

# RAGTIME

Its History,  
Composers,  
and Music

—edited by—  
JOHN EDWARD HASSE



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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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# Preface

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When I began work on this book, *The Sting*—its soundtrack resonating with Scott Joplin rags—was helping to create the greatest boom in ragtime’s popularity since the music’s heyday in the early decades of the twentieth century. At the time of *The Sting*, only a few books on ragtime were available. I had been performing ragtime for about five years, and was overtaken by a desire to know more about this infectious music. As a bibliophile, I knew that a number of first-class articles on ragtime had been published in widely scattered sources. I decided to gather these articles together, in one volume, as a “ragtime reader.”

I soon became aware, however, of gaps in existing scholarship on ragtime: such topics as ragtime songs and ragtime banjo had not been adequately covered. So I invited leading ragtime authorities to contribute chapters. I also determined to uncover new information for the book. To enhance its value as a reference tool, I traveled to libraries to unearth vintage photographs, old articles for the bibliography, and data for the other lists that support the text.

Since this project began, many new recordings and books on ragtime have appeared, including the noteworthy *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* by Edward A. Berlin, *Scott Joplin* by James Haskins, *Rags and Ragtime* by David A. Jasen and Trebor Jay Tichenor, and *This Is Ragtime* by Terry Waldo. The present volume has been enriched by the continuing appearance of new material. I am heartened to witness the advances in ragtime scholarship.

This book is intended for both layman and specialist. The introduction and most of the chapters assume no technical knowledge of music on the part of the reader. Some chapters in part three, “The Music of Ragtime,” however, will be made more accessible by such a knowledge.

The goals of this book are several. Its main purpose is to provide an overall introduction to the history, leading practitioners, and music of ragtime. Specifically, the book aims to summarize ragtime’s history and revivals, profile its most significant composers, explore the heated debate ragtime engendered, and track ragtime’s manifestations in other musical styles and genres. The book also undertakes to explain succinctly the musical elements of ragtime, especially its rhythms, and to survey the music of several of its top composers. To provide more historical context than is often supplied in ragtime studies, the introduction treats the relationship of ragtime and the piano, and furnishes a chronology of developments in politics, world affairs, the arts, and society during each year of the Ragtime Era.

A second aim is to fill in gaps in our knowledge of this important American style. Heretofore, ragtime songs, ragtime piano rolls, the role of women in ragtime, ragtime-derived novelty piano, band and orchestral ragtime, and the

influence of ragtime on country music were little known. To fill the void, leading experts on these topics have written chapters expressly for this book.

A third aim is to broaden the current conceptions of ragtime. Ragtime was not just slumbound black “perfessers” beating out rhythms on tacky pianos in Saint Louis. Ragtime was not just the extraordinary appearance of a “black Chopin” like Scott Joplin. Ragtime was piano music, surely, but also songs, and music for banjo, band, and orchestra. Ragtime was produced by blacks and whites, but certainly most of the consumers were white, and most of the consumers of the sheet music were probably women. Ragtime was played as written and also used as the basis for improvisation. Ragtime was performed in the salon as well as the saloon, before royalty as well as Rough Riders. Ragtime spread throughout rural and urban America, and even to Europe and the Antipodes. It penetrated popular song, then-emerging jazz, novelty instrumental works, white country music, Western art (“classical”) music, and even folk music.

A fourth aim is to assist the reader interested in further reading, listening, or performing. To that end, extensive lists of books, articles, recordings, and ragtime music folios are included in the back of the book.

I am pleased to restore to print and to bring to wider circulation some classic articles on ragtime, such as Guy Waterman’s influential essays from the 1950s. These and the other reprinted chapters have withstood advances in ragtime scholarship surprisingly well. I am equally pleased that more than a dozen of today’s leading ragtime experts have agreed to contribute new chapters to this book.

Each author expresses his own perspective, of course, and the reader will find no unanimity on such recurring issues as: What is ragtime? Does ragtime include songs? How should ragtime be performed? Is it valid to “jazz” a rag? A consensus of opinion could not be expected from twenty-one experts writing over a thirty-year period. I hope, however, that from the diversity of viewpoints, approaches, and subjects, the reader will gain a fuller understanding of the complex music we call ragtime. While each author is responsible for his text and musical examples, I am solely responsible for the selection and captioning of the photographs that appear throughout the book.

A single book cannot attempt to consider the complete range of topics in ragtime. Subjects awaiting future exploration include ragtime dancing, Ragtime-Era performance practice, black country ragtime, and ragtime abroad. If this book stimulates research into such topics, that would be ample reward for my work as editor.

JOHN EDWARD HASSE



# Acknowledgments

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Normally the editor of an anthology does not need to make many acknowledgments. This book is different because my own chapters and the reference lists entailed considerable original research, which was aided by many individuals. I undertook the research to provide scholarly underpinnings in the form of the bibliography, the listing of folios, the list of rags by women composers, the checklist of compositions cited, and the photographs, as well as to gather materials for the introduction and the several chapters which carry my byline.

Special thanks go to two people. Frank J. Gillis, Director Emeritus of the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music, gave freely and generously his time, counsel, library, and friendship. Judith McCulloh, editor at the University of Illinois Press, lent encouragement at the outset and provided sound advice throughout the project.

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I also traveled to use the holdings of: the Archive of Popular American Music at UCLA, the William Hogan Archive of New Orleans Jazz, the Newberry Library, the Missouri Historical Society, and the Missouri State Historical Society; the public libraries of Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Kansas City (Missouri), New York City, Saint Louis, and Sedalia; and the libraries of Columbia University, Harvard University, the University of Iowa, the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota, the University of South Dakota, and Washington University in Saint Louis. I am grateful for the cooperation of the Archives of Traditional Music, the Lilly Library, and the Inter-Library Loan Office, all of Indiana University. The Carleton College Library, the Center for Research Libraries, the Cleveland Public Library, the Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, the Ohio Historical Society, and the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Library provided assistance by mail.

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Linda Hasse, Stanley R. and Ann Nelson, and Trudy Nepstad provided a “home away from home.” My mother, the late Gladys Johnson Hasse, gave the project encouragement and shared her keen insights as a writer. Nancy E. Rallis supplied warm support.

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That so many people gave willingly of their time, knowledge, and materials was heartening to me, and served to maintain my faith in my fellow man. To those individuals cited above, to those I have forgotten to mention, to my resolute and talented contributors, and, most of all, to those gifted musicians who first created ragtime, goes my profound and eternal gratitude.

# RAGTIME

# Ragtime: From the Top

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John Edward Hasse



*This chapter is intended to serve as both a general introduction to the book and an overview of ragtime. Topics include ragtime's origins, nature, appeal, repertory, and significance; the Ragtime Era; the piano and ragtime; and a thumbnail history of the style. Thirteen tables support the text.*

Ragtime! The music that for two decades captivated a nation, set its toes to tapping, its feet to dancing, its fingers to playing, its blood to rushing. Ragtime! The name that has become a metaphor for an era. The very word evokes images of America at the dawn of the twentieth century. Images of dancers prancing to the syncopated stylings of saloon "ticklers." Of Sunday band concerts in the city square, featuring music of the "Red Back Book." Of hundreds of thousands of parlor pianists struggling to master the *Dill Pickles* and *Maple Leaf* rags.<sup>1</sup> Of pianolas pounding out ragged rhythms. Of charcoal-skinned "perfessors" playing in high-class hotels bedecked with potted palms and lazily turning ceiling fans.

Ragtime is one of the first truly American musics, and it is not quite like any other American style. It is a music of toe-tapping vitality, yet often of fragile beauty and subtle rhythmic complexity. Though based on orthodox harmonies, ragtime is never fully predictable. It has an immediate and direct appeal. Its charm and allure transcend the time and place of the Ragtime Era.

Ragtime is a music of diversity within similarity, of expressivity within a set of conventions, of apparent simplicity but often real complexity, of seeming ease of performance but actual difficulty.

## The Nature of Ragtime

What is ragtime? Though it cannot be defined precisely, it can be described as a dance-based American vernacular music, featuring a syncopated melody against an even accompaniment. It arose in the 1890s and faded by the late 1910s.

There are four main types of ragtime: (1) instrumental rags, (2) ragtime songs, (3) ragtime or syncopated waltzes, and (4) “ragging” of classics and other preexisting pieces.

*Instrumental Rag.* While “ragtime” is a broad style, “rag” or “piano rag” is a much more specific term. A “rag” is an instrumental composition, usually for the piano, in duple meter, with a syncopated melody against a regular, *oom-pah* or march-style, bass. A rag comprises a number of self-contained sections or strains, usually sixteen measures each, which are often repeated. A typical formal structure of a piano rag is **AA BB A CC DD**, each letter indicating a separate strain with its own melody, rhythm, and harmony. Rags generally used conventional European harmonies. (The musical elements of rags are discussed in greater detail in Roland Nadeau’s chapter in this book.)

Ragtime reached its highest musical development as an instrumental form. The public apparently liked ragtime songs better than piano rags, but the best piano rags have better stood the tests of time and modern critical judgment. The rags of Scott Joplin and his peers were frequently more syncopated and musically elaborate than ragtime songs. For these reasons, modern interest in ragtime has centered on instrumental rags.

It was rhythm that gave ragtime its musical distinctiveness and much of its appeal. (The syncopations of instrumental rags are explained in Frank J. Gillis’s chapter in this book.) Rag rhythms underwent changes as the music developed. As Berlin shows, untied syncopations (Example 1) predominated through about 1900, after which tied syncopations (Example 2) came to dominate.<sup>2</sup>



Example 1. Untied syncopations.



Example 2. Tied syncopation.

Another change was the increasing use of a melodic motif sometimes called “secondary rag”<sup>3</sup> (Example 3). Table 1 lists a selection of rags incorporating this motif. Its use after 1906 was so frequent that it became a cliché.



Example 3. Charles L. Johnson, *Dill Pickles*, A strain, measures 1-2, melody line.

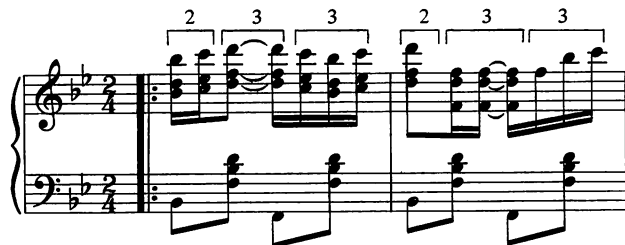
**Table 1**  
**Selected Piano Rags Containing “Secondary Rag” Motifs (1897–1917)**

YEAR	TITLE	COMPOSER
1897	<i>Roustabout Rag</i>	Paul Sarebresole
1902	<i>Levee Rag</i>	Charles Mullen
1905	<i>The Cannon Ball</i>	Joseph Northrup, arr. Thomas Confare
	<i>Peaches and Cream</i>	Percy Wenrich
1906	<i>Dill Pickles</i>	Charles L. Johnson
1908	<i>Black and White Rag</i>	George Botsford
1909	<i>Pork and Beans</i>	Theron C. Bennett
1910	<i>Grizzly Bear Rag</i>	George Botsford
	<i>Red Pepper: A Spicy Rag</i>	Henry Lodge
	<i>Spaghetti Rag</i>	George Lyons and Bob Yosco
1910s	<i>Bees and Honey</i>	Les C. Copeland
1911	<i>Down Home Rag</i>	Wilbur Sweatman
	<i>Honeysuckle Rag</i>	George Botsford
1912	<i>Slippery Elm Rag</i>	Clarence Woods
1913	<i>Crazy Bone Rag</i>	Charles L. Johnson
	<i>Hungarian Rag</i>	Julius Lenzberg
	<i>Incandescent Rag</i>	George Botsford
	<i>Lion Tamer Rag</i>	Mark Janza
1914	<i>Hot House Rag</i>	Paul Pratt
	<i>12th Street Rag</i>	Euday L. Bowman
1916	<i>Shamrock Rag</i>	Euday L. Bowman
1917	<i>Shave ‘em Dry</i>	Sam Wishnuff

To the Western ear, ragtime rhythms sound like syncopations or dislocations of the pulse, but they may also be perceived as on-beat, irregular rhythms, typical of much African music. West African music, a seminal root of Afro-American music, including ragtime, is characterized by alternate groups of two and three beats or pulses, sometimes referred to as “additive” rhythms, in contrast to the equal-beat structure of most European-American music. In this light, Joplin’s *Original Rags* (1899) and *The Ragtime Dance* (1906) take on a different perspective:<sup>4</sup>



**Example 4.** Scott Joplin, *Original Rags*, A strain, measures 1–2.



**Example 5.** Scott Joplin, *The Ragtime Dance*, A strain, measures 1–2.

From this point of view, ragtime rhythms do not result from “playing with the time” of the melody; rather, they are fundamental to the very conception of the melody.

*Ragtime Song.* The second type of ragtime, the ragtime song, evolved from syncopated “coon songs” of the late 1890s. The word “ragtime” was, however, so marketable that it became widely applied to songs that were not syncopated or were only lightly syncopated. The label was also applied to songs whose only connection with ragtime was the mention of it in the lyrics. Edward Berlin notes in his chapter, “Ragtime Songs,” that with the tremendous popularity of *Alexander’s Ragtime Band* in the early 1910s the word “ragtime” came increasingly to mean a rhythmic, but not necessarily syncopated, popular song.

