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 The PURITAN  
 LOUISVILLE - 3-



May 26/47

Mr. George C. Grise,  
 Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Mr. Grise:-

Your article in C.J. of May 22, regarding  
 Will S. Hays, song writer &c. of this City, attracted  
 my attention. I can remember him when

I was a child & that family and ours attended  
 the same Church & lived in same neighborhood,  
 and I used to sing "Nellie Darling" and ("I was  
 seeing Nellie home(?)") & probably others, oh yes -  
 "The old-fashioned Roses are sweetest." I

talked today with Mrs. Sam McHays, wife of Col.  
 Hays's grandson, who tells me they have given  
 you all the data they had. Too bad you didn't  
 get in touch with his daughter Mrs. Samuel  
 before her death not so long ago. But I am

enclosing a clipping of March 17, 1946 from her,  
 in regard to a meeting he had with Stephen  
 Collins Foster. Some man away from here  
 had stated that the latter had never visited  
 Bardstown & Rev. Lucien E. Rife of Anchorage,  
 Ky. came out with an article taking issue  
 with this statement and I backed him up in a  
 letter stating I had heard a young friend of

mine long ago, whose mother was a cousin of  
 Foster's, mention his visits to Bidston &  
 Dr. Rule, to my surprise, sent it to the paper,  
 which brought out Mrs. Samuel's statement.

This may not be worth anything to you,  
 but I do not care to have any publicity  
 as to its contents.

Wishing you well in a not-too-easy  
 task, I am —

Sincerely,

Martha C. Huber

I'm not sure the second song mentioned  
 was his.

# **Will S. Hays and Stephen Foster**

3/7/46  
With pleasure I send you the story as told me by my father, Will S. Hays, of his first meeting with Stephen Collins Foster. Foster was 11 years older than Mr. Hays, who at that time was about 20, and beginning his career as amanuensis to George D. Prentice, editor of The Louisville Daily Journal, later The Courier-Journal.

One afternoon a man standing at Third and Green asked my father where the stage coach left for Bardstown. Mr. Hays directed him and walked with him to the station. The man, who turned out to be Mr. Foster, stated he was going to the Rowan home.

In after years Mr. Hays was also a guest there frequently. The Rowan family was well known for its hospitality and I have no doubt Mr. Foster and Mr. Hays renewed often an acquaintance begun so incidentally, which was the only one I knew of and always remembered.

Mrs. M. B. HAYS SAMUEL.  
Louisville.

(*Mattie Bell*)

H. D. Mc. Cullough.  
1020 South 6th, St.  
Louisville (3) Ky.

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Louisville (3) Ky. June. 1. 1947.

Mr. George. C. Grise.  
C/O Peabody College.  
Nashville Tenn.

Dear Sir:-

As a reader of the "Point of View" column, noted your letter this past week requesting "More Data on Will. S. Hays."

Being a nephew by marriage of Uncle Will, as I called him, hope I can give you some facts of interest which no doubt will be helpful in your desired information, however if any particular items should be wanted, please out-line same and I will do my best to comply, as I have a copy of his Poems & Songs, and some other interesting notes.

Col. Will S. Hays was born in Louisville. July. 19. 1837, his Father Hugh Hays had him christened "William. Shakespeare Hays", he was married to my Fathers Sister, Rosa. Belle. Mc. Cullough, July. 4. 1865. Uncle Will had two children, a son Sam Brown Hays, who was a Doctor, specializing in Eye-Ear & Throat, (deceased) and a daughter Mrs. Mattie. Belle. Hays, Samuels, who passed away on April. 7. 1947. at the age of 79.

No doubt you have a substantial list of Uncle Will's songs per your letter, but one outstanding composition was that of "Molly Darling" which grossed over a Million copies and same was reprinted in six languages.

Uncle Will was credited with having composed "Dixie" however this was disputed, but he did write and receive credit for some 354 songs during his life time, with his first published song "Evangeline".

At the age of 19, Uncle Will was a student at Hanover College later at Georgetown College, and at Clarksville Tenn. Was Louisville's first War Correspondent during the War between States, also Captain on River boats between Louisville and New Orleans, later writing a Column for the Courier "River Snags".

Amongst the dedications of songs you list note; Mrs. Rebecca Mc. Cullough, (1872) she was my Grandmother, Uncle Will's, Mother-In-Law. A beautiful woman and a full fledged Virginian, coming to Ky. in the early days, was 84 when she passed away.

Uncle Will died July-23-1907 and at his services in the Presbyterian Church, a quartette sang his composition of, "Save One Bright Crown for Me", "Come Unto Me", and "Enter In". Was laid to rest in Cave Hill Cemetery, Louisville.

Will be pleased to hear from you with reference to any particular item required.

Yours very truly.

Howard. D. Mc. Cullough.



# THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT  
MUSIC DIVISION

June 26, 1947

Dear Mr. Grise:

Your letter to the Copyright Office has been referred to the Music Division for attention. The records since the central depository was set up in 1870 are still maintained in the Copyright Office, but the surviving volumes turned in by the various District Courts in each state, where copyrights were registered before 1870, are in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress, and the books and music deposited by the various claimants have been added to the Library's regular collections.

We have found no claim, made by Will S. Hays himself, maintaining that he was the author of the words of the Faulds edition of Dixie. The first such claim which we have found is in a small pamphlet, Origin of "Dixie," by Thomas J. Firth. A copy of this pamphlet with the heading "Twelfth Edition" was deposited for copyright in 1922. Professor Firth describes himself in the pamphlet as "Brigade Band Master during Civil War / Only surviving Band Master of the Civil War." His address is given as 736 Madison Avenue, Memphis, Tenn. Perhaps you will be able to find a copy of this pamphlet in one of the libraries in Nashville.

