole & Billy Johnson, music Bert Williams (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897); new

A Trip to Coontown (chorus; reprise)

"The Czar of the Tenderloin," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson; old

The Italian Man [an Italian specialty act, done by Bill Binkerton, acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

"The Christening of a Little Black Coon," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897); new

The Equilibrist [an equilibrist specialty act done by Jim Wilson, acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

(Play) "4-11-44," lyrics and music Bob Cole; old  
"The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon: comic song and chorus,"  
lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897);  
new

Finale

Act II

= basically an olio or Black-Patti-like recital

Riis (2011), p. 425 prints a list of musical numbers from a script in three acts of September 1899. It is virtually identical to the April 1898 program:

Act I

The Famous Black Moguls

I Hope These Few Lines Find You Well

SONG

[My] Old Kentucky Home

SONG [Two Bold Bad Men]

[A] Trip to Coontown

Act II

"The Czar of the Tenderloin"

SONG [The Italian Man]

"The Christening of the Little Black Coon: song and chorus"

Play "4-11-44"

"The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon"

Act III

[Finale] Song and Gavotte

Chorus

Song

"The Greatest Living Black Tenor"

Song

Trio from Attila, introducing Mme. Plato

Finale

Twelve songs are cited in newspapers over the 1897-1898 SEASON ONE, especially a group of eight; most of these songs are not in the programs just

cited above, so that the show was clearly evolving on the road seems clear:

Trenton Evening Times, 11/14/97, p. 11; 11/15/1897, p. 8

Geneva (NY) Daily Times, March 1, 1898, p. 1

Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5

Boston Daily Globe, April 24, 1898, p. 18

The 8 (with \* for those in programs cited above):

Hoo La Boo La = "La Hoola Boola (A Hawaiian ditty) up to date," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897) [first part, acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

"You'll have to choose another baby now: song and chorus," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897)

\*Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon

\*The Black Moguls (The Famous Black Moguls) [first part, acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

A Coontown Wedding

A Coontown Picnic

The Gin Spring ["Meet Me at the Gin Spring"]

"The Black Four Hundred's Ball: march song and chorus" (The Black 400s' Ball), from the earlier At Jolly Cooney Island

The 4 additional:

\*Here's a hoping these few lines will find you well [first part, acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

\*Play 4-11-44 [first part, acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

All Chinks Look Alike to Me; a parody of Ernest Hogan's famous "All Coons Look Alike to Me" (1896)? {sung by "the blackest Negro in the company," acc. Indianapolis Freeman, April 16, 1898, p. 5]

Cakewalk by the Black Four Hundred (the Coon and Swell Cakewalk)

In later seasons:

Fifteen songs in a Howley, Haviland ad in NY Clipper, September 24, 1898 (Ragged, p. 70), presumably with some SEASON One songs and with some

new songs for SEASON TWO among them:

"The Black Four Hundred's Ball"

"Charity Began at Home: song and chorus," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1898)

"Christening of a Little Black Coon: song and chorus"

"The Coontown Regiment is Off to War: march song and chorus" [The Coontown Regiment], Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1898); surely for the show??

"La Hoola Boola (A Hawaiian ditty) up to date"

"I hope these few lines will find you well," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1897)

"I Wonder What is That [dat] Coon's Game," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897) (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1893 [sic; recte 1898])

"In Dahomey: topical song," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1898)

\*"Miss Amorinta Jackson's Promenade: coon song and chorus," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1899); copyright January 28, 1899

My Old Country Home

"There's a Warm Spot in My Heart For You, Baby: coon love song," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897) (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1898)

A Trip to Coontown

The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon

"When the Chickens Go to Sleep," lyrics Bob Cole, music Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1898)

You'll Have to Choose Another Baby Now

And in addition:

"No Coons Allowed!" lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897); sheet music cover says "As Sung by the Authors in Their New Farce Comedy A Trip to Coontown"; the modern secondary literature of the 2000s cites it frequently, and describes it as either the finale or the last song before the finale (see Google Book), but it gets just one hit in WorldCat and does not turn up in newspaper references to the show, so what gives?

And the team have four more songs published in 1897 and 1898 by Howley, Haviland:

"I Knowed You Afore Your Hair Got Straight: song and chorus," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897)

"The Naughty Bow-wow: song and chorus," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1898)

"No One Can Fill Her Place," lyrics Billy Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1897, 1898)

"When the War is Over: sentimental song and chorus," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1898); in Johns Hopkins University, Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection

There are eighteen (18) songs in a sheet music advertisement, probably from 1898, on the rear cover of the Cole & Johnson song "I wonder what is that coon's game: coon song and chorus" (NY: Howley, Haviland, & Co., 1893 [sic]) [at Yale and at British Library]; Googling gets a hit of the front cover of this song at a vintage sheet music site, and the sheet music lists three other songs by these two that are published by Howley, Haviland, & Co., incl. "The Black 400's Ball", "You'll Have to Choose Another Baby Now," and "The Wedding of the Chinee & the Coon"; further, "I wonder what" is a selection on an amateur minstrel show program in 1899 (Albion, NY, Orleans Republican, July 26, 1899, page illeg.), and is called an up-to-date coon song in Washington, DC, Evening Star, April 28, 1899, p. 16, with no newspaper hits found prior to December 1898; the same cover image appears in the NYPL Digital Library, and they too give date 1893 in their metadata because the copyright reads MDCCCXCIII; however, the rear cover gives the titles of these 18 Cole & Johnson songs published from 1896 to 1899. All of this clearly suggests that the date of 1893 on "I wonder what" is wrong and ought to be later.

The 18 songs, with publication dates in [ ], are:

The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon [1897], The Naughty Bow-Wow [1898], The Christening of a Little Black Coon [1897], A Trip to Coontown [1897], You'll Have to Choose Another Baby Now [1897], The Black 400's Ball [1896], I Knowed You Before Your Hair Got Straight [1897], I Hope These Few Lines Will Find You Well [1897], Charity Began at Home [1898], The Famous Black Moguls [1897], The

Coontown Regiment [1898], La Hoola Boola [1897], No Coons Allowed [1897], I Wonder What is That Coon's Game [1893], No One Can Fill Her Place [1898], In Dahomey [1898], When the Chickens Go to Sleep [1898], Miss Amorinta Jackson's Promenade [1899]

Four 1899 songs associated with Cole & Johnson and this show and Howley, Haviland via WorldCat:

- \*"Baby I've done throwed you down," lyrics Bob Cole and Billy Johnson, music Will Acchoe (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1899); copyright September 27, 1899
- \*"Chicken," lyrics Bob Cole and Billy Johnson, music Will Acchoe (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1899); copyright September 27, 1899; "As sung by Bob Cole, of Cole & Johnson, in A Trip to Coontown."
- \*"The Luckiest Coon in Town," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1899); copyright July 3, 1899; "Sung by Cole & Johnson in their comic skit "Coontown society""; and sung by John Rucker in Richards, Pringle-Rusco & Holland's Big Minstrel Festival (Indianapolis Freeman, August 19, 1899, p. 5); very popular
- \*"Mr. Coon You're All Right in Your Place," Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1899); copyright February 25, 1899

Another song this year by the team that was publ. by Howley, Haviland:

"I bought a horseless carriage for my baby," Cole & Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1899); LoC copyright September 16, 1899

And another song for the show:

"All I Wants is My (ma) Chickens," lyrics and music by Lawrence Deas and Jack Wilson (NY: Joseph W. Stern, 1898, 1899); Riis (in "Forgotten MSS" and in Riis (2011)) mentions that it is in a NY Clipper add for a set of additional songs; (confirmed in WorldCat); the sheet music cover reproduced in Riis (2011), p. 434, Fig. 17.3, says it is sung with great success by Bob Cole in A Trip to Coon Town.  
Sung in Season 2: see Indianapolis Freeman, January 21, 1899, p. 5.



Peterson, Century (1993), gives the following songs and musical numbers, alphabetized, with three marked with + by Peterson for being a Howland, Haviland publ., with the addition of x if Peterson's are also in the Howland sheetmusic listg of 18, or y if in 1899 additional, and z if also on "ovrtur.com" website hit; I've added in others inside [ ]; some additional not in this list but in Howley and Haviland's 18.