*Ragtime Waltz.* The ragtime or syncopated waltz has been heretofore overlooked by writers, probably because it was a minor genre. These waltzes are, like rags, multisectional pieces usually for piano solo, with a syncopated right hand played against a recurring left-hand pattern. The greatest difference, of course, is the meter: The waltzes are in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, while most rags are written in  $\frac{2}{4}$ . Because of the metrical differences, the piano rag’s forward propulsion is noticeably lacking in the waltzes. Consequently, ragtime waltzes never became widely popular.

Table 2 lists representative ragtime waltzes. The most enduring works of this type were written by Scott Joplin (*Pleasant Moments* and *Bethena*). The most prolific publishing center was Indianapolis, which produced several dozen syncopated waltzes of a decidedly commercial bent.<sup>5</sup>

*“Ragging” Existing Music.* A fourth type of ragtime was “ragging” of classics or other preexisting music. Mendelssohn’s “Spring Song” and “Wedding March” and Rubinstein’s “Melody in F” were among the favorite classics for “ragging.”<sup>6</sup> To “rag” is to syncopate the melody of nonsyncopated work. This technique, which predates the first publication of rags by several decades, was a common performance practice of pianists. Most of this type of ragtime, like most modern jazz improvisations on existing popular songs, was probably never written down or recorded. However, some instructive examples of “ragging” survive, such as the piano rolls *Lucy’s Sextette: Ragtime Travesty on the “Sextette” from “Lucia”* (by Harry L. Alford) and *Misery Rag: Ragtime on the “Miserere” from “Il Trovatore”* (by Carleton L. Colby).<sup>7</sup> Among the best-known examples in sheet music are George L. Cobb’s *Russian Rag* (based on Rachmaninoff’s Prelude in C-Sharp Minor) and Julius Lenzberg’s Lizst-based *Hungarian Rag*. A good recorded example of “ragging” a march is Eubie Blake’s rendition of Sousa’s *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.<sup>8</sup>

*Quantity of Publications.* No one has made an exact count of how much ragtime sheet music was published during the Ragtime Era, but a good estimate is two to three thousand instrumental rags and a like number of ragtime songs. Perhaps fewer than a hundred ragtime waltzes were issued. It is difficult to estimate the number of publications that “ragged” existing music, for many such pieces were not issued separately, but rather were included in instruction manuals or in music magazines.

**Table 2**  
**Selected Ragtime Waltzes**

TITLE	COMPOSER	RACE	YEAR	PUBLISHER AND CITY
<i>Bethena: A Concert Waltz</i>	Scott Joplin	black	1905	T. Bahnsen Piano Mfg. Co., Saint Louis
<i>Covent Garden: Ragtime Waltz</i>	Marcella A. Henry	white?	1917	Christensen School of Popular Music, Chicago
<i>Daughters of Dahomey: Rag-Time Waltz</i>	Harry P. Guy	black	1902	Harry P. Guy, Detroit
<i>Day Dreams: Syncopated Waltz</i>	Maxwell Gordon	white?	1912	Buck & Lowney, Saint Louis
<i>Echoes from the Snowball Club: Ragtime Waltz</i>	Harry P. Guy	black	1898	Willard Bryant, Detroit
<i>Elaine: Syncopated Waltz</i>	E. J. Stark	white	1913	Jos. W. Stern & Co., New York
<i>Floreine: Syncopated Waltz</i>	E. J. Schuster	white	1908	Warner C. Williams, Indianapolis
<i>Il Trovatore: Syncopated Waltz</i>	Warner C. Williams	white	1912	Warner C. Williams, Indianapolis
<i>Love Dreams: Syncopated Waltz</i>	Joseph F. Cohen	white	1915	Warner C. Williams, Indianapolis
<i>Mandy's Ragtime Waltz</i>	J. S. Zamecnik	white	1912	Sam Fox, Cleveland
<i>Melody in F: (Syncopated) Waltzes</i>	Will B. Morrison	white	1913	Warner C. Williams, Indianapolis
<i>Pleasant Moments: Rag-Time Waltz</i>	Scott Joplin	black	1909	Seminary Music Co., New York
<i>Star and Garter Ragtime Waltz</i>	Axel W. Christensen	white	1910	Christensen School of Popular Music, Chicago
<i>Tobasco: Rag-Time Waltz</i>	Charles L. Johnson	white	1909	Jerome H. Remick, New York
<i>True Love: Syncopated Waltz</i>	F. Henri Klickmann	white	1913	Frank K. Root, Chicago
<i>Wiggle-Wag Ragtime Waltz</i>	George W. Meyer	white	1913	Geo. W. Meyer Music Co., New York



It is important to note that most of what we know about ragtime is derived from *published* ragtime pieces. Undoubtedly, many compositions were never notated or published. This aurally transmitted ragtime is now lost forever to the winds of time.

## Origins of Ragtime

“The origin of ragtime and coon songs,” wrote a black theater critic in 1911, “has taken up as much space as the race problem. Every writer has a different view and backs it up with a good argument. The Negro has figured in them all.”<sup>9</sup> More than seventy years later historians are still arguing about the origins of ragtime, though they agree it was originally an Afro-American idiom. The evidence is mounting that ragtime was in development some ten or twenty years before the first ragtime song, so labeled, was published in 1896. The practice of ragging an existing melody, though not under that name, dates back to at least the 1870s. The Georgia-born poet Sidney Lanier (1842–1881) wrote in 1876:

*Syncopations . . . are characteristic of negro music. I have heard negroes change a well-known melody by adroitly syncopating it . . . so as to give it a bizarre effect scarcely imaginable; and nothing illustrates the negro's natural gifts in the way of keeping a difficult tempo more clearly than his perfect execution of airs thus transformed from simple to complex accentuation.*<sup>10</sup>

Lanier's perceptive remarks all but establish that the first and oldest type of ragtime was the ragging of an existing piece. Only later were new compositions—banjo and piano rags and ragtime songs—written in a “raggy” style, with the syncopations an inherent, not an “added-on,” part of the music.

A few years after Lanier's account, an item appeared in print that strongly suggests that ragtime was in the air in Nebraska and other parts of the Midwest. In 1888 a Nebraska banjoist, probably white, wrote to a genteel banjo music magazine requesting some music with “broken time” like the “ear-players” played.<sup>11</sup> The magazine was unable to accommodate him, as this syncopated proto-ragtime, which he called “broken-time,” was being performed at that time entirely in the aural tradition, *i.e.*, by musicians who played by ear, rather than from notation.

In 1886, George W. Cable described the *rhythm* of a black dance in New Orleans' Congo Square as “ragged.”<sup>12</sup> Cable's term, and particularly the use in 1888 of the phrase “broken-time” in connection with aurally transmitted banjo music, give strong support to “ragged time” as the etymology of “rag-time.”

As other commentators have noted, during the 1880s popular sheet

music, such as Otto Gunnar's *New Coon in Town* (1884) and George Lansing's *Darkie's Dream* (1889), began to suggest the soon-to-emerge ragtime. The trend accelerated in the early and middle 1890s as more and more pieces labeled "characteristic," "patrol," "cakewalk," and "coon song" were published. Berlin argues that *The Darkies' Patrol* of E. A. Phelps, published without a "rag" appellation in 1892 but included in the 1899 folio *Brainard's Ragtime Collection*, "qualifies as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, published rag."<sup>13</sup>

The first substantiated use of the words "rag" and "rag-time" occurred in August, 1896. On August 3, Ernest Hogan's song *All Coons Look Alike to Me*, with an optional chorus labeled "Negro 'Rag' Accompaniment," was copyrighted. Two days later, a copyright was filed for Witmark's edition of Ben Harney's song *You've Been a Good Old Wagon But You've Done Broke Down*. The cover claimed that Harney was the "Original Introducer to the Stage of the Now Popular 'Rag Time' in Ethiopian Song."

The geographical origins of ragtime are uncertain. The limited evidence points to both Chicago and Saint Louis. Quite possibly, syncopated music coalesced into ragtime in several places at about the same time. The World's Fair of 1893 is said to have attracted a large number of itinerant pianists who played syncopated popular music. No one has yet located documentary



A bar at Market and Centre streets, near the notorious Chestnut Valley "sporting district" of Saint Louis, ca. 1907. Tom Turpin's famous Rosebud Bar was about seven blocks up Market Street. Black ragtime thrived in this area, which employed Scott Joplin, Tom Turpin, Artie Matthews, Louis Chauvin, Arthur Marshall, Charles Thompson, and white ragtime composer Charles H. Hunter. (*John Edward Hasse collection*)

proof of early ragtime performed at the fair, but evidence points to it. Only a few years after the fair, newspaper commentators were writing that ragtime music had come onto the public scene in Chicago at about the time of the fair.<sup>14</sup> The respected folk song collector and scholar Natalie Curtis (1875–1921) wrote in 1912 that “it has been said that ‘rag-time’ first appeared in our music-halls about the time of the Chicago World’s Fair.”<sup>15</sup>

Some Ragtime-Era commentators argued that ragtime came from Saint Louis. In the following account, laced with racial stereotyping typical of the time, a writer for the *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch* recounts what appears to be a local legend—with perhaps some basis in fact—that ragtime was heard as early as 1888 in the slums of Saint Louis.

*A negro woman, whose name is unknown to fame, is declared to have invented ragtime in St. Louis in 1888, in a house, now fallen, at Broadway and Clark avenue. She was as glossy black as her forbears of the Dark Continent, tall and stalwart, and rich-voiced.*

*It was the day of Proctor Knott, a famous racehorse, and he was the theme of the epoch-making ballad which she sang. One stanza has been preserved: “I-za a-gwine tuh Little Rock, Tuh put mah money on-a Proctuh Knott.”*

*There were hundreds of such verses, mostly as absurd with no regard for continuity of subject, and characterized by assonance rather than rhyme. But the new thing was the strangely alluring and exciting rhythm to which they were sung, a veritable call of the wild, which mightily stirred the pulses of city-bred people.*

*Syncopated time, as old as music, was the means of this effect. But it was syncopated time so exaggerated and emphasized as to reveal for the first time its capacity of powerful appeal to the flesh. It soon became a fad with young men to visit the slums to hear “Mammy,” as she was called, sing her new music.*

*“That song sounds so ragged,” was the comment of one who heard the conventional rhythms being torn to tatters. And the name “ragtime” was born.*

*One visitor was an Englishman, connected with a theatrical troupe. He studied ragtime until he had mastered its secret, and recrossed the ocean with his find.*

*Two years later an Irish comedy team was playing in St. Louis, and in the audience were several St. Louisans who had heard “Mammy” sing. What was their surprise to hear in the featured song the well-known strains of the negro composition. The music took the city by storm and swept across the country.<sup>16</sup>*

Further support for Saint Louis as the birthplace for ragtime was given by Juli Jones, a black theater critic, who wrote in 1911 that “some claimed St. Louis as the father town for ragtime; some claimed Louisville, Ky. Anyway, St. Louis turned out the first and best players.”<sup>17</sup> Whether the idiom sprang from Chicago, Saint Louis, or Louisville (one-time home of ragtime pioneer Ben Harney), the early commentators tend to agree that ragtime came from the Midwest.

Whatever its origins, it seems to have spread widely. By 1892, Charles Ives had heard ragtime in minstrel shows in his home town of Danbury, Connecticut.<sup>18</sup> After ragtime broke into print in 1896 it began to be published in a number of cities. The year 1897 saw at least twenty-three piano rags published in nine cities, mostly in the midwest, but also in New Orleans, Philadelphia, and New York (Table 3).

## The Era

*A Time of Change.* Ragtime came on the public scene at a time of great change in American society. Cities were growing rapidly—through migration from country to city, through natural population growth in the cities and through immigration from abroad. In 1890 only 22 percent of the U.S. population lived in a town or city (a place with twenty-five hundred or more people), but by the close of the Ragtime Era, the percentage had more than doubled. By 1920, 54 percent of Americans were urban dwellers.

Transportation was changing, as the railroad system was virtually completed, as a vast network of electric railways or “interurbans” linked many parts of the United States, as the motorcar began to displace the horseless carriage, and as manned flight began.

The Spanish-American War, a four-month conflict in 1898, turned the United States into a first-class world power, built an overseas empire, and helped to restore American optimism, which had suffered since the 1893 financial panic and resultant depression. Except for the Panic of 1907, the upbeat mood created by the War lasted until the First World War (1914–18).

Though some changes came too gradually to be identified with a specific year, many Ragtime-Era developments can be. Table 4 summarizes major events in American society and arts during this period.

*Afro-American Life.* The Ragtime Era saw optimism generally in white America, but the period was a difficult one for blacks. In 1896, just as the era dawned, the United States Supreme Court ruled, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, that racial discrimination was legal. The gains of Reconstruction were largely wiped out, and blacks were repeatedly set back in their efforts for equality and dignity. The next few years brought “Jim Crow” laws to many southern states, and by 1904 blacks had been disenfranchised in nearly the entire South. Since 90 percent of blacks still lived in the South in 1900, very few black men were able to vote (and of course, no women of any color).

The imperialism that the Spanish-American War both rode upon and fostered went hand in hand with racism. C. Vann Woodward writes that “at the very time that imperialism was sweeping the country, the doctrine of racism reached a crest of respectability and popularity among the respectable scholarly and intellectual circles.” The late 1890s were such a bad time for Afro-Americans that Rayford W. Logan considers the period 1897 to 1901 as the nadir for blacks.<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly, lynching was still common; in 1900 white mobs lynched 107 blacks.