Later writers on "Dixie" have not taken Professor Firth's claims too seriously, since they are dotted with demonstrable errors. For example, he states that the tune of "Dixie" was taken from a song popular in the South before the Civil War and sung to the words:

If I had a donkey that would not go,  
Do you think I'd wallop him, oh, dear, no!

Professor Firth continues:

Mr. Faulds also says: "In tracing the music in after years it was found that it was from an old English ditty, which began, 'If I was a soldier wouldn't I go,' etc..."

This is clearly Henry Rowley Bishop's famous march and song, used until quite recently at West Point as a "March On." The title is The Dashing White Serjeant, and the opening words go:

If I had a beau  
For a soldier who'd go,  
Do you think I'd say no?  
No, not I!



The tune for this runs as follows. Obviously it has no close connection with "Dixie."



Professor Firth maintains that Mr. Faulds showed this tune to his assistant, Will S. Hays, in the spring of 1858, and that Hays wrote the words which were used in the Faulds edition, published shortly afterwards. His chief evidence for this seems to be that Professor John R. Millen from New York made a band arrangement from the sheet music edition issued by Faulds, and that this arrangement was played by "the band at LaGrange, Tenn., in the spring of 1858." Professor Firth gives a facsimile of the E-flat Cornet part of this arrangement. A comparison of this melody with that of the Faulds edition and with Emmett's composition as published by Firth, Pond & Co., in New York, shows quite conclusively that it could not have been based on the Faulds edition, but might conceivably have been based on the Firth, Pond edition. This would seem to indicate that perhaps Professor Firth was mistaken about his 1858 date. He gives no documentary evidence for it, and after more than half a century, it would not be altogether surprising if his memory played him false by a year or two.

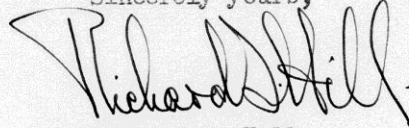
Actually, there is no documentary evidence whatsoever for the date of 1858 for any edition. We have the copy of "Away down in Dixie's Land, as sung by Hookey & Campbell's Minstrels, words by 'Jerry Blossom.'" Music by 'Dixie, Jr.,' which D.P. Faulds & Co., of Louisville, deposited for copyright in the District Court of Kentucky. The printed claim of copyright gives the date 1860, and the clerk of the court wrote the date across the top of the title-page, "July 21, 1860," signing his name and title underneath. This date is later than that of either the Firth, Pond edition or of the pirated edition issued by Werlein in New Orleans. The music closely resembles the latter edition, and in all probability was based upon it. Thus, despite Professor Firth's claims, there seems to be no reason for crediting the Faulds edition with any priority.

We have found no other evidence for or against the idea that Will S. Hays wrote the words for this edition under the nom de plume of "Jerry Blossom." If he was working for Faulds in 1860, it is entirely possible that he did so. These words, however, could not be counted in any case as the "original words" of Dixie, but merely one of the earliest parodies. They are quite different from Emmett's words -- which are the ones usually associated with the song to-day -- and have no relation at all to the words given by Professor Firth in his pamphlet. If you do not have access to a copy of the Faulds edition, our copy can be made available to the Photoduplication Service of the Library for photographing. Negative photo-stats of the cover and the music would cost \$1.45. A blank is enclosed for your convenience in placing your order should you decide to do so.

If in preparing your biography of Hays you discover evidence establishing the fact that Hays was actually "Jerry Blossom," we would greatly appreciate it if you would let us know. It would be interesting to get

this point settled, and we should like to have the information on record.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard S. Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "H".

Richard S. Hill  
Reference Librarian  
Music Division

Mr. George C. Grise  
Box 241  
Peabody College  
Nashville 4, Tenn.

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**MILLARD COX**

ATTORNEY AT LAW  
KENTUCKY HOME LIFE BUILDING  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Sept. 3d, 1947,

Mr. George C. Grise,  
George Peabody College for Teachers,  
Nashville, Tennessee.

Dear Mr. Grise:

Some time ago you wrote a letter which was published in our Louisville paper, asking if anyone had any music of Will S. Hays. At that time I did not know I was in possession of many of his beautiful compositions. If I had only known this, I would have written you much earlier.

However, the other evening I opened an antique music cabinet (over a century old) and started to look at some of the old pieces. Among them were many a very dear friend willed me. She was born and raised on a huge plantation near Natchez, Tennessee, and as a young girl she played and sang a great deal. Two other friends requested just before they died that their music be given to me.

If you would still be interested in the names of the pieces I possess which were written by Will S. Hays, I would be glad to list them for you.

Mr. Hays as a young man lived on Washington Street near my great aunt's home. Mrs. Caspar Mercke was the name of my aunt. She had five sons, four of whom are now dead. However, Cousin George Mercke, who is still living, I know would remember Mr. Hays.

Mamma remembers Mr. Hays very well and said when he would pass the home of any of her neighbors, they would laughingly remark, "There goes that loafer - Will Hays". That was funny wasn't it? They probably did not know he was busy composing pieces and that some day he would be famous.

His sister-in-law, Mrs. E. W. Hays, was a very good friend of mine. She has been dead for about four or five years. However, her daughter resides in Louisville. Gertrude Hays was her name. She married a man who was with the Commonwealth Life Insurance Company, and I can't recall her name in marriage, but could easily ask Laura Harpring, or many people on Douglas Boulevard, who grew up with Gertrude. No doubt by now, you have all this information, and I am only taking up your time. HOW I wish I had seen your letter earlier.

Wishing you great success with your biography, I am,

Respectfully,

(Miss) Rosalie Speckert  
520 West Chumley