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## **“Do Thyself a’ no Harm”: The Jubilee Singing Phenomenon and the “Only Original New Orleans University Singers”**

New Orleans is generally recognized as an historical epicenter of distinctively black music. Scholars have instituted a peculiar sort of musical hierarchy in New Orleans, with jazz at the pinnacle of creation. The religious music of black New Orleans has been perceived as some sort of amorphous ingredient that flavored the development of jazz. Behind this perception looms a deeply rooted, vastly complex and wholly viable musical tradition with its own heroes, legends and peculiar twists and turns of historical development.

One of the most influential developments in the history of African-American music was the post-Civil War phenomenon called “jubilee singing.” This was the vehicle through which the slave spirituals were transformed for future generations and through which the outside world gained its initial respect for African-American music and culture. More particularly, nineteenth-century jubilee singing troupes provided a working model for the explosion of grassroots vocal harmony groups that informed what is now called gospel music.

Most currently-available scholarship on nineteenth-century jubilee singing is devoted to the work carried out at Fisk, Hampton and Tuskegee Universities. The fact that a Methodist-sponsored freedmen’s school in New Orleans spawned a first-generation jubilee singing troupe whose influence extended well into the twentieth century has not been previously explored.

The “war to free the slaves” brought no safe pathway to social equality for slavery’s victims; lack of education remained a crucial stumbling block to the future. By the close of the 1860s the task of educating freed slaves was largely delegated from the Government Freedmen’s Bureau to independent, denominational missionary organizations.<sup>1</sup> These organizations often lived on the verge of bankruptcy, their poverty exceeded only by their apparent faith and dedication. Among them, the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church and the Freedmen’s Aid Society of the Northern Methodist-Episcopal Church proved especially effective, establishing a viable network of freedmen’s schools and churches throughout the South.

In the heightened religious atmosphere of the missionary freedmen’s schools, the idea was nurtured that the spiritual songs of slavery were “genuine jewels that we brought from our bondage,”<sup>2</sup> jewels which harbored the potential

to undo white prejudice and generate black pride. This idea struck its deepest root at Fisk University, the American Missionary Association's school in Nashville, where it was first put to the test.

On October 6, 1871, a well-rehearsed troupe of nine student singers set out from Fisk to raise desperately-needed funds for the school by concertizing in Northern churches. Their dedicated white director George L. White dubbed them "The Jubilee Singers," and this "soon became a generic appellation, applied to any black group that sang the traditional religious melodies, a banner under which black American music was promoted on its own terms, not merely as parody."<sup>3</sup>

Combining the formality of an opera performance with the fervor of a camp meeting and the optimism of a "Colored school exhibition," the Fisk Jubilee Singers offered up the spirituals as an antidote to "negro minstrelsy" and an affirmation of racial merit. Each concert was, in effect, a civil rights demonstration. At the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York, in 1872:

The wild melodies of these emancipated slaves touched the fount of tears, and grey-haired men wept like little children . . . The harmony of these children of nature, and their musical execution, were beyond the reach of art. Allow me to bespeak a universal welcome through the North for these living representatives of the only true, native school of American music. We have long enough had its coarse caricature in corked faces: our people can now listen to the genuine soul music of the slave cabins, before the Lord led his "children out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."<sup>4</sup>

The historical significance of the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the movement they inspired has been undermined by the lingering misconception that they were too "refined" to be "authentic." There is a "notion still prevalent among some folklorists and music scholars, that all truly *authentic* black American music traditions trace their nativity to cotton fields, backwoods churches, juke joints and whorehouses. This line of reasoning maintains that the black American musical heritage owes nothing to, but was merely undermined by the influences of education, intensive musical training and discipline":<sup>5</sup>

Those who would summarily dismiss the epochal work of the Fisk troupe ignore the fact that Black religious harmony singing, whether in choir, chorus or quartet, observes technical formalities based on sound musical criteria. An *ideal* born with the Fisk Jubilee Singers became a model that would guide Black religious singing groups for another fifty years or longer.<sup>6</sup>

Fisk's revolutionary jubilee singing experiment quickly resounded through the entire network of missionary freedmen's schools, across the expansive professional vaudeville and minstrel-show arena, and deep into the grassroots communities of black America. Within the first few years of the initial

thrust from Fisk, dozens of “jubilee troupes” were criss-crossing the globe as fundraisers, racial ambassadors, musical entrepreneurs, and public custodians of the slave spiritual.

In New Orleans the jubilee singing phenomenon was strangely forecasted by a British journalist who heard a group of young slaves singing hymns at a local Methodist church Sunday School meeting in 1860, more than a decade before the Fisk Jubilee Singers launched their first tour:

Now, if I were a Barnum or an Abolitionist, I think I should buy up five hundred little black angels, and take them all over the world singing hymns and learning to be good free people, by which means we might gain one hundred pounds, free five hundred “niggers,” and prove what they could do.<sup>7</sup>

The first jubilee troupe known to identify itself with New Orleans was actually from Petersburg, Virginia. The founder and manager of Petersburg’s New Orleans Jubilee Singers was Rev. Joseph Pollard, “a fine, intelligent appearing man” of “true ebony color,” and an ordained minister of the A.M.E. Zion church. Rev. Pollard’s stated goal was to “promulgate the Gospel” by “traveling from place to place giving concerts, the proceeds of which will be applied to the laudable object of building churches and schools for the poor freedmen of New Orleans.”<sup>8</sup>

One early document refers to Rev. Pollard as the “pastor of the A.M.E. Zion Church, of New Orleans.”<sup>9</sup> However, he is not remembered in the oral history of the A.M.E. Zion Church in New Orleans,<sup>10</sup> and nothing appears in early published histories to confirm that he actually established himself in New Orleans or contributed to the cause of local freedmen.<sup>11</sup>

Between 1873 and 1876, Rev. Pollard’s New Orleans Jubilee Singers gave “praise concerts” in black and white, mostly Methodist-related churches from Virginia to southern Michigan, and through New England to eastern Canada. During that time the troupe varied in configuration from a female quartette with a cabinet-organ accompanist to a mixed-voice chorus of six, with Rev. Pollard singing bass.<sup>12</sup>

In 1876 Pollard’s New Orleans Jubilee Singers published a paperback songbook, giving the texts, without music, of thirty-two titles from their repertoire. Most of these are spirituals, nearly two-thirds of which—including “Roll Jordan Roll,” “Steal Away” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”—were part of the Fisk Jubilee Singers’ original 1873 songbook. Also included are a few Methodist hymns: “I’ve Been Redeemed,” better known by its first line, “There is a fountain filled with blood,” and the Sunday school favorite, “Little Brown Church in the Wildwood.”<sup>13</sup>

Though Pollard was unable to fulfill his self-appointed mission to New Orleans, the city did manage to attract a fair share of organized Northern missionary efforts to educate and religiously persuade its freedmen. During the 1860s the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, the American Missionary

Association and the Methodist Freedmen's Aid Society all staked claims in New Orleans, and their respective efforts helped create Leland, Straight and New Orleans Universities.

Like Fisk University in Nashville, the missionary freedmen's schools in New Orleans all struggled for day-to-day survival. As Fisk's New Orleans-based sister school, related through mutual support from the American Missionary Association of the Congregational Church, Straight University might have quickly adopted Fisk's jubilee fundraising experiment. However, the students and teachers at Straight were not so well prepared to engage in the public presentation of plantation slave songs; so many of them were life-long urbanites whose religious background was Catholic and whose first language was French.<sup>14</sup> Rather, it was the evangelical Methodists of New Orleans University who raised the initial banner of jubilee singing in New Orleans.

Northern Methodist missionaries began their "New Orleans work" in 1865; they established a cluster of freedmen's churches and schools in the city,<sup>15</sup> and by 1873 they were publishing a weekly newspaper, the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, from an office on Canal Street. The *Southwestern*, as it was commonly called, was wholly committed to "Negro redemption,"<sup>16</sup> and it claimed a large black audience: "When only a few freedmen could read there were many places in cabins and humble churches where groups aggregating thousands assembled regularly to hear the *Southwestern* read, by candle or torch light."<sup>17</sup>

Along with doctrinal analyses of racial and political issues, texts of long-winded sermons and conference speeches, appeals for a uniform hymnody and flagellate diatribes on the evils of dancing and the inappropriateness of "shouting" in church, the *Southwestern* carried regular New Orleans church, school and society columns and bits of local news. The progress of New Orleans University was a regular topic of discussion in the *Southwestern*.

New Orleans University represented the outgrowth and consolidation of several earlier "Methodist adventures in Negro education."<sup>18</sup> It was opened on the corner of Camp and Race streets in October 1873.<sup>19</sup> Within the first few weeks of operation, a "vocal music class" was organized, with nearly two hundred students in attendance.<sup>20</sup> In February, 1874, Prof. T. C. O'Kane, a successful Northern composer and publisher of gospel hymns, donated 150 songbooks to New Orleans University;<sup>21</sup> nine months later the *Southwestern* noted, "the class in vocal music shows a marked proficiency in learning to read music."<sup>22</sup> By the early 1880s, New Orleans University students were *required* to study vocal music,<sup>23</sup> and talented student soloists, quartets and glee clubs were routinely featured at commencement exercises, chapel programs, and other special events.

In a brief history of New Orleans University prepared by members of the faculty in 1935 it was noted that, in addition to conventional music education, students were "always given encouragement to preserve and perform Negro spirituals"; white visitors "listened to the a cappella rendition of these songs by

the entire student group” and “bestowed generous praise upon them for the perfect blending of voices.”<sup>24</sup> There is nothing in the *Southwestern* to indicate whether this musical form of public relations actually preceded the formation of a jubilee troupe at New Orleans University.

The Methodist Freedmen’s Aid Society first got involved with jubilee singing in 1873 when it decided to sponsor the Tennesseans, “a band of singers gathered from our freedmen’s schools”<sup>25</sup> and trained in Nashville by Prof. J. W. Donovan, a Methodist layman from Delaware, Ohio. Offering “quite a proportion of church music, as well as Southern ditties,”<sup>26</sup> the Tennesseans went North to “sing up” a building fund for Central Tennessee College, the Methodist-supported freedmen’s school in Nashville. During their first year in the field, the Tennesseans were successful enough to generate talk in the *Southwestern* of channeling some of the second year’s profits to New Orleans University.<sup>27</sup> However, there is no indication that New Orleans University ever directly benefited financially from the continuing good fortunes of the Tennesseans.

The jubilee singing experiment came to New Orleans University through the specific efforts of Rev. and Mrs. W. D. Godman, a zealous, white, Northern Methodist couple who felt compelled, in their middle age, to answer faith’s decree. William Davis Godman was born in Marion, Ohio, on September 8, 1829. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan College in 1846, he “joined the Methodist ministry and traveled a circuit, riding horse-back through many miles of forest to preach to sturdy western settlers.”<sup>28</sup> In 1850 he switched from circuit-riding to teaching mathematics, theology and ancient languages at various Northern universities.<sup>29</sup>

Hanna Augusta Dexter Godman was born in Dexter, Michigan, on October 25, 1834, and was “converted in the old-fashioned way at an old time camp-meeting while still a child.”<sup>30</sup> It was recalled that she “received her first inspiration for work among the colored people from her father on his death bed”:

She nursed him during a painful, lingering illness through the fall and winter of 1862-63, and reported to him faithfully on the news of the war. Every morning his enfeebled voice gave her the same greeting:

“My child, are the slaves freed yet?” and every morning through that long fall she gave him the same disappointing response, “No, father.”

At last she could give him an affirmative answer, and the old man died not long after in peaceful, rejoicing spirit, leaving to his daughter a consecrated interest in the Freedmen.<sup>31</sup>

In 1874 Rev. and Mrs. Godman were comfortably ensconced in Berea, Ohio; Rev. Godman was the President of Baldwin University, and Mrs. Godman, having recently graduated from the Woman’s Medical College in Philadelphia, was establishing a family practice. However, their only son was “accidentally killed while practicing gymnastics” that year, and Mrs. Godman’s “grief threatened to unseat her reason.”<sup>32</sup> For a therapeutic change of scene, she repaired



Figure 1. The Rev. W. D. Godman, c. 1890. *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.



Figure 2. Hanna Augusta Dexter Godman, c. 1890. *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.



to the pastoral setting of an old sugar plantation on dreamy Bayou Teche, about one hundred miles west of New Orleans near the town of Baldwin, where the Freedmen's Aid Society was operating its Colored Orphans' Home.

This arrangement was probably made through "Father" John Baldwin, the founder of Baldwin University, where Rev. Godman was employed. John Baldwin first opened Bayou Teche to the Methodist cause with his donation of a thirty-acre portion of the Darby Plantation, which he had purchased in 1867. Baldwin Seminary, a white theological institute, was eventually developed on that site. Settling on the Darby Plantation himself, John Baldwin set up a share-cropping community, and "ultimately laid out the town" that bears his name.<sup>33</sup> When he died at his cottage there in 1884, it was Rev. Godman who conducted Baldwin's funeral, "on a ridge overlooking the Teche."<sup>34</sup>

Adjacent to the Darby Plantation was the Byrne Plantation, where the Methodist Colored Orphans' Home was struggling for survival. Purchased in the fall of 1867 through a concerted Methodist missionary fundraising effort, the Byrne Plantation fronted "half a mile on Bayou Teche, extended back for two miles, and contained nearly 1,800 arpents. Of this, over 740 arpents was rich sugar land."<sup>35</sup> Its acquisition "gave promise of great educational development there,"<sup>36</sup> and this promise was largely fulfilled through jubilee singing.

