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Ingenious Americans, an Old Taylor whiskey ad

* Native born Rhode Islander.

A copy of these contents was presented to the Moorland Collection at Howard University, Washington, D. C., in 1966 by Carl R. Gross, M. D., Providence, R. I. Also an autobiography of my life which had been requested by Mrs. Dorothy Porter, Librarian.

A former collection of material had been given in 1963 on the anniversary of my 50th graduation. CRG

N O B O D Y

The story of Bert Williams by Ann Charters

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Cow Gangsters, Says Coe

The Closing Chapters of the Life of 'Black Patti'

Sissieretta Joyner Jones Climbed the Heights of Fame, But She Gave It All Up to Come Back and Stay Here in Providence When Her Relatives Needed Her Aid.

BY F. C. TERRY

QUIETLY and unassumingly she lived here in the city where her parents had brought her as a small girl. And when she died here this month there were few who paid much attention to the brief obituary that told of the passing of Matilda Sissieretta Joyner.

But this was "Black Patti" who had died—the little lady of color who had had her start in Sunday school entertainments here and then gone on to fame on the concert stage as one of the greatest artists of her race.

In one week she sang to 75,000 people in Madison Square Garden, and she appeared before 300,000 at the Buffalo Exposition. She sang before several Presidents and was a White House guest. Dame Nellie Melba and other famous men and women were her friends, as autographed photographs attest. How her race looked up to her can be imagined from the fact that the "Green Pastures" company asked to be allowed to visit her in a body when they were in Providence for a week.

Many of the greatest colored actors, musicians and composers started in her companies, including Williams and Walker; Rosamond Johnson, the great composer; Richard B. Harrison, the "Lord God" of "Green Pastures"; Whitney Brothers, stars in that same play; Ernest Hogan, comedian and composer; Harry Burleigh, composer; Bob Cole, composer, and a long list of others.

All of the acclaim that was hers in her public career, however, she gave up years ago when she returned to this city to see that her grandmother and mother, ill, were cared for. After international concert tours she settled here quietly. "Black Patti" became again just Sissieretta Joyner.

WHERE SHE GOT HER SOBRIQUET

Although Providence had been her home since early childhood, she was born in Portsmouth, Va., Jan. 5, 1868, coming here when a small child with her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Joyner.

In the schools here she was known as "Sissy" and "Tilly", and the children were very fond of her. One schoolmate said the other day, "I used to love singing teacher day. Sissy's voice could be heard above

the rest." According to another life-long friend, she really started public singing in the Sunday school of the Pond Street Baptist Church when we had entertainments and little affairs.

When 15 she began to actually study singing at the Providence Academy of Music under the direction of M. Mouros and Baroness Lacombe. At 18 she went to Boston to continue her lessons at the New England Conservatory of Music. Later she studied in New York city, one teacher being Madame Louise Capiani.

The name of "Black Patti" was given to her by the New York Clipper after she had sung with the great Levy's band at Wallick's Theatre in New York. It was said "She sings like Patti, without the slightest visible effort."

"BOY, KEEP IT FOR POCKET CHANGE"

When very young she married Richard Jones. The one child born to them did not live long. This was a terrific sorrow to Madame Jones. She was fond of children and in her later days took in homeless children to board.

Richard Jones simply could not stand prosperity and a divorce was secured. Madame Jones was granted the right to resume her maiden name. A story is told which is said to be typical of Mr. Jones. In a hall where a concert was being given he stationed a young man to collect the money at one door and he at another, where "Black Patti" was singing. After the concert, the youth sought him out saying "You didn't take the money!"

"How much is it?" Mr. Jones asked.

"Nearly twenty dollars!"

"All right," answered Mr. Jones, "keep it for pocket change, boy."

Major Pond who piloted Henry Ward Beecher, H. M. Stanley, George Kenman, Sir Edwin Arnold, Bill Nye, Mark Twain and George W. Cable and other notables was Madame Jones's manager for a long time. It was he who presented her at Madison Square Garden.

"Black Patti" sang to 7000 on Feb. 22, 1893, in Talmadges Tabernacle in Brooklyn, N. Y.; and one day in August to 12,000 in Congress Hall Park. Her singing was one of the big attractions at the World's Fair

in Chicago in 1893 and at the Great Actor's Fund Benefit in New York.

