A Preliminary Inventory of the Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: *The Black Crook*
Title: *The Black Crook Collection*
Dates: 1853-1929, undated
Extent: 1 document box, 1 oversize box (osb), 1 framed item (2.5 linear feet)
Abstract: From its first performance on September 12, 1866, at Niblo’s Theatre in New York, *The Black Crook* drew in audiences to become one of the first successful musical spectacles in the United States.
Call Number: Performing Arts Collection PA-00113
Language: English
Access: Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition: Gift, 1956
Processed by: Erin Lawrimore, 2001; Chelsea Weathers, 2013; Grace Hansen, 2016
Repository: The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center
Scope and Contents

From its first performance on September 12, 1866, at Niblo’s Theatre in New York, *The Black Crook* drew in audiences to become one of the first successful musical spectacles in the United States. The script from a Faustian melodrama, several songs by assorted composers, and the services of a stranded Parisian ballet troupe were combined with elaborate sets and costumes to create a spectacle that spawned 15 subsequent Broadway revivals and numerous touring productions.

*The Black Crook*’s scandalously dressed dancers, who were the first to perform the Can-Can on an American stage, delighted and shocked audiences. After attending a performance of *The Black Crook* in New York, Mark Twain, in a March 3, 1868 column in Alta, California, wrote that the musical "debauched many a pure mind."

*The Black Crook* Collection contains books, a photocopy of an original promptbook from the Harvard Theatre Collection, sheet music, playbills, programs, clippings, drawings, and photographs related to performances of the musical.

Related Material

The Museum of the City of New York also holds a collection of material relating to *The Black Crook*. 
Series I. Books, 1866-1897

The Black Crook: A Most Wonderful History. Philadelphia, 1882

Container 1.1

The Black Crook: A Most Wonderful History. Philadelphia, 1866

Container 1.2


Container 1.3

Photocopy of The Black Crook in Four Acts. Charles M. Barras, 1866

Container 1.4
Series II. Sheet Music and Leaves 1866-1872, undated

Amazon’s March, 1872  Container 1.5
Black Crook Waltzes, leaf, 1867  Container 1.6
Black Crook Waltzes, 1867  Container 1.7
Les Crelots d’Amour, leaf, 1872  Container 1.8
March of the Amazons, 1867  Container 1.9
Pas de Demons, 1867  Container 1.10
Quadrille, leaf, undated  Container 1.11
Transformation Polka, leaf, 2 copies, 1867  Container 1.12
You Naughty, Naughty Men, 1866  Container 1.13
Series III. Playbills, Programs, and Clippings, 1866-1929, undated

Photograph of playbill, Niblo’s Garden, 1866  Container 1.14
Theater programs, Niblo’s Garden, 1867  Container 1.15
Theater programs, Niblo’s Garden, 1870  Container 1.16
Theater programs, Niblo’s Garden, 1871  Container 1.18
Theater program, Niblo’s Garden, 1873  Container 1.17
Theater program, Niblo’s Garden, 1887  Container 1.19
Theater programs, Academy of Music, 1893  Container 1.20
Theater program, Grand Opera House, 1896  Container 1.21
Theater program, Lyric Theatre, Hoboken, 1929  Container 1.22
Theater programs, The Temple, Portsmouth, Boston Theatre, Niblo’s Garden, Gayety Theatre, and unidentified theater, undated  Container 1.23
Clippings, 1867-1929  Container 1.24
Series IV. Prints, 1853-1866, undated

Bonfanti receiving bouquets at the first performance of *The Black Crook* at Niblo’s Garden, undated  Container 1.25

*The Black Crook* chorus, undated  Container 1.26

Entrance to Niblo’s Garden, 1853  Container 1.27

Print and photographic reproduction, Gauzy Nymphs, undated  Container 1.28-29

Interior view of Niblo’s Garden, 1853  Container 1.30

The Landing of Stalacta, Niblo’s Garden, undated  Container 1.31

The Macgiltons, Niblo’s Garden, undated  Container 2.1

Mdlle. Bonfanti, undated  Container 2.2

*The Black Crook* dancers, undated  Container 2.3
Series V. Photographs and Portraits, 1866-1929, undated

- Cox, Hazel, as Stalacta, 1929
- Dancing master, undated
- Gordon, W. in production of *The Dowager*, undated
- Howitt, Belle, as Stalacta, print and photograph, undated
- Kemp, Anna, as Stalacta, undated
- Lee, Jennie, undated
- Majilton, Marie, undated
- Markham, Pauline, 1881, undated
- Palmer, Harry, undated
- Sangalli, Rita, undated
- Santley, Kate, undated
- Siegrist, Sadie, undated
- Whitlock, Miss, undated
- Willmore, Lizzie, as Carline, undated
- Unidentified dancers, undated

"The Black Crook/ September 16, 1866/ Niblo’s Gardens [sic] / New York", composite item consisting of 6 portrait photographs matted together: Hattie Grinnell, Jennie Lee, Pauline Markham, Sadie Segrist, one unidentified member of the chorus, and two unidentified members of the chorus (33 1/2 x 27 1/2 inches)