



SEDALIA IN THE RAGTIME ERA 1895 - 1904 EXHIBIT

Thank you for taking time to view this exhibit and get a glimpse of what Sedalia, Missouri was like in the Ragtime Era, 1895-1904.

For a few short years Scott Joplin lived here and began writing what would not only become America's popular music, but America's premier classical music as well. His "Maple Leaf Rag," published here in 1899, ranks Joplin among the great composers our nation has produced. Thanks to him, Sedalia can call itself a place where America's music began!



Exhibit Case #1 "The Contract"

#1 THE CONTRACT

The “Maple Leaf Rag” contract, signed on August 10, 1899 in Sedalia, Missouri, impacted our nation in many positive ways. The bi-racial agreement was a fair and, at the time, generously unique royalty transaction. The contract came at a time of intense national segregation so this was a very positive moment in national race relations.

Though there had been many previous ragtime compositions, Joplin’s was by far the most sophisticated. It not only quickly became an iconic piece of American music, it was to have an impact on the rest of American music as well. In addition and true to Joplin’s dream, his Classic Ragtime compositions are now recognized as America’s early classical music. Joplin, himself, is considered one of our premier classical composers. It is American music and Scott Joplin is the King.



#2 POLITICS

Sedalia had always been a very politically active community. In the Ragtime Era the city was lobbying to get the state capital moved from Jefferson City. They had land set aside to the west of town for all the state buildings but when the issue came to a vote in 1896, the leaders were disappointed that their plan had failed. After all, they had two powerful representatives in Charles Yeater and John Bothwell campaigning for the move.

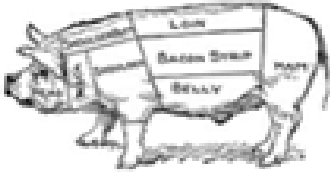
Sedalia's white residents voted largely Democratic in the election of 1896, and they voted heavily for William Jennings Bryan, who had visited the city during the campaign.

On the other hand, North Sedalia residents in the Black Lincolnville community tended to vote Republican. As Tom Ireland's mother reminded him, but for Abraham Lincoln you would be a slave. Ireland was respected in both communities and was often chosen to lead local Republican groups.

The Pettis County Courthouse presided over downtown in the Ragtime Era and the community's political activity was focused there.



#3 THE FAIRS



Sedalians always loved festivities and a large country fair is about as big a local affair as can be thrown. For years, the downtown street fairs had been attracting local revelers as well as folks from far and

wide who came in on excursion trains. The local musicians told of performing from booth to booth up and down Ohio Street. A highlight of the street fairs were the flower parades featuring carts and carriages decorated with elaborate floral arrangements.

So popular were the street fairs that after the Capital Removal campaign failed in 1896, Sedalia leaders began almost immediately to lobby for the State Fair authorization for their city. The political impetus came from leaders like N.H. Gentry who lobbied for a fair among the state's swine breeders. In the end, this effort was successful, thanks in large part to the 150 acres of land the Van Riper family had previously designated for the capital.

Thus, in 1901 the first Missouri State Fair was held in Sedalia at the height of the Ragtime Era. However, it was held in the midst of a severe drought. Nevertheless, thanks to the Mo-Pac and MKT railroads and the local trolley system extending tracks to the fairgrounds, visitors flocked to the first fair.

In all, \$50,000 was appropriated to construct necessary buildings, roads and barns. The main feature was the 3,000 seat grandstand that overlooked a half-mile and one-mile racetrack. 25,000 people attended the first fair held September 9-13, 1901.



Exhibit Case #3 "The Fairs"

#4 TRANSPORTATION

Sedalia's Ragtime Era story is the story of the western railroads binding the nation together. An essential ingredient then was the role the railroads played in bringing young musicians to Sedalia. Most of these young men were itinerants constantly moving from town to town.



The Missouri Pacific inspired George R. Smith to relocate along the line in 1860-61. The MKT arrived in the 1870s. By 1873, both railroads had sizable shops employing thousands of workers. In addition there were railroad stockyards, round houses and a MKT hospital for the employees.



Sedalia had passenger travel from 1861 on but it gained real momentum in 1886, when construction of the Mo-Pac Depot on Pacific Street downtown, and the MKT Depot off of 3rd Street was finished in 1896. In addition to ordinary travel, the railroads brought large excursion groups to town for shopping and special events, greatly enhancing the economy.

Exhibit Case #4 "Transportation"

#5 PERRY MUSIC COMPANY

For part of nine decades, the A.W. Perry Music Company produced sheet music for countless piano teachers and church musicians around the world.

In addition to publishing individual sheet music, Perry and his sons published the Perry's Musical Magazine monthly from 1881 to 1967. They had subscribers around the world. It was one of the longest running publications of its kind.