INVITED BY HARRISON TO THE WHITE HOUSE

President Harrison in February, 1882, invited Madame Jones to appear at the luncheon in the blue room of the White House. Mrs. Harrison presented her with a bouquet of White House orchids. Later she appeared at the houses of Chief Justice Fuller, Senator Andrews and other dignitaries. She sang before President McKinley and President Roosevelt.

Her first foreign appearances were made at Berlin, the many cities to follow were Paris, Cologne, Munich and Milan. She was received with great enthusiasm and applause in Europe. Under Charles Matthews she toured South America. Voelckel and Nolan formed the world famous "Black Patti Troubadours" in 1895 which toured the United States, Canada, Mexico and Cuba.

When Madame Jones came to Providence to care for her relatives she intended to return to the stage but she would not leave them ill. Her grandmother passed away and later her mother, but she had given them every comfort and devotion, her friends say. Naturally reserved, she became more so as the years passed on and she never made but one more stage appearance and that was at Grand Theatre, Chicago.

A smile would wreath her face when one discovered her identity, but she positively would not talk of her glory. A friend who spent years in the family says her disposition was wonderful. She was always the same. In face of adversity she would smilingly say, "The sun is shining." Even during her suffering it was the same.

PROVIDENCE GAVE HER A MEDALLION

She lived a retired life at her home on Wheaton street, scarcely ever going out. The homeless children and a parrot brought by her from Argentina 28 years ago, were her companions.

Recently when Green Pastures played here, Madame Joyner refused to allow them to visit her in a body, but at the personal appeal of "Tutt" Whitney and Mr. Harrison, who had toured with her, she did attend a performance, the whole company according her worshipful courtesy.

Once she remarked "I woke up famous after singing in Madison Square Garden and didn't know it." In later years she knew she was

famous but certainly did not want others to know it.

To one seeing, occasionally, a sweet faced, modestly dressed, unassuming lady of color walking along the city streets—one would not dream that here walked one who had sung before presidents, kings and queens by command, who had been presented with countless medals and scrolls of appreciation from nobility, from various countries and to whom the citizens of Providence gave a medal.

Afro-American, New England Edition, Lydia T. Brown

Providence Corespondent

July 1933

black?

BLACK PATTI LEFT ONLY A SMALL ESTATE

Singer Spent Her Last Days Humming in Her Rose Garden.

JEWELRY SOLD TO PAY DEBTS

She Kept Gowns, Her Piano and Paintings.

By LYDIA T. BROWN
(Exclusively to the AFRO)

PROVIDENCE, R.I.—Death sang a swan song for the world's famous singer, Black Patti, at the Rhode Island Hospital.

Living in her nine-room house at 7 Wheaton Street, amid the treasures brought in former days, when she had money and affluence, her parlors still contain four valuable large paintings, a painting of the Grand Canal, of Venice, by C. Valleta, a Corot, a Murot, seascape, and Old Mill with its brook, by C. Ruetta, all famous artists of the last decade, all worth real money today.

Walnut Piano

Gold gilt chairs, gold clock, gold candlesticks, settees of wonderful rich red brocade with gold fleur de lis, her walnut piano and autographed pictures of other stage celebrities, among them the autographed pictures of Cole and Johnson with their famous song, "Mudder Knows," Madame Melba and Bohn Poles, dated 1904, are some of the things found in her home.

Gone are the famous 17 ponderous medals, one from King Hippolyte of Haiti, another for singing the A tiara, diamond-crusted, from the mayor of Demerara, W.I. The Parnell defense from the Irish people. Gifts she once had a plenty. governor of St. Thomas gave her a great bracelet loaded with old gold coins. Her necklace of Egyptian gold scarabaei, with a pearl locket pendant.

Poverty forced her to sell all her jewelry and some of her silver.

She still retained her two beautiful fur coats and her wonderful wardrobes of her evening gowns, loaded with sequins, her gorgeous airgrets, gloves, and other finery.

She lived with her dreams of the past, sometimes singing softly to herself, and once after begging her, she sang in her rich contralto, "Swanee River." Her singing brought her hearers the beauty of nature, and they actually saw a picture of smooth dark waters, soft swaying branches and a drowsy nook in the summer time.