All Chinks Look Alike to Me  
[All I Wants is My Chickens]  
y [Baby I'se Done Throed You Down]  
x [The Black Four Hundred's Ball (or Black 400's)]; Jolly Cooney Island  
[Cakewalk by the Black Four Hundred (the Coon and Swell Cakewalk)]  
xz [The Christening of A Little Black Coon]  
Coontown Frolique  
(A Coontown Picnic)  
[A Coontown Wedding]  
x The Coontown Regiment  
z [The Czar of the Tenderloin]  
z [The Equilibrist]  
xz The Famous Black Moguls  
For All Eternity  
z (Play) 4-11-44; Jolly Cooney Island  
(Meet Me at the) Gin Spring  
xz Here's a Hoping (I hope) These Few Lines Will Find You Well  
+x La Hoola Boola  
"I Can Stand for Your Color, But Your Hair Won't Do," lyrics and music  
Billy Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1901)  
I Must o' Been a Dreaming  
x I Wonder What is Dat Coon's Game  
"If That's Society, Excuse Me," lyrics Bob Cole and Will Johns, music J. R.  
Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland and Dresser, 1900)  
x In Dahomey  
z The Italian Man  
A Jolly Old Rube  
y The Luckiest Coon in Town  
y (Ma) Chicken  
z [Midnight Kisses]  
xy [Miss Amorinta Jackson's Promenade]

Miss Arabella Jones  
 y [Mr. Coon You're All Right in Your Place]  
 +x No Coons Allowed! (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Co., 1897)  
 z Old Kentucky Home  
 Picking (Pickin') on a Chicken Bone  
 Sweet Savannah  
 +There's a Warm Spot in My Heart for You, Babe  
 z The Trio from Attila  
 xz A Trip to Coontown  
 z Two Bold Bad Men  
 The Way to Kiss a Girl  
 xz The Wedding of the Chinee and the Coon  
 x When the Chickens Go to Sleep

The story is told (Riis; Century of Musicals; etc.) that the troupe is actually blackballed/ blacklisted/locked out this first season (or at least the threat of this is made by Voelckel and Nolan) and that they play only in smaller second-rate/third-tier houses. To clarify, this is a question of the circuit---they could be described as playing the good houses in smaller towns on a second or third-tier circuit, sometimes just for half weeks or travelling daily. They clearly spent many months moving between pretty small towns in upstate New York and nearby Canada and Massachusetts. Lester A. Walton, in his NY Age obit for Cole, said the company "had the distinction of doing something unusual in the show business---play the worst houses in every city its first year and playing the best houses the next." The tour ran successfully for a long season of 39 weeks (over ninth months, from late Aug/early Sept 1897 to early/mid June 1898) ending with three weeks in Ottawa (NY Dramatic Mirror, June 18, 1898, p. 14)

Cities and theaters in SEASON ONE (1897-1898) include:

August/September: South Amboy, NJ  
 September: NYC Proctor's 23rd Street Theatre, week of Tuesday, Sept. 14  
 September: Elizabeth, NJ, at the Star Theatre, Sept. 28  
 October: Catskill, NY, October 4  
 October: Schenectady, October 7  
 October: Mechanicsville, NY, at the Park Ave. Opera House, October 8  
 October : Ballston Spa (SW of Saratoga Springs), October 11  
 October : Cortland NY Oct./Nov. 11 [?]

October: Lyons, NY: October 15  
Glenns Falls.  
October: Newark, NY, October 16  
October: Canandaigua, October 18  
October: Oneida, NY, October 22  
October: Rome, NY, October 25  
October: Auburn, NY, October 26  
October: Rochester, from October 28 for three days (to 30th)  
November: Syracuse, November 1  
November: Philadelphia, at the Standard, week of Nov. 7  
November: Norwich, NY, November 9 (cancelled)  
November: Trenton, at the Taylor Opera House, week of Nov. 14 (on the 15th  
and 16th)  
November: Rome, NY, November 25  
November: Penn Yan, November 27  
December: Southport, CT, in the second half of the week of December 16  
December: Lawrence, Mass., December 23-25  
December: Lowell, Mass. December 27-29  
January: Montreal, Queen's Theatre, week of January 10  
Kingston, Canada (return), January 28  
Oshawa, Canada, January 29  
Toronto, Canada, January 31  
Hamilton, Canada, February 7, 8  
Guelph, Canada, February 9  
Brantford, February 10  
Berlin, Canada, February 11  
Chatham, Canada, first half of February  
Woodstock, Canada, February 15  
Guelph, Canada (return), February 17  
Berlin, Canada (return), February 18  
St. Catharines, Canada, February 19  
February: Batavia, NY, February 24  
March: Penn Yan, March 2  
March: Geneva, March 3  
March: Auburn, March 5  
March: Oneida (return), March 9  
March: Schenectady, March 12  
March: Oneonta, March 15  
March: Medina, March 22

March: Norwich, NY, March 16  
March: Lockport, March 23  
March: Canandaigua (return), March 26  
April: NYC Third Avenue Theatre, April 4-9, 1898 (1 week; 8 performances)  
April: Boston, at the Palace Theatre, from Monday April 25  
May: Worcester, Mass., around May 7  
May: Springfield, Mass., at the Opera House, May 12  
May: North Adams, Mass, May 14  
May/June: Ottawa, Canada, at Victoria Park, for three weeks

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1898, in June: Cole and Billy Johnson's summer show in June is Georgia '49, opening in Ottawa Canada on June 11, "introducing negro plantation songs and dances, and concluding with the cake walk" (New York Dramatic Mirror, June 18, 1898, p. 7)

1898, August: Cole & Billy Johnson's summer show for late July thru August at Koster and Bial's is Kings of Koon-Dom, assisted by the Freeman Sisters, and their "Cake Walk Coterie"; see, e.g., Boston Journal, August 7, 1898, p. 15

1898-1899

SEASON TWO of A Trip to Coontown

The show is "revised and strengthened" (and laid out in two acts).  
Rehearsals called for August 22.

The show travels much farther, including west to Omaha and Denver, and to bigger markets. Venues include:

Asbury Park, NY, August 29

Elizabeth, NJ, August 31

Grand Opera House at 23rd & 8th in NYC for 8 performances from September 12-17

Hoboken, NJ, September 18-25 [?]

Bridgeport, CT, October 1-3  
Putnam, CT October 23  
South Framingham, Mass., October 24  
Denver in early January 1899  
Topeka in January 1899  
Omaha in January 1899  
Chicago in early February 1899  
Cleveland in February 1899  
Milwaukee in March 1899  
Minneapolis in March 1899

1899, March: Bob Cole & Billy Johnson have one song in Klaw & Erlanger's A Reign of Error, running March 1899 to June 1899: "I Wonder What is That Coon's Name" from A Trip to Coontown

1899, spring and summer: J. W. Johnson and J. R. Johnson come up from Florida to NYC in the spring with their comic operetta, Toloso. (a.k.a. The Czar of Zam). J. R. Johnson had spent a year on the road in 1896-1897 with Isham's Oriental America, and returned to Florida to teach music. J. W. Johnson had been in law school, and had graduated and passed the bar. They don't find much interest in a production for their operetta in NYC and returned to Florida in the fall. Still, it opened doors to NYC's black theatrical community. Cole met the Johnson brothers in the north this summer. In their first collaboration, they wrote at least one song together, "Louisiana Lize," for May Irwin. J. W. Johnson much later remembers that they wrote two songs together and brought them to E. B. Marks.

## 1899 SONGS

"Lucille, ma lady love," Bob Cole & Theo. F. Morse (NY: Howley, Haviland, 1899); LoC copyright Jan. 2/3, 1899

"Mamma, I'se your baby, ain't I, mamma, ain't I?" Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (NY: Howley Haviland, 1898, 1899); LoC copyright Jan. 21, 1899

"Louisiana Lize," lyrics and music Bob Cole, words and music edited J. W. and J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1899; repr. Riis 2015);

LoC copyright Aug. 10/Sept. 8, 1899; it was already being sung in variety in the summer of 1899 (NY Dramatic Mirror, August 26, 1899, p. 16) and the 1899 sheet music cover says it is "May Irwin's Latest Success"; sung in the Primrose and Dockstader minstrel show in 1899-1900; May Irwin evidently is singing it in 1899 and she sings it in the fall 1900 Belle of Bridgeport (below) and it remains popular for at least the next half decade

1899-1900

SEASON THREE of A Trip to Coontown

Route (partial) includes:

Jersey City in September  
NYC at Star Theatre in September  
Harrisburg in early October  
Philadelphia in October  
Cleveland in early November  
Kalamazoo in November  
Jackson, MI, in November  
Grand Rapids in November  
Erie, PA, early December  
Amsterdam in December  
Watertown, NY in late December  
Canada:  
Kingston in January  
Belleville, in January  
Lindsay in January  
Simcoe in January  
Barrie in January  
Oshawa in January  
London in January  
Woodstock in January  
Hamilton in January  
St. Catharines in January  
Niagara Falls in February  
Boston in February  
New Haven in February

Hoboken in March  
Wilkes-barre in March  
Mahanoy City in March  
Allentown in March  
Washington, DC, in March  
Philadelphia in April  
Boston in April

1900, in March: In NY Clipper, March 31, 1900, p. 98, in the column THEATRICAL under "Dramatic Copyrights," are listed:

"Bob Cole in Coontown," a musical comedy, in two acts, by Bob Cole.  
Copyrighted by Bob Cole, New York.

"King of Spades," a musical comedy, in two acts, by Bob Cole.  
Copyrighted by Bob Cole, New York.

"Coontown Carnival," a musical comedy, in two acts, by Bob Cole.  
Copyrighted by Bob Cole, New York.

1900, in the spring: The Johnson brothers return to NYC from Florida and begin a partnership with Cole this summer that for Cole and J. R. Johnson will span the next ten years. Cole is still in A Trip To Coontown with Billy Johnson, but their artistic collaboration is over. With the Johnson brothers, Cole writes for season four of A Trip to Coontown and for other shows, most especially The Belle of Bridgeport.