Table 3  
Piano Rags Published in 1897

CITY	TITLE	COMPOSER	PUBLISHER	
TO	Chicago	<i>Alabama Rag Time: Cake Walk</i>	J. E. Henning	Henning Music Co.
		<i>Ben Harney's Rag Time Instructor</i>	Ben Harney, arr. Theodore H. Northrup	Sol Bloom
	Cincinnati	<i>Louisiana Rag</i>	Theodore H. Northrup	Thompson Music Co.
		<i>Mississippi Rag</i>	William H. Krell	S. Brainard's Sons*
		<i>Night on the Levee</i>	Theodore H. Northrup	Sol Bloom
		<i>Plantation Echoes: Rag Two-Step</i>	Theodore H. Northrup	Sol Bloom
		<i>Rag Time March</i>	Warren Beebe	Will Rossiter
		<i>The Rag Time Patrol</i>	R. J. Hamilton	National Music Co.
		<i>A Bundle of Rags</i>	Robert S. Roberts	Phillip Kussel
		<i>Pride of Bucktown</i>	Robert S. Roberts	Phillip Kussel
		<i>The Coons' Frolic (for band)</i>	George Southwell	George Southwell
		<i>Roustabout Rag</i>	Paul Sarabresole	Gruenewald
		<i>At a Georgia Campmeeting</i>	Kerry Mills	F. A. Mills
		<i>De Captain of de Coontown Guards</i>	Dave Reed, Jr.	M. Witmark & Sons
		<i>Dinah's Jubilee: Characteristic March and Two Step</i>	Jacob H. Ellis	Howley, Haviland
<i>Forest &amp; Stream: Polka or Two-Step</i>	William H. Tyers	F. A. Mills		
New York	<i>Rag Medley</i>	Max Hoffmann	M. Witmark & Sons	
	<i>Walk Baby Walk or The Pickaninny Cake Walker</i>	Theo C. Metz	Primrose & Rose	
	<i>Who'll Win de Cake Tonight? Ethiopian Schottische</i>	Walter Hawley	George L. Spaulding	
	<i>Shifty Shuffles: Buck Dance</i>	Eva Note Flennard	Welch & Wilsky	
	<i>Darktown Capers: An Original Southern Rag</i>	Walter Starck	Shattinger Music Co.	
Philadelphia	<i>Harlem Rag</i>	Tom Turpin	Robert De Yong & Co.	
	<i>Silver King Polka-March</i>	Mamie A. Gunn	Thiebes-Stierlin	
Saint Louis	<i>Happy Little Nigs: Ragtime Two Step</i>	George Elliott	George Elliott	

\*The S. Brainard's Sons imprint included both Chicago and New York.

As late as 1910 “coon songs” were still disseminating racially derogatory lyrics. The slanderous lyrics did not go unprotected by the black press. Complained the *Indianapolis Freeman* in 1905:

*Song publishers will have to get their eyes open after awhile. Men who write words for songs can no longer write such mean rot as the words of “Whistling Coon” and expect respectable publishers to accept it no matter how good the music may be. Composers should not set music to a set of words that are a direct insult or indirect insinuation to the colored race. This style of literature is no longer appreciated.<sup>20</sup>*

It is one of the great ironies of the Ragtime Era that the lyrics of racially demeaning songs were frequently set to ragtime—a music created by the very people denigrated by the songs.

Compounding their other miseries, most blacks were forced to work in menial jobs. Only three professions were open to them in any numbers: those of preacher, teacher, and musician. Music was one field in which blacks could not only avoid menial labor, but achieve some success and upward mobility and make distinctive contributions to American culture.

*Musical Culture.* Drastic changes were also taking place in American musical culture during the Ragtime Era. This period saw the firm establishment of vaudeville throughout the United States; the opening of thousands of movie theaters and the creation of many accompanying jobs for musicians; the spread of organized labor among professional musicians; a quickening succession of dance crazes that swept the nation; the rise of music publishing as big business; the entrance of more blacks to popular song writing, arranging, and even publishing. The spread of the phonograph record and gramophone cylinder transformed musical life by bringing great music to the masses, greatly enhancing the dissemination of classical and popular music, and democratizing music by giving the public what it wanted—largely pop songs.<sup>21</sup>

For those who could afford them, player pianos and piano rolls also brought mechanized, repeatable music—classics and pops—into the home. Piano rolls could not bring you the voice of Arthur Collins or Sophie Tucker, as did recordings, but you could sing along and enjoy far greater fidelity from a resonant piano than from a tinny cylinder or Victrola horn.

## The Piano and Ragtime

The role of the piano in the development and popularity of many types of music of the Ragtime Era, particularly ragtime itself, cannot be overestimated. The piano was a symbol of respectability—of arrival in the middle class. Before the advent of the automobile, the piano represented for many families the biggest single purchase, other than a house. The piano

Table 4  
**Societal Developments During the Ragtime Era, 1896–1920\***

YEAR	U.S. AND WORLD AFFAIRS	THE ARTS	OTHER
1896	Supreme Court upholds segregation. Utah becomes forty-fifth state. Bryan, "Cross of Gold" speech.	McDowell, <i>Indian Suite</i> . American Fed'n of Musicians founded. Dunbar, <i>Lyrics of Lowly Life</i> .	Gold rush in Alaska. Olympic Games revived, Athens. First U.S. motion picture machines.
1897	McKinley inaugurated President. Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.	Sousa, <i>The Stars and Stripes Forever</i> . Conrad, <i>The Nigger of the Narcissus</i> .	Mosquito discovered as malaria carrier. Thomson discovers the electron.
1898	Spanish-American War. U.S. annexes Hawaii.	James, <i>Turn of the Screw</i> . Wells, <i>War of the Worlds</i> .	Pierre and Marie Curie discover radium.
1899	U.S. "Open Door" policy for China. Boer War begins in South Africa.	Schoenberg, <i>Verklärte Nacht</i> . Sibelius, <i>Finlandia</i> .	Boll weevil begins destroying U.S. cotton. Veblen, <i>The Theory of the Leisure Class</i> .
1900	Boxer Rebellion in China. Hawaii becomes U.S. territory.	Philadelphia Orchestra founded. Dreiser, <i>Sister Carrie</i> .	Freud, <i>Traumdeutung</i> . U.S. population hits 75 million.
1901	McKinley shot, Roosevelt succeeds. Edward VII becomes King of England.	Mahler, Fourth Symphony. Mann, <i>Buddenbrooks</i> .	U.S. Steel, Victor Talking Machine Co. est'd. Max Planck develops quantum theory. First transatlantic radio broadcast.
1902	Five-month coal strike cripples U.S. * Boer War ends.	Debussy, <i>Pelléas et Mélisande</i> . Caruso makes his first recording.	Rayon patented. Teddy Bear introduced.
1903	U.S. supports Panamanian revolution. Ida Tarbell exposes Standard Oil.	Shaw, <i>Man and Superman</i> . London, <i>Call of the Wild</i> .	Wright brothers, first airplane flight. First baseball world series.
1904	Russo-Japanese War. Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doc.	London Symphony founded. Puccini, <i>Madama Butterfly</i> .	Saint Louis World's Fair. Columbia introduces first flat records.
1905	First Russian Revolution. Roosevelt begins second term.	Strauss, <i>Salome</i> . Léhar, <i>The Merry Widow</i> .	Einstein, special relativity theory. First neon light signs. First motion picture theater.
1906	Pure Food and Drug Act in U.S. Troops quell Atlanta race riot.	Sinclair, <i>The Jungle</i> . Herbert, <i>The Red Mill</i> .	San Francisco earthquake and fire. Roosevelt helps coin term "muckraker."
1907	Oklahoma becomes forty-sixth state. Peace Conference at the Hague.	First Ziegfeld Follies, N.Y. Scriabin, <i>Poem of Ecstasy</i> .	Boy Scouts and Mother's Day founded. Financial panic causes run on banks.
1908	FBI established.	Bartok, String Quartet No. 1. Matisse coins term <i>cubism</i> .	Model "T" Ford produced. Jack Johnson becomes world heavyweight champ.

1909	Taft Inaugurated President. Congress sets high protective tariffs.	Wright, Robie house, Chicago. Schoenberg, <i>Plano Pieces</i> , Op. 11.	U.S. Copyright Law passed. Peary reaches North Pole.
1910	George V becomes King of England. NAACP organized in New York.	Stravinsky, <i>The Firebird</i> . Ravel, <i>Daphnis et Chloé</i> . Herbert, <i>Naughty Marietta</i> .	N.Y.'s Pennsylvania Station opens. Halley's Comet passes sun. Father's Day first celebrated in U.S.
1911	Chinese republic replaces dynasty. Supreme Court dissolves Standard Oil.	Mahler, <i>Das Lied von der Erde</i> . Strauss, <i>Der Rosenkavaller</i> .	Amundsen reaches South Pole. Carrier invents air conditioner.
1912	Arizona and New Mexico become states. Balkan Wars begin.	Schoenberg, <i>Pierrot Lunaire</i> . Flat records supersede cylinders.	Titanic sinking kills 1,513. F. W. Woolworth Co. founded.
1913	Wilson inaugurated President. U.S. income tax introduced. U.S. Dep't of Labor created.	Armory show brings modern art to U.S. Stravinsky, <i>Le Sacre du printemps</i> . Tango and dance craze sweeps U.S. Lawrence, <i>Sons and Lovers</i> .	Ford introduces moving assembly line. Indian head nickel introduced.
1914	World War begins in Europe. Panama Canal opens. U.S. intervenes in Mexico.	Handy, <i>St. Louis Blues</i> . ASCAP formed in New York. Joyce, <i>Dubliners</i> .	Teletype machine introduced. Elastic brassiere patented.
1915	World War intensifies. U.S. Coast Guard established.	Griffith, <i>Birth of a Nation</i> . Ives, <i>Concord</i> sonata. Maugham, <i>Of Human Bondage</i> .	Lusitania sinking kills 1,195. First U.S. transcontinental telephone.
1916	Battle of Verdun. Pershing chases Pancho Villa.	Ives, Fourth Symphony. Rockwell teams with <i>Saturday Evening Post</i> .	Einstein, general theory of relativity. First Rose Bowl football game.
1917	U.S. enters World War. Wilson inaugurated for second term. Russian Revolution overthrows czar.	First jazz recordings. Cohan, <i>Over There</i> .	Women's bobbed hair becomes fashionable. Jung, <i>The Psychology of the Unconscious</i> .
1918	Kaiser Wilhelm abdicates. Civil War grips Russia.	Stravinsky, <i>L'histoire du soldat</i> . Cather, <i>My Antonia</i> .	Worldwide influenza epidemic begins. Air mail begins in U.S.
1919	Treaty of Versailles ends World War. League of Nations formed.	Falla, <i>The Three-Cornered Hat</i> . Anderson, <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> .	Prohibition ratified in U.S. First nonstop transatlantic flight.
1920	Harding elected President. "Red scare" grips U.S.	Holst, <i>The Planets</i> . Lewis, <i>Main Street</i> .	U.S. grants woman suffrage. First U.S. commercial radio stations.

\* See also Table 12, A Chronology of Ragtime, 1896–1920.



provided a center for family and self-entertainment, it contributed to musical education, and it served to instill discipline and “culture” in the youth of America. It was the main instrument used for indoor public musical entertainment in saloons, restaurants, ball rooms, and theaters. Most published music was either composed for piano solo or for voice with piano accompaniment.

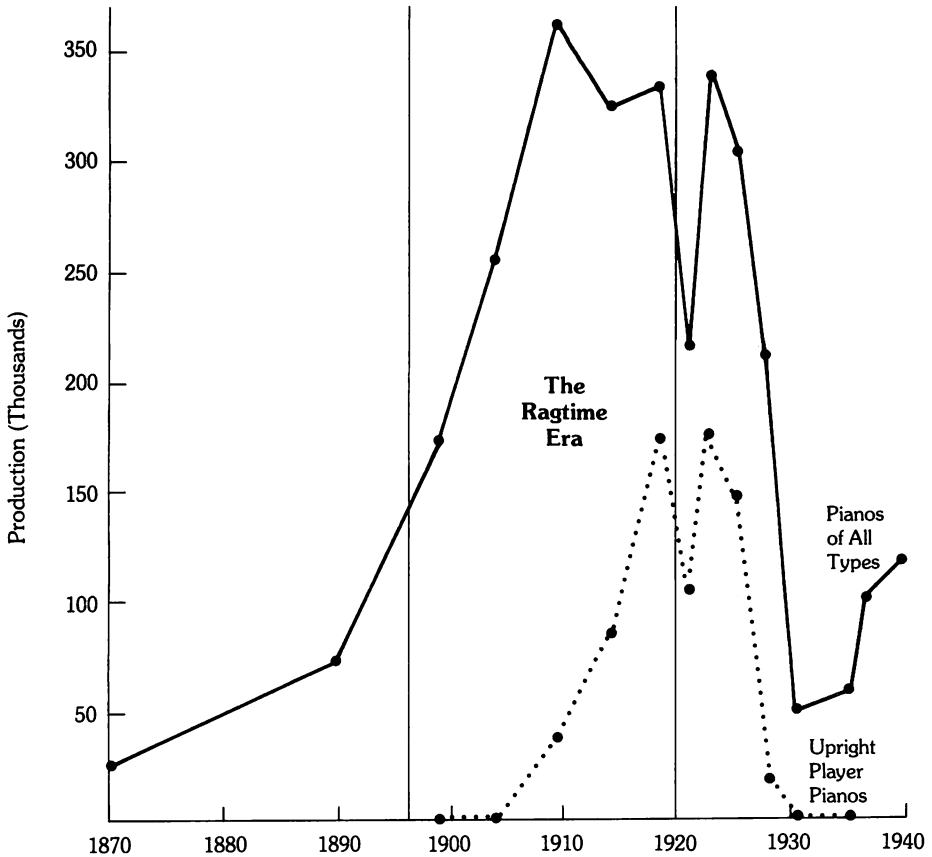
The piano played a fundamental role in ragtime, which reached its highest and most intricate development at the piano in the form of piano rags. Had it not been for the piano, ragtime doubtless would not have matured to the extent it did. The piano allowed for two hands (up to ten fingers) of melody, harmony, and rhythm. Furthermore, it allowed each hand to perform a separate musical role—the right to provide melody and some harmony, the left to execute an accompanying bass pattern (with harmony) in steady, equal-beat rhythm. The rhythmic juxtaposition of the two hands is what creates contrast and tension, making piano ragtime work.