Rose Garden

Stilled and hushed is the house which once knew the vivacious Black Patti. No longer will she hum softly to herself, in her little rose garden. Our stage has lost its greatest artist whose silvery notes the world will hear no more.

Of her estate there is none. Like most of our famous artists, Black Patti died penniless. By the kindness of heart of William Freeman, realtor, and prominent N.A.A.C.P. local president, for the past two years her taxes, water bill, coal and wood, etc., have been provided.

To Mr. Freeman go the treasures still left of Matilda Joyner, the once famous Black Patti.

In Patti's clipping book I saw an article from the AFRO-AMERICAN dated 1892.

CAN, WEEK OF JULY 8, 1933

BLACK PATTI

Black Patti, the elegant Madame Sissieretta Jones, is dead and the world that once sang her praises had to stop and scratch its head when that announcement was made last Saturday from Providence, R.I.

This worldly forgetfulness can not be criticized too severely, however, when we recall that most anybody who spends much of his time in Providence, R.I. is likely to be forgotten.

There were those who believed that Black Patti was a native of Baltimore, a belief that, if true, would have neither added nor detracted from her brilliant career, unless, of course, she depended on the home-town folks to give her a boost, which would have never happened.

She did, however, marry a Baltimorean, I am informed, one Dick Jones, a race-horse and gambling man, whom she later divorced for good and sufficient reasons after he had had a swell time spending her money.

There were grand doings around these parts when Madame Sissy arrived to do her number along with her troubadours at the old Holiday Street Theatre. Whites and others would gather around the stage door to get a glimpse of her well-rounded figure as with flowing skirts and protruding bosom she stepped into a waiting carriage drawn by a pair of stiff-necked horses and was driven to her place of abode.

During some of her visits she was the house guest of the late Harry Cummings when he was Baltimore's only city councilman of color

and she moved in the very best social circles. In those days being a stage celebrity was not looked upon with too much favor as the portly trust beauties who exposed their bountiful hips and meaty thighs incased in tights and capped their heads in huge picture hats with flowing plumes were not what the more homey people considered "fitting to associate with."

The story is told how upon one occasion the famous singer came to town to give a recital at a fashionable Madison St. Presbyterian Church, white, which was the gospel cafeteria of the first families who traced their ancestry back to the Calverts and the Cabots.

Madame Jones arrived at the church in the afternoon and was holding a little private rehearsal, and her thrilling voice drifted to the ears of one of the city's dowagers of great wealth who was entertaining her club just across the way.

She inquired whose voice it was and was surprised to learn that it was the great Black Patti.

"Oh," she ohed, "I must do something for her. I'll allow her to sing for our party."

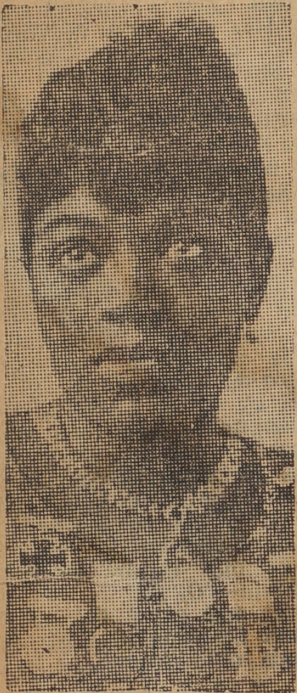
The party was graced with the matrons who represented a line of generations of bankers, importers, planters and other Maryland blue gores. It would be quite an honor for this "Patti person" to yodel into such distinguished ears. The social columns would mention it to the undying credit of the hostess, adding another star in her crown as the city's most brilliant social entertainer.

The grand lady tripped to the kitchen and dispatched her colored cook to invite Black Patti over.

The black singer who had sung before crowned heads of Europe had been honored by President Harrison and was the toast of royalty, looked at the cook with an air of aloofness and said:

"Tell your mistress if she will write my managers in New York and arrange an engagement I will be happy to sing for her. It will be seven or eight months, however, as my schedule is quite full."

The cook returned the message and were the faces of the blue-bloods red!

**BOB COLE**

The name of Mme. Jones and that of the late Bob Cole are associated professionally by old-timers as it was his master hand which made her troubadours the sensation they were.

The Troubadours, when they first came into prominence, featured such stars as Lloyd Gibbs, the Dewitt Sisters, Billy Johnson, Giggins and Davis, Andy Byrd, Stella Wiley and Aida Reed, who later became famous in her own right as Aida Overton Walker.