1900-1901

SEASON FOUR of A Trip to Coontown

Cole and Johnson in their final season together.  
The show's route included (but was not limited to):

Oshawa, Canada, in September; Berlin, Canada, in September; St. Catharines, in September; Guelph, Canada, in September; London, Ontario, in September; Jackson, MI, in October; Indianapolis in October; Cleveland in October; Kalamazo in November; in Milwaukee in latest November or earliest December; Springfield, Il. in December; Louisiana, Moberly, Mexico, Chillicothe, Mo in December; Leavenworth in

December; Kansas City in December; Chicago in December; Lincoln, Beatrice, Fairbury, Omaha, NE in January; Memphis in January; Birmingham in January; Charleston in February; Harrisburg in March; New York City in March; Jersey City in March; Hoboken in April; Port Jervis, Kingston, Catskill, Hudson, Schenectady, NY in April; Boston in April; Willimantic, Bridgeport, CT in late April and earliest May; Philadelphia in May

#### SONGS for Season Four:

Sampson, Blacks in Blackface, gives 1899 date (clearly an error) and names these two songs; they are singled out in the Freeman for October 1900 as Cole songs in the show (Indianapolis Freeman, October 20, 1900, p. 5):

"I must have been a dreamin'," lyrics and music Bob Cole, arr. J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Morse, 1900; NY: Howley, Haviland, and Dresser, 1900) = I Must O' Been a Dreaming, I must a been a dreamin', "I must a Be'n a Dreamin', etc.; LoC copyright January 5, 1901; "Sung with great success by Dot Clausen" on Morse sheet music; inset of Fannie Midgley in blackface on Howley, Haviland, and Dresser sheet music; also a Trip to Coontown song (in Season Four, as below);  
A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"Picking on a Chicken Bone," lyrics and music Bob Cole, arr. J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Morse, 1900); "Bob Cole's tremendous hit in "A Trip to Coontown" Co."

Indianapolis Freeman, October 20, 1900, p. 5 mentions two songs:

"I must o' been a dreaming" [1900]  
"Picking on a chicken bone" [1900]

Memphis Evening Scimitar, January 24, 1901 (and Sampson, Blacks in Blackface, giving 1901 date) reports three songs:

"If That's Society, Excuse Me" [1900]  
"Picking on a Chicken Bone" [1900]



"I Can Stand For Your Color, But Your Hair Won't Do" [1901]

1900, August: one song in The Rogers Brothers in Central Park, Klaw and Erlanger's vaudeville farce [Norton (2002) 1900.40], runs 1900-1901, and fall 1901:

"Run, brudder possum, run" (finale) ["Run, brudder possum, run: a Negro warning" or "Run, brudder possum run: coon song and chorus"], lyrics J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson: (New York: Roger Bros., 1900)

1900, in September: Cole had been sick with diphtheria and out of the A Trip to Coontown company, but is expected to return to the show soon (Indianapolis Freeman, September 22, 1900, p. 5)

1900, October: The Belle of Bridgeport [Norton (2002) 1900.48] Cole and Johnson brothers do most of the songs for this show; J. W. Johnson remembers it as "all the single numbers" for the show; a few others by Accooe, etc.; this is a white show, a vehicle for great "coon song" singer May Irwin, who was also the producer; ran October to December 1900

"I Ain't Gwine Ter Work No Mo," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin

"Why Don't the Band Play," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin

"I've got troubles of my own," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900; repr. Riis 2015); for May Irwin

"Magdaline [Magdalene, Madelene], My Southern Queen," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin; repr. by Hearst's Chicago American, October 1903)

"Since (Sence) you went away," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin

"Ma Mississippi Belle," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900; repr. Riis 2015; publ. in Hearst papers in 1903); May Irwin Irwin sings it, though the printed lyrics are for a man to sing about his gal---is Irwin still

doing Belle in 1903?

"I Must O' Been A Dreamin'" from A Trip to Coontown

"Louisiana Lize" (written for May Irwin in 1899)

and also, inter alia:

"Ma dandy soldier coon," lyrics and music Will Acchoe (New York Journal and Advertiser, by permission of Stern)

1900, in December: May Irwin in her new vehicle, Madge Smith, Attorney [Norton (2002), 1900.55] with a number of songs carried over from the Belle of Bridgeport:

"I Ain't Gwine Ter Work No Mo," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin

"Why Don't the Band Play," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin

"I've got troubles of my own," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1900); for May Irwin

1901, in April: A Trip to Coontown files for bankruptcy after four years, on April 11, 1901 (Indianapolis Freeman, April 20, 1901, p. 5; see also Ghost Walks, p. 230, etc., etc., but it is in Boston with Cole and Johnson in mid April [Boston Herald, April 21, 1901, p. 14; Boston Herald, April 23, 1901, p. 7]); the Tom the Tattler column in Indianapolis Freeman, May 11, 1901, p. 6, says "The Trip to Coontown Company, if reports be true, has tripped its last trip,"; in the end, though, the show closed for the season in Philadelphia on May 11 (Philadelphia Inquirer, May 7, 1901, p. 7; Indianapolis Freeman, May 18, 1901, p. 5).

1901, in July: Billy Johnson takes the show for a stint in the summer, and with Jesse Shipp as his co-star, plays at the Midland Beach Theatre (Staten Island) in July (Indianapolis Freeman, July 27, 1901, p. 5); moreover, a version of the show with new stars continues to run at least into 1902 (Indianapolis Freeman, June 28, 1902, p. 5; Indianapolis Freeman, September 6, 1902, p. 5)

Cole and Billy Johnson reportedly intend to make a new team with Will Marion Cook, J. W. and J. R. Johnson for Cannibal King project. (NB: Cole had

been publishing songs with the Johnsons since at least 1899.) Then Cole and Billy Johnson dissolve their partnership on July 31, 1901 (Ghost Walks, p. 233) though as late as August 1901 newspapers, Cole and Billy Johnson were both going to be in Cook's Cannibal King (as below). The dissolution is big news in Sylvester Russell's 1901 end of year write-up; from fall 1901, Cole and Johnson then go their own ways, but sometimes work separately on the same vaudeville bill. Cole and the Johnson brothers continue to churn out songs, and Billy Johnson also continues to be a prolific song writer with several new collaborators over the next decade.

1901, August: Cole and J. W. Johnson write a Cannibal King script (first act) for WMC in 1901, with LoC copyright dated August 10, 1901. This might be Cole's first "big show" from scratch, and the team ends up writing a failure: a full show by length and number of musical numbers that covers only Act I of the scenario. The show goes into rehearsal in early August with a superstar cast including Bob Cole, Billy Johnson, Rosamond Johnson, Ernest Hogan, Abbie Mitchell, Reginald Burleigh, Muriel Ringgold, etc., etc. (Indianapolis Freeman, August 10, 1901, p. 5)

## 1901 SONGS

"Ain't dat scan'lous," words Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. R. Johnson (NY: Joseph Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015), for May Irwin; sheet music says she sings it "in her new play this season"; possibly whatever 1901-1902 play that followed Belle of Bridgeport (i.e., Madge Smith, Attorney or The Widow Jones)

"No use in askin' 'cause you know the reason why," J. W. Johnson and Cole (NY: Stern, 1901); sung by Lew Dockstader in Primrose and Dockstader's Minstrels

"When De Jack O' Lantern Starts to Walk About," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015)

"Tallahassee Ziz," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland & Dresser, 1901); LoC copyright January 5, 1901

## 1901-1906

Cole moves on to five years of vaudeville, including European touring, plus writing songs for Tin Pan Alley and white shows, especially a series for Klaw & Erlanger (whom Bob Cole & Billy Johnson had dealt with already), all with partner J. R. Johnson on stage; Cole with J. W. and J. R. Johnson as song-writing trio (Washington Bee, November 16, 1901, p. 1)

1901-1902

In fall 1901 Cole and the Johnsons get lots of newspaper attention as a song-hit-writing trio in later 1901 (e.g., Washington Bee, November 16, 1901, p. 1); NB: sometimes songs by the Johnson and Johnson duo get identified with Cole as well

Cole enters vaudeville with J. R. Johnson as his pianist/partner in late 1901 or earliest 1902 (1902 acc. Riis in NGD); for 1901, see, e.g., Pittsburgh Courier, December 3, 1927, section two, page 2; in NY Tribune, December 29, 1901, p. 9, Bob Cole is on a theatrical bill at the new Winter Garden; NY Clipper, February 1, 1902, p. 1065, writes "Bob Cole, who made an emphatic success at the New York Winter Garden recently, is re-engaged for the next few Sundays, and will again feature "My Castle on the Nile" and "The Phrenologist Coon." The vaudeville act is going strong in late spring 1902 (Indianapolis Freeman, June 28, 1902, p. 5); the Washington, DC, Colored American, May 10, 1902, p. 5 identifies Cole and J. R. as "the musical composers, song writers and comedians of New York"

1901, October: some songs for Champagne Charlie, comedy by Augustus Thomas, esp. for actor Peter F. Dailey, running September and October 1901, including:

"Gin"

"I Don't Want to Be No Actor Man No Mo'," lyrics J. W. Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015); "Introduced by Peter F. Dailey in His New Production "Champagne Charlie"

"Nobody's lookin' but de Owl an' de Moon" [The Owl and the Moon; The Moon and the Owl], lyrics J. W. Johnson and Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015); also in Klaw & Erlanger's Sleeping Beauty and the Beast below; A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at

the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"My Castle on the Nile," lyrics J. W. Johnson and Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015); sheet music cover says it is one of "New Song Hits Introduced by Williams and Walker's Own Big Co." . . . "Sung by the Great Comedian Bert Williams"; that would be in Sons of Ham, 1900-1901; A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"Tell me, dusky maiden" (also in Sleeping Beauty below)

"My Heart's Desiah is Miss Mariah," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015); sung by Lew Dockstader in Primrose & Dockstader's Minstrels

1901, October: some songs for The Little Duchess [Norton (2002) 1901.25], which ran Oct 1901-April 1902; a Harry Smith/ De Koven show, directed by Ziegfeld, starring Anna Held, etc.

