

# A Preliminary Inventory of the Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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## Descriptive Summary

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

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## Administrative Information

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| <b>Acquisition:</b>  | Gift, 1956   |
| <b>Processed by:</b> | Erin Lawrimore, 2001; Chelsea Weathers, 2013; Grace Hansen, 2016       |
| <b>Repository:</b>   | <a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a> |

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## 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.

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## Related Material

The Museum of the City of New York also holds a collection of material relating to *The Black Crook*.

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**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

*The Naked Truth: An Inside History of the Black Crook.* Joseph Whitton,  
Philadelphia, 1897

**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                       | <b>Container 1.5</b>  |
| Black Crook Waltzes, leaf, 1867            | <b>Container 1.6</b>  |
| Black Crook Waltzes, 1867                  | <b>Container 1.7</b>  |
| Les Crelots d'Amour, leaf, 1872            | <b>Container 1.8</b>  |
| March of the Amazons, 1867                 | <b>Container 1.9</b>  |
| Pas de Demons, 1867                        | <b>Container 1.10</b> |
| Quadrille, leaf, undated                   | <b>Container 1.11</b> |
| Transformation Polka, leaf, 2 copies, 1867 | <b>Container 1.12</b> |
| You Naughty, Naughty Men, 1866             | <b>Container 1.13</b> |

**Series III. Playbills, Programs, and Clippings, 1866-1929, undated**

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

**Series IV. Prints, 1853-1866, undated**

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Bonfanti receiving bouquets at the first performance of <i>The Black Crook</i> at Niblo's Garden, undated | <b>Container</b><br>1.25    |
| <i>The Black Crook</i> chorus, undated  | <b>Container</b> 1.26       |
| Entrance to Niblo's Garden, 1853  | <b>Container</b> 1.27       |
| Print and photographic reproduction, Gauzy Nymphs, undated  | <b>Container</b><br>1.28-29 |
| Interior view of Niblo's Garden, 1853   | <b>Container</b> 1.30       |
| The Landing of Stalacta, Niblo's Garden, undated  | <b>Container</b> 1.31       |
| The Macgiltons, Niblo's Garden, undated   | <b>Container</b> 2.1        |
| Mdlle. Bonfanti, undated  | <b>Container</b> 2.2        |
| <i>The Black Crook</i> dancers, undated   | <b>Container</b> 2.3        |

**Series V. Photographs and Portraits, 1866-1929, undated**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Cox, Hazel, as Stalacta, 1929   | <b>Container 1.32</b>                  |
| Dancing master, undated   | <b>Container 1.33</b>                  |
| Gordon, W. in production of <i>The Dowager</i> , undated  | <b>Container 1.34</b>                  |
| Howitt, Belle, as Stalacta, print and photograph, undated   | <b>Container<br/>1.35</b>              |
| Kemp, Anna, as Stalacta, undated  | <b>Container 1.36</b>                  |
| Lee, Jennie, undated  | <b>Container 1.37</b>                  |
| Majilton, Marie, undated  | <b>Container 1.38</b>                  |
| Markham, Pauline, 1881, undated   | <b>Container 1.39</b>                  |
| Palmer, Harry, undated  | <b>Container 1.40</b>                  |
| Sangalli, Rita, undated   | <b>Container 1.41</b>                  |
| Santley, Kate, undated  | <b>Container 1.42</b>                  |
| Siegrist, Sadie, undated  | <b>Container 1.43</b>                  |
| Whitlock, Miss, undated   | <b>Container 1.44</b>                  |
| Willmore, Lizzie, as Carline, undated   | <b>Container 1.45</b>                  |
| Unidentified dancers, undated   | <b>Container 1.46</b>                  |
| " <i>The Black Crook</i> / 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) | <b>Container<br/>framed<br/>item 1</b> |