Many say that it was the Troubadours who were really the medium by which colored actors got their first firm foothold on the American stage.

It was when the show was playing in Proctor's 58th Street Theatre, New York, that Bob Cole went to bat with the white managers to get better pay for his troupe. Unable to better the condition of the cast, Cole took his music and quit the show.

Vokel and Noland, the financial backers, had Cole arrested, but he could not be intimidated and the backers later had him blacklisted.

Referring to this incident the Theatrical World, published in 1928, informs us that the backers induced other managers all over the country to refuse employment to Cole and his sympathizers. Naturally, the faint hearted deserted Cole at this juncture, but a few staunch followers, including Jesse Shipp, Tom Brown, Billy Johnson, Hen Wise and Loyd Gibbs, decided to fight it out to a finish.

With his back to the wall Cole issued what may rightly be called the colored actor's Declaration of Independence. "We are going to have our own shows," he declared. "We are going to write them ourselves, we are going to have our own stage manager, our own orchestra leader and our own manager out front to count up. No divided houses—our race must be seated from boxes back." As a means of inaugurating these principles Cole organized his "Trip to Coontown" company. The title of the show, by the way, indicates that he did not have the slightest trace of an inferiority complex.

When "A Trip to Coontown" was ready for the road the managers dealt Cole another blow. They had already passed the word than any performer who signed up with the show would be boycotted for life. Now they informed managers that any house booking "A Trip to Coontown" could not expect any other colored show. This threat closed practically every important theater in the country to Cole and his followers and the show "was driven into the woods."

After months of terrific "wild catting" the company finally wandered into Canada and obtained a broken date in Ottawa and another in Toronto. Fortunately the American managers had overlooked the Canadian field when they issued their boycotting and lockout orders. The daily papers of the Dominion raved about the novelty of the show and managers began to bid for bookings. When the news of the success of the show drifted back to the States Klaw and Erlanger defied the lockout order and booked the company for a New York opening. "A Trip to Coontown" opened in Jacob's Third Avenue Theatre during Holy Week, the worst week of the year. Nevertheless, crowds were turned away at every performance. Bob Cole had won his battle. His subsequent successes followed as a matter of course.

This interesting bit of history is fast passing into the discard as one by one the pioneers of the stage pass on. There are few left. Black Patti is the end of her line.

of dancers on the Pacific coast, will autographed menus and cards by return here on or about the 15 of the dozens.
July, after a sojourn at the Cathay Ballroom, located in the Chinese

MME. Sissieretta Jones "Black Patti"



MME. SISSIARETTA JONES - "BLACK PATTI"

109

MME. Sissieretta Jones "Black Patti"

19B

B. 1869? Portsmouth N. H. 1933
Va.

Providence
R.I.



MME. SISSIARETTA JONES
Home at (Black Patti) 7 Wheaton St. Providence R.I.
The World's Greatest Negro Singer

A BRIEF HISTORY ON THE LIFE
OF
MATILDA SISSIERETTA (JOYNOR) JONES
"THE BLACK PATTI"
1869-1933
?

by
Carl R. Gross, M. D.
Providence, R. I.
1966

PREFACE

I became interested in the history of the Negro in Rhode Island when Governor William K. Vanderbilt appointed a group in 1935, to represent the Negro on the Rhode Island State Tercentenary Committee.

We met and organized, deciding to write something of the history of our race in the State. Different members were assigned various categories such as: Churches; the Civic field; Medicine and Allied Sciences; Law; Negroes in the General Assembly; noted Negroes in the State; the first and only Negro woman chosen to be American Mother, 1946 and others.

Some of the members gave me their material to go with mine forming a nucleus for furthering this endeavor as a hobby.

A request came from a student at Syracuse University, N. Y. to the Rhode Island Historical Society for information concerning Madame Jones and they referred her to me. Her doctoral dissertation is on the Negro's role in the 19th century concert life, her central figure being Madame Matilda Sissieretta (Joynor) Jones who had lived here in Providence, R. I. This caused me to type a brief history of Madame Jones, this and other material I had collected was made available to her.

In the meantime I heard that Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Mass., had sought information from her church here as they were sponsoring a biographical encyclopedia on Noted American Women which would include her. I also sent them a copy of my notes and they sent them to Mr. William Lichtenwanger of the music division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., who is to write the article about her.