"The Maiden With the Dreamy Eyes" (Maid, Girl), lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015); a big hit, written for and sung in this show by Anna Held; J. W. Johnson remembers it brought them a big check and got them out of debt; this is the single song mentioned in first reports of his death; A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"Strollin' Along the Beach," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1902), "As sung in Anna Held's Co."

"Sweet Saloma: serenade" [Sweet Salome], lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901)

1901, in November: The National Police Gazette, November 16, 1901, p. 2, reports that "Ed H. Lester is going to take a chance with a new show, called "The Carnival King." It is to be headed by Bob Cole, of Cole and Johnson. There will be forty colored performers. Hot stuff, eh?" Could this be Cole's "Coontown Carnival," or is it a mishearing of "Cannibal King"?

1901, November: at least four songs for The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast [Norton (2002) 1901.27]; white show; NYC and London Drury Lane; Klaw and Erlanger extravaganza; ran Nov 1901 thru May 1902, etc.

"Come out, Dinah, on the green: darkey serenade" ["Dinah"] (Chicago & NY: Howley, Haviland, and Dresser, 1901)

"Nobody's lookin' but de owl an' de moon" (Owl and the Moon; The Moon and the Owl; "Nobody's looking but the Owl and the Moon) lyrics J. W. Johnson and Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901); written for Christie McDonald; "As sung in the Klaw & Erlanger production of the Drury Lane extravaganze, The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast"

"The Old Flag Never Touched the Ground," lyrics J. W. Johnson and Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901; repr. Riis 2015); "Originally Introduced, & Staged by Primrose & Dockstader's Minstrels"; "A Stirring American Song"

"Tell me, dusky maiden: a travesty" lyrics J. W. Johnson and Bob Cole, music J. R. Johnson (NY and Chicago: Howley, Haviland, and Dresser, 1901); "sung in the Klaw & Erlanger's production of the Drury Lane extravaganza "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast." Staged under direction of Ben Teal."

1901, December: three songs for the three-act comedy The Supper Club [Norton (2002) 1901.29], Sydney Rosenfeld's musical comedy; ran December 1901-Jan 1902

"When the Band Plays Ragtime," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1902)

"Don't Butt In," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901); NB: also done by Lew Dockstader in Primrose & Dockstader's Minstrels

"The Maiden with the Dreamy Eyes," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (Sydney: Albert & Son, 1901)

1901, in November/December: any songs for May Irwin's The Widow Jones? Apparently not. Miss Irwin sings (Syracuse Journal, November 30, 1901, p. 12):

"Be Good, Be Good"

"I Want You, Ma Honey"

"The Frog Song"

"The New Bully"

"When Shakespeare Comes to Town"

"Good bye bonze"

"The Song of the Naptha Launch"

1902, January: The Hall of Fame [Norton (2002) 1902.06], Sydney Rosenfeld's musical comedy, ran late January/Feb-June 1902, with songs including:

"My Angemima Green" (NY: Stern, 1902); sung by Dan McAvoy and Louis Harrison

"The Maiden with the Dreamy Eyes," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (Sydney: Albert & Son, 1901)

1902, in March Cole may have gone back to work on The Cannibal King without J. W. Johnson, since he writes an article for Colored American Magazine which appears in March 1902, in which he says he is writing the libretto for Cook ("The Negro and the Stage," Colored American Magazine 4/3 (March 1902), pp. 301-306 at p. 306); the Indianapolis Freeman picks up on this and reports in May that Mr. Cole is writing a libretto for Mr. Cooke's "The Cannibal King" and Dunbar is out of the business (Indianapolis Freeman, May 24, 1902, p. 5)

## 1902 SONGS

"The Maid from Tokio. Japanese love song," Bob Cole (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Desser, 1901); Bob Cole & Johnson [which brother not specified] (NY: Howley, Haviland, and Desser, 1902)

"Mandy, won't you let me be your beau?" words Bob Cole, music J. R. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1902; NY: W Edward B. Marks, 1902), sung by Eddie Leonard in Primrose and Dockstader's Minstrels

"When the Minstrels Come to Town," JR and Cole (NY: Stern, 1902); arr. as two-step march with title "Mandy won't you let me be your beau" (NY: Stern, 1902)

and

"Oh! Didn't he ramble," lyrics and music Will Handy [said by some to be a pseudonym for the Bob Cole and Johnson brothers team;

otherwise usually identified as W. C. Handy] (NY: Stern, 1902; NY: Marks, 1902; repr. Riis 2015);

the original sheet music just says "Words & Music by Will Handy," with "Adaptation by Bob Cole" on the cover, and Will Handy at the upper right on the first page of the score; Extra verses in the sheet music say "By Will Handy, Adaptation by Bob Cole, and thus a WorldCat annotation says "additional verses" by Cole. It is a two-step; it is a popular success right off the bat, remains popular a long while, and in later days becomes a jazz staple; there is an LoC copyright Dec. 12, 1902 for an arrangement by Maurice F. Smith for band (NY: Stern, 1902), with no mention of the original author;

"The latest fad in town introduced by the famous minstrel George H. Primrose" on the sheet music; a Jos. W. Stern sheet music ad in *Billboard* (1902) calls it a comic coon song sung by Primrose; *NY Herald*, Sunday, March 2, 1902, Seventh Section, p. 6, has an advertisement for Primrose and Dockstader's Minstrel Show that says "Oh! Didn't He Ramble" is a song success for George W. Primrose, who is said on the sheet music to have introduced it;

a *New York Clipper*, April 18, 1903, p. 197 advertisement for Cole and J. R. Johnson as a vaudeville team says they composed it; an advertisement in *Variety* and the *New York Dramatic Mirror* for J. Rosamond Johnson and the Jazz Five (n.d., in 1919) says J. R. composed it;

Newman Ivey White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (1929), p. 184, calls it "Bob Cole's coon song," and says it was copyrighted in 1921; George Ade, in *The Old Time Saloon* (1931), says it was said to have been written by Cole around 1904 and the copyright was renewed in 1921 by Marks Music Co.;

An extended biographical survey of J. W. Johnson in the Bennet Davis column, "Books of the Week in Review" says this song was written by the Johnson brothers (*Buffalo Courier-Express*, October 8, 1933, p. 4)

John Szwed, *Alan Lomax: The Man Who Recorded the World* (2010) says Lomax discovered "that its music was actually drawn from the melody of an old English song, "The Ram of Darby" (p. 000)"



1902-1903

1902, August: one song in Sally in our Alley [Norton (2002) 1902.23], Hobart and Englander, starring Marie Cahill, etc., which ran August-December 1902

"Under the Bamboo Tree," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1902; repr. Riis 2015); a giant hit; "A Successful Interpolation by Marie Cahill in Sally In Our Alley"; originally for Todalo?; said to be written for Marie Cahill, which would rule out Todalo; see also Nancy Brown and Red Moon, below; sheet music for "Big Indian Chief" says this song is by Cole & Johnson Brothers; A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

and also

"Congo Love Song" (Mary Cahill's Congo Love Song), lyrics J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903); interpolated in this show by Marie Cahill acc. Riis; "Featured by this Peerless Artiste in Daniel V. Arthur's Musical Comedy Entitled Nancy Brown," so see also Nancy Brown, below; WorldCat follows sheet music at head of score and says lyrics J. W. Johnson and music J. R. Johnson---thus with no input from Cole, though the sheet music says "by Cole & Johnson Bros.," as does the cover of the sheet music for "Big Indian Chief"; advertisements for Cole and J. R. Johnson as a vaudeville team in 1902 and 1903 say that they are the authors; clearly this is a case where "Cole & Johnson" can mean any two of the three, though here, in fact, without Cole; Selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

1902, in August: Huckleberry Finn, big Klaw and Erlanger extravaganza for 1902-1903, in rehearsal from August, following Beauty and the Beast

"The Animals' Convention" J. W. Johnson and Cole (NY: Stern, 1902); repr. in Cole & Johnson Vocal Folio (NY: Stern, 1904)

1903, January: Mr. Blue Beard [Norton (2002) 1903.04], Klaw & Erlanger extravaganza, Jan to May 1903, had this song:

"W'en de Colo'ed Ban' Comes Ma'chin' Down de Street," lyrics Paul Dunbar, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Howley, Haviland & Dresser, 1903); as "When the Colored Band Comes Marching Down the Street," attr. by Norton (2002) to Cole & Johnsons, though the sheet music does not, in fact, make any reference to Cole