Ragtime is essentially a percussive music, notwithstanding lyrical and singing rags such as *Heliotrope Bouquet* (by Scott Joplin and Louis Chauvin). Unlike other keyboard instruments—organ, harmonium, and accordion—the piano was perfectly suited to the percussive timbres that ragtime required. The piano’s percussive capability was, I suspect, one of the reasons that the considerably more expensive piano succeeded in displacing the reed organ as the primary instrument of home music making. The piano better suited ragtime and the era’s other lively popular styles, which, unlike sad ballads and solemn hymns, demanded crisp enunciation. As the primary instrument of ragtime, the piano was not without its disadvantages. Unlike the banjo, violin, or cornet, it was not portable and could not be used easily for parades, park concerts, and similar amusements. Also, the high cost of the instrument placed it beyond the reach of those without means.

Ragtime on the piano could not, of course, render the vocalisms traditional to Afro-American music—the swoops, slides, slurs, and *glissandi*—that can be imitated successfully on a guitar or trombone. But the piano was able to maintain the traditional percussive timbres and polyrhythms and, some would argue, even the polymeters that are a hallmark of Afro-American and West African music. And more than most instruments, the piano allowed for an open display of technical velocity and virtuosity.

During the Ragtime Era the piano was booming in popularity. As the graph on page 15 reveals, the piano reached its sales peak in 1909, roughly the midpoint of the Ragtime Era. It is significant that the number of published piano rags, according to my calculations, also reached a peak the very same year.<sup>22</sup> Ragtime and the piano were thus interdependent. The popularity of one spurred that of the other. The popularity of the piano and of music publishing in general were, in fact, mutually reinforcing. People purchasing pianos for their homes needed to have music to play; new songs

## U.S. Piano and Player Piano Production, 1870-1940



Compiled from data included in Solomon Fabricant, *The Output of Manufacturing Industries, 1899-1937* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1940), pp. 597-99, and Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (London: J. M. Dent, 1976), p. 221.

and instrumentals were put before the public and marketed as never before; and people needed to have an instrument on which to play the current tunes.

Today, we have a hard time understanding how good ragtime piano sounded during its heyday. The pianos of the day were either grands or full uprights, capable of producing much more sound than the spinets of later years. Also, most homes were of solid wood construction. The sounding boards of the large pianos produced considerable volume, and buildings' wooden floors and walls amplified the sound to a full and rich resonance. The listener could actually *feel* the piano vibrations through his or her feet and bones. To the loudness and resonance were added the appealing and

novel rag rhythms. It is no wonder that some people became intoxicated with ragtime.<sup>23</sup>

If ragtime played on a standard piano was compelling, player piano ragtime was downright exciting. Unlike most amateur pianists, the player piano rolls could execute the rags flawlessly. Also, the rolls were frequently enriched with extra octaves beyond the capacity of the human hand, creating an even fuller sound. Many rolls featured flashy effects, such as tremolo, to dazzle the listener. Watching the piano keys moving rapidly without human fingers was like witnessing a feat of wizardry. And the excitement was further heightened for the person pumping the player pedals, for the physical exertion also got the adrenaline pumping. For these reasons, the player piano played an important role in disseminating ragtime. (Ragtime on piano rolls is treated in a separate chapter.)

The graph on page 15 reveals that the peak years of player piano production, 1919 to 1923, came at the end of the Ragtime Era. This period marked the beginning of the piano novelty, a successor to ragtime (see Ronald Riddle's chapter, "Novelty Piano Music"). Another offshoot of ragtime, the "Harlem stride" jazz piano of James P. Johnson and Luckey Roberts was also becoming popular at this time (see the chapter "Conversations with James P. Johnson"). Stride pieces and piano novelties were often flashier than rags and were extremely well suited to the player piano.

## The Appeal of Ragtime

Although some people couldn't abide ragtime, many others embraced it enthusiastically. Young people especially liked it. Ragtime was "their" music, just as several generations later teenagers took rock and roll as "their" music. For some, ragtime undoubtedly represented a rebellion against their parents. Ragtime echoed the restless energy and optimism of youth and of the American people in general during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Above all, it was the rhythms of rag that created its allure. Today, after decades of syncopated jazz and other Afro-American idioms, we have difficulty appreciating how novel and exotic these rhythms must have been for Ragtime-Era listeners. White America had not heard such consistently syncopated music before. Verse-and-chorus waltz songs had dominated popular music; ragtime brought a refreshing contrast not only in rhythm, but also in tempo, formal structure, and mood. Rag was fresh and striking also because of its inherent percussiveness, emphasized by the timbres of the banjo, piano, or player piano.

During a visit in 1903 to the Georgia sea island of Jekyll, Dr. Gustav K hl, a German musician, attended a masked ball at which music was provided by two black musicians. K hl relates the jarring effect, at first

negative and then positive, that these instrumental rag syncopations had upon him.

*But my senses were captivated against my will by the music, which seemed to be produced by a little army of devils to my left. It seemed incredible to me for quite a while, how any person could dance a single step to such an irregular and noisy conglomeration of sounds; and it was even more difficult for me to understand how such complicated and to me unmusical noise was brought about. . . . Before a thoroughly dilapidated Grand Piano, . . . a muscular, short haired Negro . . . with his arms and elbows . . . belaboured the keys in sixteenths with such ease, and dexterity as many a pianist could wish for his wrists. In reality he produced all the music, as his colleague, with a Double Bass (minus one string) simply supported the bass notes, with vivacious and grunting strokes from his bow. . . . The continuous reappearance and succession of accentuations on the wrong parts of the bar and unnatural syncopations imparts somewhat of a rhythmic compulsion to the body which is nothing short of irresistible and which makes itself felt even before the ears have discerned the time or rhythmic value of the various parts of the bar.<sup>24</sup>*

Many other people found ragtime “irresistible” and “fascinating,” as indicated in the titles of a number of instrumentals and songs, including *Irresistible Rag*, *Irresistible Fox Trot Rag*, *That Irresistible Rag*, *That Fascinating Rag*, *The Fascinator*, and *That Nifty Rag*.

As noted above, blacks suffered many setbacks during the ragtime years. Blacks struggled to survive economically, politically, socially, and spiritually. As the profession of musician was one of only three open in any numbers to blacks, music in general and ragtime in particular held promise of escape from poverty, anonymity, and powerlessness. Ragtime undoubtedly also appealed to black professional musicians by providing opportunity for masculine competitiveness, especially in the virtuosic “cutting contests.” In addition, playing the piano brought a measure of respectability, especially compared with the banjo, which carried associations of plantations and minstrelsy. Thus, for black ragtime pianists, the music had deeper meaning and perhaps more profound appeal than it did for whites.

## The People of Ragtime

Like any music, ragtime had two primary groups of participants: its producers and its consumers. The consumers—the people who comprised the audience—were diverse, including many young people, both black and

Table 5  
Most Prolific Composers of Instrumental Rags

COMPOSER	LIFE SPAN	AGE WHEN FIRST RAG PUBLISHED	BIRTHPLACE	RACE	NUMBER OF RAGS*		
					SOLO	COLLABORATIVE	TOTAL
Aufderheide, May	1888-1972	19	Indianapolis, Indiana	white	7	0	7
Bennett, Theron	1879-1937	23	Pierce City, Missouri	white	8	0	8
Blake, Eubie	1883-1983	20	Baltimore, Maryland	black	13	1	14
Botsford, George	1874-1949	22	Sioux Falls, South Dakota	white	17	0	17
Campbell, Brun	1884-1952	†	Oberlin, Kansas	white	9	0	9
Christensen, Axel W.	1881-1955	27	Chicago, Illinois	white	7‡	0	7
Cobb, George L.	1886-1942	22	Mexico, New York	white	16	0	16
Copeland, Les	1887-1942	21	Wichita, Kansas	white	9	1	10
Denney, Homer	1885-1975	20	NA	white	8	0	8
Giblin, Irene M.	1888-1974	16	Saint Louis, Missouri	white	10	0	10
Hunter, Charles H.	1876-1906	24	Columbia, Tennessee	white	8	0	8
Johnson, Charles L.	1876-1950	22	Kansas City, Kansas	white	32	0	32
Joplin, Scott	1868-1917	30	Bowie County, Texas	black	32	6	38
Jordan, Joe	1882-1971	19	Cincinnati, Ohio	black	6	0	6
Kortlander, Max	1890-1961	29	Grand Rapids, Michigan	white	8	0	8
Lamb, Joseph F.	1887-1960	19	Montclair, New Jersey	white	34	0	34

Lodge, Henry	1884–1933	25	Providence, Rhode Island	white	15	0	15
Marshall, Arthur	1881–1968	18	Saline County, Missouri	black	9	1	10
Mentel, Louis H.	1880–1955	25	Covington, Kentucky	white	10	0	10
Olman, Abe	1888–1984	19	Cincinnati, Ohio	white	7	0	7
Pratt, Paul	1890–1948	18	New Salem, Indiana	white	15	0	15
Pryor, Arthur	1870–1942	28	Saint Joseph, Missouri	white	9	0	9
Roberts, Luckey	1887–1968	25	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	black	7	0	7
Robinson, J. Russel	1892–1963	17	Indianapolis, Indiana	white	8	0	8
Stark, E. J.	1868–?	34	Gosport, Indiana	white	6	0	6
Straight, Charley	1891–1940	22	Chicago, Illinois	white	18	1	19
Scott, James	1886–1938	17	Neosho, Missouri	black	31	0	31
Tierney, Harry	1890–1965	19	Perth Amboy, New Jersey	white	15	0	15
Turpin, Tom	1873–1922	24	Savannah, Georgia	black	6	0	6
Wenrich, Percy	1880–1952	23	Joplin, Missouri	white	18	0	18
Woolsey, Calvin	1884–1946	24	Tinney's Point, Missouri	white	6	0	6

\* Number of rags is approximate. Excludes "novelty piano." Includes works published in sheet music, issued on piano roll or recording, or which survive complete in manuscript.

† Since none of Campbell's rags were published, but exist only in recordings he made late in his life, it is impossible to ascertain his age at first composing rags.

‡ Excludes Christensen's ragtime instruction books and his numerous "ragtime arrangements of old favorite melodies" such as *Home! Sweet Home!*, *Old Black Joe*, and *Auld Lang Syne*.

NA = Not available.

Compiled from information in Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, 4th ed., rev., David A. Jasen and Trebor Jay Tichenor, *Rags and Ragtime: A Musical History*, and author's research.

white. The producers included ragtime's composers, arrangers, performers, and, by extension, publishers.

*Instrumental rag composers.* Although the two greatest ragtime composers—Scott Joplin and James Scott—were black, most of the published rag composers were white. As Table 5 demonstrates, only seven of the thirty-one most prolific, and largely the most representative, rag composers were black. This indicates that ragtime, originally an Afro-American idiom, was adopted by many white musicians. It also suggests, however, that some black composers of rags did not get published—by choice, because they lacked formal training in composing and notating music, or because of racial discrimination by publishers. It suggests, too, that many black ragtime pianists devoted their energies to *interpreting* existing pieces, rather than composing new ones, as have modern jazz performers such as Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson.

Table 6 also establishes that the major rag composers<sup>25</sup> generally became involved with ragtime in their youth.

Table 6  
Age Composers First  
Wrote Rags

AGE	NUMBER OF COMPOSERS
16-19	10
20-22	7
23-25	8
26-28	2
29-31	2
32+	1

Most of the composers had their first rags published between the ages of 17 and 25. Ten of the most prolific were still teenagers at the time of their first publications. This data indicates clearly that ragtime was a music of youth, and it sheds light on the tremendous opposition ragtime engendered in many quarters. Youth was enjoying a new, somewhat irreverent music, and many adults resented it. (There were other reasons why ragtime met opposition, which are explored in Neil Leonard's chapter, "The Reactions to Ragtime.")