During her recuperative stay on Bayou Teche, Mrs. Godman was implored by an old "colored laundress" to teach her how to read "just one verse from God's word":

The appeal was too direct to be resisted and before the old woman left that night she had the joy of reading a verse from the New Testament . . . Other Negro women came, and night after night they sat in an old building, with a dim light and with a boy stationed close at hand to kill any approaching snakes, and labored that they might learn to read."<sup>37</sup>

Before long, Mrs. Godman was wholly drawn to the freedmen's cause. Consequently, when the Methodist Freedmen's Aid Society solicited Rev. and Mrs. Godman to take charge of the Orphans' Home and superintend the organization of its schoolwork they figured, "God is in it."<sup>38</sup> In short order Rev. Godman resigned from Baldwin University, sold the family home, bade farewell to the North Ohio Methodist Conference and headed South to Bayou Teche. In an open letter to the *Southwestern*, Mrs. Godman wrote:

I need not tell you how God led me from the grave of my first born down here among my colored brethren and sisters, and showed me their needs, and said to me, 'why stand ye here idle?' All weak and broken, and crushed with a heart fully and freshly consecrated to God, rejoicing in a perfect Saviour, happy in a present redemption, I come among you led by Jesus, to know nothing among you, save Jesus, and to sit with you at the feet of Jesus.<sup>39</sup>



On Bayou Teche Rev. and Mrs. Godman inherited a ten-year legacy of struggles to care for Louisiana's colored orphans of war. General N. P. Banks, after serving as Louisiana's military governor during the Union occupation, left this brief account of the Orphans' Home's beginnings:

The Colored Orphans' Home in Louisiana was originally established by my order in the mansion formerly owned by Pierre Soule, in the city of New Orleans, in 1863, where it was maintained for nearly three years in a prosperous condition. Madam de Mortier, a colored lady of high culture and character, well known to philanthropic ladies of Boston, and liberally aided by them in her labors in Louisiana, had charge of the home and managed its affairs with great success. When the government withdrew its protection it was temporarily discontinued, and the orphans narrowly escaped being apprenticed by the government to their former owners until the age of twenty-one years.<sup>40</sup>

During her tenure at the Orphans' Home, Louise DeMortie organized and participated in "musical soirees" to help raise funds to cover operational expenses. In May, 1865, a "large and attractive audience of colored people assembled at the Orleans Theater" for one of her soirees. General Banks was spotted among several "white friends" in attendance. A review in the New Orleans *Black Republican* mentioned: "Madam De Mortie's rendition of the Marsellais was admirable in manner and execution," and violinist Eugene McCarty's work was that of "an artiste."<sup>41</sup> The musical resources of the orphans remained untapped.

The relocation of the Orphans' Home from New Orleans to Bayou Teche was motivated by plans to develop a self-sufficient farm operation, employing share-croppers, as John Baldwin was doing next-door.<sup>42</sup> These plans went up in the smoke of a boiler explosion which destroyed the plantation's old sugarmill in December, 1873.<sup>43</sup> To confound matters, the flow of donations from white friends was being drained off by creeping political intransigence and economic depression. By the time Rev. and Mrs. Godman took charge of it, the Orphans' Home was ten thousand dollars in debt.<sup>44</sup>

On April 1, 1875, Rev. and Mrs. Godman and their daughter, Inez, opened La Teche Seminary and Orphans' Home to fifty-six pupils. By mid-May the enrollment had grown to ninety-four. "They are of all grades of attainment," Rev. Godman reported, "from absolute blankness up to considerable acquisition. We've not yet tested their oratorical powers. But if they are as good as their cantatory abilities, they will certainly distinguish themselves. I've been charmed," he confessed, "with the spiritual melodies of this people."<sup>45</sup>

A self-described "close observer" of Bayou Teche folkways, Rev. Godman started making transcriptions of sermons, sayings and "spiritual melodies" he heard around the Orphans' Home. In 1893, he published some of these in an informal collection of Bayou Teche *Sketches and Incidents*. Many of the entries are dated, going back to 1875. Unfortunately, no dates are attached to the entries

relating to spirituals. Still, they represent the earliest black English-language spirituals known to have been collected in Louisiana:

De Father look at de Son an' smile,  
De Son he look after me;  
De Father redeem my soul from hell,  
An' de Son did set me free.

*Chorus:*

We all shall be free, we all shall be free,  
When de Lord he set us free.

Hope done more than Moses done,  
Our Prophet, Priest, and King;  
From bonds of hell Christ freed my soul,  
An' taught my lips to sing.

When de moon run down in de purple stream,  
An' de sun refuse to shine,  
An' ebbery star it disappear,  
King Jesus shall be mine.<sup>46</sup>

Rev. Godman also collected patches of "I'm On My Way," "New Burying Ground" and "We'll Anchor Bye And Bye:"

Dere's a foursquare city  
Where Jesus Christ do dwell;  
Dere's a foursquare city,  
Gwine to anchor by an' by.<sup>47</sup>

Rev. Godman's transcription of a sermon delivered by "Uncle Jim" during the course of a Sunday-morning "basket meeting at the Tchoupique,"<sup>48</sup> captures something of the spiritual in its original context:

["Uncle Jim's"] sermon was such a combination of Scripture and hymn fragments . . . and though many of the hymns may not be familiar, my readers will please remember that the unwritten hymnology of the colored race is more thoroughly known among them than the hymn book.

"My breddrin, you will fin' my tex' in de third chapter of Revelation, de twentyef verse, 'Behol', I stan' at de do', an' knock.' .let us dis mawnin' look 'way back in de garden ob Eden an' see Eve in de garden; an' de angel wid de fiery sword he say,

*'Eve, whar is Adam?*

*Eve, whar is Adam?'*

Den Eve call back an' say,

*'Adam in de garden pinnin' leaves.'*<sup>49</sup>

An' de angel see Adam a-runnin' out de garden an' he say,

*'Whar you runnin', sinner?*

*Far' you well.*

*Whar you runnin', sinner?*

*Far' you well.'*

Den Adam he say,

*'I'se a-runnin from de fi-ar,*

*Far' you well.*

*I'se a-runnin' from de fi-ar,*

*Far' you well.'*

. . . Let us come down to little David as he ten'ed his sheeps . . . An' Saul he sont fur David, an' he say,

*'O, David! play on yer gol'en harp.*

*Hallelujah!*

*David play on yer gol'en harp.*

*Hallelujah!'*

. An' Isaiah he stan' on Mount Zion, an' he look 'way off an' he say, 'I see 'im, de mighty God, de eberlastin' Father, an' de Prince ob Peace.'

*'Den de clock in heaben done struck one;*

*King Jesus suckle at de breas' so young.*

*De clock in heaben done struck two;*

*King Jesus read de Bible trou'*

*De clock in heaben done struck t'ree;*

*King Jesus died upon de tree.'*

An' he groan, an' he groan, an' he say,

*'Follow me on Calvary,*

*On Calvary.*

*O, follow me on Calvary.'*

*'De clock in heaben done struck five;*

*King Jesus make me dead alive.*

*De clock in heaben done struck seven;*

*King Jesus rose and went to heaben;*

*De clock in heaben done struck eight;*

*King Jesus standin' at heaben's gate.'*

. Den de do' fly wide open, an' Jesus walk in to

*'Ahgu wid de Fader an'*

*Chattah wid de Son, an'*

*Talk about the worl' he*

*Jes' come from.'*<sup>50</sup>

Yes, Jesus is knockin' at every sinner's heart dis mawnin' Gib him yo' heart, sinner, fo' de worl's on fi-ar."

As the audience had sung every hymn . . . and echoed almost every word, they were much wrought up . . . One . . . sister was walking the aisle with the help of several others and ejaculating "My Jesus." Another . . . girl was swaying to and fro in the arms of her friends with closed eyes, while two others were stiff upon the floor. It was several minutes before order could be restored enough to start a collection.<sup>51</sup>

While Rev. Godman also collected malapropisms and other specimens of acculturational "humor," he recognized and defended the native dignity of his charges. In 1875 he argued that the "shouting, clapping hands, and saltatory performances" which attended their worship services could be "truly religious acts, and as acceptable to God as the most decorous genuflections," and he acknowledged "Let Us Cheer the Weary Traveler," as sung in "their own earnest manner," to be "one of the finest spiritual songs in any hymnology."<sup>52</sup> Rev. Godman feared the spiritual songs he heard along Bayou Teche would not survive the rise from slavery:

We shall hope to witness the disappearance of the superstitious notions about dreams, witches, devils, etc. We cannot, on the other hand, desire the disappearance of the precious songs of this people. But go they will. They belong to an untutored age. They can neither be produced nor reproduced among an intelligent and reflective people. They are outbursts of childish feeling, conveying often beautiful and touching truth . . . When sung to their peculiar airs they are unutterably affecting.<sup>53</sup>

In May, 1875, Rev. Godman proposed that La Teche Seminary and Orphans' Home be made a preparatory school for New Orleans University.<sup>54</sup> The Freedmen's Aid Society welcomed this idea, and appointed Rev. Godman to preside over both New Orleans University and its new satellite. This meant relocating to New Orleans and directing the La Teche Seminary and Orphans' Home, for the most part, by remote control. Meanwhile, La Teche continued its headlong plunge into irreparable debt. To prevent foreclosure from creditors, the Orphans' Home Board was forced to arrange with the Freedmen's Aid Society to sell off a portion of the plantation property in lots.<sup>55</sup>

Languishing in New Orleans, the Godmans felt helpless to protect their beloved La Teche. Rev. Godman practically had a nervous breakdown; he submitted an emotional letter of resignation from New Orleans University, but was persuaded to reconsider, under the condition that he and Mrs. Godman be excused during the summer months to conduct a personal crusade through the North, exhorting their wealthy Methodist peers to donate funds to save the Orphans' Home.<sup>56</sup> On June 7, 1876, Rev. Godman presided over New Orleans University's third annual commencement exercises, held at First Street Methodist Church. One week later, with the blessings of the Freedmen's Aid Society, Rev. and Mrs. Godman left for Philadelphia and points North.<sup>57</sup>

They spent the next seven months on what Rev. Godman labeled a "Centennial Pilgrimage."<sup>58</sup> "Amazement was great in Ohio when the wife of the former President of Baldwin University was seen attired in a bedraggled linen duster, hurrying from place to place soliciting aid for a country school in Louisiana."<sup>59</sup> After hearing Mrs. Godman's "burning words" at a rally in Martha's

Vineyard, Bishop Gilbert Haven suggested the Godmans could increase their fundraising effectiveness by fielding a jubilee troupe.<sup>60</sup>

In February, 1877, Rev. and Mrs. Godman returned to New Orleans with \$3,500, which the Freedmen's Aid Society split between the La Teche Home and New Orleans University.<sup>61</sup> About two months later, on April 19, the *Southwestern* announced:

Rev. and Mrs. Godman of New Orleans University are organizing a company of Jubilee Singers. It is proposed to take them to Philadelphia in a few weeks, where they will give concerts to raise money for our work in this state.<sup>62</sup>

The first intimations of jubilee singing in New Orleans had cropped up two weeks earlier in the local columns of the *Southwestern*; on March 29, 1877, correspondence from Wesley Chapel advised, "Our next union meeting will be held on the third Sabbath in April, during which time a concert will be given by the Tennessee Jubilee Singers." In that same issue was this advertisement:

A Grand Concert, Dialogue, and Tableaux Exhibition will be given at Wesley Chapel, Liberty street, between Poydras and Perdido streets, on Tuesday, April 10, 1877, for the benefit of that church. It will be under the auspices of the New Orleans Jubilee Singers. Admission 25 cents; children 15 cents; doors open at 7 o'clock p.m."<sup>63</sup>

The Wesley Chapel announcements referred neither to Central Tennessee College's troupe of Tennesseans, nor to Rev. Pollard's New Orleans Jubilee Singers from Petersburg, Virginia. Rather, they were intended to announce the public debut of the troupe being organized for Rev. and Mrs. Godman's fundraising mission. In reviewing the historic April 10, 1877, Wesley Chapel concert of the prototype New Orleans Jubilee Singers, the *Southwestern* gave out nothing of what was actually sung, saying only that the troupe of eight mixed voices sang with "fine taste and excellent effect" while Mrs. Julia A. Yarrington "presided at the piano."<sup>64</sup>

Julia A. Yarrington is listed in New Orleans University's 1877-78 catalogue as an assistant professor of music, and, as such, she may have been the school's first black faculty member. The board of trustees had just resolved in January, 1877, that, "as soon as practicable, one or more colored professors should be employed in the school."<sup>65</sup> Mrs. Yarrington was a native New Orleanian<sup>66</sup> and a pronounced classicist. Her subsequent dealings with members of the pathbreaking Wesley Chapel concert troupe appear to have been in conflict with Rev. and Mrs. Godman's jubilee fundraising endeavors.

In order to raise seed money "to start North with the New Orleans Jubilee Singers," Rev. and Mrs. Godman made the rounds of local churches with an exhibition of fifty-one "fine works of art" illustrating John Bunyan's allegory,

"The Pilgrim's Progress." The *Southwestern* assured that "either Dr. Godman or his wife accompanies the scenes with interesting and instructive lectures."<sup>67</sup> While the unwieldy paintings—all twelve feet high and from eighteen to thirty feet long—were being hauled from church to church, news reached New Orleans that the Fisk Jubilee Singers had just cleared \$12,000 for a month's work in Holland.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, a situation developed with regard to the New Orleans Jubilee Singers' cognomen:

Dr. and Mrs. Godman having learned that some parties find fault with the name "New Orleans Jubilee Singers" applied to the troupe they are planning to take North with them, wish us to state that they have not yet named their troupe. The *Southwestern* is responsible for the name above, and we think it is a good one, and see no grounds for unfavorable criticism from anyone.<sup>69</sup>

The actual point of contention was not revealed. Perhaps there was some local awareness of Rev. Pollard's already-active troupe of New Orleans Jubilee Singers. There were probably philosophical differences to contend with as well. The jubilee movement was continually haunted by the notion that, as a vestige of slavery, Negro spirituals could amount to nothing more than a cultural ball-and-chain. This notion was expressed in the *Southwestern's* sister publication, the *Western Christian Advocate*, in 1894:

If there is one thing above all others that friends of the Afro-Americans should do for that people, it is to frown upon the tendency to caricature them. So long as singing plantation melodies, patting Juba, and scrambling for the pennies flung by Northern tourists among the colored children at Southern depots, continues, the flavor of domestic slavery will linger. We should help the colored man to rise; and the way to rise is literally to forget what is behind, and press forward to what is before.<sup>70</sup>

At any rate, Rev. and Mrs. Godman dropped the "jubilee" sobriquet and, summoning the spirit of Philadelphia's 1876 Centennial Exhibition, dubbed their troupe the "New Orleans Centennial Singers."<sup>71</sup> The "Centennials" left New Orleans on May 26, 1877, followed by a detailed report in the *Southwestern*:

This new troupe of singers organized and drilled under the direction of Dr. and Mrs. Godman of our New Orleans University left for Philadelphia via Cincinnati on the steamboat Charles Morgan, last Saturday evening. They give their first concert in Arch Street Church, Philadelphia, June 8; and it is expected they will sing in all our principal churches of that city before going elsewhere.

