African American Humor

The Best Black Comedy from Slavery to Today

EDITED BY MEL WATKINS
FOREWORD BY DICK GREGORY

CONTENTS



FOREWORD BY DICK GREGORY		χı
INTRODUCTION BY MEL WATKINS		xvii
PART ONE		
Playin' the Fool Sla	avery	
Proverbs		
Plantation Proverbs Some New Proverbs	Joel Chandler Harris M. Quad	3 4
Animal Tales and Rhymes		
Uncle Remus Initiates the Little Boy The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story Why Mr. Possum Loves Peace How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox Mr. Fox Is Again Vicitmized The Ape Bad Birds Catching the Snake and the Yellowjackets The Flea The Woodpecker A Roost on the Rim of the Moon The Rooster and the Chicken	Joel Chandler Harris Folk Chandler Harris Folk Charles C. Jones Folk Folk E. C. L. Adams Folk	5 6 8 10 11 14 16 16 17 18 18 18
Numskull Tales		
Talking Turtle The Mojo Amos and the Union Officer John in Jail John and the Blacksnake	Folk Folk Folk Folk Folk	20 21 22 22 22
TRICKSTER TALES		
The Laugh That Meant Freedom Mo' Nigger The Champion Old Master and Okra	Folk Folk Folk Folk	24 24 25 26

Strong Man Jack	Folk	29
Swapping Dreams	Folk	29
THE PASSING OF GRANDISON	CHARLES W. CHESNUTT	30
Pompey and the Jackass	Peter Randolph	44
RHYMES, RIDDLES, AND SONGS		
We Raise de Wheat	Frederick Douglass	44
Run, Nigger, Run	Folk	45
Massa Had a Yaller Girl	Folk	45
Comic Lyrics from Slave Folk		
and Work Songs	Folk	46
JOHN AND OLE MASSA TALES		
The Horsefly	Folk	47
The Ducks Get the Cotton	Folk	47
Baby in the Crib	Folk	48
The Fight	Folk	49
The Yearling	Folk	50
Old Marster Eats Crow	Folk	50
John Praying	Folk	51
Old Boss and John at the Praying Tree	Folk	51
PART TW	o	÷
Lay My Burden Down Emancipation	on to the Roaring Twenti	es
Lies and How Come Tales		
Git Back!	Folk	56
Apple Peelin'	Folk	57
Heard the Bullet Twice	Folk	57
The Story of the Deluge and How It		
Came About	Joel Chandler Harris	57
Why the Negro Is Black	Joel Chandler Harris	59
The First White Man	Folk	60
The Water's Deep	Folk	60
De Ole 'oman an' Me	A. C. Gordon	61
Uncle Remus's Church Experience	Joel Chandler Harris	63
THE CONJURER'S REVENGE		
T-1 01 C 01.1 m	CHARLES W. CHESNUTT	64
ionn Snarecrops for Old Boss		64 74
John Sharecrops for Old Boss John on Trial	Folk	74
John on Trial	Folk Folk	74 76
John on Trial Uncle Remus and the Savannah Darkey	Folk Folk Joel Chandler Harris	74 76 76
John on Trial Uncle Remus and the Savannah Darkey Jesse James and the Graveyard	Folk Folk Joel Chandler Harris Folk	74 76 76 78
John on Trial Uncle Remus and the Savannah Darkey Jesse James and the Graveyard Post-Slavery Aphorisms	Folk Folk Joel Chandler Harris Folk Folk	74 76 76
John on Trial Uncle Remus and the Savannah Darkey Jesse James and the Graveyard Post-Slavery Aphorisms When Malindy Sings	Folk Folk Joel Chandler Harris Folk	74 76 76 78 78
John on Trial Uncle Remus and the Savannah Darkey Jesse James and the Graveyard Post-Slavery Aphorisms	Folk Folk Joel Chandler Harris Folk Folk Paul Laurence Dunbar	74 76 76 78 78 79

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR	82
Billy Kersands	87
Williams and Walker	88
BERT WILLIAMS	
	88
	91
	91
	92
	92
	93
	93 93
	94
	94
	94
Folk	98
Folk	98
	98
•	99
	99
Miller and Lyles	100
Folk	101
- -	102
	102
	102 102
	102
į.	103
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	103
- -	104
	104 105
	105
Folk	108
Ē	
	Folk Folk James David Corrothers W. E. B. DuBois Miller and Lyles Folk Folk Folk Folk Folk Folk Folk Fol