It has been a privilege and an honor to have personally known Madame Jones, the World's Greatest Negro Singer of her time and to have been able to collect the following information about her.

C. R. G. 1966

MATILDA SISSIERETTA (JOYNOR) JONES

"BLACK PATTI"

1869-1933

Matilda Sissieretta Jones was born in Portsmouth, Va., the 5th day of January, 1869, the daughter of Reverend Jeremiah M. and Henrietta B. Joynor. He was the pastor of an Afro-Methodist church there also chorister, being ably assisted by his wife, a soprano of exceptional ability. 1

In 1876 he received a call to a church in Providence, R. I. and he and his family came here, which was to be the scene of the first musical triumph of "Sissy" as she was called. 1

She started singing in Pond Street Baptist Church Sunday School entertainments. While a mere child, Madame Jones developed a voice of remarkable power and quality that she attracted the attention of the musical people of Providence.

She began to study at the Providence Academy of Music, when 15 under M. Mauros and Baroness Lacombe, (a retired Italian singer), at 18, she continued at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Mass., later going to New York where one of her teachers was Madame Louise Cappiani, another Italian voice teacher. 2

During a year of training at the Conservatory, she appeared in concert by invitation at Boston's Music Hall in 1887 before 5,000 people for the Parnell Defense Fund. (The Message, May 14, 1892) 1

It was after singing at the Sans Souci Garden in Providence, R. I., she received a call to come to New York to sing for Abbey, Schoeffel and Grau. She sang with such success at Wallack's Theatre that she was immediately engaged for a tour of South America and the West Indies, which lasted two years. This was the real start of her professional career in 1888. No other colored artist had ever appeared at Wallack's before. 1

She sang before 7,000, February 22, 1893 at the Talmage Tabernacle in Brooklyn, N. Y., before 300,000 at the Buffalo Exposition, before 75,000 in one week at the Madison Square Garden, 12,000 in Congress Hall Park in Chicago. She toured with the great Levy's Concert Band as soloist, all over the United States in auditoriums, expositions and halls. 1-2

Her voice in its early stages was a decided contralto and as it matured, still contained the velvety richness so noticeable in such singers as Scalchi and others. 1

1- Her personal scrap book.

2- Providence Sunday Journal, July 16, 1933

Morris Reno, president of the Carnegie Music Hall Association of New York, engaged her for a concert tour of the United States and Europe. She made her first appearance in Berlin, Germany and the Berliner Zeitung said, "no sooner had the real Patti departed than a most worthy substitute appeared in the person of the Black Patti from America!" The European engagement lasted eight months and no singer was ever received with more enthusiasm than Madame Jones. She received a royal command to appear before King Edward while in Britain and that popular monarch expressed the unqualified delight with her performance. 1

In February, 1892, President Harrison invited her to appear at a luncheon in the Blue Room at the White House. After the concert Mrs. Harrison was so delighted that she presented her with a bouquet of White House orchids. She also appeared at the homes of Chief Justice Fuller, Senator Andrews and others. She sang before President's Theodore Roosevelt and William McKinley. 2

Major J. B. Pond, the proprietor and manager of the American Lecture and Musical Agency was her manager. He also managed Clara Louise Kellogg, Anna Louise Carey, the Reverend T. DeWitt Talmage, Mark Twain, Henry Ward Beecher, Sir Edwin Arnold, George Keenan and others. 1

Once she remarked, "I woke up famous after singing at the Garden and didn't know it" when she sang before 75,000 people in one week. For one week's appearance at the Pittsburg Exposition, he demanded and received \$2,000, the highest salary ever paid a colored artist. Mrs. Alberta Wilson was under contract by Major Pond as the accompanist for Madame Jones. At a concert in Louisville, Ky., to the people who had never seen a finished colored pianist, she was a curiosity and a revelation. 1(Louisville Courier Journal)

Later Messrs. Voelckel and Nolan became her managers and they organized the famous "Black Patti Troubadours" which toured the country in a special hotel Pullman car for many seasons. Madame Jones enjoys the distinction of appearing in more consecutive performances than any other living singer of her time. 1

