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Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections

Black Expressive Culture Narrative Stage: The Scanner Boys; The Philadelphia Tap Dancers

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WEBVTT

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York then I went to New York to learn

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And now I went with the vaudeville show

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And a guy named Snake Hill Dave was out trying to do another dance

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I finally couldn't tap dance so I tried to do a snake {{??}} dance

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Well he was good at it, and I was good but I wasn't good as him, 'cause I did a lot of comical dancing and didn't know time. And when they really want somebody to do something when they- I thought I was good and they took me away {{??}} I found out-they found out I didn't know time.

00:20:10.000 --> 00:20:34.000

So then I lost {{our bet?}} So I taken 6 months to learn music and time so I would be a dancer. And from that day on, I start to waken, dancing but I was doin' the Lindy Hop but I wasn't doing- and I got older, I couldn't throw the girls around and the girls couldn't throw me around so I started doing comedies it's cause I wanted to stay in the show business.

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<i>Speaker 1</i>: Well, you say that before you did Lindy Hop you worked on a vaudeville show, were you showing inside at that time or working under tent at all?

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<i>Willie</i>: What no, I was showing theaters and clubs all over the world, and auditoriums yeah.

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<i>Speaker 1</i>: Okay, so the first thing that becomes real clear then is the link between the type of show that you were doing on the carnival, and what was happening at that time in black vaudeville or real close tie the same kind of entertainment.

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<i>Willie</i>: Oh yeah it was the same entertainment

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<i>Speaker 1</i>: Now another form that borrowed the same entertainment was that of the minstrel show. Now a lot of people when they hear minstrel shows automatically think of the 1800's, think of white people who would put on black face-would quirk up their faces so that they would look black and then would do comic routines caricaturing the dance, the humor, the music of the black man.

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In the 1900's however, a number of black troops developed which did the very same thing. Among them {{Silas?}} Scream, the Florida Blossom minstrels, and others.

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Willie, could you tell us a little bit about what was a minstrel show and-from having worked with the Florida Blossoms for a while.

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Well, the minstrel show we used to have what we call uh-one night stands.



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