



The Fisk Jubilee Chorus toured America and Europe in the 1870s, singing traditional spirituals and songs. Their performances helped introduce Black American music to the world. (The Bettman Archive)

without eliminating those qualities.

Their first selections were popular ballads of the day, such as *Annie Laurie* and *Home, Sweet Home*. In unstructured moments, they would sing some of their spirituals and plantation melodies for their own entertainment. Hearing these songs, their simplicity and beauty so evident, White wanted to include the songs in the first concert that he planned for Nashville in 18678, but there was strong resistance by the singers for fear of ridicule.

Finally, he encouraged them to sing several of "their" songs at the program...the success and accolades with which the selections were met created a more ambitious local scheduling of concerts.

In 1871, White decided to take the group on tour to raise funds. This was a difficult decision, for there were several obstacles; none had the proper clothing for a northern tour and no money to purchase any, their program was not in form of the minstrelsy with which the American (i.e. white) public was familiar and, in fact, the genre (spirituals) was quite unfamiliar to the general public.

Nevertheless, with borrowed clothing and funds, White and his singers left, with hearts in their mouths, to begin a fundraising tour on October 6, 1871, in Cincinnati, Ohio. At Oberlin a turning point of sorts was reached. White being kept waiting in the audience for their turn to perform, at a lull in the proceedings, they softly began to sing, *Steal Away to Jesus*. As a hush settled over the audiences, their confidence grew. The purity and beauty of their singing and the song moved the white audience in a way that nothing else had.

White then decided to include more spirituals on succeeding programs, and a new name was needed. Remembering the slaves had talked about the "year of jubilee" that would be celebrated when bondage was ended, he elected to call the group the *Fisk Jubilee Singers*.

## A SALUTE TO BLACK HISTORY

Born in New Orleans in 1806 and educated in France, Norbert Rillieux, while chief engineer of the Louisiana Sugar Refining Company, made a most important contribution to the advance of the sugar industry. His invention of an evaporating pan to refine raw sugar revolutionized the sugar industry. His system reduced the hand labor of refining and saved fuel because the closed system trapped the heat and boiled the juice at lower temperatures. Everywhere, its use increased sugar production, produced a superior product, and



Norbert Rillieux.

reduced operating costs. With this device, patented in 1846, Norbert Rillieux established the scientific principles that form the basis of all modern industrial evaporation.

**Pepsi Cola Bottling Company of Portland salutes Norbert Rillieux for his contribution to the history of America**



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