1903, in February: The Jewel of Asia [Norton (2002) 1903.06], musical in two acts, lyrics by Harry B. Smith and Frederic Ranken, music Ludwig Englander; a Lederer production

"Everybody wants to see the baby" (Hold the Baby), lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1903)

1903, Feb: songs for Nancy Brown, which first ran February through May, and then toured and back to NYC again in the fall to November; with JR and JW Johnson, mostly Cole and Johnson songs; white show, a vehicle for Marie Cahill; Rankin and Hadley published score of 17 numbers, at least two of which are (unidentified) Cole & Johnson, and there is a list of additional interpolations on the back cover

The Opening Chorus, Cole & Johnsons

"The Katy-did, the Cricket, and the Frog," J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1903; repr. Riis 2015); big Marie Cahill hit; also published by Hearst in Sunday supplements in 1905

"Two Eyes," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903); in the Stern score and IBDB

"Cupid's Ramble, or Cupid's Blind, They Say," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903); in the Stern score and IBDB

"Congo Love Song," Johnson & Johnson (Marie Cahill's Congo Love Song); interpolated by Marie Cahill; a Cahill hit

Perhaps for the second run:

"Save It For Me!" lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1903);

repr. Riis 2015); "Recently Introduced by Marie Cahill [into] Nancy Brown"; in 1904 Stern ads

"In Gay Ballyhoo"

"Octette to Bacchus"

"The Soldier is the Idol of the Nation"

and also the Cahill and May Irwin hits:

"Under the Bamboo Tree" (1902), interpolated by Marie Cahill

"Mudder Knows," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903; repr. Riis 2015)

"Ma/My Mississippi Belle" (1900)

"Magdalene My Southern Queen" (1900)

Some time in 1903 the trio of Cole and the Johnson brothers sign a three-year contract with Klaw and Erlanger.

## 1903 SONGS

"Moonlight on the Mississippi," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903); sung by Carroll Johnson in Dockstader's Minstrels

"Shine On My Evening Star," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903)

## 1903-1904

1903, September: songs for Whoop-dee-doo [Norton (2002), 1903.28], which ran from Sept 1903 to May 1904, including:

"The Flowers of Dixie Land," lyrics Edgar Smith and Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (acc. IBDB, which says it was sung by "The Rose, the Sunflower, and the Magnolia")

"The Maid of Timbuctoo," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1903); introduced by Lillian Russell in Whoop-dee-doo

1903, September: A/The Girl From Dixie [Norton (2002) 1903.41]

"When the Moon Comes Peeping [a'peepin'] O'er the Hill," lyrics Cole, music J. R. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1902); sung by Irene Bentley

1903, October: Mother Goose [Norton (2002) 1903.39], another Klaw & Erlanger extravaganza (next after Huck Finn)

"There's a Very Pretty Moon Tonight," lyrics Cole & J. W. Johnson, music J. R. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903)

"The Evolution of Ragtime", a big six-item ensemble number (Cole & the Johnsons variously contributing; all published separately with NY: Stern, 1903) including:

Voice of the Savage  
Echoes of the Day  
Essence of the Jug  
Darkies Delight  
The Spirit of the Banjo!  
Lindy: Sounds of the Times

NOTE: "Voice of the Savage. (Zulu dance)," lyrics Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903)

NOTE: "Echoes of the Day: Daylight is Fading," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music by J. R. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903); LoC copyright December 3, 1903;

NOTE: "Essence of the Jug," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1903); LoC copyright December 3, 1903

NOTE: "Darkies' delight: introducing 'Carve dat 'possum'," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern, 1903); LoC copyright December 3, 1903; later published in the Ten Choice Negro Folk Songs (NY: Glove, 1909) of Stern catalogue songs mostly by Cole and J. R. Johnson; WorldCat cites from the 1905 Ladies Home Journal issue that had a set of Cole and Johnson songs, of which this was the second: "[this song] illustrates the earliest style of negro popular music. Songs of that period were almost always about good things to eat, or good times. The most famous one . . . was 'Carve dat

'possum,' written by Sam Lucas"; the Lucas number was a song published in 1875; see also "Spirit of the Banjo"

NOTE: "The Spirit of the Banjo," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903; repr. Riis 2015); the third of four songs that are supposed to represent the growth of the forms of negro music from the days of old minstrelsy to the present; this third song represents the old-time banjo song of the cotton-fields; the sheet music cover says it is one of "Peter F. Dailey's Famous Song successes," and it was "Sung at Klaw and Erlanger's Aerial Theatre, New York City"; in Ladies Home Journal, July 1905

NOTE: "Sounds of the times: Lindy" (or just "Lindy"), words J. W. Johnson, music Cole and J. R. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903); obviously the most "modern day" of the songs in the series; also "Sung at Klaw & Erlanger's Aerial Theatre, New York"

1903, in November: The Office Boy [Norton (2002) 1903.34], lyrics Harry B. Smith, music Englander

"When the Band Plays Ragtime," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern, 1902), reprinted with statement on the cover: "Vocal and instrumental successes in Charles B. Dillingham's magnificent production, 'The office boy,' comedy opera"

1904, January: two songs for An English Daisy [Norton (2002), 1904.04], runs Jan-Feb 1904

"Big Indian Chief," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. R. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904; repr. Riis 2015); sheet music cover says "Written Especially For the 16th Annual Production of The Mask & Wig Club of the University of Pennsylvania"; the "Mask & Wig" association is confirmed by the NY Age, Autumn Exposition supplement, which says this song will be sung at the "Songs of Olden Days" event on October 1, and that it was written especially for the Mask & Wig Club "and was a tremendous selling success";

A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"A Prepossessing Little Maid," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. R. Johnson (NY:

Stern, 1904); "Introduced by the popular Christie McDonald in Weber and Field's magnificent production, *The English Daisy*"

1904, June: Klaw and Erlanger present *A Little Bit of Everything* [Norton (2002) 1904.22], a vaudeville entertainment, at their Aerial Gardens, sung on the roof of the New Amsterdam theatre from June thru September, and then into the fall (e.g., in Boston in October), with stars including Miss Fay Templeton; see NY *Sunday Telegraph*, July 10, 1904, p. 7 and IBDB; a large number of songs by Cole & Johnsons; songs, alphabetically, include the following, and \* if published by Stern in 1904:

- \*"Como le Gusta? = How Do You Like Me?: tale of the gay Lothario" (Como le Gusta Me), lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1904); sung by Fay Templeton
- \*"Don't Wake Him Up: Let Him Dream" (Let Him Dream), lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1904)
- \*"Fishing," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904; Sydney: Albert & Son, 1904); sheet music cover says by Cole & Johnson Brothers, but at head of score it says lyrics J. W. and music J. R.; "Fay Templeton's Latest Song Sensations"; "Sung and Klaw and Erlanger's Aerial Theatre, New York"
- \*"Leave It to Bill," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1904); "Sung at Klaw and Erlanger's Aerial Theatre, New York."
- "Lindy: sounds of the Times" from "The Evolution of Ragtime" (from *Mother Goose* (1903))
- \*"Spirit of the Banjo," from "The Evolution of Ragtime" (from *Mother Goose* (1903))  
[NB: Norton (2002) says all of "The Evolution of Ragtime" was done]
- \*"That Pretty Little Squaw From Utah," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904);  
A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914
- \*"There is Something About You That I Love, Love, Love" lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1904)

1904, August: *Looney Dreamland*, mini musical skit for Black Patti and John Rucker in 1904-1905 and 1905-1906; many hits on this name, though Peterson has *Cooney Dreamland*, which

is evidently an error; but NB: one hit each in 1904 and 1905 call it  
Looney Cooney Dreamland;

"Looney" is right because the skit is about Luna Park and Dreamland at  
Coney Island;

for its repertoire, which draws on recent Cole & Johnson numbers for  
white shows, see, inter alia, Syracuse Daily Journal, August 20, 1904, p.  
12; Indianapolis Freeman, September 17, 1904, p. 5; Forth Worth Star-  
Telegram, November 2, 1904, p. 7

"All aboard for dreamland" by von Tilzer

"When the coons have a dreamland of their own," by Heelan and Helf  
"Dollie"

"Gimme de Leavin's," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern,  
1904); for John Rucker, the "Alabama Blossom"

"Leave It to Bill," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1904)

"Big Indian Chief," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY:  
Stern, 1904; repr. Riis 2015); big choral number

"Maid of Timbuctoo," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern,  
1903)

"Lazy Moon," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern,  
1903; repr. Riis 2015); written for Geo. Primrose, and some  
printings have photo of Geo. Primrose; sung by him in his Minstrel  
show c. 1903 before turning up a year later in this show

Cole & Johnson Vocal Folio (NY: Stern, 1904), 21 songs (80 pp.), alphabetical  
in the original:

Ain't dat scan'lous? -- (NY: Stern, 1901)

Don't butt in! -- (NY: Stern, 1901)

Everybody wants to see the baby -- (NY: Stern, 1903)

Louisiana Lize -- (NY: Stern, 1899)

Madalene my Southern queen -- (NY: Stern, 1900)