The troupe is made up entirely from our New Orleans churches, and is organized as follows: Soprano, Misses Tillie Jones and Lizzie Parker; Alto, Misses Cora Smith and Sarah Merritt; Bass, Alexander Brown and Joseph

Dupre [alternately given as Joseph Dupuy]; tenor, Charles Dardis and George Dardis [elsewhere given as George Benn]. Dr. and Mrs. Godman will have entire charge of the troupe, and have employed Mr. John H. Dale as assistant business manager.

The evening before the troupe left a few friends were invited to the University Chapel to hear their last rehearsal under their special instructor Prof. Cordova of this city. Miss Tillie Jones has a very superior soprano voice, and will be a favorite with all who hear her. Miss Parker's voice is not as fully developed but is pleasant. The alto and tenor are fair. The bass, especially Mr. Brown is first class. On the whole we think our Philadelphia Methodist friends will be greatly blessed with the Centennials.

The Drs. Godman takes this troupe to aid them in the great work of saving and building up the Orphans Home, an institution which has become embarrassed by hard times, and which is sadly needed in our work. We commend these Christian workers to the good people of Philadelphia and trust that with God's blessing, they may find many who will, to the extent of their ability, share with them and their fellow workers here the blessed labor of caring for God's poor.<sup>72</sup>

A few biographical shards survive to recall the members of this double quartet. Almost all of them had participated in the initial New Orleans Jubilee Singers concert at Wesley Chapel. Only two, Tillie Jones and Sarah Merritt, were actually full-time students at New Orleans University.<sup>73</sup> Sarah Merritt was born a slave in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1856, and was brought to New Orleans with her family in 1861. After the War, her parents worked at mattress making.<sup>74</sup> Alexander Brown, Joseph Dupre/Dupuy and Cora Smith were students at Straight University during the early 1870s, and Cora Smith graduated from Straight in 1876.<sup>75</sup> Charles or George Dardis was probably a relative—perhaps the son—of Rev. George Dardis, who pastored New Orleans's Union M.E. Chapel during the mid-1870s, then shifted to African Methodism and briefly pastored St. James A.M.E. Church.<sup>76</sup> Tillie Jones and Joseph Dupre were members of the St. James A.M.E. Church choir.

The troupe's special instructor, identified as "Prof. Cordova," may have been Antonio *Cardona*, a published composer of salon pieces and a teacher at the old Lower Girls' High School in New Orleans.<sup>77</sup> Along with whatever "drilling" the Godmans may have provided, the troupe sought additional training from music professors encountered during their travels, including "Professor Fischer of Philadelphia, and Tourjee & Daniell of Boston."<sup>78</sup>

By the time the troupe arrived in Philadelphia, its name had been changed—again—to the more functional "New Orleans University Singers." Some time during 1877 Rev. and Mrs. Godman had a paperback souvenir songbook printed in Philadelphia. The title page proclaimed:



NEW ORLEANS  
UNIVERSITY SINGERS.  
A COLORED DOUBLE QUARTETTE.  
VOICES UNRIVALLED.

Pronounced the best Troupe now before the Public.

For Concerts Apply to

W. D. GODMAN

1018 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pa.<sup>79</sup>

This pocket-size songbook included the texts, in Negro dialect and without music, of twenty-two slave hymns and spirituals from the troupe's repertoire. Sixteen of the songs—nearly seventy-five percent, including "Steal Away," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Roll Jordan, Roll," "The Gospel Train" and "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See"—appeared in the Fisk Jubilee Singers' 1873 collection. Another entry, "De Ole Ark's a Movin'," said to be "improved by" the New Orleans University Singers, appeared first in the Hampton Students' 1874 songbook.

The remaining five songs — "Walk Neat," "Sooner in de Mornin'," "We're all Here, Do Thyself a' no Harm," "Jesus, He Mourns for Me" and "Putting on Airs"—were claimed to be "Sung only by New Orleans University Singers." "Putting on Airs" is the only song in the book which is not in the tradition of the Negro spiritual. Copyrighted in 1863 by a certain Lee and Walker, this Negro dialect song can also be found in a 1910 collection of "Minstrel Songs, Old and New."<sup>80</sup> It was obviously intended for white audiences:

Oh, white folks! listen, will you now?  
Dis darkey's gwine to sing;  
I'se hit upon a subjeck now  
I think am jes' de ting [etc.].

The other four songs, described as "Sung only by New Orleans University Singers," demonstrate floating verses and phrases common to the spiritual repertoire of first-generation jubilee troupes.

A second edition of the New Orleans University Singers songbook was published in 1878. It is identical to the edition of the previous year, save for recognition of "W. H. Crane, musical director." Perhaps W. H. Crane is the fifth man pictured with the double quartet in an undated photo placard of the "University Singers of New Orleans In Aid of Colored Orphans' Home of Louisiana," which was made in the Philadelphia studio of L. A. Sawyer. Then, too, the photo could depict a later manifestation of the troupe with manager F. S. Thomas—Tillie Jones' future husband—as the fifth man. There are numerous possibilities.

[ 3 ]

Wrestling Jacob.

Chorus:—

Wrestling Jacob, Jacob, day is a breaking,  
Wrestling Jacob, Jacob, I will not let thee go.

1 Let me go, Jacob !  
I will not let thee go,  
Let me go, Jacob,  
I will not let thee go.

2 Until thou bless me ;  
I will not let thee go,  
Until thou bless me,  
I will not let thee go.

Chorus :—Wrestling Jacob, &c.

3 I'll wrestle till the break of day ;  
I will not let thee go,  
I'll wrestle till the break of day,  
I will not let thee go.

4 Until thou tell me what's thy name ;  
I will not let thee go,  
Until thou tell me what's thy name,  
I will not let thee go.

Chorus :—Wrestling Jacob, &c.

5. Until thou come and bless my soul,  
I will not let thee go,  
Until thou come and bless my soul,  
I will not let thee go.

Chorus :—Wrestling Jacob, &c.

Walk Neat.

Sung only by New Orleans University Singers.

1 If you love God, children,  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
If you love God, children,  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
If you love God, children,  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
And don't you leave me behind,

UNIVERSITY SINGERS

OF

NEW ORLEANS.

W. H. CRANE, Musical Director.

ALEXANDER BROWN,	-	Second Basso.
JOSEPH DUPUY.	-	First Basso.
CHARLES DARDIS,	-	First Tenor
GEORGE BENN,	-	Second Tenor.
Miss TILLIE JONES,	-	First}Soprano.
" - LIZZIE PARKER,	-	Second Soprano.
" CORA SMITH,	-	Second Alto.
" SARAH MERRITT,C	-	First Alto.†

Figure 3. Texts of songs "Sung only by the New Orleans University Singers" from a Philadelphia-published songster of 1878.

## [ 4 ]

*Chorus* :—Oh, will you lead me to the Lamb?  
Oh, will you lead me to the Lamb?  
Oh, will you lead me to the Lamb?  
And don't you leave me behind.

2 If you want to see my Jesus,  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
If you want, &c., &c.

*Chorus* :—Oh, will you lead me, &c.

3 I'm a' gwine to see my Jesus,  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
I'm a' gwine &c., &c.

*Chorus* :—Oh, will you lead me, &c.

4 I'se gwine to try on my robe a',  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
I'se gwine to try on, &c.

*Chorus* :—Oh, will you lead me, &c.

5 I'se gwine to put on my crown a  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
I'se gwine to put on &c., &c.

*Chorus* :—Oh, will you lead me, &c.

6 I'se gwine to put on my slippers,  
Walk neat, walk neat,  
I'se gwine to put on &c., &c.

*Chorus* :—Oh, will you lead me, &c.

### My Wav's Cloudy.

*Chorus* :—Oh brethren, my way's cloudy, my way;  
Go, send them angels down,  
Oh brethren, my way's cloudy, my way,  
Go, send them angels down.

1 There's fire in the east and fire in the west;  
Send them angels down,  
There's fire amongst the Methodists,  
Oh, send them angels down.

*Chorus* :—Oh, brethren, my way's &c.

## [ 5 ]

2 Ole Satan's mad and I am glad;  
Send them angels down,  
He's lost that soul he thought he had,  
Oh, send them angels down.

*Chorus* :—Oh, brethren, my way's &c.

3 I tell you now as I told you before;  
Send them angels down,  
To the promised land I'm boun' to go,  
Oh, send them angels down.

*Chorus* :—Oh, brethren, my way's &c.

4 This is the year of Jubilee;  
Send them angels down,  
The Lord has come and set us free,  
Oh, send them angels down.

*Chorus* :—Oh, brethren, my way's &c.

### View the Land.

1 What kind of shoes is them you wear,  
View the land, view the land,  
That you can walk upon the air,  
Go view the Heavenly Land.

*Cho.*—It's way over Jordan,  
View the land, view the land,  
It's way over Jordan,  
Go view the Heavenly Land.

2 The shoes I wear are the Gospel shoes,  
View the land, view the land,  
And you may wear them if you choose,  
Go view the Heavenly Land.

*Cho.*—It's way over, &c.

3 You say you're aiming for the skies,  
View the land, view the land,  
Whv don't you stop your telling lies,  
Go view the Heavenly Land.

*Cho.*—It's way over, &c.

[ 7 ]

## Sooner in de Mornin'.

Sung only by New Orleans University Singers.

- 1 Gwine to ride up in de chariot,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up in de chairot,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up in de chariot,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Hope I'll jine de band.

*Cho.*—Oh ! Lord, have mercy on me ;  
 Oh ! Lord, have mercy on me ;  
 Oh ! Lord, have mercy on me ;  
 And, I hope I'll jine de band.

- 2 Gwine to meet my brudder there,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh ! Lord, &c.

- 3 Gwine to walk and talk wid Jesus,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh ! Lord, &c.

- 4 Gwine to chatter wid de angels,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh ! Lord, &c.

5. Gwine to meet de 'postles dar,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh ! Lord, &c.

- 6 We all gwine to meet in Hebben,  
 Sooner in de mornin',  
 Ride up, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh ! Lord, &c.

[ 6 ]

- 4 You say your Jesus made you free,  
 View the land, view the land,  
 Why don't you let your neighbors be,  
 Go view the Heavenly Land.  
*Cho.*—It's way over, &c.

- 5 The saints and angels there shall dwell,  
 View the land, view the land,  
 The hypocrites go down to hell,  
 Go view the Heavlnly Land.  
*Cho.*—It's way over, &c.

## Turn Back Pharaoh's Army.

- 1 Gwine to write to Massa Jesus,  
 To send some valiant soldiers,  
 To turn back Pharaoh's army, Hallelu.

*Cho.*—To turn back Pharaoh's army, Hallelujah,  
 To turn back Pharaoh's army, Hallelu.

- 2 If you want your souls converted,  
 You'd better be a prayin'  
 To turn back Pharaoh's army, Hallelu.  
*Cho.*—To turn back Pharaoh's army, &c.

- 3 You say you are a soldier,  
 A fightin' for your Master,  
 To turn back Pharaoh's army, Hallelu.  
*Cho.*—To turn back Pharaoh's army, &c.

- 4 When the children were in bondage,  
 They cried unto the Lord,  
 And turn'd back Pharaoh's army, Hallelu.

*Cho.*—And turn'd back Pharaoh's army, &c.

- 5 When Moses smote de water,  
 De children all pass'd over,  
 And turn'd back Pharaoh's army, Hallelu,  
*Cho.*—And turn'd back Pharaoh's army, &c.

- 6 When Pharaoh cross'd the water,  
 De waters came together,  
 And drown'd ole Pharaoh's army, Hallelu.  
*Cho.*—And drown'd ole Pharaoh's army, &c.

[ 10 ]

## Mary and Martha's Just Gone Along.

- 1 Mary and Martha's just gone along,  
 Mary and Martha's just gone along,  
 Mary and Martha's just gone along,  
 To ring a' those charming bells.  
 Crying, free grace and dying love,  
 Free grace and dying love,  
 Free grace and dying love,  
 To ring a' those charming bells.

*Cho.*—Oh, it's way over Jordan, Lord;  
 Way over Jordan, Lord;  
 Way over Jordan, Lord,  
 To ring a' those charming bells.

- 2 De preacher and de elder's just gone along,  
 De preacher, &c., &c.,  
 Crying, free grace and dying love,  
 Free grace, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh, it's way over Jordan, Lord, &c.

- 3 My fadder and my mudder's just gone a'long,  
 My fadder, &c., &c.,  
 Crying, free grace and dying love,  
 Free grace, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh, it's way over Jordan, Lord, &c.

- 4 De Methodis' and Baptis' just gone along,  
 De Methodis' &c., &c.,  
 Crying, free grace and dying love,  
 Free grace, &c., &c.

*Cho.*—Oh, it's way over Jordan, Lord, &c.

[ 11 ]

## He's the Lord of Lords.

*Cho.*—Why, He's the Lord of lords,  
 And the King of kings,  
 Why Jesus Christ is the first and the last,  
 No one can work like him,  
 1 I will not let you go, my Lord;  
 No one can work like him,  
 Until you come and bless my soul,  
 No one can work like him.

*Cho.*—Why, He's the Lord of lords, &c.  
 2 For Paul and Silas bound in jail,  
 No one can work like him,  
 The Christians prayed both night and day,  
 No one can work like him.

*Cho.*—Why, He's the Lord of lords, &c.  
 3 I wish those mourners would believe,  
 No one can work like him,  
 That Jesus is ready to receive,  
 No one can work like him.