Perry published Scott Joplin's "The Favorite" in 1904 (though he probably bought it in 1899.) The company also published Edgar Settle's "X.L. Rag" in 1903.

A great deal of the company's publishing involved arrangements by Mr. Phillip Perry. He was a classically trained musician and studied in Europe for a lengthy period in the early twentieth century. Phillip often arranged pieces under the pseudonyms M.W. Butler, G. Holcomb or G. Gregory.

The Perry Company was also known for publishing music to celebrate and commemorate noteworthy events and to publicize or memorialize famous people. This included composing for Sedalia, Missouri, national and world affairs.



Exhibit Case #5 Perry Music Co.





Exhibit Case #6 "Commerce"

#6 COMMERCE

The turn of the 20th Century saw the economy improving and an already vital community once again ready for growth.

The Sedalia Board of Trade (forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) produced a thorough booklet extolling the commercial and social virtues of the community for the Capital Removal campaign of 1896.

It described the city of 20,000 inhabitants and its central position in the U.S. emphasizing that

Sedalia had railroad lines going in and out of the city in eight different directions. This was a great railroad center.

Sedalia boasted 16 miles of electrified trolley track, twice that much paved road, a gas plant, a water system with a modern pumping station, six banks and a long and diversified list of factories and manufacturers with nearby coal deposits to power all this. Sedalia was electrified in the late 1870s and had telephone service by 1880 with 200 units in place within a year. All this is especially fascinating when you realize that Sedalia didn't exist until 1861, and that fire almost completely destroyed the town in the 1870s.

In the end, it was the railroads that had the most impact on the city and they deserve their own display.



#7 SEDALIA PERSONALITIES

It is exciting to imagine all the musical personalities who gathered in Sedalia during the Ragtime Era. Scott Joplin alone was a major celebrity by the time he left Sedalia for good in 1904 but many had come to meet him and even seek him as a teacher. But Sedalia also produced musical personalities of its own in the Ragtime Era.

SCOTT JOPLIN — It is uncertain if Joplin went to high school in Sedalia but he certainly made it his home base by 1895, while traveling with his various musical groups. Though he moved to St. Louis in 1901, he often returned and even lived in Sedalia again briefly in 1904. He wrote the “Maple Leaf Rag” during his Sedalia years. It was published by John Stark in 1899, making him the “King of Ragtime.” The Perry Music Co. published “The Favorite” in 1904, and “The Ragtime Dance” and “Guest of Honor” may have been written in Sedalia.



Exhibit Case #7 “Personalities”

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BLIND BOONE — was a composer/performer and Joplin contemporary from Columbia, Missouri who performed often by imitating other performers or compositions by ear.



CARRIE STARK BURGGEMAN—was the daughter of John Stark and a composer, performer in her own right and probably wrote “You’ve Gotta Quit Kickin’ My Dog Around!”

BRUN CAMPBELL—the fifteen year old “Ragtime Kid” from Kansas who came to Sedalia to learn Ragtime from Joplin and then became a promoter of Scott Joplin in the 1940s.



W. C. HANDY—the popular Blues and Ragtime composer and band leader who visited Sedalia and the Maple Leaf Club while traveling with the Mahara Minstrel Show.

SCOTT HAYDEN—a resident of Sedalia who was Joplin’s pupil, and later a composer and Joplin collaborator on six rags.



TOM IRELAND—a clarinetist in the Queen City Concert and Joplin bands, who worked on local newspapers most of his 97 years. He was imminently respected in the community and rode his bicycle into his 90s.

HENRY JACKSON—co-produced musicals with Joplin and collaborated on two songs.

MINNEOLIA & VIOLETTA JACKSON—composers and music teachers in Sedalia, and Joplin contemporaries. Minneola went to George R. Smith College with Joplin, and the sisters briefly ran a music school.





ARTHUR MARSHALL — Sedalia resident, Joplin friend, collaborator, composer and performer. In 1959, Arthur returned to Sedalia to appear in a centennial ragtime program.

DANIEL & WILLIAM McCABE —

William, (and possibly Daniel) was born in Sedalia. Both ran large minstrel shows and with Billy Young, Daniel had one of the largest African-American owned shows touring the country. They were Joplin contemporaries and appeared in Sedalia often, Arthur Marshall toured with Daniel's show for two years.



Dan



Billy



QUEEN CITY CONCERT BAND — Local African-American Band popular during the Ragtime Era. Joplin played coronet in the band and Tom Ireland, clarinet. The group performed all over the mid-west and they frequently won awards for their showmanship.

OTIS SAUNDERS — Musician, Joplin friend and his frequent companion in Sedalia.