Ma Mississippi belle -- (NY: Stern, 1900)

My Angemima green -- (NY: Stern, 1902)

My castle on the Nile -- (NY: Stern, 1901)

My heart's desiah -- (NY: Stern, 1901)

No use in askin' 'cause you know the reason why -- (NY: Stern, 1901)

Since [sence] you went away -- (NY: Stern, 1900)

Shine on my evening star! -- (NY: Stern, 1903)

Strolling along the beach -- (NY: Stern, 1902)  
Sweet Saloma -- (NY: Stern, 1901)  
The animals' convention -- (NY: Stern, 1902)  
The Katy-did, the cricket and the frog -- (NY: Stern, 1903)  
The old flag never touched the ground -- (NY: Stern, 1901)  
When the band plays ragtime -- (NY: Stern, 1902)  
"When De Jack O' Lantern Starts to Walk About," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901)  
When the minstrels come to town -- (NY: Stern, 1902)  
Why don't the band play -- (NY: Stern, 1900)

1904-1905

1904, October: Langevin's York State Minstrels, and Lew Dockstader's minstrel show both feature an actor in black-face singing this:

"The Countess of Alagazam" lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1904; repr. Riis 2015), "The Latest Coon Craze in Town; Introduced by John H. King in Dockstader's Minstrels"

1904, November: Humpty Dumpty (Norton (2002) 104.47) almost all the songs are by Cole and Johnson and are retained into the revival; a Klaw and Erlanger extravaganza or pantomime; white show, next after their Mother Goose; in their usual pattern it premiered in London and moved to NYC; opened on Monday, November 14, 1904 at the New Amsterdam; ran Nov. 1904 thru March 1905 and was revived for March 1906 (Indianapolis Freeman, February 11, 1905, p. 2; Indianapolis Freeman, February 25, 1905, p. 5; Boston Herald, March 21, 1905, p. 10)

Popular Humpty Dumpty: a selection (NY: Stern, 1905) is an 11-page arrangement for piano of music from the show.  
Sheet music for "Mexico" has a list of 11 titles from the show.

Act I

"I Am the King" (Freeman)  
"Mary From Tipperary" ibdb; by Nugent



"The Egg Has Fallen Down" ibdb  
"Will He Ever Smile Again" ibdb  
"[The] Pussy and the Bow-Wow," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904/1905); ibdb; Freeman; Riis  
"We go to Find the Ring" ibdb  
"Mexico," lyrics Cole and J. W. Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern, 1904); Freeman; NY Clipper;  
A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914  
"Fairyland" (ibdb; Freeman)

#### Act II

"Sambo and Dinah," lyrics Cole and J. W. Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern, 1904/1905); Freeman; NY Clipper;  
"Cupid Reigns King," by Fred Solomon (Freeman)  
"Down in Mulberry Bend," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904/1905); ibdb; Freeman; Riis  
"Man, Man, Man," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern, 1904); (Freeman)

#### Act III

"I'm a Very Good Sailor on Land" (Freeman)  
"Down at the Bottom of the Sea" (quartet; ibdb; Freeman)  
"On Lalawana's shore: South Sea island love song," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904);  
Lakawanna in NY Clipper, but Lalawana is the word (newspaper hits; ibdb; NY Clipper; Freeman; Riis); one sheet music cover calls it "Fay Templeton's South Sea island love song"; also sung by Maude Lillian Barri  
"Fishing," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904); Riis

1904, December: In Newport (Norton (2002) 1904.56)  
some Cole and Johnson songs; white show, Klaw & Erlanger; ran Dec. 1904 thru Jan 1905 (Indianapolis Freeman, February 25, 1905, p. 5)

#### Act I

"The House That Jack Built," by Wincott & Leighton (1901)?; ibdb

"Don't Come [go] [get] too Dangerously Nigh"

"When I am the Chief of Police"

"Scandal"

"The Newport Dip" ibdb

Act II

"The Rehearsal" ibdb

"Stockings"

"Nobody But You," by Fay Templeton; ibdb

"Hello, My Lulu," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1905); ibdb; success by  
Peter F. Dailey

"Zel, Zel, Arabian Love Song," lyrics J. W., Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern,  
1905)

"Roaming Around the Town" (in a Stern anthology, NY: Stern, 1906)

"Peggy is [Polly's] a New Yorker Now"

Act III

"Sounds of the Times," Cole & Johnsons (Riis)

"The Spirit of the Banjo," Cole & Johnsons (Riis)

"Lindy: sounds of the times," Cole & Johnsons

"Mary Was a Manicure"

"All the World Loves a Lover" (Freeman)

"After Marriage" (Freeman)

"Women," mentioned by a reviewer

"How a Monocle Helps the Mind," mentioned by a reviewer

1905, in July and August: Cole & Johnson to London to stage musical numbers for the latest Klaw & Erlanger London production but there is no later sign of this production; they are heavily billed for their London debut in vaudeville; they leave for Le Havre on June 15 for two weeks in Paris, then two weeks touring Belgium and Holland, and then to London by July 15 for performances at the Palace Theatre (Ghost Walks, p. 345; Billboard, n.d. (ca. June 1, 1905), p. 12; Indianapolis Freeman, August 19, 1905, p. 5; Indianapolis Freeman, August 26, 1905, p. 5); for Bob Cole & J. R. Johnson in London at the Palace Theatre in July and August 1905, see The Observer hits; NB: Comment in Indianapolis Freeman, December 9, 1905, p. 5 article on

WMC in Europe with Tennessee Students says Bob Cole & Billy Johnson (an error for J. R.!) were in vaudeville at the Palace Theatre in London, and in context this was not very long before; they are headlining in London at the Palace not long before (Indianapolis Freeman, September 9, 1905, p. 5)

## 1905 SONGS

"My Lu lu San. Japanese Love Song," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1905);  
"As sung in Mr. Hamlet of Denmark, 17th annual production of the Mask and Wig Club [University of Pennsylvania]"

## 1905-1906

The connection with Klaw and Erlanger appears to be severed. Cole & Johnson are back in NYC and in vaudeville this year, but their song production seems slight; surely this is on account of writing The Shoo-Fly Regiment

1905: The "Sambo Girls," later "Cole & Johnson's Sambo Girls with Edgar Connor," a popular act owned by Cole & Johnsons from October 1905 to 1913 that ran in vaudeville; it had prior and subsequent history under other management; this act was a launching pad for Eva Tanguay in her career; Cole's ownership of the show is one of the items mentioned in the first reports of his death

1905, in September: Cole & Johnson return to the US on September 2, 1905 from Liverpool on the *Lucania* (NYC Passenger Lists)

1905, in September: Cole & Johnson are in vaudeville in NYC (Indianapolis Freeman, September 30, 1905, p. 5)

1905, in October: Cole & Johnson are in NYC (Indianapolis Freeman, October 14, 1905, p. 5)

1905, October: Moonshine (Norton (2002) 1905.45)  
running Oct 1905-Jan 1906, featuring Marie Cahill singing:

"The Conjure Man," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern,

1905)

1905, in October: Indianapolis Freeman, October 28, 1905, p. 5 says they've heard that Cole & Johnson are going out with a big company at the end of the year, and that WMC will train the chorus (an anticipation of the 1906 Shoo-Fly Regiment); an account in November says WMC is writing an opera for Cole & Johnson (NY Morning Telegraph, November 20, 1905, p. 10);

1905, in November: Will Marion Cook arrived back from Southampton to NYC on the "St. Paul" on November 19, 1905; he turns up at Hammerstein's Victoria with one of his children and gives the Morning Telegraph an interview: he arrived yesterday, leaving Abbie and a troupe of 18 in Paris, and he is writing an opera for Cole & Johnson; moreover, "A London manager is going to lease a theatre for negro performers exclusively," announced Cook. Cole & Johnson will open this house, and they can stay as long as they wish" (NY Morning Telegraph, November 20, 1905, p. 10)

1906, February: at Proctor's 23rd Street; Cole and Johnson performed a new medley of old songs (though not that old!):

"I'll keep a warm spot in my heart for you," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906); "There's a warm spot in my heart for you" is a Cole and Billy Johnson song of 1898; this new number is sung by Aida Overton Walker in Abyssinia;

A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"Mexico," Cole & J. W. Johnson (NY: Stern, 1904)

"Father's Got a Job," lyrics Cole and J. W. Johnson, music Cole (NY: Stern, 1906)

"Lazy Moon," lyrics Cole, music J. R., Johnson (NY: Stern, 1903) (encore)

1906, in February: now into the new year, the big new project is still fluid; their new military play with music is expected towards the end of February 1906 with a company of 55 under the management of Samuel L. Tuck (Indianapolis Freeman, February 10, 1906, p. 5); they are writing everything---book, lyrics, music---themselves (Indianapolis

Freeman, April 28, 1906, p. 5); then a much later story says the show will be under the management of Melville B. Raymond; this shift in management may indicate problems getting the show initially off the ground (Fort Worth Star-Telegram, September 17, 1906, p. 3)

1906, April: some songs for Shylock and Co., Bankers (burlesque), the new Easter Week burlesque for the Mask and Wig Club of the University of Pennsylvania (18th annual---they did songs for 1904, 1905, 1906):

"Won't Your Mamma Let You Come Out and Play," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1906)

"My One and Only," lyrics J. W. Johnson, music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1906)

"Come My Love and Go with Me" lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906)

1906, in April: setting aside the big new musical comedy, the team is now in Europe (Indianapolis Freeman, April 28, 1906, p. 5)

1906, in June: Will Marion Cook is being considered as possible music director for Cole & Johnson's Shoo-Fly Regiment (Indianapolis Freeman, June 9, 1906, p. 5)

1906, in June: J. Rosamond Johnson returns to US from Liverpool on the Umbria on June 10, 1906 (NYC Passenger List); likely that Cole was also on that ship

1906, August: Marrying Mary (Norton (2002) 1906.27) a couple of songs?; white show, the latest vehicle for Marie Cahill, runs Aug-Oct 1906; with JR and JW Johnson songs (a ghost reference? or were there later interpolations?)

