

Men in Blackface: True Stories of the Minstrel Show

Seymour Stark

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**TRUE STORIES
OF THE
MINSTREL SHOW**

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Seymour Stark : Men in Blackface: True Stories of the Minstrel Show before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Men in Blackface: True Stories of the Minstrel Show:

11 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Pop culture archeology holding a mirror up for the presentBy Paul StantonThis is probably the finest book on the minstrel show which I have encountered. Many threads involving race, history and popular art are connected, giving some new slants on this curious, but still very resonant, cultural

phenomena.

Contents
The Minstrel Show Will Never Die
Jim Crow and Tom Thumb
Irishness of it All
Irving Berlin
Titillates
Gershwin's Racial Profiling
Jews in Blackface
Jolson the Shlemiel
Strutting to
Redemption
Endnotes-----
How New York City, the Birthplace of Blackface, Defined Humor and Race for 100 Years (MIB: 12-17)
Jim Crow, a blackface stage character, lends his name to the pernicious practice of racial segregation. Native New Yorker Tom Rice performed "Jim Crow" at the Bowery Theatre in 1832. (MIB: 22-24)
Edwin P. Christy established the first permanent minstrel hall at 472 Broadway in New York City in 1847. Christy created the stylized format which endured for 10 decades.
Why Irish Americans Wore Blackface (MIB: 18-19)
Dan Emmett's "Dixie", written as a minstrel tune, became the Confederate anthem. In an earlier minstrel song, Emmett romanticized slavery: "Ill dance all night an work all day." (MIB: 46-48)
Ned Harrigan, the grandfather of the Broadway musical, pitted on stage the Irish Mulligan Guard in 1879 against the black (white actors in blackface) Skidmore Guard--"Ten platoons of dandy coons."
The Blackface Burden of Jewishness (MIB: 73-78)
Irving Berlin, son of a cantor, penned his first "coon song" in 1909, and added eight more to his "coon song" cycle. Berlin staged blackface minstrel shows for the Army in both World War I and World War II. His 1942 film, "Holiday Inn", introduced "White Christmas" and Bing Crosby in blackface. (MIB: 101-138)
Al Jolson in blackface made the first talking motion picture in 1927. In each of his eight Hollywood films over two decades, Jolson weaved the theme of Jewishness into the blackface minstrel show. He is the worldwide icon of blackface.