*Cho.*—Why, He's the Lord of lords, &c.

## De Ole Ark's a Movin'

Improved by New Orleans University Singers.

- 1 Jes' wait a little while, I'm gwine to tell ye 'bout de  
 ole ark,

*Refrain:*—De ole ark's a movin' move along children,  
 De ole ark's a movin' move along.

- 2 De Lor' tole Noah for to build Him an ark.

*Refrain:*—De ole ark's a movin', &c.

## [ 12 ]

3 Den Noah and his sons went to work upon de dry  
land,

*Refrain* :—De ole ark's a movin', &c.

Dey built dat ark jes' accordin' to de command.  
De ole ark's a movin', &c.

4 Noah and his sons went to work upon de timber.  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

De proud begin to laugh and de silly pint de finger,  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

5 When de Ark was finsh'd jes' accordin' to de plan,  
De Ole ark's a movin', &c.

Massa Noah took his fam'ly both animal and man.  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

6 Dey say Brudder Noah was a foolish ole man,  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

For to build dat ark right on de dry land.  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

7 When de rain begin to fall and de ark begin to rise,  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

De wicked hung aroun' wid der groans and der cries  
De Ole ark's a movin', &c.

8 Forty days and forty nights the rain it kep' a fallin'  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

De wicked clumb de trees and for help dey kep' a  
callin'  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

9 Dat awful rain, she stopped at las'; de waters dey sub-  
sided,  
De Ole ark's a movin', &c.

## [ 13 ]

An dat Ole Ark wid all on board, on Ararat she rided.  
De ole ark's a movin', &c.

10 De waters run down from de mountain to de plain,  
De Ole ark's a movin', &c.

De Raven went a huntin' an' de Dove do de same.  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

11 Massa Noah raise de window and lookout for to see  
De Ole ark's a movin', &c.

De Raven in de mud and de fishes in dd tree,  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

12 When de lan' it was dry, and de sun it did shine  
De Ole ark's a movin', &c.

Fadder Noah and his fam'ly dey all feel fine,  
De Ole ark's a movin' &c.

## Hard Trials

1 Been a list'ning all de night long,  
Been a list'ning all de day  
Been a list'ning all de night long,  
For to hear some sinner pray,

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials, tribulation,  
Was'nt dem hard trials !  
I'm boun to leave a dis world.

2 How lost was my condition !  
Till Jesus made me whole ;  
Dere is but one Physician  
Can cure de sin-sick soul.

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials, &c.

## [ 14 ]

3 An Angel came from Heaven ;

He came tree times a day,  
To hoist those diamond winders,  
For to hear brother Daniel pray.

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials &c.

4 Into de fiery furnace,

De Hebrew children went  
Ar' unto dem an Angel  
From de heavenly host was sent.

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials, &c.

5 Some say dat John de Baptis

Was nothing but a Jew,  
But de Holy Bible tells us,  
'At John was a preacher too.

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials, &c.

6 You may go dis way, you may go dat way,

You may go from do'ah to do'ah,  
But if ye ain't got religion right in yer heart,  
De Devil's gwine to get you, sure.

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials, &c.

7 De Hypocrites, de sunny-sides,

Dey live among the swine,  
Dey go to Goo wid der tongue and teeth,  
But dey leave der hearts behin'.

*Cho.*—Was'nt dem hard trials, &c.

8 Oh Methodis', Methodis' is my name

A Methodis' till I die ;  
I got baptized in a Baptist Church  
An' I died on de methodis' sfde.

*Cho.*—An' was'nt them hard trials, &c.

## [ 15 ]

## King Emanuel

1 Oh, who do you call de King Emanuel?

I call my Jesus, King Emanuel.

Oh, who do you call de King Emanuel?

I call my Jesus King Emanuel.

CHORUS.—Oh de King Emanuel, is a mighty 'Manuel

I call my Jesus, King Emanuel.

2 Oh, some call him Jesus ; but I call Him Lord ;

I call my Jesus, King Emanuel,

Let's talk about de hebben, and de hebben's fine tings.

I call my Jesus, King Emanuel.

CHO.—Oh, de King Emanuel, &c.

3 Oh steady, steady, a little while ;

I call my Jesus King Emanuel,

I will tell you what my Lord done for me.

I call my Jesus, King Emanuel.

CHO.—Oh, de King Emanuel, &c.

4 He pluck-a my feet out de miry clay,

I call my Jesus King Emanuel ;

He sot dem a-on de firm Rock o' Age ;

I call my Jesus, King Emanuel.

CHO.—Oh, de King Emanuel, &c.

## Jesus, He Mourns for Me.

Sung only by New Orleans University Singers.

Prelude.—

(*Soprano*) Children ! oo, oo—oo, oo—(with closed lips,)

(*Bass*)—Who dat a' mournin' soul ?

(*All*)—My heart so hard, I cannot mourn,  
Jesus, He mourns for me !



## [ 16 ]

Children ! oo, oo—oo, oo—

Who dat a mournin' soul?  
My heart so hard I cannot mourn,  
Jesus, He mourns for me.

*Chorus.*—Brethren, land on de shore,  
Brethren, land on de shore,  
Brethren, land on de shore,  
God Almighty bless forever more.

1 De moon ran down, wid de purple stream,  
De sun forbear to shine,  
An, ebbery star, it disappear'd,  
King Jesus shall be mine.  
Prelude and Chorus.—

2 De wind blew east, de wind blew west  
It blew like de Judgment Day,  
An' ebbrey poor soul 'at did not pray,  
'Ad better pray dat day.  
Prelude and Chorus.—

3 I set my foot on de Gospel ship,  
De ship began to sail,  
It landed me on de Canaan shore,  
And nebber come back no more.  
Prelude and Chorus.—

Judgment Day is rolling Around.

*Chorus.*—Judgment, judgment, judgment day is rolling  
around,  
Judgment, judgment, Oh, how I long to go.

## [ 17 ]

1 I'se a good ole mudder, in de Heaven, my Lord,  
How I long to go dar too,  
I'se a good ole mudder, in de Heaven, my Lord,  
Oh, how I long to go.

*CHO.*—Judgment, &c.  
2 Dere's no backsliders in de Heaven, my Lord,  
How I long to go dar too,  
Dere's no backsliders in de Heaven, my Lord,  
How I long to go.

*CHO.*—Judgment, &c.  
3 King Jesus sitting in de Heaven, my Lord,  
How I long to go dar too,  
King Jesus sitting in de Heaven, my Lord,  
Oh, how I long to go.

*CHO.*—Judgment, &c.  
4 Dere's a big camp-meetin in de Heaven, my Lord,  
How I long to go dar too,  
Dere's a big camp-meetin in de Heaven, my Lord,  
Oh, how I long to go.

*CHO.*—Judgment, &c.

We're all Here, Do Thyself a' no Harm.

Sung only by New Orleans University Singers.

1 For Paul and Silas bound in jail,  
Do thyself a' no harm  
De Christians pray'd both night and day,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

*CHORUS.*—We're all here, we're all here,  
Do thyself a' no harm,  
We're all here, we're all here,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

[ 18 ]

2 What makes ole Satan tempt me so ?  
Do thyself a' no harm,  
He had me fast, but he let me go,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

CHO.—We're all here, &c.

3 As I went down in de valley to pray,  
Do thyself a' no harm,  
I met ole Satan on de way,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

CHO.—We're all here, &c.

4 He says, your Jesus is dead and your God's gone away,  
Do thyself a' no harm,  
For I was at de funeral de odder day,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

CHO.—We're all here, &c.

5 Ole Satan's like a huntin' dog,  
Do thyself a' no harm,  
He hunts de Christians home and abroad,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

CHO.—We're all here, &c.

6 De bredrens thought that Paul was lost,  
Do thyself a' no harm,  
But the dungeon shook and his chains fell off,  
Do thyself a' no harm.

CHO.—We're all here, &c.

[ 19 ]

### This Old Time Religion,

CHORUS.—Oh ! this old time religion ;  
This old time religion ;  
This old time religion ;  
Its good enough for me.

1 It is good for the mourner ;  
It is good for the mourner ;  
It is good for the mourner ;  
Its good enough for me.

2 It is good, when you're in trouble ;  
It is good, when you're in trouble ;  
It is good, when you're in trouble ;  
Its good enough for me

3 It is good, when you're a' dying ;  
It is good, when you're a' dying ;  
It is good, when you're a' dying ;  
It's good enough for me.

4 It will carry you home to Heaven ;  
It will carry you home to Heaven ;  
It will carry you home to Heaven ;  
It's good enough for me.

5 It brought me out of bondage ;  
It brought me out of bondage ;  
It brought me out of bondage ;  
It's good enough for me.



Figure 4. Undated photo of University Singers of New Orleans, "in aid of Colored Orphans' Home of Louisiana." New Orleans Museum of Art.

In a letter to the *Southwestern* Rev. Godman characterized the New Orleans University Singers' initial reception in Philadelphia during the summer of 1877 as "cordial." He said, "Engagements came to us as numerous as we could conveniently meet," but "during the hot months it was impossible to get large audiences in the city" because of all the "people going to the seaside." Consequently, "until late in August we made above expenses only enough to pay one claim for \$62.50 against the Home."<sup>81</sup>

Increasingly frustrated, Rev. Godman resigned—again—as President of New Orleans University in September, 1877: "It appears to be my duty," he explained, "to consecrate my efforts to the relief and direction of the Orphans' Home and the La Teche Seminary; I cannot successfully carry the University and the Home together any longer . . . I put myself in the Lord's hands to raise the money required to relieve the Home."<sup>82</sup>

An open letter from Rev. Godman, posted from Philadelphia on January 31, 1878, brought *Southwestern* readers up to date with the jubilee work:

In the latter part of September [1877] we were able to realize more liberally from concerts . . . Since then we've [paid off \$1,732.50 worth of debts] We are full of faith in ultimate success. It means, however, patient labor and plenty of it . . .

We . . . have only one thing to notice that we should desire to see changed, *i.e.*, the people of God who are rich, with a few noble exceptions, do not seem to realize their privilege to give largely to the cause of Christ among the Freedmen . . . We are going forward trusting in the Lord, waiting His guidance in all our movements. When He shall open the way, we expect to move eastward . . . Pray for us.<sup>83</sup>

In March, 1878, the New Orleans University Singers were guided from Philadelphia to New York City. Rev. Godman made a speech before "the New York Preachers' Meeting" on March 18, and he fetched this endorsement:

Whereas, Rev. Wm. D. Godman, D. D. of New Orleans, is now visiting the North with a band of Singers in behalf of the Home for the Orphans . . . which belongs to the Louisiana Conference of the M. E. Church, an important interest, dear to our hearts and sorely imperilled, therefore,

Resolved, That this New York Preachers' Meeting welcomes Dr. Godman and his cause, and commends him to the sympathies of our churches and our general public.<sup>84</sup>

A letter from Rev. Godman informed readers of the May 9, 1878, *Southwestern* that when the New York Methodist Conference convened at St. Luke's Church on April 3, 1878, "the University Singers were *put in charge of the singing* at divine service, the first night of the session," and raised \$100 "by a spontaneous collection." Two days later they sang for the New York East

Conference at First Place Church, Brooklyn, and received “a liberal collection.” On Monday, April 8, at “the hour of the Conference adjournment,” the troupe was “invited to sing by vote, the entire Conference remaining, and a vast assembly of visitors crowding the house above and below.”

During November 1878, the New Orleans University Singers sang at St. Paul M.E. Church in New York City, at a “fete” marking the eleventh anniversary of the Freedmen’s Aid Society, and according to the *Christian Educator*, a Cincinnati-based Methodist missionary and educational journal, they “delighted the audience with the weird melodies of plantation life.”<sup>85</sup> One month later, following an appearance in Rhinebeck, New York, where they “footed up \$130,” a lady “belonging to the elite of New York society” likened basso Alexander Brown to an opera star: “I have heard [Luigi] Lablache and all the eminent profundo bassos of this country and Europe, but I never heard one whose voice was equal in combined melody and power to that of this young colored man.”<sup>86</sup>

Surviving financial reports make it clear that the New Orleans University Singers never came close to generating the awesome fundraising power of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, or even that of their Methodist cousins the Tennesseans. The building that the Tennesseans had initially set out to raise funds for at Central Tennessee College was dedicated on October 7, 1875,<sup>87</sup> and in 1880 the Freedmen’s Aid Society reported the Tennesseans had “paid \$18,000 into its treasury as the fruit of their effort.”<sup>88</sup> Still, the New Orleans University Singers were inching their way through the La Teche Seminary and Orphans’ Home’s outstanding debts.

During May 1879, Rev. Godman and the New Orleans University Singers made thirty-nine fundraising appearances, mostly in New York and Connecticut, but ranging as far North as Vergennes, Vermont, and as far South as Salisbury, Maryland. The collections varied from \$3.78 in Vergennes to \$148.42 in St. Paul’s Church, New York City. The month’s total: \$891.49.<sup>89</sup>

In the midst of this work-a-day grind, crushing news reached the Godmans and their troupe. On September 1, 1879, a hurricane raged across Bayou Teche and “played sad havoc” with the Orphans’ Home: “The main building, which was a two story brick . . . was so badly wrecked that only a part can be used in rebuilding; the school house, the gift of the Freedmen’s Bureau, was entirely destroyed; the barn, the planter’s quarters and the fences were nearly all swept away.”<sup>90</sup> A sense of hopelessness crept over the La Teche project. Staunch supporters dropped away, leaving the Godmans to crusade for the Home as virtually independent agents.

At the same time, the New Orleans University Singers’ star soprano, Tillie Jones, and other members of the troupe showed up in New Orleans and took part in an independent series of concerts directed by Julia A. Yarrington. On September 13, 1879, the secular New Orleans *Weekly Louisianian* carried this advertisement:

A grand star concert will be given by the Professional Singers of this city, for the benefit of the Union Chapel M.E. Church, on Monday, September 22 at Turner's Hall. Miss Matilda Jones of the New Orleans University Singers, and Mrs. Anna Mason, leading sopranos. Dancing after the concert. Admission 50c.<sup>91</sup>

A follow-up report noted:

Under the direction of Mrs. Yarrington, a pianist of fine musical taste and excellent execution, the concert was a decided and brilliant success. Notwithstanding that several influential societies gave entertainments with prices better suited to the times, fully five hundred persons attended the Concert.