*Rag Performers.* Most ragtime was performed by amateur musicians, at home, for the amusement of themselves, their families, and friends. The majority of the amateur pianists were young white women who learned piano as an important part of their cultural upbringing. Since ragtime was frowned on by most piano teachers and some parents, playing the music must have been a furtive activity for many. Most of these amateurs played the music strictly as written, or to be more accurate, *strove* to play it as written, for pieces such as the *Maple Leaf Rag* were difficult to play.

These piano players bought the ragtime sheet music at music stores and at the music counters of department stores and dime stores. Many department store music sections had pianos on which the clerks (frequently

young ladies) would obligingly demonstrate the latest ragtime and other popular music to any potential customer who wanted to know how it sounded.

The professionals formed a separate group. These were the “perfessors” and “ivory ticklers” who played in saloons, sporting houses, riverboats, restaurants, and theaters. This group, which included many blacks, formed the somewhat exotic rag fraternity engagingly described in *They All Played Ragtime*, the pioneering ragtime history by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis.<sup>26</sup> Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson (see the chapter “Conversations with James P. Johnson”), Willie “the Lion” Smith, and Eubie Blake recorded their reminiscences of some of the most unusual and picturesque members of this fraternity.<sup>27</sup> Through them, the colorful, itinerant, struggling black ragtime pianist emerges a folk type—a recurring character in ragtime legend.

Of the many occasions on which rags were performed, one of the most sensational was the cutting contest. These were playing contests among professional ragtime pianists, to see who could best or “cut” the other players. These seem to have been held frequently on an informal basis during the era and occasionally on a formal basis with much public fanfare. Examples of the latter include the spectacular contest sponsored by *Police Gazette* magazine in New York City’s Tammany Hall on January 23, 1900. The winner, Mike Bernard, received a handsome medal and the title of “Champion Rag Time Pianist of the World.” During the early 1900s, Tom Turpin’s Rosebud Bar in Saint Louis held annual piano playing contests and balls. The 1904 contest (held February 22) was won by Louis Chauvin, who is said to have won the giant contest at the Saint Louis World’s Fair later that year. In January 1901, a black Indianapolis newspaper carried a large advertisement for a “Cake Walk” with “pie eating and piano playing contests,” held at Tomlinson Hall. Chicago held a “Rag Time Piano Contest and Ball” on October 9, 1916, sponsored by the Piano Players Social Club. The black contestants came from throughout the Midwest and East.<sup>28</sup>

While the amateurs played—or struggled to play—the music as written, many of the professional rag pianists could and did “fake” or improvise on rags. Why else would Artie Matthews admonish pianists not to “fake” his *Pastime* rags? As Berlin astutely observes, ragtime rendered in a semi-improvisatory or improvisatory style constituted an early form of jazz in everything but name.<sup>29</sup>

*Rag Publishers.* For many of the ragtime composers, publication was all important, for it provided not only modest income, but also recognition and prestige. For Joseph Lamb, it was almost a goal in itself. Sheet music publication provided the primary means of disseminating and diffusing rags, since the recording industry was in its infancy, and since piano roll manufacturers normally depended upon prior sheet music publication for their arrangements. The publishers could not have existed, of course, without composers to write for them, but the reverse is nearly true. To the extent to which the composers depended on the publishers for earnings and

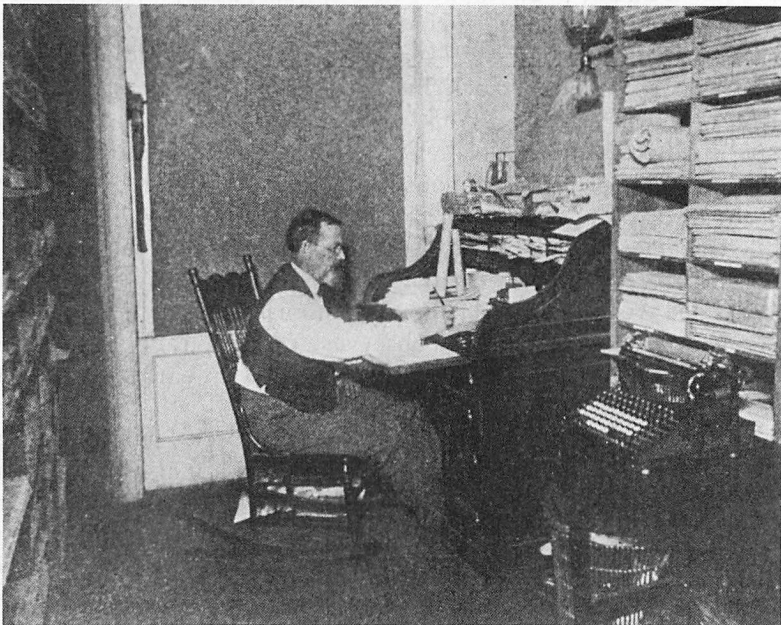


for the dissemination of the music, we can say that the publishers were essential to the ragtime composers.

Without publishers and publication, ragtime might have remained an elusive, impermanent music in aural tradition, known primarily to itinerant and improvising musicians who learned by ear, not by note. Had it not been widely published, ragtime would not have had a pronounced influence on the American musical scene, nor would it have spread to Canada and Mexico or crossed the oceans to Europe and Australia with such ease and impact. The publication of ragtime gave the music a permanence which has made it available to millions of instrumentalists over the decades. Ragtime publication also provides us, seventy years later, the primary source documents, without which we could not reconstruct the history of this music.

Publication brought ragtime some respectability, and therefore entrée to settings where it would otherwise have been unknown or prohibited—the parlors of middle-class homes, where young ladies generally provided the family music. If ragtime had remained a shadowy, unnotated, unpublished music of the red-light districts and cultural “underground,” few middle-class musicians, male or female, would have become involved with it.

Of the several hundred publishers of ragtime, no one did more to champion it than John Stark (1841–1927), a colorful, singularly independent pioneer. He was the primary publisher of Scott Joplin, James Scott, Joseph Lamb, Arthur Marshall, and Artie Matthews. Through articles in the musical press and numerous advertisements, Stark tirelessly promoted his



A rare photograph of publisher John Stark in his New York office, 1909. Note the labeled shelves of sheet music, the cluttered desk, and the rocking chair. (*John Edward Hasse collection*)

firm's catalogue of accomplished rags, which he called "classic rags." By publishing ragtime of artistic merit, Stark also helped set a high standard for others to emulate and helped ragtime achieve a modicum of respectability.<sup>30</sup>

With ragtime composer Charles N. Daniels (1878–1943) as its manager, the firm of Jerome H. Remick & Company became the largest publisher of instrumental rags, issuing more than twice as many rags as Stark. Remick was also perhaps the most prolific publisher of popular music from about 1900 to 1930. Table 7 presents key facts about Stark, Remick, and the other leading publishers of rags.

*Rag Arrangers.* The arrangers are a less important group than the publishers. Many rag composers didn't need arrangers. With few exceptions, Scott Joplin, James Scott, and Joseph Lamb apparently did all their own arranging.<sup>31</sup> According to Abe Olman and J. Russel Robinson, however, many composers submitted only a lead melody line to publishers, and staff arrangers filled in the harmony and bass.<sup>32</sup> These staff arrangers were often not identified on the sheet music. Those that were named include Artie Matthews, Paul Pratt, J. Russel Robinson, and Charles N. Daniels (see Table 8).

*Ragtime Song Writers.* The leading ragtime song writers were in most instances not the leading instrumental rag composers, as a comparison of Tables 4 and 9 makes clear. (Table 9 includes Scott Joplin among leading ragtime song writers, not because of a prolific output but because of the enduring quality of his ragtime songs.) Many composers of ragtime songs were Tin Pan Alley tune smiths, such as Harry Von Tilzer, Egbert Van Alstyne, and Lewis F. Muir. While they hailed from many parts of the United States, nearly all the successful ragtime songwriters lived in New York City. More instrumental rag composers achieved success in other cities, such as Saint Louis (Artie Matthews, Tom Turpin, Charles Hunter), Kansas City (Charles L. Johnson), Carthage, Missouri (James Scott), Chicago (Paul Pratt, Charley Straight), Indianapolis (May Aufderheide, J. Russel Robinson), and Boston (George L. Cobb). The success of ragtime and popular song writing was more dependent than instrumental writing on song plugging, vaudeville, and the entertainment complex based in New York City.

Although the leading instrumental rag writers did not devote their energies exclusively to ragtime, they seem to have been generally more committed to it than were the ragtime song composers. To the latter group, ragtime seems to have been a fad to exploit rather than a genre of enduring value to pursue.

*Ragtime Song Performers.* The best-known singers of ragtime songs were New Yorkers. Though no study of these individuals, mostly vaudevillians, has been carried out, we know that the leading ragtime singers included Sophie Tucker (1884–1966), Gene Greene (1877–1930), Arthur Collins (1864–1933), Dolly Connolly (Mrs. Percy Wenrich, 1888–1965), Bert Williams (1874–1922) and George Walker (1873–1911), Alex Rogers

Table 7

## Leading Publishers of Piano Rags (in descending order of output)

FIRM	YEAR FOUNDED	PRINCIPAL CITIES	PROPRIETOR AND HIS LIFE SPAN	APPROX. NO. OF RAGS PUBLISHED
Jerome H. Remick & Co.	1905 *	Detroit and New York	Jerome H. Remick (1868-1931)	ca. 300
Stark Music Co.	1892†	Sedalia, Missouri (1892-1900) Saint Louis (1900-1927) New York (1905-1910)	John Stillwell Stark (1841-1927)	115
Will Rossiter	1890	Chicago	Will Rossiter (1867-1954)	38
Jos. W. Stern	1894	New York	Joseph W. Stern (1870-1934)	37
Waterson, Berlin & Snyder	1912	New York	Henry Waterson Irving Berlin (b. 1888) Ted Snyder (1881-1965)	33
H. Kirkus Dugdale	ca. 1910	Washington, D.C.	H. Kirkus Dugdale	26
Vandersloot Music Co.	189-?	Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and New York	Frederick William Vandersloot (1866- ) Caird Vandersloot (1869- )	23
J. H. Aufderheide & Co.	1908	Indianapolis	John H. Aufderheide (1865-1941)	21
Walter Jacobs	1894	Boston	Walter Jacobs (1872?-1945)	20
The S. Brainard's Sons Co.	1845	New York and Chicago	Silas Brainard (1814-1871) Henry M. Brainard	20
Axel W. Christensen	1903	Chicago	Axel W. Christensen (1881-1955)	19
Sam Fox	1906	Cleveland	Sam Fox (1882?-1971)	18
Jos. Morris	ca. 1895	Philadelphia	Jos. Morris	17
J. W. Jenkins Sons	1878	Kansas City, Missouri	John Woodward Jenkins (1827-1890) John Wesley Jenkins (1864?-1932)	15

\* In 1898 Jerome H. Remick bought one-half interest in, and in 1900 whole control of, the Detroit music publishing firm of Whitney-Warner, whose name he maintained until 1904. In 1905, he changed the name to Jerome H. Remick & Company.

† John Stark & Son was founded by at least 1882 as a retail piano and music store, but did not begin music publishing until about 1892.

Table 8  
Selected Piano Rag Arrangers and Representative Arrangements

ARRANGER	WORK	COMPOSER	YEAR
Alford, Harry L.	<i>Frankfort Rag</i>	Maude M. Thurston	1909
Campbell, Arthur	<i>One More Rag</i>	Minnie Berger	1909
Confare, Thomas R.	<i>Cannon Ball</i>	Joseph C. Northrup	1905
Daniels, Charles N.	<i>Original Rags</i>	Scott Joplin	1899
DeLisle, D. S.	<i>Bowery Buck</i>	Tom Turpin	1899
	<i>Harlem Rag</i>	Tom Turpin	1897
	<i>A Rag-Time Nightmare</i>	Tom Turpin	1900
Epstein, Phil	<i>That Texas Rag</i>	Nell Wright Watson	1913
Fassbinder, William B.	<i>Topsy Two Step</i>	Libbie Erickson	1904
	<i>Trixy Two Step</i>	Libbie Erickson	1904
Frolich, Carl	<i>Echoes of the Congo</i>	Lyllan M. Chapman	1903
Joplin, Scott	<i>Sensation: A Rag</i>	Joseph Lamb	1908
Matthews, Artie	<i>Jinx Rag</i>	Lucian P. Gibson	1911
	<i>The Lily Rag</i>	Charles Thompson	1914
Mooney, Arthur B.	<i>Robardina Rag</i>	E. Warren Furry	1902
Northrup, Theodore H.	<i>Ben Harney's Rag Time Instructor</i>	Ben Harney	1897
Pratt, Charles E.	<i>Eli Green's Cake Walk</i>	Sadie Koninsky	1898
Pratt, Paul	<i>Nice and Easy: Rag Fox Trot</i>	Cliff McKay	1916
Robinson, J. Russel	<i>Kalamity Kid</i>	Ferd Guttenberger	1909
	<i>Log Cabin</i>	Ferd Guttenberger	1908
Rosenbush, Julia	<i>Checker: Rag Two Step</i>	Bulah Arens	1908
Smith, Lee Orean	<i>After the Cake Walk</i>	Nathaniel Dett	1900
Tyers, Will	<i>Harlem Rag</i>	Tom Turpin	1899
	<i>"Wiggy Waggy" Rag</i>	Mattie Harl Burgess	1910

(1876–1930), Byron G. Harlan (1861–1936), Al Jolson (1886–1950), Billy Murray (1877–1954), Walter Van Brunt (b. 1892), and Ruth Roye (d. 1960). Many of their faces grace the sheet music covers of ragtime songs, and several made numerous recordings.