New Day's A-Coming \dots The Harlem Renaissance to the Fifties

Jokes and Routines	BUTTERBEANS AND SUSIE
Get Yourself a Monkey-Man	113
Too Many Ups	113
I Want a Hot Dog in My Roll	114

I Ain't Scared of You Until the Real Thing Come Along		114 115
Indefinite Sentence	Folk	116
indefinite Sentence	FOIR	110
FROM THE WALLS OF JERICHO	RUDOLPH FISHER	116
The Faith Healer	Folk	130
Early Blues Lyrics	Folk	130
Ghost Story	Tim Moore and	
	Andrew Tribel	132
WHY WOMEN GOT THE ADVANTAGE OF MEN	ZORA NEALE HURSTON	134
Sound Advice	Folk	138
FROM BLACK NO MORE	George Schuyler	139
Hanging Out	Folk	158
Great Men	Oscar Micheaux	158
CHITLIN' CIRCUIT ROUTINES		
Go Ahead and Sing	Rastus Murray and	
	Henry Drake	161
Ain't Nobody Here!	Willie Too Sweet	162
Open the Door, Richard	Dusty Fletcher	163
Where's the Money?	Spo-Dee-O-Dee	166
Here Come de Judge	Dewey "Pigmeat" Markham	166
Half Mine	John "Spider Bruce"	100
Han Mine	Mason	167
	14145011	107
THE CONJURE-MAN DIES	RUDOLPH FISHER	168
No'lasses	Folk	171
Quips and Cracks from Hollywood Film Clo	OWNS	
	Stepin Fetchit	172
	Mathew "Stymie" Beard	173
	Willie Best	173
	"Butterfly" McQueen	173
	Mantan Moreland	174
Radio Repartee	Eddie "Rochester"	
Radio Repartee	Anderson	174
Laziest Man in the World	Stepin Fetchit	176
How Old?	Satchel Paige	176
	_	
MEXICANA ROSE	FOLK	177
Fastball	Monte Irvin	182
Cartoon	Oliver W. Harrington	183
JOKES AND ROUTINES	Moms Mabley	
Old Men		184
Counting on His Fingers		184

\$25 a Question		185
Cab Calloway		185
Love Is Like a Game of Checkers		185
Miami-Red Light's for Us		186
Old Man in the Hospital		186
Old Men Left Behind		187
Accidents		187
Robbers		188
Thought I Was Having a Good Time		188
You Ain't So Smart		188
Dog on the Bus		189
Trouble with Old Men		189
JESSE B. SIMPLE TALES	Langston Hughes	
Temptation		190
There Ought to Be a Law	•	192
Race Relations		194
That Word Black		195
Dear Dr. Butts		197
From Amos 'n' Andy	Various Writers	200
Observations	SATCHEL PAIGE	
Illegal Pitches		203
In Demand		203
Second Base		203
Second-Class Immortal		203
Ain't Ghana Eat	Nipsey Russell	204
Still a Nigger	Nipsey Russell	204
Comeuppance	Junior Mance	205
Train to New York	Two Tons of Fun	205
My Nigger	John H. Johnson	205
	Redd Foxx	
JOKES AND ROUTINES Boss Spelled Backward	REDD FOXX	206
Snakebite		206
Black Scientists		206
Sneezes		207
Toasts		207
Knives		207
Eat What You Love		207
Backing Up		208
\$240,000		208
Oh, George!		208
Sugar Ray		209
Revival Preacher		209
FM		209
President Johnson		210
Depression Time		210
First Politician		210
Love Song		210

PART FOUR

What You See Is What You Get ... Civil Rights to the Millennium

FROM NIGGER: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY	DICK GREGORY	214
The Battle of Little Rock	Folk	218
Heroes Ain't Born	Redd Foxx	219
CADILLAC FLAMBÉ	RALPH ELLISON	219
From The Wig	CHARLES WRIGHT	233
Temporary Job	Timmie Rogers	241
Steamin'	Folk	241
Closer to Welfare	Slappy White	241
Running for Vice President	Slappy White	241
A Fair Fight	Folk	242
Cartoon	Oliver W. Harrington	243
FROM BLIND MAN WITH A PISTOL	CHESTER HIMES	244
Lean and Mean	Adam Clayton	
	Powell, Jr.	249
Blackface	Ossie Davis	250
Tall, Tan, Young, and Fly	Frankie Crocker	250
Black Rioters	Dick Gregory	251
American History	Dick Gregory	252
Kittens and Biscuits	Malcolm X	254
FROM YELLOW BACK RADIO BROKE-DOWN	ISHMAEL REED	255
Before God Get the News	Muhammad Ali	265
From for colored girls who have considered		
suicide when the rainbow is enuf	Ntozake Shange	265
Jokes	GODFREY CAMBRIDGE	
After You		267
Eating Too Well	·	268
The Suburbs		268
Just in Case		268
-		200
FROM THE LOVES AND LIVES OF		
Mr. Jiveass Nigger	CECIL BROWN	268
Jokes and Routines	FLIP WILSON	
Cowboys and Colored People		272
Kids		274
Cheap Hotel		275
Church on Sunday		277
Ugly Baby		277
Christopher Columbus		278
Timbropiles Columbus		2 , 0