The singing of Mrs. Mason and Miss Tillie Jones surpassed all their previous efforts, and raised them to the front rank in the standard of first class Amateur vocalists. Their solos respectively elicited encores. Misses Coleman, Parker, and Messrs. Dupre, Parker, Berry and Dowden sustained their different parts with great credit to themselves.<sup>92</sup>

Apparently there was some indecision about whether this troupe was comprised of "Professional Singers" or "first class Amateurs." Anna Brunette Mason was a member of P. B. S. Pinchback's lofty social circle. In 1872 her wedding reception was held in Pinchback's "spacious parlors" on Derbigny Street, with Charles Jaeger's band playing.<sup>93</sup> Earlier that year she was the "special favorite" at a Lyceum Hall "Concert and Exhibition," where she and Arthur P. Williams sang a duet entitled "Moonlight, music, love and flowers." Other hits of the program were Mr. J. H. Burch's singing of "Selections from Lucia di Lammermoor" and Mr. E. E. Smith's rendition of "Old Black Joe."<sup>94</sup>

In addition to performing with the city's black musical society elite, Mrs. Mason was the organist at St. James A.M.E. Church.<sup>95</sup> Tillie Jones and Joseph Dupre were members of that choir, and fellow "grand star" Charles Dowden was the chorister. Under Charles Dowden's continued guidance, the St. James A.M.E. Church Choir became a New Orleans institution.<sup>96</sup>

On October 27, 1879, Mrs. Yarrington's "grand stars" gave another concert at the Masonic Hall on the corner of St. Claude and St. Peter streets, this time "for the benefit of the Louisiana Orphan Asylum"—not La Teche, but a new Home, backed by a group of black New Orleans' most prominent "Protestant ladies," including Mrs. C. C. Antoine, wife of the politician, and Mrs. G. D. Geddes, wife of the undertaker.

According to a review in the *Louisianian*, the Masonic Hall was "uncomfortably crowded, with standing room at a premium," and the troupe made \$125 above expenses. Following the concert, "dancing was commenced and kept up until the wee small hours."<sup>97</sup> After-concert dancing was a deeply-ingrained, catholic New Orleans custom, but the very idea must have shocked the Godmans' Methodist sensibilities.

Despite Mrs. Yarrington's conflicting interests in Tillie Jones and other members of the New Orleans Jubilee Singers, there was no reported break in the Godmans' jubilee work up North. Apparently, Mrs. Godman was still in the field in January, 1880, when Rev. Godman came to New Orleans to attend the annual Louisiana Methodist Conference.<sup>98</sup> The opening hymn of the Conference could have been his calling card: "And We Are Still Alive."

One highlight of the Conference was a "Love Feast" at Wesley Chapel, where a thousand people joined in "stirring exhortations" and "the singing of our hymns and the weird songs so familiar in the olden times."<sup>99</sup> For his part, Rev. Godman reported that the New Orleans University Singers had managed thus far to pay off debts totalling \$6036.92—enough to "secure the ultimate safety of the Home."<sup>100</sup>

The property at La Teche was secure, but, as the *Southwestern* wryly observed, "Since the time God put His grasp upon the winds and gave them so much fury, the Seminary and Home have both been orphans."<sup>101</sup> The buildings remained in ruins, and all activities had been suspended for more than a year. Rev. and Mrs. Godman resolved to stay in the field and raise an additional \$5000 to rebuild and reopen La Teche by the end of 1880.<sup>102</sup>

In April, 1880, the New Orleans University Singers sang for President and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes at the White House. This report from the *Philadelphia Methodist* was quoted in the *Southwestern*, under the headline, "Our University Singers in the White House":

The original New Orleans University Singers, accompanied by Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Godman, J. Lanahan and W. R. Webster, had a grand reception at the White House on Friday [April] 9th. Mrs. Hayes, the queenly lady who presides with so much grace and dignity, conducted her visitors through the splendid mansion, and called their attention to various features of interest, historic relics, engravings, etc. The party then returned to the Blue Room, and were severally introduced to President Hayes, Secretary Everts and other notables. The University Singers then rendered several fine selections, with which the company expressed their high gratification. Some affirmed that Dr. Godman's singers were far superior to the celebrated Fiskes, who sang in the same room a few weeks before.<sup>103</sup>

This report, encouraging as it was, marked the last good news from afield. In mid-January, 1881, Rev. Godman arrived in New Orleans from New York and proceeded "at once to La Teche" to reopen the Orphans' Home.<sup>104</sup> Six months later, the *Southwestern* acknowledged, "The work of rebuilding the Home buildings is going forward as rapidly as money can be secured. Dr. Godman has a few hundred dollars to begin with remaining from the fund raised with the troupe of singers. It will be some months before much income from the plantation can be secured."<sup>105</sup>

Apparently, it was during the last months of 1880 or the first months of 1881 that Rev. and Mrs. Godman's jubilee fundraising effort crumbled. No news



was reported in the *Southwestern* during that time, and, aside from what Julia Yarrington's concerts in New Orleans imply, there was only a bit of wordplay to suggest that a power struggle had been taking place: the Godmans' troupe was described at the White House concert as the *Original* New Orleans University Singers, and when their souvenir songbook was reprinted again in 1881, they were qualified as the *Only Original* New Orleans University Singers.<sup>106</sup>

It was later explained that the Godmans had been constantly "worried about finance, annoyed by troubles among the singers, sickened by poor food and hurt by insult and slander . . . Then one morning when Mrs. Godman and the daughter were in New York, and the Doctor was on business in Louisiana, the singers struck and went off by themselves,"<sup>107</sup> to sing on their own merit as an independent, professional jubilee troupe. Nothing has been found to describe the singers' side of the story.

It may have been in the immediate wake of this "mutiny" that Mrs. Godman recruited two New York City church singers, Emma Fisher and Abbie Wright, to help fill outstanding bookings. By June 1881, Mrs. Godman was back at La Teche, teaching classes with her husband and daughter, Inez,<sup>108</sup> who had become the Seminary's music instructor.<sup>109</sup> That fall, however, in response to the still-urgent need for rebuilding funds, the "indefatigable little woman gathered together half a dozen children who could sing, and started off again"<sup>110</sup> with what came to be known as the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children.

Like the New Orleans University Singers, the Tennesseans eventually came out from under their original Methodist missionary sponsors to promote themselves as an independent, professional troupe. Feeling betrayed, the Freedmen's Aid Society published this "jubilee disclaimer" in a June 1882, issue of the *Southwestern*:

In times past several troupes of colored singers have been in the field with a view to obtain money to assist in the erection of buildings for institutions of learning in the South, or for the support of such institutions. The Freedmen's Aid Society for a time gave its indorsement to one or more of these troupes. But it has been found, after experience, that the effect upon the society's interests has been anything but beneficial. The society therefore some time ago took formal action declining to give any such indorsement in the future, and the executive committee requested that this fact be announced in all our papers. The society took no action, as a matter of course, either for or against any particular troupe. This is a land of freedom, and any numbers or sets of individuals have a right to organize and travel through the country to obtain patronage for their orchestral or vocal efforts. But it should be understood that they act on their own responsibility, and that the patronage bestowed on them is in no way solicited by or in any way a benefit to the society named.<sup>111</sup>

With his wife still doggedly shepherding the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children through the northern states, Rev. Godman was obliged to rebut the Freedmen's Aid Society position on jubilee singing:

The day of usefulness for bands of colored singers is not yet passed. No entertainments are more acceptable to the Christian public than those given by a company of genuine people of the African race, with a Christian spirit, and under discreet management. The original Fiske [sic] Jubilee Singers are still traveling and singing. The Tennesseans, who were originally organized under the auspices of our Freedmen's Aid Society, and who raised for it about \$14,000, are still traveling; although they are not under the auspices and control of that society. The University Singers of New Orleans are also traveling, and I believe successfully. No such company is now more popular than the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children, who expect to be home ere the opening of winter. This mode of raising money—i.e., by concert—for a benevolent object, has its disadvantages and drawbacks. But what kind of human action has not its weak points? Perhaps this business of concerts has as few as any. You will allow one who has experience thus to speak. An agency for money raising that pays its own way, not discounting the liberality of the people for expenses, certainly commends itself to favorable regard.<sup>112</sup>

Rev. Godman had adopted a philosophical view of his own involvement in the jubilee movement, and he was right about the New Orleans University Singers—they were “traveling successfully” under their own power. A favorable account of their hometown appearances during September, 1882, appeared in the *Southwestern*:

The concerts given by the troupe of Jubilee Singers at Union Chapel and Central Church recently were highly entertaining, and reflected much credit not only upon the participants, but upon the race represented. We have never heard anything like it in this city. The jubilee choruses especially, the familiar old plantation songs of our people's bondage, set to music, were rendered with such effectiveness as to thrill every chord of emotional sensation. The troupe, composed of Misses Tilly Jones, L. Parker, A. Murray, Mrs. M. Dupuy, Mrs. Yarrington, and Messrs. A. Landry, J. Dupuy, C. B. Wilson, and C. J. Dowden, were loudly and enthusiastically applauded. Where all did so well, it is hard to make exact comparison; but to Miss Tillie Jones the palm seems to belong. Her rendition of the solos “When 'tis Moonlight” by [C.A.] White, and “The Cows are in the Corn” by [Herbert] Leslie, shows her to be a singer of the highest order, and entitles her to the proud distinction of a prima donna. She, with Miss Parker, who are to be joined in a few weeks by Mr. Wilson and others of the troupe, who are already North, have a year's engagement in California and the Great West. We wish them many good things.<sup>113</sup>

While Tillie Jones and the independent New Orleans University Singers prepared to venture West, Mrs. Godman returned South with her Seminary

Quartette and La Teche Children. Their arrival at the Orphans' Home in mid-December, 1882, had been anticipated by the local community of freedmen, who were personally attached to this troupe through the involvement of their children: "Crowds came from the neighboring towns and villages so that on the night of the 15th La Teche presented a picture of gaiety and merriment."<sup>114</sup> The freedmen packed La Teche Chapel for a formal "Reception of the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children," and, at the "signal of approach of the benevolent lady and her coadjutors, all stood in bowed reverence."<sup>115</sup>

The texts of all the speeches made that night were published in the January 9, 1883, *Southwestern*. The first to speak was Camille D. Bonaparte, a local white judge, who asked the congregation, "Have you sent your surplus pennies to the Freedmen's Aid Society to help to educate your race?" He answered his own question: "No!" He accused them of having bought whiskey instead. They must have wondered where Judge Bonaparte got the notion there were "surplus pennies" to be had from the freedmen's quarters along Bayou Teche.

Next to speak was Rev. Ernest E. Lyon, the pastor of La Teche Chapel. Rev. Lyon was "born of free parents" in September 1860. Growing up in New Orleans, he attended Straight University and worshipped at Wesley Chapel before joining the itinerant ministry in 1881.<sup>116</sup> As spokesman for the gathered flock at La Teche, Rev. Lyon addressed Mrs. Godman and her singers:

I wish it to be understood on the part of these my brothers and sisters, the members of the La Teche Quartette that this demonstration, though feeble in its attempt, is heartfelt and intense.

We cannot recompense you. The sympathy your efforts demand lies to a very great extent beyond the reach of us poor mortals . . . Traveling as you have been, in the interests of this downtrodden race; immuring yourselves to hardships, and exposing your gentle natures to the idiosyncrasies of stage life, thereby rendering your tribute of love and toil to assist in the grand design of ameliorating the condition of the dark and sable sons and daughters of unfortunate Ham . . .

In view of all that has been accomplished, I feel like falling at your feet as a token of gratitude.

Mrs. Godman responded:

You committed your children to us and now we bring them back to you, and I think you are satisfied of their well doing and their advancement. (Responses of "yes!" "yes!") We've required them to be obedient and they have been obedient, coming to their duties daily like soldiers. When evil things were said of us by those who desired to prevent our success, we were ever sustained, not only by the grace of God, but also by *your confidence*, which we knew to be behind us like a strong wall.

Mrs. Godman went on to introduce the La Teche Children:

Here is Miss Victoria Sutton, she has been a good, faithful girl, looking after the children as our helper; and an excellent singer, too. Maria Bannister, also, has been a very good singer and a faithful girl. Susie Kinchen and Yi Jackson and Corrine Comb (our little Duca), they have charmed the people by their singing and have been obedient girls. Master James Jackson is also worthy of mention and has done well for his part. These are your own children and you see for yourselves how great an opportunity they have enjoyed and how much they have improved by it.

Finally, Mrs. Godman introduced Emma Fisher and Abbie Wright, the two New York singers who, "when some of our southern helpers abandoned the cause, joined us and gave their energies successfully to the work. They are worthy of all praise, and you will hear them sing."

The last speaker of the evening was La Teche's white financial agent, Rev. W. R. Webster of New York. A long-time friend of La Teche, Rev. Webster had opened doors for the New Orleans University Singers in New York, and he had been present at the White House concert. He gave a heart-felt summing-up of the jubilee work: how Rev. and Mrs. Godman had "stood like a living wall between the Orphans' Home and the enemies of this protective and educational interest both in the North and South, who would have gladly swept the whole into oblivion;" how they "organized the band of students from New Orleans University . . . to sing these institutions out of debt, with those sweet and sad old songs of slavery days;" and how their troupe "developed in to what was pronounced in the blue room of the White House 'the best jubilee singers ever heard.'"

Rev. Webster cited Mrs. Godman for special patience and indomitability: "Her toils and noble self-sacrifice in ministering to the intellectual, social, and material wants of the singers, eternity alone will reveal." In closing, he summoned a vision of Rev. and Mrs. Godman being ushered into heaven by the "multitudes of redeemed ones from La Teche" who had been "lifted through their agency to the abode of immortality."