## The Rag Repertory

With the revival of ragtime in the early 1970s, focus was placed upon the piano rags of Scott Joplin and a few others who also wrote “classic rags.” This select group comprised Joseph Lamb and Missourians James Scott, Artie Matthews, Scott Hayden, and Arthur Marshall. Numerous recordings were made of Joplin’s *The Entertainer*, *Pine Apple Rag*, *Easy Winners*, of Lamb’s *Ragtime Nightingale*, and of Scott’s *Ragtime Oriole*. Many people assumed that that was all there was to ragtime, at least, all there was of merit. Actually, Joplin and his peers represented only a small part of instrumental ragtime, and many other composers wrote praiseworthy rags.

Though commercial success does not guarantee quality and enduring value, it does indicate public taste. Commercial success, therefore, may be our best indicator of what was truly representative of ragtime as a whole. Although few sales records survive from that time and no “best seller” charts were compiled, the relative popularity of rags can be reconstructed from the number of sheet music copies and piano rolls which have survived; the number of sound recordings and piano rolls issued of each piece; and the quantity of advertising and publicity each work received in the musical press.

**Table 9**  
**Some Leading Composers of Ragtime Songs**

COMPOSER	LIFE SPAN	BIRTHPLACE	RACE	REPRESENTATIVE RAGTIME SONGS
Berlin, Irving	1888-	Temun, Russia	white	<i>Alexander's Ragtime Band</i> <i>The Ragtime Violin</i> <i>That Beautiful Rag</i> <i>That International Rag</i>
Cannon, Hughie	1877-1912	Detroit	white	<i>Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?</i> <i>He Done Me Wrong</i> <i>I Hates to Get Up Early in de Morn</i> <i>You Needn't Come Home</i>
Harney, Ben	1871-1938	Middleboro, Kentucky	black?	<i>The Cake-Walk in the Sky</i> <i>The Hat He Never Ate</i> <i>Mister Johnson Turn Me Loose</i> <i>You've Been a Good Old Wagon But You've Done Broke Down</i>
Johnson, J. Rosamond	1873-1954	Jacksonville, Florida	black	<i>Nobody's Looking but de Owl and de Moon</i> <i>Roll Them Cotton Bales</i> <i>St. Vitus Rag</i> <i>Under the Bamboo Tree</i>
Jones, Irving	ca. 1874-1932	(unknown)	black	<i>I Don't Understand Ragtime</i> <i>I'm Living Easy</i> <i>Rag-Time Queen</i> <i>Take Your Clothes and Go</i>
Joplin, Scott	1868-1917	Bowie County, Texas	black	<i>Maple Leaf Rag: Song</i> <i>Pine Apple Rag: Song</i> <i>The Rag Time Dance</i> <i>A Real Slow Drag</i>

Jordan, Joe	1882-1971	Cincinnati, Ohio	black	<i>Dat's Ma Honey Sho's Yo' Born</i> <i>Lovie Joe</i> <i>That Raggedy Rag</i> <i>That Teasin' Tag</i>
Morse, Theodore	1873-1924	Washington, D.C.	white	<i>Auntie Skinner's Chicken Dinners</i> <i>Down in Jungle Town</i> <i>That Good Old Irish Rag</i> <i>Up in the Coconut Tree</i>
Muir, Lewis F.	1883-1915	New York	white	<i>Hitchy-Koo</i> <i>Ragtime Cowboy Joe</i> <i>Waiting for the Robert E. Lee</i> <i>When Ragtime Rosie Ragged the Rosary</i>
Smith, Chris	1879-1949	Charleston, South Carolina	black	<i>All in Down and Out</i> <i>Ballin' the Jack</i> <i>Barnyard Rag</i> <i>You're in the Right Church</i>
Van Alstyne, Egbert	1882-1951	Chicago	white	<i>Hold Up Rag</i> <i>Honolulu Rag</i> <i>Oh That Navajo Rag</i> <i>That Devil Rag</i>
Von Tilzer, Harry	1872-1946	Detroit	white	<i>Alexander</i> <i>Mr. Music Master</i> <i>Under the Yum Yum Tree</i> <i>What You Goin' To Do When the Rent Comes 'Round?</i>
Wenrich, Percy	1887-1952	Joplin, Missouri	white	<i>Alamo Rag</i> <i>Ragtime Turkey Trot</i> <i>Red Rose Rag</i> <i>Skeleton Rag</i>

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Based on these criteria, Table 10 lists some of the rags most popular during the Ragtime Era. These would have been in the repertoire of most “perfessers,” in addition to their own specialties, local favorites, a few “classic rags,” perhaps, from the John Stark publishing firm, and some “ragging” of classics and old familiar songs.

As Table 10 reveals, few of the most successful rags were written by Scott Joplin and his peers. Most of the rags that became standards of the 1897–1920 repertory were written by composers more oriented towards popular appeal than were Joplin, Scott, and Lamb. However, Tin Pan Alley, which was amassing more and more control over music publishing, was not even close to having a monopoly on these hits. More than half came from musicians and publishers in other cities: Chicago, Indianapolis, Fort Worth, Oakland, Boston, and four towns in Missouri—Saint Louis, Kansas City, Sedalia, and Carthage.

Although sheet music, piano rolls, and live performance were the most important means of disseminating rags, cylinder and disc recordings also helped spread the syncopated sound. Because the sound quality of cylinder and disc recording and playback was poor in the first years of the twentieth century, these devices won acceptance by consumers only gradually. Nonetheless, hundreds of rags were recorded on 78 rpm discs during this era. Although the publication of new rags virtually ceased by 1920, the recording of rags did not. During the 1920s and succeeding decades many of the old rags were recorded anew. Two rags were particularly popular with recording artists, record companies, and the public. These were *12th Street Rag*, which by the end of the 78 rpm era in 1958 had almost one hundred-thirty recordings, and *Maple Leaf Rag*, which neared seventy. Table 11 lists other rags frequently recorded on 78 rpm records.<sup>33</sup>

## A Thumbnail History

During its heyday, ragtime underwent a complete life cycle; it arose, developed, and faded. The life of ragtime is composed of many publications and events. Some of the most important of these are listed in Table 12. Some occurrences, of course, are not isolable to a specific year. Changes in the rhythms and the racial references happened gradually, as detailed by Berlin.<sup>34</sup> Thornton Hagert notes in his chapter, “Band and Orchestral Ragtime,” that as ragtime gained popularity among small orchestras, publishers began issuing folios, and the functions of the instruments changed. The now-famous “Red Back Book” cannot yet be dated definitively; we know only that it was published sometime between 1910 and 1914. Other facets of ragtime that do not fall easily into a chronology are the reactions, pro and con, of the public and press, the gradual entrance of some ragtime hits into the aural tradition of folk and country music,<sup>35</sup> and the transformation of ragtime into jazz and into novelty piano music.

Ragtime originated and developed in the United States. Within a few

**Table 10**  
**Major Hits of the Rag Repertory, 1897–1920**

RAG	COMPOSER	YEAR
<i>At a Georgia Campmeeting</i>	Kerry Mills	1897
<i>Black and White Rag</i>	George Botsford	1908
<i>Cannon Ball</i>	Joseph C. Northup	1905
<i>Creole Belles</i>	J. Bodewalt Lampe	1900
<i>Dill Pickles</i>	Charles L. Johnson	1906
<i>Dusty Rag</i>	May Aufderheide	1908
<i>The Entertainer's Rag</i>	Jay Roberts	1910
<i>Frog Legs Rag</i>	James Scott	1906
<i>Grizzly Bear Rag</i>	George Botsford	1911
<i>Maple Leaf Rag</i>	Scott Joplin	1899
<i>Ragging the Scale</i>	Edward B. Claypoole	1915
<i>Red Pepper</i>	Henry Lodge	1910
<i>Russian Rag</i>	George L. Cobb	1918
<i>Smoky Mokes</i>	Abe Holzmann	1898
<i>St. Louis Tickle</i>	Barney & Seymore	1904
<i>Sunflower Slow Drag</i>	Scott Joplin and Scott Hayden	1901
<i>Temptation Rag</i>	Henry Lodge	1909
<i>That Eccentric Rag</i>	J. Russel Robinson	1912
<i>Tickled to Death</i>	Charles H. Hunter	1901
<i>Très Moutarde (Too Much Mustard)</i>	Cecil Macklin	1911
<i>Turkey in the Straw: A Rag-Time Fantasie</i>	Otto Bonnell	1899
<i>12th Street Rag</i>	Euday L. Bowman	1914
<i>Wild Cherries Rag</i>	Ted Snyder	1908

years after it broke into print in the United States, it traveled abroad. One of those frequently credited with introducing live American ragtime to Europe was band leader John Philip Sousa. Although Sousa would not lead his band in recordings of ragtime (Assistant Conductor Arthur Pryor, himself a rag composer, often conducted these recordings), Sousa performed it before live audiences. His repertory included a number of early syncopated cakewalks, as well as some ragtime songs and ragtime arrangements of existing works. He made tours of Europe in 1900, 1901, 1903, and 1905. After his 1900 tour, in which he played ragtime for Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, an American music magazine published a bit of untitled doggerel about Europe's reaction to Sousa's ragtime.

To the Paris Exposition  
 Went John Philip on a mission.  
 To cut some Yankee capers,  
 And take the town by storm.  
 He played the latest rag-time  
 All his marches, choicest jag-time,  
 If it's true what's in the papers,  
 His reception was quite warm.

He played before the Kaiser,  
 Whom they say is greatly wiser  
 Than a thousand learned professors  
 Of any land or clime.

(Continued on p. 32)



Table 11  
**Rags\* Most Frequently Issued on 78 rpm Records, 1897–1958**

NUMBER OF RECORDINGS	RAG	COMPOSER	YEAR PUBLISHED
128	<i>12th Street Rag</i>	Euday L. Bowman	1914
68	<i>Maple Leaf Rag</i>	Scott Joplin	1899
51	<i>Temptation Rag</i>	Henry Lodge	1909
48	<i>Canadian Capers</i>	Henry Cohen, Gus Chandler, and Bert White	1915
42	<i>Whistling Rufus</i>	Kerry Mills	1899
31	<i>At a Georgia Campmeeting</i>	Kerry Mills	1897
31	<i>Dill Pickles</i>	Charles L. Johnson	1906
27	<i>Ragging the Scale</i>	Edward B. Claypoole	1915
24	<i>Red Pepper</i>	Henry Lodge	1910
24	<i>Smoky Makes</i>	Abe Holzmänn	1898
23	<i>Black and White Rag</i>	George Botsford	1908
18	<i>Russian Rag</i>	George L. Cobb	1918
17	<i>By Heck</i>	S. R. Henry	1914
17	<i>Coon Band Contest</i>	Arthur Pryor	1899
15	<i>Creole Belles</i>	J. Bodewalt Lampe	1900
15	<i>The Smiler</i>	Percy Wenrich	1907
14	<i>Gaby Glide</i>	Louis Hirsch	1911
14	<i>Grizzly Bear Rag</i>	George Botsford	1911
11	<i>The Colored Major</i>	S. R. Henry	1900
10	<i>Cotton Blossoms</i>	Milton H. Hall	1898
10	<i>Red Rose Rag</i>	Percy Wenrich	1911
10	<i>Spaghetti Rag</i>	George Lyons and Bob Yosco	1910
10	<i>Whitewash Rag</i>	Jean Schwartz	1908
10	<i>Tres Moutarde (Too Much Mustard)</i>	Cecil Macklin	1911

\* Excludes rags composed after 1920. Includes syncopated cakewalks.

Compiled from data in David A. Jasen, *Recorded Ragtime, 1897–1958* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1973).