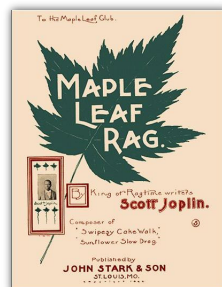
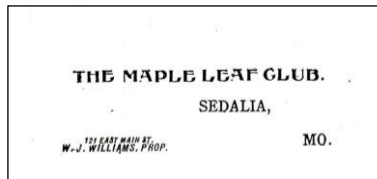
JOHN STILLWELL STARK — was a music dealer in Sedalia who went into the publishing business beginning with the 1899 contract he signed with Joplin to publish the “Maple Leaf Rag.”

TOM TURPIN — Early Ragtime composer and owner of Rosebud Café in St. Louis. He visited Joplin in Sedalia and then Joplin moved to St. Louis and worked with Turpin. Turpin wrote the “Harlem Rag.”



TONY WILLIAMS — Ran the Maple Leaf and Black 400 clubs and was a champion cake walker and entertainer in his own right. He and his brother Charles were close friends and confidants of Joplin in Sedalia.

THE MAPLE LEAF CLUB — Since the Maple Leaf Club existed for such brief time, there was always controversy as to whether the rag was named for the club or the club for the rag. The dedication on the second and third editions of the rag added to the controversy. (See covers in Case #1)



#8 EDUCATION



Exhibit Case #8 Education

In addition to employment, the opportunity for an education undoubtedly drew Scott Joplin to Sedalia. In fact, he may have even arrived earlier to attend the all-Black Lincoln High School. Regardless, Joplin's friends encouraged him to take music classes at the George R. Smith College and he seems to have attended for all or part of the first year the college was open. He also participated in musical programs. Sedalia had a successful but segregated public school system at all levels.

In 1901, the Carnegie-endowed, free public library opened its doors. It became the location for the Sedalia Natural History Society collection. This group and its founder, F.A. Sampson, were nationally known in the field of natural science. Sampson donated his extensive personal library of 2,000 books and 14,000 pamphlets to inaugurate the library of the State Historical Society of Missouri and was its first secretary.

As a result, Sedalia was widely known as a place of educational opportunity and advanced learning, especially for minority students.



#9 ENTERTAINMENT

When it came to entertainment Sedalia seemed to pull out all the stops. From cake walks and bar room piano music on Main Street, to the Woods Opera House a block north on 2nd street, to any one of 11 other theaters that graced downtown, Sedalia had entertainment.

And Sedalians could make their own entertainment. There were at times six music stores selling pianos, organs, instruments of every kind, and, of course, sheet music to play on all those music makers.



Exhibit Case #9 "Entertainment"

Before the music could be played, people had to know how to play their instruments. So, music was taught in the schools and at the George R. Smith College and private lessons were given by teachers in homes and storefronts and second-story downtown studios. Then all those lessons resulted in painful recitals by some and grand concerts by the more advanced pupils.

Sedalians loved parades with lots of bands, and band concerts in the park were especially popular. Dancing was also big in Sedalia and there were purveyors of lessons, with dance halls around town to practice and party.

Church musicians were plentiful in town as evidenced by the many church organs and pianos purchased. And there were music organizations in addition to the instrumental groups that meet regularly with a variety of musical offerings.





Exhibit Case #10 "Domestic Life"

#10 DOMESTIC LIFE

When we think of ragtime music there is often an association with bar rooms, speak-easys, clubs or perhaps Vaudeville Theatre or silent film accompaniments. The fact is, however, ragtime was the popular music of the era from 1900-1920, after World War I, and it was to be found in all its forms in homes across America.

People had upright pianos and parlor grands with sheet music-laden benches and they regularly enjoyed the music. And, because the music itself was

challenging, many a ragtime teacher was employed to share the secrets of syncopation. Soon, pianos were playing themselves as player pianos became available, and another industry was born to compete with sheet music publishers. But, it was Edison's phonograph and his wax cylinders first, and then shellac records that caused the popular music industry to soar, and ragtime was quickly available in all of the new formats. When we think of the music industry, we think of the music producers, but instrument manufacturing was vital as well, and so were the intrepid piano tuners. Ragtime was a boon to the music business in all of its incarnations as well as to the national economy.



* * * * * BIBLIOGRAPHY * * * * *

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This map identifies Sedalia locations related to the Ragtime Era or to the commemorations and events Sedalia has sponsored to recognize its ragtime heritage.

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|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Stark Business | 8 Carnegie Library | 15 Rose Nolen Black History Library |
| 2 Old Court House | 9 MKT RR Shops | 16 Mineola Day Nursery |
| 3 MKT Depot | 10 State Fair Grounds | 17 Black 400 Club |
| 4 Mo-Pac Shops | 11 History Museum | 18 Maple Leaf Club & Monument |
| 5 Wood's Opera House | 12 Liberty Park | 19 George R. Smith College |
| 6 Sedalia High School | 13 Mo-Pac Depot | |
| 7 Perry Music Co. | 14 Lincoln High School | |

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