The Reception of the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children was concluded with "singing by the ladies, Miss Fisher and Miss Wright," and a "chorus piece of rare beauty led by Miss Yi Jackson," one of the La Teche Children. There was "enthusiastic applause," then "a vote of thanks was unanimously adopted, and the happy audience proceeded to discuss the Christmas tree."<sup>117</sup> This marked the end of Rev. and Mrs. Godman's jubilee fundraising ventures, which had spared La Teche from the auction block, resurrected it from the path of a hurricane and secured it for a productive future.

In 1883, by direct or indirect result of the jubilee work, La Teche received the first installment of a \$50,000 pledge from white Connecticut clockmaker-philanthropist William L. Gilbert.<sup>118</sup> Consequently, the school was renamed Gilbert Academy, and Rev. Godman was appointed life-time President

Emeritus.<sup>119</sup> Rev. and Mrs. Godman remained on the campus, more or less as saints, until 1897, when Rev. Godman's health failed and he was advised to abandon the semi-tropical climate of Bayou Teche.<sup>120</sup>

During their retirement years on Bayou Teche, Rev. Godman tackled literary pursuits which he had put aside to take up the freedmen's cause, while Mrs. Godman studied Greek, mediated community disputes with neighboring "Cadiens," and learned—at the age of sixty—to ride a bicycle.<sup>121</sup> The Godmans' devoted daughter Inez continued to serve as Gilbert Academy's music instructor. She instituted a tradition of mixed-voice student quartets at the school, and her "class of 1889 quartette led by Isaac Young" was said to "take the ribbons."<sup>122</sup> In 1891 she assumed "superintendence of the temperance work," and was said to be "giving king alcohol a bold fight."<sup>123</sup> "Miss Inez" was still in the field in 1920, when she assured readers of the *Southwestern* that God was "molding and forming a new Race in His mighty crucible."<sup>124</sup>

Mrs. Godman died on January 8, 1905: "With her last consciousness, she smiled and murmured, 'The Lord Jesus Christ.'" At her funeral, music "was furnished by a quartette led by Dr. I. W. Sutton [elsewhere given as Dr. E. R. Sutton]," a "young Negro physician" who "received his first medical instruction from Mrs. Godman."<sup>125</sup> Perhaps Dr. Sutton was a brother, or the father, of Victoria Sutton, one of the La Teche Children. On Christmas Day, 1908, Rev. Godman followed his wife to the grave. At his funeral, "music was rendered by a trio of young colored physicians" which included Dr. Sutton.<sup>126</sup>

On April 3, 1910, the new Godman Memorial Library was dedicated at Gilbert Academy,<sup>127</sup> and the school prospered on Bayou Teche until 1919,<sup>128</sup> when it was moved to New Orleans to join New Orleans University on the "magnificent" St. Charles Avenue site acquired in 1884.<sup>129</sup> During the early-1930s New Orleans University merged with Straight University to become Dillard University, which is still very much alive. Gilbert Academy survived until 1949, producing such distinguished alumni as Andrew Young, contemporary jazz patriarch Ellis Marsalis,<sup>130</sup> and concert singer Frank Davis, who became well-known during the 1950s for his interpretation of "God's Trombones" with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians.<sup>131</sup>

In 1922, following Gilbert Academy's departure from Bayou Teche, the Methodist Woman's Home Missionary Society established the Sager-Brown Orphanage and Godman School on that site.<sup>132</sup> Retrieving the original concept of a combination home-and-school for African-American orphans, Sager-Brown remained in operation until 1979.<sup>133</sup>

Several veterans of Rev. and Mrs. Godman's jubilee fundraising drives continued to exert their influence on American cultural life. Most noticeable among the members of the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children was Abbie Wright, one of the singers Mrs. Godman had recruited in New York. After traveling to La Teche with Mrs. Godman and the troupe in December, 1882, Abbie Wright stayed on to enter the Christian work, and she ended up marrying

Rev. Ernest Lyon, the La Teche Chapel pastor. In 1884 Rev. and Mrs. Lyon moved to New Orleans, where Rev. Lyon took the pastorate of Mallalieu Chapel, and Mrs. Lyon launched an eight-year reign as one of the City's paramount church-house prima donnas.<sup>134</sup> With her "peculiarly touching and pathetic" contralto voice, she became well known for her renditions of gospel hymns like "Yes There Is Rest" at numerous local church and society gatherings.<sup>135</sup> At Union Chapel's 1887 Christmas program, Mrs. Lyon "almost brought down the house."<sup>136</sup>

In addition to her solo work, Mrs. Lyon organized a mixed-voice quartet at Mallalieu Chapel. In November, 1885, when the Calanthe Literary Circle sponsored a "programme of choice music, recitations and drama" on behalf the Baptist Faith Home for the Aged, Mrs. Lyon's quartet sang "Come Where The Lillies Bloom." Also on the program, Joseph Dupre sang a solo rendition of "O Fair Dove, Fond Dove." The Calanthe Literary Circle was one of several black, community-based "culture clubs" then active in the city, and a local mainstream newspaper assured it was "highly esteemed in colored society."<sup>137</sup>

Mrs. Lyon's quartet was mentioned at least twice more in the *Southwestern*, first when they gave a "fine and creditable entertainment" at the 1887 Colored State Fair.<sup>138</sup> Then, at a "grand reception" tendered Rev. Emperor Williams at LaHarpe street M.E. Church in November, 1889, "Mrs. Lyon together with her quartette sang one piece which delighted the audience very much."<sup>139</sup>

In late 1892 Rev. Lyon was transferred to St. Mark's M.E. Church in New York City. One of the first requests from his new congregation was to hear Mrs. Lyon sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," after which the congregation sang "John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave."<sup>140</sup> The January 5, 1893, edition of the *Southwestern* proclaimed Abbie Lyon a "Sweet Singer of Israel," and assured she "is greatly missed here in New Orleans by all who wont [sic] to hear her."

In New York, Abbie Lyon emerged as a well-paid, independent professional singer. Under the headline "A Sweet Singer in Israel," an article in the October 6, 1898, *Southwestern* summarized her New York career:

She organized what was known as the "Creole Quartette," which entertained scores of audiences in the wealthy white churches and at other gatherings. She soon found, however, that she was in greater demand as a soloist than was her quartette, hence of late years most of her singing has been done in that capacity. For several years she has had a standing engagement with Col. Hadley, who has charge of the Vanderbilt Rescue Mission, the wealthiest mission in this country. In this work she sings not only in New York city, but at Asbury Park, Ocean Grove and other points at which the colonel holds his great meetings. Mrs. Lyon is the only Afro-American thus engaged, and there is no doubt that she enjoys being the highest paid singer of the race.

She considers it a great privilege to have been thrown in contact at many of these great meetings with such renowned singers of sacred song as Fanny Crosby, Kirkpatrick, Sank[e]y, Sween[e]y and others whose names are equally well known. In her engagements at Ocean Grove last August [1898], Mrs.

Lyon sang before an aggregated audience for the month of about 32,000 persons.

So as not to neglect the interests of home she spends a few weeks assisting her husband in his pastorate and a few weeks elsewhere preaching the Gospel in song.

After 1898, the "Sweet Singer of Israel" fell away from the pages of the *Southwestern*. That she nevertheless continued her work is suggested by a blurb which appeared in the "Stage" columns of the Indianapolis *Freeman* in 1906: "Madam Abbie Wright Lyon is giving music recitals in New York City."<sup>141</sup> Meanwhile, when Rev. Lyon was appointed Minister Resident and Consul General to Liberia in 1903, he reportedly sailed out of New York Harbor with a new bride.<sup>142</sup>

Among the members of Rev. and Mrs. Godman's original troupe of New Orleans University Singers, Sarah Merritt Gates graduated from New Orleans University in 1878 and devoted a lifetime to "elevating her race" as a teacher in the local public schools.<sup>143</sup> In December, 1902, as president of the Afro-American Club of New Orleans, she addressed the fourth annual convention of Southern Colored Women's Clubs at Tulane Avenue Baptist Church. The convention was chaired by Mrs. Booker T. Washington, and future educator and Creole song specialist Camille Nickerson gave one of the musical interludes.<sup>144</sup> New Orleans University Singer Cora Smith also went into teaching, and in 1881 she had charge of the Sunday School at a Methodist-Episcopal church outpost in Alexandria, Louisiana.<sup>145</sup>

The most musically conspicuous veteran of the professional faction of the New Orleans University Singers was Charles Isaiah Dowden. With a group of young men that included Joseph Dupre, Dowden had joined St. James A.M.E. Church around 1871: "Immediately upon their becoming members of St. James. . . , they joined the choir, thereby starting its upgrade to a point where it became the best choir among the Negro Churches in the city of New Orleans." In 1872 Dowden became the St. James A.M.E. chorister, and he "remained as such for more than forty years":

He was an employee of Hart's Music Store, one of the leading musical establishments of this city, therefore his appreciation for and knowledge of music came from his environment and contacts with many eminent musicians as well as his hard study of music. He had free access to all musical compositions, but his chief interest was in sacred music, anthems and Gospel numbers. His favorite anthem was "Father, Oh Hear Us," by Farmer, which is sung often by the choir to this day [1946]. He also trained the choir to sing such selections as "Inflam[m]atus," "Qui Tol[l]is," "Et Incarnatus" and "The Heavens Are Telling." He had a clear tenor voice and sang with much feeling and expression; when he sang, it seemed as if the Holy Spirit was present in and around the church.



Under his leadership, the choir became so renowned that it was invited to and took part in the singing at the Negro Congress, held in the city of Atlanta, Georgia, in 1905. On the occasion of the visit of President William Howard Taft, to the city of New Orleans in 1908, Charles Dowden directed one hundred voices who sang for the President at White City (now [1946] Pelican Baseball Park).<sup>146</sup>

When the Pythian Temple Building, the “Largest and Most Modern Building in America Owned by Negroes,” was dedicated by New Orleans’ Colored Knights of Pythias on August 18, 1909, the “St. James Choir, under the leadership of Prof. Dowden and Prof. Robichaux orchestra furnished musical numbers for the program.” The choir sang “Qui Tollis” and the “Hallelujah Chorus.”<sup>147</sup> Shortly after World War I, Prof. Dowden “retired from activities of the Church and was voted a seat of honor in the Church by the congregation until he died on July 1, 1938.”<sup>148</sup>

Julia Yarrington also left an impression on New Orleans music circles. She became a member of Central Congregational Church, “by profession of faith,” on January 4, 1880,<sup>149</sup> and by the end of that year she was directing both the New Orleans University Music Department and the prestigious Central Church Choir.<sup>150</sup> In January 1881, she directed the Central Church Choir in a program at lily-white Lower Bethel Church on Esplanade Street. According to the *Louisianian*, this was “the first invitation given to a colored choir by a white audience” in New Orleans: “The waters were slightly troubled when it became apparent that the choir was colored, but after the first piece was rendered and the competency of the singers established order, perfect attention was given throughout the evening.” The ten-voice choir—which included former New Orleans University Singers Alexander Brown, Charles B. Wilson, and Anna Mason—delivered a conventional, “high-class” program, apparently devoid of Negro spirituals: “Mrs. Yarrington in artistic style sang the solo, Valse, loudly applauded but when the Trio ‘O Restless Sea,’ was sung by Mr. Wilson, Miss Fleming and Mr. Brown, the audience gave vent to their joy, and could only be restrained in their applause, by a repetition of the song.”<sup>151</sup>

In 1881 the commencement exercises at New Orleans University were “concluded with a short operetta, Little Red Riding Hood, under the skillful direction of Mrs. J. A. Yarrington, who has charge of the musical instruction at the university. The exquisite dresses of the fairies, the charming singing of the chorus, of the fairy Queen and of Little Red Riding Hood herself, completely carried the audience by storm. Rounds of applause showed the little ones how much they were admired by their friends and parents.”<sup>152</sup>

When the independent, professional troupe of New Orleans University Singers headed West in early 1883, Mrs. Yarrington remained in New Orleans. Apparently, she retired from New Orleans University—her name disappears from the catalogue in 1883—and started teaching music in her home at 77 Bourbon Street.<sup>153</sup>

When the Calanthe Literary Circle gave a program at the home of one of its members in March, 1885, Mrs. Yarrington "presided at the piano."<sup>154</sup> In April, 1887, she trained a group of children to sing for the Louisiana Orphan Asylum to which her faction of the New Orleans University Singers had lent support back in 1879. Dressed in sailor suits, the children sang Gussie L. Davis's "In The Lighthouse By The Sea."<sup>155</sup> Later that year Mrs. Yarrington conducted a "Grand Concert and Tableaux" at Morris Brown Chapel, on Villere Street, between Bourbon and St. Anthony. There was a ten-cent admission fee.<sup>156</sup> Julia Yarrington died of cancer in 1891 at the age of 50.

The exploits of the independent troupe of New Orleans University Singers between 1883, when they reportedly left for California, and 1889, when they surfaced in the columns of various black northeastern weeklies, remain undocumented.<sup>157</sup> However, the troupe claimed to be continuously active throughout that time, with Tillie Jones linking them back to the original work. At some point during that period, Tillie Jones married one F. S. Thomas. In October 1889, the Detroit *Plain Dealer* reported:

One of the most enjoyable entertainments of the season was the one at fraternity hall last evening given by the New Orleans University Glee Club, for the benefit of the Second Baptist Church. The company, composed of seven members under the management of Mr. F. S. Thomas, is well organized and is on the road for the purpose of raising funds for the completion of an Industrial School, which they are erecting in the South. Last week they entertained large audiences with their melodies at Wonderland.<sup>158</sup>

It was not unusual for professional offshoots of missionary jubilee troupes to continue trading on their former status as students raising funds for a worthy cause. Of course, common practice made it no less deceitful. When New Orleans University's administration finally got wind of this deceit, fireworks exploded in the *Southwestern*. On May 14, 1891, an open letter from the president of the board of trustees gave warning of:

#### A Fraud!

The general public is hereby warned against the fraudulent representations of a troupe styling themselves the "New Orleans University Glee Club," under the management of a Mr. F. S. Thomas, which is said to be raising funds for an industrial school in the South. The faculty and trustees of New Orleans University know nothing of such a troupe. They have fraudulently assumed our name and are gulling our friends, especially in the North. All friendly exchanges please copy.