**Table 12**  
**A Chronology of Ragtime, 1896–1920**

YEAR	ACTIVITY
1896	First songs labeled ragtime published: <i>All Coons Look Alike to Me</i> (Ernest Hogan) and <i>My Coal Black Lady</i> (W. T. Jefferson).
1897	First instrumental rags published, including <i>Mississippi Rag</i> (W. H. Krell) and <i>Harlem Rag</i> (Tom Turpin). Ben Harney publishes his <i>Rag-Time Instructor</i> . First recordings of ragtime by banjo (Vess L. Ossman) and band (Metropolitan Orchestra). <i>At a Georgia Campmeeting</i> (Kerry Mills) issued; becomes cakewalk hit.
1898	A few more piano rags are published than in 1897, as rag idea spreads. <i>Smoky Mokes</i> (Abe Holzmann) published; becomes cakewalk hit.
1899	Scott Joplin's <i>Maple Leaf Rag</i> published; quickly becomes popular among public and influential among musicians. Rag publication more than triples from previous year. Eubie Blake creates <i>Charleston Rag</i> , though not copyrighted until 1917. <i>Hello! Ma Baby</i> (Joseph Howard and Ida Emerson) becomes ragtime song hit.
1900	Joplin and publisher Stark relocate from Sedalia to Saint Louis. Tom Turpin opens Rosebud Bar in Saint Louis; becomes a mecca for midwestern ragtime pianists. Sousa's Band (at Paris Exposition) and banjoist Vess L. Ossman (a tour of England) help introduce "live" ragtime to Europe. <i>Creole Bells</i> (J. Bodewalt Lampe) published, becomes popular.
1901	American Federation of Musicians votes to suppress ragtime. <i>Ticked to Death</i> (Charles H. Hunter) and <i>Sunflower Slow Drag</i> (Scott Joplin and Scott Hayden) issued, become hits.
1902	<i>Under the Bamboo Tree</i> (Cole and Johnson) becomes ragtime song hit. Joplin's <i>The "Rag Time Dance"</i> published as a folk ballet with lyrics. Charles Ives incorporates ragtime into <i>Set of Nine Ragtime Pieces</i> .
1903	Axel W. Christensen opens his first ragtime school, in Chicago. Joplin completes ragtime opera <i>A Guest of Honor</i> , tours Midwest with it. Sousa performs ragtime for royalty in England, Prussia, and Russia.
1904	Saint Louis World's Fair attracts many ragtime musicians; Joplin commemorates the Fair with <i>The Cascades</i> . <i>St. Louis Tickle</i> (Barney & Seymore) published, becomes popular. The first <i>Christensen's Rag-Time Instruction Book for Piano</i> issued. Rags' reference to blackness declines sharply.
1905	John Stark opens publishing office in New York City; Jerome H. Remick music publishing firm established in Detroit. <i>Cannon Ball</i> (Joseph C. Northup) issued, becomes favorite with public.
1906	<i>Dill Pickles</i> (Charles L. Johnson) published; becomes big hit in sheet music and rolls; popularizes "secondary rag" motif. James Scott's <i>Frog Legs Rag</i> issued; Joplin's <i>The Ragtime Dance</i> published as a piano rag. Claude Debussy incorporates ragtime into "Golliwog's Cakewalk."
1907	<i>Heliotrope Bouquet</i> (Scott Joplin and Louis Chauvin) issued. Joplin makes last move of his life, to New York City.
1908	Joplin's <i>Fig Leaf Rag</i> , <i>Pine Apple Rag</i> , and <i>School of Ragtime</i> issued. <i>Black and White Rag</i> (George Botsford), <i>Wild Cherries</i> (Ted Snyder), and <i>Dusty Rag</i> (May Aufderheide) published, become hits. Player piano makers adopt eighty-eight-note standard; industry takes off.
1909	U.S. piano production reaches all-time high and publication of piano rags peaks. <i>Euphonic Sounds</i> (Scott Joplin), <i>Grace and Beauty</i> (James Scott) published. <i>Temptation Rag</i> (Henry Lodge) issued, becomes hit.
1910	<i>The Entertainer's Rag</i> (Jay Roberts), <i>Red Pepper</i> (Henry Lodge) are hits. John Stark closes New York office, returns to Saint Louis.

(Continued)

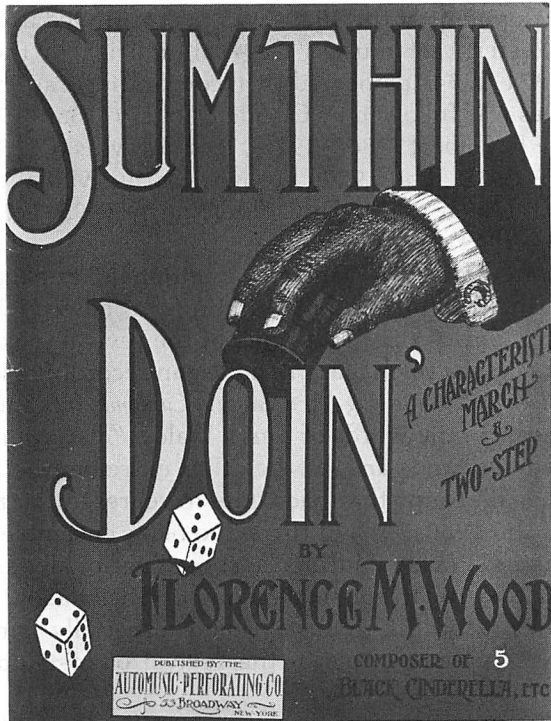
Table 12 (Continued)  
**A Chronology of Ragtime, 1896-1920**

YEAR	ACTIVITY
1911	Joplin completes, copyrights, and self-publishes his opera <i>Treemonisha</i> . Irving Berlin's <i>Alexander's Ragtime Band</i> becomes smash song hit. Other ragtime hits include <i>Très Moutarde</i> (Cecil Macklin), <i>Red Rose Rag</i> (song by Percy Wenrich and Edward Madden), and <i>Grizzly Bear Rag</i> (George Botsford). <i>Ragtime Oriole</i> (James Scott) published.
1912	First hand-played piano rolls issued. Mike Bernard becomes the first to regularly record ragtime piano.
1913	John Stark publishes the first of Artie Matthews' five <i>Pastime</i> rags. <i>American Beauty Rag</i> (Joseph Lamb), <i>Junk Man Rag</i> (Luckey Roberts) issued.
1914	<i>Magnetic Rag</i> (Joplin), <i>Cataract Rag</i> (Robert Hampton), <i>Hot House Rag</i> (Paul Pratt), <i>12th Street Rag</i> (Euday L. Bowman) issued. Axel Christensen begins publishing the monthly magazine <i>Rag Time Review</i> .
1915	<i>Ragtime Nightingale</i> (Lamb) published. Popular rag successes include <i>Ragging the Scale</i> (Edward B. Claypoole) and <i>Canadian Capers</i> (Cohen, Chandler, and White).
1916	<i>Top Liner Rag</i> (Lamb) published. Luckey Roberts becomes first black "stride" pianist to make records.
1917	Scott Joplin dies, his <i>Reflection Rag</i> published posthumously. <i>Rag Time Review</i> absorbed by <i>Melody</i> magazine. Erik Satie incorporates ragtime into <i>Parade</i> .
1918	<i>Russian Rag</i> (George Cobb) becomes one of the last rag hits during Ragtime Era. James P. Johnson makes piano roll of <i>Carolina Shout</i> ; Jelly Roll Morton copyrights <i>Frog-I-More Rag</i> . Igor Stravinsky composes <i>Ragtime for Eleven Instruments</i> and "Rag-Music" from <i>L'histoire du soldat</i> .
1919	Player piano production reaches near-peak (peak is 1923).
1920	John Stark publishes the last of Artie Matthews' five <i>Pastime</i> rags. Igor Stravinsky composes <i>Piano Rag-Music</i> .

And this great and only critic,  
Both didactic and analytic  
Said: "Es gibt nichts bessers.  
Ausgezeichnet ist 'rag-time'!"<sup>36</sup>

American banjoists had brought ragtime to England even before 1900. Lowell Schreyer notes, in his chapter on "The Banjo in Ragtime," that Cadwallader L. Mays and Parke Hunter went to England in January 1897 to introduce ragtime to the British. In 1900 and again in 1903, American banjo virtuoso Vess L. Ossman carried ragtime to England. Ragtime also went to England by means of sheet music.<sup>37</sup> In some cases, American publishers sold ragtime (and other music) through their own branches in London. In other cases, they sold the British publishing rights to English firms.

Back in the United States, ragtime publication continued strongly well into the 1910s, after which it all but ceased. By 1920, the Ragtime Era was decidedly over. Jazz recording was gathering momentum, after its beginning in 1917. Jelly Roll Morton and Eastern "stride" pianists were becoming major influences in Afro-American piano music. In 1921, novelty piano burst on



Florence M. Wood's rag *Sumthin' Doin'* (1904) illustrates the racial imagery common before about 1905. Racial stereotyping gradually gave way in succeeding years to genteel images. (John Edward Hasse collection)

the scene with the phenomenal success of Zez Confrey's *Kitten on the Keys*. Novelty piano, a flashy offshoot of ragtime, lasted throughout the 1920s.

It is incorrect, however, to say that ragtime died in the late 1910s. While the composition and publication of rags virtually ceased, the performance, recording, and enjoyment of ragtime did not. Millions upon millions of pieces of ragtime sheet music, ragtime piano rolls, and ragtime recordings were in the hands of the public, and it did not suddenly discard all this material. Ragtime remained in the repertory of countless pianists—amateur and professional—and other musicians. Rags continued to be heard on old piano rolls and old recordings. Some new recordings were made of rags. During the 1920s and 1930s, *12th Street Rag* was recorded forty-eight times and *Maple Leaf Rag* twenty-four times.<sup>38</sup>

The booming silent movie theaters provided a venue for ragtime as accompaniment to parts of films. And when talking pictures came in, ragtime was incorporated into their soundtracks.<sup>39</sup> Ragtime had, however, become old hat by the 1920s. In fact, it was frequently used in silent and talking pictures to evoke nostalgia. Think of all those old Western movies with the "perfesser" beating out rag rhythms on a battered saloon upright!

Another development of the 1920s was the continued use of ragtime by composers of Western art music ("classical" music). In the early 1900s, Charles Ives (1874–1954) pioneered in incorporating ragtime into "cultivated" works. Ives was followed by Claude Debussy (1862–1918) and, in the 1910s, by Henry F. Gilbert (1868–1928), Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), and Erik Satie (1866–1925). The 1920s brought Darius Milhaud (1892–1974), Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942), Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), and Louis Gruenberg (1884–1964) to ragtime.

A revival of interest in rag piano and traditional jazz began in the early 1940s. No single incident marks the beginning of renewed interest in piano ragtime. However, one of the first events of the revival took place in 1941, when Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band began recording old rags, such as *Maple Leaf Rag*, *Black and White Rag*, *At a Georgia Campmeeting*, and *Smokey Mokes*. Watters' group was, in the words of Terry Waldo, "discontented with both the overarranged big bands and, at the other extreme, the unimaginative solo-after-solo small groups that had come to represent jazz music during the swing era of the 1930s,"<sup>40</sup> and turned to older ensemble styles of jazz. Through recordings, Watters' influence spread nationally and even internationally, albeit to a relatively small group of aficionados. This evidence reveals that the recording industry—and especially small, specialist companies—played a leading role in the revival of instrumental ragtime since the early 1940s.<sup>41</sup>

By the mid-1940s, jazz specialist magazines began publishing articles about Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, and other early figures. The event which had the most enduring impact was the publication in 1950 of the first history of ragtime, *They All Played Ragtime*. This now-classic book by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis rescued the ragtime story from otherwise likely oblivion, sparked the imagination of countless readers, and inspired a number of ragtime figures of later years to get involved with the music.

Despite the book's emphasis on "classic ragtime," however, the 1950s saw ragtime treated primarily as flashy, rinky-tinky "honky-tonk" music. Recording artists "Knuckles O'Toole," "Slugger Ryan," "Willie 'the Rock' Knox," and others featured pianos "doctored" to produce highly percussive sounds.<sup>42</sup>

Table 13 presents a number of other milestones in the revival of instrumental ragtime, concentrating on events that brought the sound of ragtime, directly or indirectly, to a large number of people. Two of these events, both concerning Scott Joplin, stand out as preeminent in spreading ragtime to a mass audience. In 1971, the New York Public Library issued the two-volume *Collected Works of Scott Joplin*, edited by the historian and concert pianist Vera Brodsky Lawrence. This handsome edition restored Joplin's work to print for the first time in sixty years and gathered nearly his entire oeuvre into one anthology. Joplin's music became readily available to professional and amateur pianists, and suddenly, all over America, pianos were resounding to Joplin's joyous syncopations. His rags began to be recorded and performed in public, including the concert stage. And the