Jokes	Paul Mooney	
Paul Revere/Betsy Ross		280
Blame-a-Nigger		281
Nigger Raisins		281
		ترغمين
FROM SOUTH STREET	DAVID BRADLEY	281
MAGID AND MUDBONE	MEL WATKINS	291
Baseball Jokes	Various Players	300
Nigger Look Just Like You	Richard Pryor	301
Don't Let Me Down	Eddie Murphy	301
O. J. SIMPSON JOKES		
Going to Cancun	Folk	302
The Best Defense	Folk	302
Bad Fit	Johnny Cochran	303
THE DOZENS-CAPS AND SNAPS	Folk	
Smell and Looks Caps		303
Dumb and Poor Caps		304
The Dozens-Yo' Momma Caps		305
Women and Men		
Marital Counseling	Folk	307
Equal Rights	LaWanda Page	307
A Prayer and a Promise	Folk	307
Different Strokes	Richard Pryor	308
Old Man and Young Man	Moms Mabley Folk	308 308
Perfect Health		309
Women vs. Women Payback Is a Bitch	Damon Wayans Michelle Youngblood	309
Lost Luggage	Folk	309
Curb Your Dog	Eve	310
Hunters	Dave Chappelle	310
Overeating	Janet Cormier	310
RANDOM QUIPS FROM FAMOUS WITS	•	
Gettin' It	Steve Harvey	310
Senility	Bill Cosby	311
New Tricks	Bill Cosby	311
On My Feet	Spike Lee	311
Not All Black	Redd Foxx	311
Just Us	Richard Pryor	312
Being Famous	Dave Chappelle	312
The American Dream	Paul Mooney	312
Pass the Milk	Bernie Mack	312

From You So Crazy	MARTIN LAWRENCE	313
THE OLD SCHOOL		
All Turned Around	Folk	315
Cockeyed Junior	Richard Pryor	315
Old Bull and Young Bull	Folk	315
Running Machinery	Folk	316
I Ain't Loss!	Folk	316
Trifocals	Bill Cosby	317
Hard to Fool	Folk	317
Pennies from Heaven	Folk	317
Top That	Folk	318
THE NEW SCHOOL		
Worse Than That	Folk	318
One White Guy	Dave Chappelle	319
Hyde Park	Folk	319
Fool Me Once	Folk	319
Unforgettable	Folk	320
Rappers	Damon Wayans	320
Formal Introduction	Folk	320
Don't Blame Me	Folk	321
Yardwork	Folk	321
FROM OXHERDING TALE	Charles Johnson	321
Jokes	Leighann Lord	
Acne Cure		336
Big Words		336
		330
Third World Perfume		336 337
Third World Perfume Wrong War	Cunic Poor	
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS!	CHRIS ROCK	337
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism		337
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided	CHRIS ROCK	337 337 338
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience		337 337 338 338
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark		337 337 338
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader.		337 338 338 340
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within.		337 338 338 340 341
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution		337 338 338 340 341 343
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist?		337 338 338 340 341 343 344
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"?		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World Color Coding		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347 348
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World Color Coding Supermarket Sweepstakes		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347 348 349
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World Color Coding		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347 348
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World Color Coding Supermarket Sweepstakes Why Do You Think They Call It "School"?		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347 348 349 350
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World Color Coding Supermarket Sweepstakes Why Do You Think They Call It "School"? Money Money Money Money		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347 348 349 350 352
Third World Perfume Wrong War FROM ROCK THIS! Reverse Racism A Country Divided The Black Experience We All Look the Same in the Dark Help Wanted: One Leader. Please Apply Within. A Creative Solution Who You Calling Racist? Mommy? Can I Say "Nigger"? The Most Racist Guy in the World Color Coding Supermarket Sweepstakes Why Do You Think They Call It "School"? Money Money Money Money Authors and Comedians		337 338 338 340 341 343 344 346 347 348 349 350 352