A. E. P. Albert,

President Board of Trustees New Orleans University

In July 1891, after hearing from F. S. Thomas in person, the *Southwestern* softened its position:

Mr. F. S. Thomas and Mrs. Tillie Jones Thomas, managers of the Glee Club, which we published as a fraud some weeks ago, because it assumed the name "New Orleans University Glee Club," explain their connection with that name as follows: "We are managers of a company known as the New Orleans University Singers, and traveling on our own merits, since we finished our mission in the interest of LaTeche Seminary, under Dr. Godman, ex-president of New Orleans University. We finished our work with him in 1881, and have been traveling since upon our own merits." We would not do Mr. Thomas and his troupe any injustice, but it is but just to the University and its friends that the fact be known that the New Orleans University has no troupe giving concerts for its benefit in the North.<sup>159</sup>

Meanwhile, Tillie Jones Thomas and the New Orleans University Singers were blanketing the northeast. Skeletal remains of their itinerary can be exhumed from random reports in the weeklies. They left Detroit for Pontiac, Michigan, on October 11, 1889.<sup>160</sup> In April 1890, they sang at the Odd Fellows Hall in Pittsburgh, and two months later they participated in a four-day camp meeting in Boston, Pennsylvania.<sup>161</sup> In October 1891, they sang at the Zion Wesley A.M.E. Church in Philadelphia, and they were still working the Philadelphia area at the end of the year.<sup>162</sup>

Early in 1892 the New Orleans University Singers left Philadelphia for New York City. The *New York Age* reported on February 20, 1892:

The New Orleans University singers gave a concert on Tuesday evening at the Johnson street M.E. Church . . . The troupe consisted of seven persons, three sopranos, two altos, a bass and a tenor. Mr. F. S. Thomas is the sole manager of the troupe, Miss Tillie Jones Thomas is the leading star. This troupe has traveled extensively throughout the country with much success having raised several thousand dollars for the institution. They are now on their own resources.<sup>163</sup>

In March 1892, the New Orleans University Singers were spotted in Brooklyn.<sup>164</sup> A final citing put them in an A.M.E. church in Olean, New York, in October, 1896.<sup>165</sup> Then came the news of Tillie Jones Thomas' death, reported to the *Southwestern* by grieving friends, in July 1897:

Tillie Jones Thomas, one of the original "Jubilee Singers" is no more. It has pleased God to take her from our midst to live in a home of happiness. She lived and died a Christian, beloved and a joy to all that knew her; she will never sing again to gladden our hearts, for she sleeps the "sweet sleep of the blessed." She sang before the Queen and Royal Family, and in many places throughout Europe. She was called the "Black Swan." Thou hast fought a good fight, Tillie, thy crown is now in glory.

Thou no more will join our number,  
And no more your songs we will hear;

Peaceful be thou silent slumber,  
 Peaceful in thy grave so low,  
 Friends knew you well,  
 But God knew you best,  
 Good night, but not farewell.  
 Her Friends<sup>166</sup>

If she never really got to sing “throughout Europe”—and maybe she *did*—there is the feeling, after all, that Tillie Jones Thomas was an influential nineteenth-century jubilee singer, and that the New Orleans University Singers had been a major jubilee troupe. With the death of Tillie Jones Thomas, the bloodline of jubilee singers which extended from Rev. and Mrs. Godman’s desperate concern for La Teche Seminary and Orphans’ Home was apparently severed. No evidence indicates that F. S. Thomas tried to continue fielding a troupe.

Though the New Orleans University Singers ceased to exist, their reputation was strong enough to encourage the commercial exploitation of their name by entrepreneurs who were in no discernible way connected to New Orleans University, and probably knew little or nothing of its history. Among these entrepreneurs were Dan Palmer and Prof. A. M. Damon.

Dan Palmer was an inveterate vaudevillian. He and international vaudeville star Billy McClain were said to be the “first colored acrobats and trapeze performers out of Indianapolis.”<sup>167</sup> During the late 1890s, Dan Palmer worked in several major road shows, including the “Darkest America” Company and Mahara’s Mammoth Colored Minstrels in 1897,<sup>168</sup> McCabe’s Black Trilby Company in 1898,<sup>169</sup> A. G. Allen’s New Orleans Minstrels in 1899<sup>170</sup> and the “Coontown Four Hundred” in 1900.<sup>171</sup>

Some time during 1900 Dan Palmer became a partner in “McBeard and Palmer’s New Orleans University Students company.” A blurb in the December 1, 1900, edition of the Indianapolis *Freeman* said, “McBeard and Palmer’s New Orleans University Students Company . . . consisting of ten people, are touring the peninsula of Michigan. We have nothing to complain of, as we are playing to good sized houses, and give entire satisfaction.” The company included “Mr. and Mrs. McBeard, Will Burgess and Alice Simms, George A. Hunter, Dan and Ruby Palmer, and Minnie Stevenson,” with pianist Eddie Lyons.

By March, 1903, Dan Palmer had taken solitary control of the New Orleans University Students Company. The March 28, 1903, *Freeman* revealed, “Dan Palmer’s ‘New Orleans Students’ are meeting with much success, having made Montana, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin.” The subsequent activities and ultimate fate of Dan Palmer and his New Orleans University Students are unknown.

Prof. A. M. Damon, the other independent professional musician who exploited the New Orleans University Singers’ name, was styled the “Black Paganini,”<sup>172</sup> the “king of the violin,” and “the only colored man in America

that plays the harp-zither.”<sup>173</sup> Damon toured as a soloist during the early-1900s, then joined W. A. Mahara’s New Orleans Concert Company: “While the American public has had ‘jubilee singers’ and colored concert companies in abundance, they have never been offered a company with more merits than the New Orleans Grand Colored Concert Company.”<sup>174</sup> Mahara eventually put Damon in charge of the New Orleans Colored Concert Company and changed its name to “Damon’s New Orleans Colored Students.” The July 8, 1905, *Freeman* announced:

Damon’s New Orleans Colored Students: This all star company is under the direction of Prof. A. M. Damon, the leading violinist of his race, who has by years of instruction produced a company that excels in the singing of the old folk lore songs of the sunny south, to the twanging of mandolins and banjos as soft as a summer twilight, introducing only the beautiful in colored melodies. This company will carry eight people, opening at Kansas City, Mo., August 10, under the auspices of the Acme Lyceum Bureau, Chicago.

In a letter to *The Freeman*, mailed from Chase, Kansas, on October 1, 1905, Damon cited Mahara for sparing “neither pains or money in allowing me to select this ‘bunch’ of talent known as Damon’s New Orleans Students.” He went on to report:

We are now touring Western Kansas, working toward the coast. By January we will be in Southern California, where we have made a reputation for ourselves the past season. The opera house managers, doctors and lawyers all claim that the Damon New Orleans Students is without exception the greatest concert company that ever traveled. We have gotten away from the old jubilee style and grasped the idea of progressing with the times.<sup>175</sup>

By the fall of 1906, Prof. Damon had amended the name of his troupe to “Damon’s Colored Musical Comedy Company”<sup>176</sup> and was featuring his banjo and mandolin ensembles, along with a special zither duet. The closest thing to jubilee singing was an olio of “Southern - descriptive songs and dances” entitled “Old Folks at Home.”<sup>177</sup> Abandoning the “Colored Students” motif, Prof. Damon went on to become the bass voice of Mahara’s Big Four Minstrel Male Quartette,<sup>178</sup> and the last lingering commercial vestige of the Only Original New Orleans University Singers was finally laid to rest.

Back at the original source, the concept of jubilee singing that had initially guided the New Orleans University Singers into the concert arena was also “progressing with the times.” During the 1890s, partly in response to the signal popularity of recreational quartet “harmonizing,” or “barbershopping,” the Fisk Jubilee Singers switched their presentation format from mixed-voice choral to male quartet.<sup>179</sup> Following suit, New Orleans University started sponsoring its own male jubilee quartet some time before 1910.<sup>180</sup>

In addition to carrying on as racial ambassadors, the new wave of university-based jubilee quartets took part in student recruitment campaigns which carried them deep into black America. This amplified the already-apparent influence university jubilee troupes made on grassroots vocal harmony traditions; the formal decorum, missionary posture and textbook disciplines of attack, release and articulation which they so artfully demonstrated were directly funneled into factories, ghettos and rural communities, to be emulated by the rising tide of gospel singers intent on making "a way out of no way."<sup>181</sup>

The artful approach to singing spirituals that had originated with the Fisk Jubilee Singers and been adopted with such evangelical zeal by the New Orleans University Singers was the product of a consciously concerted, self-respecting effort to reconcile indigenous African and African-American folk-musical practices with standard functional Western musical principles. This reconciliatory process was essential to the crystallization, commercial development and worldwide dissemination of all the great black vernacular musics: ragtime, blues, jazz and gospel.<sup>182</sup>

It takes no abstract leap of faith to follow a trail of historical continuity from Tillie Jones, the New Orleans University Singers' most commanding soloist, to Mahalia Jackson; or from the New Orleans University Singers as a group to the Soproco Spiritual Singers, New Orleans's most powerful post-World War II gospel quartet.<sup>183</sup> The stature of New Orleans as an historic focus of powerful black vernacular music is especially beholden to the groundbreaking adventures of the Only Original New Orleans University Singers.

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## NOTES

The large-scale omission of specific page references in many citations below reflects not neglect on the author's part, but the absence of clear page numbers on many of the microfilm sources. The reiteration of "n.p." for dozens of citations was deemed a needless redundancy by the editor.

<sup>1</sup> Howard Ashley White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 188-192.

<sup>2</sup> Handwritten note, c. 1873, in Jubilee Singers Archive, Fisk University Library Special Collections, quoted in Doug Seroff, "Nashville—Historic Capital of Spiritual Singing" (program for Gospel Arts Day, Nashville, 19 June 1988), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Doug Seroff, "How Shall We Sing The Lord's Song In A Foreign Land?" (program for "Gospel Arts Day," Nashville, Tennessee, 18 June 1989), 2-9.

<sup>4</sup> Theo. L. Culyer, in a letter to the *New York Tribune*, 17 January 1872, as quoted in G.D. Pike, *The Jubilee Singers, and Their Campaign for Twenty Thousand Dollars*, (Boston, Lee and Shepard, 1873), 117-119.

<sup>5</sup> Seroff, "How Shall We Sing?" 4.

<sup>6</sup> Doug Seroff, "On the Battlefield," *Repercussions: A Celebration of African-American Music* (London, Century Publishing, 1985), 32.

<sup>7</sup> B.L.S.B., "Slave Preaching," extracts from *Englishwoman's Journal*, published in *The [New York] Anti-Slavery Standard*, 12 May 1860.

<sup>8</sup> *Melodies of the New Orleans Jubilee Singers* (Richmond, VA: J.W. Fergusson & Son, 1876).

<sup>9</sup> *Melodies*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Lynn Abbott conversation with Rev. William Bryson, January 1987.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. Pollard is not mentioned in John Jamison Moore, *History of the A.M.E. Zion Church in America*, 1884 or Bishop J.W. Hood, *One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*, 1895.

<sup>12</sup> *Melodies*, 7-15.

<sup>13</sup> *Melodies*, 17-37.

<sup>14</sup> Howard Ashley White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 190-191. John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans: 1860-1880* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 122-131.

<sup>15</sup> James P. Brawley, *Two Centuries of Methodist Concern: Bondage, Freedom and Education of Black People* (New York: Vantage Press, 1974), 267-274.

<sup>16</sup> "Editorial Perambulations," *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, 27 January 1887.

<sup>17</sup> *Southwestern*, 28 June 1923.

<sup>18</sup> Jay S. Stowell, *Methodist Adventures in Negro Education* (New York and Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1922), 110-111.

<sup>19</sup> Brawley, *Two Centuries*, 270-273.

<sup>20</sup> *Southwestern*, 20 November 1873.

<sup>21</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 February 1874.

<sup>22</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 February 1874; 19 November 1874.

<sup>23</sup> New Orleans University catalogues, 1880-1881 and 1883-1884.

<sup>24</sup> *Seventy Years of Service*, The Faculty of New Orleans University (n.p., 1935), 59.

<sup>25</sup> *Southwestern*, 3 December 1874.

<sup>26</sup> "The Tennesseans," *Southwestern*, 21 October 1880.

<sup>27</sup> *Southwestern*, 3 December 1874.

<sup>28</sup> "The Rev. William Davis Godman, D.D.," *Southwestern*, 29 April 1909.

<sup>29</sup> "Rev. W. D. Godman, D.D.," *Southwestern*, 6 June 1889.

<sup>30</sup> "In Memoriam," *Southwestern*, 26 January 1905.

<sup>31</sup> "Some Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Godman," *Southwestern*, 2 February 1905.

<sup>32</sup> "In Memoriam," *Southwestern*, 26 January 1905.

<sup>33</sup> Anne C. Loveland, "The 'Southern Work' of the Reverend Joseph C. Hartzell, Pastor of Ames Church in New Orleans, 1870-1873," *Louisiana History* 16:4 (Fall 1975), 400.

<sup>34</sup> Rev. W. S. Fitch, "Death of John Baldwin, Sr., the Christian Philanthropist," *Southwestern*, 15 January 1885.

<sup>35</sup> "History of Sager-Brown Goes Back to 1867," *St. Mary & Franklin Banner-Tribune*, "Special Progress Edition," 1967.

<sup>36</sup> Brawley, *Two Centuries*, 268.

<sup>37</sup> Stowell, *Methodist Adventures*, 113.

<sup>38</sup> Brawley, *Two Centuries*, 272-276. *Southwestern*, 11 March 1875; 26 January 1905.

<sup>39</sup> Mrs. A. D. Godman, "Why I Came South," *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, 8 April 1875.

<sup>40</sup> N. P. Banks, in a letter dated "Boston, Mass., June 25, 1879", quoted in William D. Godman, *Gilbert Academy and Agricultural College: Sketches and Incidents* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1893), 52.

