

INTRO TO TAP HISTORY: RESOURCE GUIDE

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NOTE: This is an ever ongoing list and simply a beginning for you and/or your students to explore. For further inquiries or follow-up discussions and/or guidance, please visit www.lisalatouche.com/consulting

ORAL ACCOUNT OF LIFE DURING THE SLAVE TRADE

Last known documented person illegally enslaved (from the Clotilda)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Piq4JO8HVmk&t=4s>

Article about the last known slave ship, the Clotilda

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/Descendant-documentary-clotilda-africatown-last-slave-ship-180980978/>

*Recommendation: “The Descendants” documentary on Netflix

Rare audio of enslaved people (ABC news story)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cb_-jw_NEI

RESISTANCE: STONO REBELLION & FORT MOSE

Brief overview of resistance during years of enslavement:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/september-09/>

Video recommendations:

Fort Mose (2 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRWaWNzDPKM&t=2s>

The Stono Rebellion a Crash Course (12 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pND-9KhM1Xw>

THE RING SHOUT

Overview:

<https://www.jazzhistorytree.com/ring-shout/>

Video Suggestions:

Ring Shout from McIntosh County Shouters:
Gullah Geechee Ring Shout from Georgia
see 6:04 - 10:45 from clip for explanation and demonstration
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxPU5517u8c&t=654s>

Ring shout - vernacular dance overview

*note: who and how are they depicting this story - opportunity for critical thinking
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skUsJMKwsfE&t=40s>

THE MINSTREL ERA and MORE

Overview link:

Blackface: The birth of a stereotype

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/blackface-birth-american-stereotype>

Video Suggestions:

Who was Jim Crow: "Let's Teach"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX8ihCOJaZM&t=164s>

Vice: Long Painful Legacy of Blackface in America

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9soZnDf0P7E>

Podcast Recommendation:

CLASSIX:

Black Performance in the era of Minstrelsy
<https://www.theclassix.org/act-1-overview>

Notable Black Performers from the Minstrel Era

Billy Kersands (1842-1915)

<https://black-face.com/billy-kersands.htm>

Bert Williams (1874-1922)

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200038860/>

MASTER JUBA (AKA) WILLIAM HENRY LANE

Master Juba

American Tap Movie depiction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdkkQvk58K8>

library of congress:

<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.music.tdabio.121/>

BILL “BOJANGLES” ROBINSON

Brief Biography

<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.music.tdabio.154/>

Video references

Harlem Is Heaven (stair dance) 1932

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrV4rmeMWYE&t=618s>

King For a Day 1934

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xnHJI89PcE>

Bill Robinson, Jeni LeGon and Fats Waller “Living in a great big way” 1935

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1-mEEQPxls>

Bojangles with Shirley Temple 1935

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtHvetGnOdM>

Stormy Weather 1943

<https://youtu.be/WkD60wab3n4>

THE WHITMAN SISTERS & THE SHIM SHAM

Whitman sisters

<https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.music.tdabio.156/>

<https://aaregistry.org/story/the-whitman-sisters-are-formed/>

Leonard Reed interview about the Shim Sham

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iH10E20--5k&t=101s>

SHUFFLE ALONG

Recommended Article:

NY Times: Shuffle Along and the Lost History of Black Performance in America

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/magazine/shuffle-along-and-the-painful-history-of-black-performance-in-america.html>

Video Overview: Shuffle Along 1921

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hvzb8Ag_y38

Behind the scenes: Shuffle Along CBS Sunday Morning (2015): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_4xoFahhr4&t=6s

ADDITIONAL DANCE CLIPS - Select Recommendations to introduce great Black Tap Dance acts etc

John Bubbles

Buck and Bubbles Variety Act 1937

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCpKx64EivE>

Bill Bailey (First recorded “moonwalk”, dancers at the time called it the backslide)

<https://youtu.be/y71njpDH3co>

Mable Lee 1943

<https://youtu.be/BXQoTgLMysw>

Cora LaRedd 1933

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODvJ4syBI-s>

The Nicholas Brothers:

Stormy Weather 1943

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loMbeDhG9fU>

Bunny Briggs 1950

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHTeUoU8Jtw>

Clayton “Peg Leg” Bates

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hayM4B7hcBQ>

MOVIE “TAP” (1989): Challenge Scene

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsK8dWjDi_E

NOTABLE and RECOMMENDED BOOKS

“Jazz Dance” (published 1968)

Marshall and Jean Stearns

“Reminiscing with Sissle and Blake”

By Robert Kimball and William Bolcom (published 1973)

“Steppin’ On the Blues: The visible rhythms of African American Dance” (published 1996)

Jacqui Malone

“Class Act: the jazz life of choreographer Cholly Atkins” (published 2001)
Cholly Atkins & Jacqui Malone

“Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History” (published 2009)
Constance Valis Hill

“Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery” (published 2014)
Katrina Dyonne Thompson

“Sportin’ Life: John W. Bubbles an American Classic” (published 2022)
Brian Harker

“When Broadway was Black: The triumphant story of the all-Black musical that changed the world” (published 2023) by Caseen Gaines