**Table 13**  
**Milestones in the Revival of Ragtime**

YEAR	EVENT
1941	Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band begins recording old rags.
1942	Wally Rose makes his first piano rag recording.
1944	Brun Campbell and Roy Carew begin writing articles on ragtime for specialist magazines <i>Record Changer</i> , <i>Jazz Record</i> , <i>Jazz Journal</i> .
1946	Luckey Roberts and Brun Campbell make rag recordings.
1947	Jelly Roll Morton's Library of Congress recordings (recorded 1938) are issued by Rudi Blesh's Circle Records.
1948	Pee Wee Hunt's recording of <i>12th Street Rag</i> becomes smash hit.
1949	Pianists Marvin Ash, Don Ewell, Knocky Parker, Ralph Sutton, and Charley Thompson make their first rag recordings.
1940s	Professor Albert White forms Gaslight Orchestra, in San Francisco, to perform Ragtime-Era orchestrations of ragtime and popular music.
1950	<i>They All Played Ragtime</i> (Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis) and <i>Mister Jelly Roll</i> (Alan Lomax) published, stimulate public interest.
1955	Lou Busch begins recording ragtime as "Joe 'Fingers' Carr." Bob Darch begins performing "classic ragtime" on the saloon circuit. Johnny Maddox has record hit with ragtime-oriented <i>Crazy Otto Medley</i> .
1956	Riverside issues LP of piano roll rags, as interest in rolls picks up and Aeolian manufacturers first U.S. player piano in nearly thirty years.
1959-60	Max Morath's <i>The Ragtime Era</i> series is broadcast on educational TV.
1960-62*	Knocky Parker becomes first to record complete piano rags of Scott Joplin and James Scott (Audiophile Records, two two-LP albums).
1961	Mills Music begins issuing piano rag folios, under Bernard Kalban.
1961-62	Max Morath's <i>Turn of the Century</i> series airs on educational TV.
1961	The <i>Ragtime Review</i> is founded by Trebor Tichenor and Russ Cassidy (publishes until 1966).
1962	The Ragtime Society is founded in Canada.
1963	Max Morath opens his ragtime act in New York City, at the Blue Angel.
1965	Saint Louis Ragtime Festival begins as annual event.
1967	Maple Leaf Club organized in Los Angeles by Dick Zimmerman.
1970	Joshua Rifkin's <i>Piano Rags by Scott Joplin</i> (Nonesuch Records) issued.
1971	<i>Collected Works of Scott Joplin</i> issued by New York Public Library. William Bolcom begins recording his own and classic rags (Nonesuch).
1972	Gunther Schuller founds New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble. Joplin's opera <i>Treemonisa</i> revived in Atlanta.
1973	Dover begins issuing piano rag anthologies, starting with <i>Classic Piano Rags</i> (Rudi Blesh, compiler). <i>The Red Back Book</i> LP of the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble tops the classical record charts.
1974	Motion picture <i>The Sting</i> , featuring Joplin music, released. <i>The Entertainer</i> , from <i>The Sting</i> soundtrack, tops the pop record charts. National Public Radio broadcasts Terry Waldo's <i>This is Ragtime</i> series. Murray Hill issues Dick Zimmerman's five-LP complete Joplin piano works. Scott Joplin's grave finally receives a marker, courtesy ASCAP.
1975	Scott Joplin's opera <i>Treemonisa</i> opens on Broadway. RCA Red Seal issues Dick Hyman's five-LP complete Joplin piano works.
1976	Scott Joplin receives a special posthumous Pulitzer Prize in music.
1977	<i>Scott Joplin</i> movie released, starring Billy Dee Williams and Art Carney. Joplin home in Saint Louis is designated National Historic Landmark.
1970s	Folkways, Biograph, Herwin, and other small record companies issue many rag records, along with bigger CBS, RCA, MCA, Angel, and Nonesuch. Edward B. Marks, Belwin-Mills, Charles Hansen, <i>et al.</i> publish rag music folios.
1980	Edward A. Berlin's <i>Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History</i> sets new standards in ragtime scholarship.
1982	The Smithsonian Institution issues Jelly Roll Morton's <i>Collected Piano Works</i> (James Dapogny, editor). Murray Hill issues Dick Zimmerman's five-LP <i>Collector's History of Ragtime</i> .
1983	Eubie Blake celebrates his one-hundredth birthday and, five days later, dies. U.S. Postal Service issues Scott Joplin commemorative postage stamp.

\*Year approximate.

performance by professionals and dabblers alike is what truly made the Joplin revival.

The other far-reaching event was the adoption of Joplin rags into the soundtrack of *The Sting*, a movie hit of 1974. More than anything else, this film and its successful soundtrack recording spurred a Joplin and ragtime revival on records. Dozens of recording artists and record companies got into the act. By the late 1970s, more than two hundred LPs of ragtime had been issued. Once rags were on record, they were heard over the radio. "Classical" music stations, jazz stations, and even rock stations (while *The Sting* was hot) played rag records.

## The Significance of Ragtime

Ragtime left its impact on American music and culture in a number of ways:

1. Combining African and European antecedents into a wholly new creation, ragtime was one of the first truly American musical genres.
2. Ragtime helped lead to jazz, which has had an enormous impact on music, and to novelty piano music, the popularity of which, though short lived, was pronounced. Ragtime's popularity spread throughout Canada, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere, paving the way for the later acceptance of American jazz abroad.
3. Ragtime allowed Afro-American rhythms to penetrate to the heart of the American musical culture, at a time when blacks were denied access to many avenues of American society. The popularity of ragtime provided entrée into commercial musical life for black musicians who might not otherwise have been accepted during an age of spreading "Jim Crow" laws and discrimination.
4. Ragtime, especially instrumental rags created by the most gifted composers, gave us a body of works of lasting merit.
5. The crisp rhythms of ragtime hurried the decline of the musically limited parlor organ and helped give rise to the more versatile piano as the primary instrument of home music making.
6. Ragtime helped spark public debate about popular music and American music, thereby raising awareness of America's musical achievements.

Thus, ragtime was significant in a number of ways. It may have created more impact than any previous type of American vernacular music.

Happily, ragtime appears to be with us to stay. I suspect that, having been nearly forgotten for sixty years, the work of Scott Joplin and some of his peers will be with us for a long time. While rags may never be in the forefront of the public stage, they will undoubtedly remain, like the marches of John Philip Sousa, a permanent part of America's musical consciousness, ever capable of stirring the listener.

## Notes

1. Complete facts of publication for compositions mentioned in the text of this book can be found in the Checklist of Compositions.
2. Edward A. Berlin, *Ragtime: A Musical and Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 128–30.
3. “Secondary rag” is discussed by Lowell Schreyer in footnote 29 to his chapter “The Banjo in Ragtime” in this book.
4. See Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York: Norton, 1983), pp. 393–94; and Samuel A. Floyd, Jr., and Marsha J. Reisser, “Social Dance Music of Black Composers in the Nineteenth Century and the Emergence of Classic Ragtime,” *The Black Perspective in Music* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1980), pp. 172–73. This kind of analysis of rag rhythms first came to my attention through an ethnomusicology course taught by Professor Charles L. Boilés, at Indiana University in the spring of 1975.
5. John Edward Hasse, “The Creation and Dissemination of Indianapolis Ragtime, 1897–1930” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1981), pp. 233–37.
6. Berlin, *Ragtime*, pp. 66–71.
7. U.S. Music player piano rolls 6981 and 6963.
8. Included in Eubie Blake’s LP record, *The Marches I Played on the Old Ragtime Piano*, 20th Century Fox 3009 [ca. 1958]. Reissued as RCA (France) T610.
9. Juli Jones, “Great Colored Song Writers and Their Songs,” *The Freeman*, 23 December 1911, p. 6.
10. Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History . . . Being a Complete Hand-book and Guide* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1876), pp. 30–31. Quoted in Dena J. Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), pp. 294–95.
11. Letter by unidentified correspondent in Beatrice, Nebraska, in “Correspondent’s Column,” *S. S. Stewart’s Banjo and Guitar Journal* 5, no. 3 (August–September 1888): 2. Quoted by Lowell Schreyer in his chapter “The Banjo in Ragtime” in this book.
12. George W. Cable, “The Dance in Place Congo,” *Century Magazine*, February 1886, p. 525. Quoted in Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, 4th ed., rev. (New York: Oak Publications, 1971), p. 83. Berlin (*Ragtime*, p. 26) points out that the musical example Cable includes does not reveal ragtime rhythms; however, this does not mean that the music performance was not syncopated. Cable, a novelist, might not have been accurate in transcribing the music to paper.
13. Berlin, *Ragtime*, pp. 81–2, 109. See also David A. Jasen and Trebor Jay Tichenor, *Rags and Ragtime: A Musical History* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 10–11.
14. See untitled *Chicago Chronicle* article of 1897 quoted in Blesh and Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, p. 150. In his discussion of the Chicago World’s Fair, Berlin cites these sources: Isidore Witmark and Isaac Goldberg, *The Story of the House of Witmark* (New York: Lee Furman, 1939), pp. 169–70; “Questions and Answers,” *Etude* 16 (December 1898): 349; and “‘Coon Songs’ on the Wane,” *American Musician and Art Journal* 22 (12 June 1906): 26a.
15. Natalie Curtis, “The Negro’s Contribution to the Music of America,” *Craftsman* 23 (15 March 1913): 662.
16. “Ragtime (Invented in St. Louis) Is Dead,” *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch*, 4 April 1909, p. 1.
17. Juli Jones, “Great Colored Song Writers.”
18. Charles E. Ives, *Memos*, ed. John Kirkpatrick (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 56. Cited by Berlin, *Ragtime*, p. 16.
19. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 74; Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Collier Books, 1965), p. 74.
20. Woodbine, “The Stage,” *The Freeman*, 6 May 1905.
21. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 384.



22. My sample of 1,514 rags reveals a peak of 158 rags published in 1909. Using a smaller sample of 1,035 published piano rags, Berlin shows a publication peak of 124 rags in 1899. See Berlin, *Ragtime*, p. 73.
23. For a discussion of some physical effects of ragtime, see Neil Leonard's chapter "The Reaction to Ragtime," elsewhere in this book.
24. Gustav K uhl, "The Musical Possibilities of Rag-Time," trans. Gustav Saenger, *Metronome* 19 (March 1903): 11; (April 1903): 8. Emphasis added.
25. Scott Joplin, James Scott, Joseph Lamb, Brun Campbell, Jelly Roll Morton, and May Aufderheide are profiled in several chapters in this book. For further information on major rag composers, see especially Blesh and Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*; Jasen and Tichenor, *Rags and Ragtime*; and the Select Bibliography at the back of this book.
26. *They All Played Ragtime: The True Story of an American Music* by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis was first published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, in 1950.
27. Eubie Blake tells about pianists Jesse Pickett, "Big Head" Wilbur, "One Leg" Willie Joseph, "Slew Foot" Nelson, Jack "the Bear" Wilson, "No Legs" Carey, Willie "the Lion" Smith, Sammy Ewell, Hughie Wolford, and others: Al Rose, *Eubie Blake* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), pp. 20, 40, 46, 148–50, 155. Jelly Roll Morton reminisced for Alan Lomax about Benny Frenchy, Alfred Wilson, Tony Jackson, Porter King, Artie Matthews, and other pianists: Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 120–21, 137–40, and *passim*. See also Tom Davin, "Conversations with James P. Johnson" in this book; Willie "the Lion" Smith, *Music on My Mind: The Memoirs of an American Pianist*, with George Hoefer (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964). A ragtime piano contest held in Chicago in 1916 included the colorfully named "Sparrow," "Bert King, alias Black Diamond," and "Squirrel" (Harry Crosby): see advertisement for this contest reproduced in Blesh and Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, 4th ed., rev., following p. 80.
28. Advertisement, *The Freeman*, 5 January 1901, p. 5.
29. Edward A. Berlin, "Ragtime and Improvised Piano: Another View," *Journal of Jazz Studies* 4, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1977): 4–10.
30. Biographical information on Stark is included in Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, *They All Played Ragtime*, 4th ed., rev. (New York: Oak Publications, 1971), pp. 45–54 and *passim*, and David A. Jasen and Trebor Jay Tichenor, *Rags and Ragtime: A Musical History* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), pp. 78–80.
31. The exceptions were Scott Joplin's first published rag, *Original Rags*, which was arranged by Charles N. Daniels (1899), and Joseph Lamb's *Sensation: A Rag* (1908), which carried Joplin's name as arranger.
32. Personal interview with Abe Olman, Rancho Mirage, California, 23 July 1980. Composer J. Russel Robinson said that the Stark Music Company "liked my work, because I was one of the few people who could write out the complete piano part." See J. Russel Robinson, "Dixieland Piano," as told to Ralph Auf der Heide, *Record Changer*, August 1947, p. 7.
33. LP recordings of rags are not included as there is, as yet, no thorough discography of rags on long-playing records.
34. Berlin, *Ragtime*, pp. 122–30.
35. For a treatment of rags in the aural tradition of white country music, see the chapter "Ragtime in Early Country Music," by Norm Cohen and David Cohen, in this book.
36. P. J. Meahl (untitled poem), *Brainard's Musical* 2, no. 2 (November 1900): 31.
37. Scott Joplin is alleged to have visited Germany, though no conclusive evidence has yet appeared. See James A. Haskins with Kathleen Benson, *Scott Joplin: The Man Who Made Ragtime* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), pp. 113, 151. See also Edward S. Walker, "Scott Joplin in England: An Investigation," *Storyville* no. 68 (December 1976–January 1977): 66–68.

38. See David A. Jasen, *Recorded Ragtime, 1897-1958* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1973), pp. 63-65 and 99-102.
39. An early example is Walt Disney's 1932 cartoon *Whoopee Party*, which includes the *Maple Leaf Rag*. This recording is available on LP: Dick Schory, producer, *The Magical Music of Walt Disney: 50 Years of Original Motion Picture Sound Tracks*, (five-disc set), Ovation Records OV-5000, 1978, Vol. 1.
40. Terry Waldo, *This is Ragtime* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1976), p. 133.
41. Ragtime songs have not yet undergone a full-scale revival. Perhaps this is because they are not as rhythmically interesting or as "jazzable" as piano rags. In some cases, too, the lyrics are offensive. Max Morath has revived some of the best ragtime songs in his stage shows, recordings, and writings. See, for example, *Max Morath's Songs of the Early 20th Century Entertainer* (New York: Edward B. Marks, 1977). Also useful in Ann Charters' collection, *The Ragtime Songbook* (New York: Oak Publications, 1963). Additional collections of ragtime songs are listed in "Ragtime Music Folios and Method Books," in the back of this book. In several of his recordings, singer Ian Whitcomb has brought back now-obscure ragtime songs. Examples include *Pianomelt*, Sierra Records SRS-8708, 1980; Ian Whitcomb and Dick Zimmerman, "Don't Say Good-Bye, Miss Ragtime," Stomp Off Records S.O.S. 1017, 1981; and Ian Whitcomb and Dick Zimmerman, *My Wife is Dancing Mad!*, Stomp Off Records S.O.S. 1049, 1982.
42. These three names are all pseudonyms of pianist Dick Hyman. For further discussion of ragtime as honky-tonk music, see Waldo, *This is Ragtime*, pp. 156-63.