"Hottentot Love Song," a two-step, for Marie Cahill, by Benjamin Burt and Silvio Hein (NY: Stern, 1906), and sometimes called "Marie Cahill's Hottentot Love Song" and copyright under that title by Burt and Hein, Aug. 27/28, 1906;

Billboard, July 2, 1949, p. 42 says it is by Cole & Johnson, and it is said to be by them by Bernard L. Peterson in A Century of Musicals, but most newspaper references of the day say it is by

Silvio Hein, not to mention WorldCat, etc.; Norton (2002) says it is by Cole & Johnsons

At this moment, after collaborating on songs for the upcoming show, J. W. Johnson steps out of the picture and moves professionally in another direction. He takes a diplomatic position in 1906 in Venezuela, as US Consul in Puerto Cabello; in 1909 he is promoted and goes to Nicaragua. He remembers the years of the "Trimvirate" of Cole & Johnson Brothers in show business together as seven in all, thus 1899-1906.

1906-1907

#### THE SHOO-FLY REGIMENT

1906-07; 1907-08: Cole begins four years, in two two-year stints, on tour with two Cole & J. R. Johnson vehicles: The Shoo-Fly Regiment over 1906-1908 and The Red Moon over 1908-1910; this marks their return to musical comedy, leaving vaudeville, and with the departure of J. W. Johnson.

1906, in August: The Shoo-Fly Regiment

Opens in August 1906. Mostly their own material; Bob Cole is most often the lyricist for J. R. Johnson's music; in late 1905 and earliest 1906 WMC might have been going to come aboard (as above); in the event, James Reese Europe is first music director, in charge of orchestra and chorus, but only in first season until Feb. 1907. The Shoo-Fly Regiment opens in Washington, DC, at the Majestic on August 20, 1906 (Evening Star (DC), August 15, 1906, p. 16; Evening Star (DC), August 19, 1906, p. 18; Evening Star (DC), August 21, 1906, p. 16), though once was expected to open at Cumberland, MD on August 27 (Cleveland Gazette, August 1, 1906, p. 1; Indianapolis Freeman, August 4, 1906, p. 5)

NB: Shoo-Fly Songs---songbook of ten numbers (NY: Stern, 1906); in WorldCat there is a hit which is probably the same item: The Shoo-Fly Regiment, book, lyrics, and melodies by Cole & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906-1907), with ten numbers; one copy catalogued, at British Library, and I have not seen its contents a note says the song "Won't You be My Little Brown Bear?" is by Bob Cole, suggesting that for the others he is lyricist but not

composer

Songs from WorldCat and IBDB, etc., with \* if in a list of 14 on a Stern sheet music cover for the show, and X if in the list of seven unpublished songs copyright by Cole & Johnson in August 1906; 1/ if in Norton (2002) program:

- \*1/ De (The) Bo'd of Education, Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906, 1907)
- 1/ Down in the Philippines [ibdb]
- \*X1/ Floating Down the Nile, Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906); LoC Aug. 15/23, 1906
- X1/ The Ghost of Deacon Brown, Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906); LoC Aug. 15/23, 1906
- \*"I Can't Think of Nothin' in the Wide, Wide World But You," lyrics Bob Cole, Music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1907); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show
- "I Think an Awful Lot of You," Anderson and Jordan (NY: Witmark, 1907); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show
- X1/ "If Adam Hadn't Seen the Apple Tree," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1906); LoC copyright August 21, 1906
- X1/ "I'll Always Love Old Dixie," Johnson & Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906); LoC copyright August 20, 1906; ibdb
- \*I'll Fight for the Dear Old Flag
- \*X1/ Just How Much I Love You, lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906); LoC Aug. 15/23, 1906
- 1/ Lemons [Lemmons] [ibdb]
- \*1/" Li'l Gal" [Little Gal; Lit'l Gal], lyrics Dunbar, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1902, 1905)
- 1/ The Little Choo-choo Gee-Gee [ibdb]
- My Sweetheart's a Soldier in the Army; Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show
- \*My Susanna
- \*1/ The Old Flag Never Touched the Ground; finale," lyrics Bob Cole and J. W. Johnson, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1901); ibdb
- \*1/ "On the Gay Luneta," lyrics Bob Cole, music James Reese Europe (NY: Stern, 1906);  
A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at

the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

\*Once Upon a Time

X1/ Run, Brudder Rabbit, Run [LoC Aug. 15/23, 1906; ibdb] [same as "Run, brudder possum"?)

1/ Southland, Johnson & Johnson; [ibdb]

\*\*"Sugar Babe," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1907 repr. Riis 2015)

That Still, Small Voice; Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show

\*\*"There's Always Something Wrong: comic coon song," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1907); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show

1/ "We've Been to Boston Town" [ibdb]

\*X1/ "Who Do You Love?" lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1906; repr. Riis 2015); LoC August 21, 1906

\*\*"Won't You Be My Little Brown Bear?" lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1907); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show;

A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

Shoo-Fly Regiment, Program for Year I (Norton (2002), I: 861-62 [1907.22]), with an interesting disconnect from the songs in the Stern songbook:

Act I

Opening Chorus

De Bo'd of Education

The Little Choo-choo, Gee-gee

Just How Much I Love You

If Adam Hadn't Seen the Apple Tree

I'll Always Love Old Dixie

Run, Brudder Rabbit, Run

Act II

Southland

L'il Gal

The Ghost of Deacon Brown

On the Gay Luneta



Ballet  
Lemons

Act III.  
Opening Chorus  
We've Been to Boston Town  
Who Do You Love, lyrics Cole  
Floating Down the Nile  
Down in the Philippines  
The Old Flag Never Touched the Ground (Finale)

NB: The Shoo-Fly Regiment, Second Season (1907-1908) songs need isolating.

1908, in May: For the summer, Cole and J. R. Johnson are going into vaudeville with about a half dozen others in the troupe, and the orchestra is directed by James Reese Europe while the act is on; moreover, Europe, who had left Cole & Johnson late in the first season of The Shoo-Fly Regiment and led the Smar Set this last season, will re-join Cole & Johnson as music director for the upcoming season (NY Age, May 14, 1908, p. 6)

1908, in July: Cole is a founding member of the Frogs (see, inter alia, NY Age, July 9, 1908, p. 6; NY Age, August 6, 1908, p. 6; NY Age, August 13, 1908, p. 6).

## 1908 SONGS

"Sweetest Gal in Town," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson  
(NY: Stern, 1908)

1908-1909

## THE RED MOON

1908: The Red Moon begins its first season; it features Abbie Mitchell; Cole & J. R. Johnson are big creative team; season one has additional music by JRE

and additional lyrics by Charles A. Hunter; in the end, five songs co-written with James Reese Europe (three for season one and two for season two), who is music director for a season and a half, from now until December 1909. The secondary literature sometimes credits Joe Jordan with lots of this show, for no reason that I have seen.

SONGS. NB: strong correlation between year 1 and year 2 references and 1908 or 1909 publication dates.

\* indicates on list of 12 on sheet music cover for "Ada" and "The Big Red Shawl"

# indicates on sheet music for "Pliney"

I/ means in 1908 version, esp. via NY Age and Billboard and Freeman;

II/ means new in 1909 version, esp. via NY Age

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\*I/"Ada, My Sweet Potater," lyrics Charles Hunter, music Bob Cole and James Reese Europe (NY: Stern, 1908)

#II/"As Long as the World Goes Round" (Rolls On), lyrics Bob Cole, music, J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Remick, 1909); sung by Abbie Mitchell before she leaves; mentioned in early year 2 Walton review; WorldCat hit; Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show)

\*I/"The Big Red Shawl" [The Red Shawl], lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1908; repr. Riis 2015)

\*I/"The Bleeding Moon" (Bleeding Moon, Bleedin' Moon), lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1908; repr. Riis 2015); sung by Fannie Wise in Act II; A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

I/"Checkers [Life is a Game of Checkers]," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1908)

\*I/"Cupid Was [Is] An Indian Pickanniny" (NY: Stern, 1908); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show

I/"Don't Tell Tales Out of School" (called new in 1909 Freeman art.; cit. Chicago Broad Axe, November 20, 1909, p. 1; in May of Year I acc Norton (2002) program)

#II/"Hoola-Woola" (or in some newspapers, "Coola-Woo-La" or "Coola Woola"), lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Remick, 1909); Walton's year 2 review calls it a new song; mentioned in year 2 arts. in Chicago Broad Axe and Indianapolis Freeman

\*I/"I Ain't Had No Lovin' in a Long Time" (Ain't Had No Lovin' In a Long Time), lyrics Bob Cole, music James Reese Europe (NY: Stern, 1908)

I/ "I Love But You." (Billboard Sept. 12, 1908, p. 11 ref.)