<sup>41</sup> "The Musical Soiree at the Orleans Theatre," *New Orleans Black Republican*, 13 May 1865.

<sup>42</sup> Freedmen's Aid Society. Fourth Annual Report, 1871, 12, quoted in Brawley, *Two Centuries*, 269. Loveland, 400-404.

<sup>43</sup> *Southwestern*, 4 December 1873.

<sup>44</sup> "Extracts From a History of the Organization and Growth of the Orphans' Home Society," January 1880, quoted in Godman, *Sketches and Incidents*, 74.

<sup>45</sup> "Dr. Godman to Bishop Foster," *Southwestern*, 20 May 1875.

<sup>46</sup> *Sketches and Incidents*, 89-90.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Much smaller than Bayou Teche, Bayou Choupique wanders along the southwestern fringes of the present town of Baldwin.

<sup>49</sup> "Adam in the garden pinnin' leaves" turns up in another early collection: E.A. McIlhenny, *Befo' de War Spirituals: Words and Melodies* (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, 1933). McIlhenny collected his songs from descendants of slaves in the vicinity of his family's Avery Island plantation, less than thirty miles from La Teche.

<sup>50</sup> Another early document of "chatter with the Son" occurs in the song "Sweet Chariot," as given in Marshall W. Taylor, *A Collection of Revival Hymns and Plantation Melodies* (Cincinnati: Marshall W. Taylor & W.C. Echols, 1883), 207. From 1884 until his death in 1887, Marshall W. Taylor was the editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.

<sup>51</sup> *Sketches and Incidents*, 257-261.

<sup>52</sup> Rev. W. D. Godman, "Progress Among the Freedman," *Southwestern*, 26 August 1875.

<sup>53</sup> *Sketches and Incidents*, 87-88.

<sup>54</sup> *Sketches and Incidents*, 62.

<sup>55</sup> *Southwestern*, 3 June 1875; 17 June 1875.

<sup>56</sup> *Southwestern*, 20 April 1876; 6 July 1876.

<sup>57</sup> "New Orleans University," *Southwestern*, 6 July 1876; *Southwestern*, 31 August 1876.

<sup>58</sup> *Southwestern*, 31 August 1876.

<sup>59</sup> "In Memoriam", 26 January 1905.

<sup>60</sup> *Southwestern*, 9 January 1883.

<sup>61</sup> *Southwestern*, 1 February 1877.

<sup>62</sup> *Southwestern*, 19 April 1879.

<sup>63</sup> *Southwestern*, 29 March 1877.

<sup>64</sup> "The Wesley Chapel Concert," *Southwestern*, 19 April 1877. The participating singers were identified as, "Miss. M. Jones, Miss. E. Parker, Miss. E. Merritt, Mrs. Yarrington, Miss. Ritchie, Mr. A. A. Brown, Mr. Dupuy, and Mr. Dardis."

<sup>65</sup> Journal, Louisiana Annual Conference, 10-15 January 1877, quoted in Brawley, *Two Centuries*, 277.

<sup>66</sup> "Certificate of Death," Julia A. Yarrington, Bureau of Vital Statistics, State of Louisiana.

<sup>67</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 April 1877.

<sup>68</sup> *Southwestern*, 3 May 1877.



- <sup>69</sup> *Southwestern*, 17 May 1877.
- <sup>70</sup> "Negro Cartoonists," *Western Christian Advocate*, quoted in *Southwestern*, 15 February 1894.
- <sup>71</sup> *Southwestern*, 31 May 1877.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> New Orleans University catalogues, 1875-1876, 1877-1878.
- <sup>74</sup> *Southwestern*, 6 June 1889.
- <sup>75</sup> Straight University catalogues, 1871-1872, 1881-1882.
- <sup>76</sup> *Southwestern*, 6 November 1873; 11 March 1875.
- <sup>77</sup> According to Soard's *New Orleans City Directory*, 1877.
- <sup>78</sup> *Southwestern*, 9 January 1883.
- <sup>79</sup> "New Orleans University Singers," (Philadelphia: J. H. Johnson, 1877) in Xavier University Archives, New Orleans.
- <sup>80</sup> The same lyrics, with additional verses, appear as "Folks That Put On Airs," in *Minstrel Songs, Old and New*, (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1910), 64-66.
- <sup>81</sup> "Letter from Dr. Godman," *Southwestern*, 14 February 1878.
- <sup>82</sup> *Southwestern*, 20 September 1877.
- <sup>83</sup> "Letter from Dr. Godman," *Southwestern*, 14 February 1878.
- <sup>84</sup> "Dr. Godman's Work in New York," *Southwestern*, 9 May 1878.
- <sup>85</sup> *Christian Educator* 12 (1878): 30.
- <sup>86</sup> "Dr. Godman and his Work," *Southwestern*, 9 January 1879.
- <sup>87</sup> *Southwestern*, 21 October 1875.
- <sup>88</sup> "The Tennesseans," *Michigan Christian Advocate*, quoted in *Southwestern*, 21 October 1880.
- <sup>89</sup> *Christian Educator* 13 (1879): 73-74.
- <sup>90</sup> *Southwestern*, 11 September 1879; 15 April 1880.
- <sup>91</sup> *New Orleans Weekly Louisianian*, 13 and 27 September 1879.
- <sup>92</sup> *Weekly Louisianian*, 27 September 1879.
- <sup>93</sup> *Weekly Louisianian*, 2 November 1872.
- <sup>94</sup> *New Orleans Louisianian*, 17 March 1872.
- <sup>95</sup> Mrs. Rosa Marshall Francois, "History of St. James A.M.E. Church Choir," in *St. James A.M.E.: A Century of African Methodism in the Deep South* (n.p., 1946), 58.
- <sup>96</sup> Joseph A. Thornton, "The History of St. James A.M.E. Church," in *St. James A.M.E.: A Century of African Methodism in the Deep South*, (n.p., 1946), 31-32.
- <sup>97</sup> *Louisianian*, 1 November 1879; 13 December 1879; 8 January 1881.
- <sup>98</sup> *Southwestern*, 22 January 1880.
- <sup>99</sup> *Southwestern*, 12 and 26 February 1880.
- <sup>100</sup> *Southwestern*, 5 February 1880.
- <sup>101</sup> *Southwestern*, 9 February 1882.
- <sup>102</sup> *Southwestern*, 22 July 1880.
- <sup>103</sup> "Our University Singers in the White House," *Philadelphia Methodist*, quoted in *Southwestern*, 29 April 1880.
- <sup>104</sup> *Southwestern*, 27 January, 1881.
- <sup>105</sup> *Southwestern*, 23 June 1881.
- <sup>106</sup> "The Only Original New Orleans University Singers," (Philadelphia, 1881). This edition of the songbook is noted in Blassingame, 264.
- <sup>107</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 January 1905.
- <sup>108</sup> *Southwestern*, 23 June 1881.
- <sup>109</sup> La Teche Seminary catalogue, 1880.
- <sup>110</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 January 1905.
- <sup>111</sup> *Southwestern*, 22 June 1882.
- <sup>112</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 October 1882.
- <sup>113</sup> *Southwestern*, 14 September 1882.
- <sup>114</sup> *Southwestern*, 2 January 1883.

- <sup>115</sup> *Southwestern*, 9 January 1883.
- <sup>116</sup> *Southwestern*, 6 June 1889.
- <sup>117</sup> "The Reception of the Seminary Quartette and La Teche Children," *Southwestern*, 9 January 1883.
- <sup>118</sup> *Sketches and Incidents*, 28.
- <sup>119</sup> "The Rev. W. D. Godman, D.D.," *Southwestern*, 31 December 1908.
- <sup>120</sup> "In Memoriam," 26 January 1905.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid. "Some Incidents in the Life of Mrs. Godman," *Southwestern*, 2 February 1905.
- <sup>122</sup> *Southwestern*, 8 August 1889.
- <sup>123</sup> *Southwestern*, 15 January 1891.
- <sup>124</sup> *Southwestern*, 1 January 1920.
- <sup>125</sup> "In Memoriam," 26 January 1905. "The Rev. William Davis Godman, D.D.," *Southwestern*, 29 April 1909.
- <sup>126</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>127</sup> "History Of Sager-Brown Home Goes Back To 1867," *St. Mary & Franklin Banner Tribune*, "Special Progress Edition," 1967, n.p.
- <sup>128</sup> Brawley, *Two Centuries*, 273.
- <sup>129</sup> "New Orleans University," *Southwestern*, 6 June 1889. An historical marker commemorates the work of New Orleans University and Gilbert Academy at this site (corner of St. Charles Avenue and Valmont Street), now occupied by De LaSalle High School.
- <sup>130</sup> "Gilbert Academy alumni reminisce on school's heyday," *New Orleans Times Picayune*, 21 April 1984.
- <sup>131</sup> Lynn Abbott interview with Frank Davis, 16 January 1984.
- <sup>132</sup> *Southwestern*, 16 March 1922; 15 June 1922.
- <sup>133</sup> Wanda Horn, "Allen gave up 26-year career for 7 months at Sager-Brown," *Baton Rouge, Louisiana Sunday Advocate*, 5 August 1979. "History of Sager-Brown Goes Back to 1867," *St. Mary & Franklin Banner Tribune*, "Special Progress Edition," 1967.
- <sup>134</sup> *Southwestern*, 21 July 1887.
- <sup>135</sup> *Southwestern*, 10 March 1887.
- <sup>136</sup> *Southwestern*, 12 January 1888.
- <sup>137</sup> "Colored Baptists in New Orleans," *New Orleans Evening Chronicle*, quoted in *Southwestern*, 25 November 1885.
- <sup>138</sup> *Southwestern*, 24 November 1887.
- <sup>139</sup> *Southwestern*, 28 November 1889.
- <sup>140</sup> *Southwestern*, 5 January 1893.
- <sup>141</sup> "The Stage," *The Freeman*, 17 February 1906.
- <sup>142</sup> *Southwestern*, 19 March 1903; 23 July 1903.
- <sup>143</sup> *Southwestern*, 26 March 1885; 6 June 1889.
- <sup>144</sup> *Southwestern*, 8 January 1903.
- <sup>145</sup> *Southwestern*, 14 April 1881.
- <sup>146</sup> Joseph A. Thornton, "The History of the St. James A.M.E. Church," 31-32.
- <sup>147</sup> "New Orleans News," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 4 September 1909.
- <sup>148</sup> Thornton, "The History of the St. James A.M.E. Church," 32.
- <sup>149</sup> Central Congregational Church Register, 1872-1909.
- <sup>150</sup> New Orleans University catalogue, 1880-1881.
- <sup>151</sup> "An Evening At Lower Bethel," *New Orleans Weekly Louisianian*, 22 January 1881.
- <sup>152</sup> I. Eugene Mullon, "New Orleans University," *Southwestern*, 9 June 1881.
- <sup>153</sup> *Soard's New Orleans City Directory*, 1883.
- <sup>154</sup> *Southwestern*, 19 March 1885.
- <sup>155</sup> *New Orleans Weekly Pelican*, 16 March 1887.
- <sup>156</sup> *Weekly Pelican*, 22 October 1887.
- <sup>157</sup> A note in the 9 March 1889 issue of the *Indianapolis Freeman* confuses Tillie Jones of the New Orleans University Singers with the more famous prima donna Mathilda Sissieretta Jones: "Miss Mathilda S. Jones formerly of New Orleans has been singing in the West Indies and Central

America. She received magnificent presents from her hearers. She was formerly a member of the St. James Church Choir in New Orleans." Sissieretta Jones was never a member of the St. James A.M.E. Church Choir in New Orleans, but she did make a tour of the West Indies in 1889 (see Doug Seroff, "Nashville -Historic Capital of Spiritual Singing," Nashville "Gospel Arts Day" program, 1988, 3-4).

<sup>158</sup> *Detroit Plain Dealer*, 11 October 1889.

<sup>159</sup> "Schools and Colleges," *Southwestern*, 9 July 1891.

<sup>160</sup> *Detroit Plain Dealer*, 18 October 1889.

<sup>161</sup> *Cleveland Gazette*, 26 April 1890; 14 June 1890.

<sup>162</sup> *Indianapolis Freeman*, 24 October 1891; 5 December 1891.

<sup>163</sup> *New York Age*, 20 February 1892.

<sup>164</sup> *Freeman*, 12 March 1892.

<sup>165</sup> *Cleveland Gazette*, 24 October 1896.

<sup>166</sup> *Southwestern*, 29 July 1897.

<sup>167</sup> Billy McClain, "The Man Who Originated the Cake Walk," *Freeman*, 23 April 1910.

<sup>168</sup> *Freeman*, 17 July 1897.

<sup>169</sup> *Freeman*, 13 November 1897.

<sup>170</sup> *Freeman*, 29 July 1899.

<sup>171</sup> *Freeman*, 13 January 1900.

<sup>172</sup> *Freeman*, 3 April 1909.

<sup>173</sup> *Freeman*, 7 February 1903.

<sup>174</sup> *Freeman*, 8 August 1903.

<sup>175</sup> *Freeman*, 7 October 1905.

<sup>176</sup> *Freeman*, 22 September 1906.

<sup>177</sup> *Freeman*, 1 December 1906.

<sup>178</sup> *Freeman*, 23 January 1909.

<sup>179</sup> See Lynn Abbott, "'Play That Barber Shop Chord': A Case for the African-American Origin of Barber Shop Harmony," *American Music* 10:3 (Fall 1992).

<sup>180</sup> Lynn Abbott, *The Soproco Spiritual Singers: A New Orleans Quartet Family Tree*, (New Orleans: Jean Laffitte National Historical Park, 1983).

<sup>181</sup> See Lynn Abbott, "Religious Recordings from Black New Orleans, 1924-1931" (booklet accompanying 504 LP 20), 1989.

<sup>182</sup> See Doug Seroff and Lynn Abbott, "'They Cert'ly Sound Good to Me': Sheet Music, Southern Vaudeville and the Commercial Ascendancy of the Blues," *American Music* 14:4 (Winter 1996).

<sup>183</sup> See Abbott, *The Soproco Spiritual Singers*.