\*"I Want My Chicken." (no year; Bauman) (NY: Stern, 1908); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show, and it is on Stern sheet music cover list

\*I/"I've [I] Lost My Teddy Bear," lyrics Bob Cole, music, J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1908); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show, and it is on Stern sheet music cover list; also sung by Anna Held in Ziegfeld's Miss Innocence

I/"Keep on Smiling" (mentioned in 1908 Freeman and NYT May 1909 stories; is it the Remick 1907 song?)

\*"Life is a game of checkers," lyrics Bob Cole and Chas. Hunter, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1908); it is on Stern sheet music cover list;

"Love Me Baby Mine," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1909)

\*I/"My Indian Maid" (Bauman and Billboard Sept. 12, 1908, p. 11 refs.) (NY: Stern, 1908); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show, and it is on Stern sheet music cover list

\*I/"On the Road to Monterey," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1908; repr. Riis 2015); two pages of J. R. Johnson's orchestration of this song for The Red Moon are published in Riis 2015, pp. 120-21

\*I/"The Pathway of Love" [to Love], lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1908; repr. Riis 2015); mentioned in 1908 Freeman art.; a year one vehicle for star Abbie Mitchell

#II/"Phoebe Brown," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Remick, 1909); for Ada Overton Walker and the Girls

#II/"Pickaninny Days," lyrics Bob Cole, music James Reese Europe (NY: Remick, 1909); for Ada Overton Walker

#II/"Pliney Come Out in the Moonlight" [Pliney, Won't You Come Out in the Moon Light], lyrics Bob Cole, music James Reese Europe (NY: Remick, 1910)

I/"Red Moon." (Is this just another name for Year I "Bleeding Moon" or "Red Shawl"? (Bauman ref. and Peterson ref. probably both from Walton NY Age art.); Norton (2002) says it is an additional song associated with the show, by James Reese Europe; for Abbie Mitchell as Minnehaha

I/"Run, Brudder Possum, Run" (mentioned in 1909 Freeman art. as "Run Billy Possum"; NYT May 1909 at end of year 1 calls it "Run, Billy Possum, Run", as do Christian Science Monitor, Chicago Broad Axe, and Springfield Daily Illinois State Register in year 2); this is surely the song by the Johnson Brothers (NY: Rogers, 1900) with "Brudder" here replaced by "Billy"; "Billy Possum" is a famous figure in popular culture at this time

\*I/"Sambo," lyrics Bob Cole, music James Reese Europe (NY: Stern, 1908);

A selection for "Songs of Olden Days," Thursday evening, Oct. 1, at the Autumn Exposition, Sept. - Oct. 1914

"The Same Old Silv'ry Moon is Shining," lyrics Bob Cole, music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Remick, 1909); LoC copyright Oct. 26, 1909; surely year 2 (e.g., mention in Springfield Daily Illinois State Register, December 10, 1909, p. 16 and Chicago Broad Axe, November 20, 1909, p. 1)

"To-Da-Lo Two Step," or "The Red Moon To-da-lo--Two Step" (Joe Jordan?), a version of the very popular dance of the moment

II/"Wildfire Dance" (or "Wildfire"; an aboriginal dance, for Ada Overton Walker)

I/"When I take My Seat in Congress" (Billboard, Sept. 12, 1908, p. 11 ref.)

I/"Why Did I Leave My Happy Home" (Billboard, Sept. 12, 1908, p. 11 ref.)

Act I

Opening Chorus

"Life is a Game of Checkers"

"Keep On Smilin'"

"Don't Tell Tales Out of School"

"I Love But You"

"Ada My Sweet Potater," lyrics Chas. Hunter, music Bob Cole and James  
Reese Europe

Finale

Act II

Prelude

"Bleeding Moon"

"The Big Red Shawl"

"the Pathway of Love"

"On the Road to Monterey"

War Dance

Act III

"Red Moon To-da-lo"

"Sambo," by James Reese Europe

Pianologue

"Hoola Woola"

"Run, Billy Possum, Run"

"I Ain't Had No Lovin' in a Long Time," James Reese Europe

"Love Me, Baby Mine"

Finale

## 1909 SONG PUBLICATION

Ten Choice Negro Folk Songs for Voice and Pianoforte (NY: Globe Music Co.,  
1909); nos. 1-8 are Cole & Johnsons songs:

Nobody's lookin' but the owl and the moon [1901]

Sugar Babe [1907]

Mudder knows [1903]

Run, Brudder Rabbit, run! [1906]

Lazy moon [1903]

Lit'l gal [1902]  
Moonlight on the Mississippi [1903]  
Darkies delight; Intro: Carve dat possum [1903]

and

"I can't think ob nuthin' else but you, [Lulu!]," Harry Dacre [1896]  
"Consolation Lane," Chris Smith J. Tim Brymn, and James Burris [1909]

1909-1910:

1909: The Red Moon begins its second season, in a new version with major changes, esp. to incorporate Ada Overton Walker; Abbie Mitchell resigns in early September 1909 and goes into vaudeville with ex-husband WMC. The show runs for a full season, at least up through a two-week engagement from Monday May 2, 1910 in Washington (Washington Evening Star, May 3, 1910, p. 10; Washington Bee, May 14, 1910, p. 1; Washington Evening Star, May 10, 1910, p. 18)

RED MOON Program, Year 2 (Chicago Broad Axe, November 20, 1909, p. 1, 2)

Act I

Opening Chorus

"The Same Old Moon is Shining"

"Keep On Smilin'"

"Don't Tell Tales Out of School"

"Pickinniny Days"

"Pliney, Won't You Come Out in the Moon Light"

Finale

Act II

Prelude

"Bleeding Moon"

"The Big Red Shawl"

"On the Road to Monterey"

Wildfire Dance

Finale

Act III  
"Red Moon To-da-lo"  
"Sambo"  
Pianologue  
"Hoola Woola"  
"Run, Billy Possum, Run"  
Old Songs  
"Phoebe Brown"  
Finale

1910, summer: The Red Moon closes for the season in mid May; Cole returns to the vaudeville stage with J. R. Johnson in the summer. Reportedly, he was trying to write a new play for his own company and also another play as a vehicle for Aida Overton Walker (Russell obit, Chicago Defender, August 12, 1911, p. 1)

#### 1910 SONGS

"Oh, You Georgia Rose," lyrics Shelton Brooks and W. R. Williams, music Bob Cole and Johnnie Waters, in Will Rossiter "Good Luck" Songs (Chicago: Will Rossiter, 1910); later published separately (Chicago, Will Rossiter, 1912)

"M'Aimez-Vous? (Do You Love Me?)," lyrics and music Bob Cole (NY: Stern, 1910)

NB: "Sweetness, I Love You Best of All," lyrics and music J. Rosamond Johnson (NY: Stern, 1910), for "Cole & Johnson's Sambo Girls with Edgar Connor"

#### 1910-1911

1910, October 8: Cole has his final manic breakdown and is committed to an asylum;  
(Washington Bee October 15, 1910, p. 7; Anaconda (Montana) Standard, October 17, 1910, p. 7; Indianapolis Freeman, October 22, 1910, p. 1;

Trenton Evening News, October 30, 1910, p. 22); the facility is a private sanatorium in Woodcliff-on-Hudson [presumably just across the Hudson River from W. 96th Street] (NY Age, October 13, 1910, p. 6)

Lester Walton, in his NY Age obit, says that Cole was first taken to Bellevue, then to Manhattan Hospital on Ward's Island for almost nine months, then to Amityville on July 1, 1911, and to Catskill on July 29. The village of Catskill is on the west side of the Hudson river between Poughkeepsie and Albany, north of Kingston and Woodstock.

1911, August 2 (Wednesday): ten months later, Cole commits suicide in Catskill, NY, age 43;

Wire-service news item out of Catskill, NY, dated either August 2 or 3: "Robert Cole, negro theatrical star, 43 years old, drowned himself in a shallow creek here," "he came here Saturday," etc. (e.g., Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 3, 1911, p. 1; Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, August 3, 1911, p. 16); "Robert Cole of New York, one of the best known colored men in the theatrical profession, was drowned in a shallow creek at Catskill last Wednesday. Cole was the head of Cole & Johnson, owners of the "Sambo Girls" show, and author of a number of songs, including "The Girl With the Deamy Eyes." He walked into the creek without undressing, and, after swimming for a few minutes, allowed himself to sink. Two friends watching say they supposed it was in play, and Cole was dead before they realized the truth" (Cooperstown, NY, The Glimmerglass, n.d. (likely August 9, 1911), n.p.)



## OBITS

Obit by Sylvester Russell in Chicago Defender, August 12, 1911, p. 1 and  
Indianapolis Freeman, August 12, 1911, p. 5

Obit by Lester A. Walton in NY Age, August 10, 1911, p. 6

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