A note of the hardships of early colored performers was that of Bob Cole, as it was his master hand that made the Troubadours the sensation they were. It was when the show was playing at Proctor's 58th Street Theatre in New York that he went to the managers for better pay for the troupe. Unable to better this condition, he took the score, (his music) and left. 4

- 1- Her personal scrap book
- 2- Providence Sunday Journal, July 16, 1933
- 4- Baltimore Afro-American, July 8, 1933

Voelckel and Nolan, the financial backers had Cole arrested but he could not be intimidated, so they had him black-listed inducing other managers all over the country to refuse employment to Cole or any of his sympathizers but not in Canada. A few staunch followers like Jesse Shipp, Billy Johnson, Lloyd Gibbs, Hen Wise and others decided to fight with Cole to the finish. 4

Cole issued the Colored Actor's Declaration of Independence, "We are going to have our own shows, we are going to write them ourselves, our own stage manager, our own orchestra leader, our own manager out front to count up, no divided houses, our race must be seated from the boxes back. Cole organized his "Trip to Coontown company and the managers dealt Cole another blow, no house could book another colored show. After terrific wild-cattling they wandered into Canada, obtaining a broken date in Ottawa, another in Toronto and the daily papers of the Dominion raved about the novelty of the show so much that the managers there bid for it. 4

The news of it reached New York and Klaw and Englander defied the lock-out, booking them for a New York opening at Jacob's 3rd Avenue Theatre during Holy Week, the worst week in the year for show business. Crowds were turned away at every performance thus paving the way for colored artists. Cole had won his battle. 4

The New York Clipper, a theatrical paper gave her the name, the "Black Patti" by which she became world famous, after singing at Wallack's Theatre in New York. It said, "she sings like Patti without the slightest effort". 2 Madame Jones was very distressed by that name, even while appreciating the comparison as a great honor, but I do not begin to sing like Patti can. I have been anxious to drop this name but it has been so identified with me, it is now impossible. 1 (Detroit Tribune, February 12, 1893)

She married while very young, D. Richard Jones, a handsome mulatto and had one child who died and this was a great loss to her. He was a race-track and gambling man whom she later divorced for sufficient reasons after he had a grand time spending her money. She was allowed to resume her maiden name but she preferred Madame Sissieretta Jones for the stage. 1

She was engaged to sing at the Madison Street Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, the gospel cafeteria of the first families. Arriving in the afternoon for a private rehearsal, her voice drifted across the street to the ears of one of the dowagers who was entertaining her club. Whose voice is that? On being told it was the Black Patti said, I'll allow her to sing for our party. She dispatched her colored cook to invite her over. Madame Jones looked at the cook, saying tell your mistress if she will contact my managers, arrange for an engagement, I will be happy to sing for her, but it will several months. The cook returned and were their faces of the blue bloods red. 4

1- Her personal scrap book

2- Providence Sunday Journal, July 16, 1933

4- Baltimore Afro-American, July 8, 1933

She retained three of the seventeen gold medals which appeared across her bosom in concert, possibly for sentimental reasons. 6

One of these was given her for singing at a benefit for the Parnell Defense Fund in Providence, R. I. Inscribed was Madame Jones on the top bar; suspended another bar with the date April 4, 1889, holding a lyre surrounded with shamrocks and below the medal with a scroll in the center and around the outside, Presented by her Providence Friends. 1-6

The largest gold medal was from President Hippolyte of the Haitian Republic. From the top bar, a ribbon holding a bar inscribed Madame Jones and below the medal with Black Patti around the top with a diamond above, around the bottom, Republique-1891-Haiti with a diamond below. 1-6

The third was given by the Society of the Sons of New York, a leading colored organization who raised more than \$1,100 for the World Food Fund. Madame Jones was the star of the evening, her first number was the waltz song by Geli, "La Farfalla" and for an encore, "The Cows are in the Clover". Her second number was Gounod's "Ava Maria" with piano and violin obligato. The medal: From the Society of the Sons of New York on the top bar, below the medal with the insignia of the Society and in the center of this was the seal of the State of New York. 1-6

Some of the other gifts she received were; from the Governor-General of Demerara, the richest of all, a tiara of solid gold with three diamonds projecting; a huge rough nugget of gold also from Demerara; the costliest from the citizens of St. Thomas; a large solitaire diamond in the center of a bar with emeralds; the Governor of St Thomas gave her a bracelet of old gold coins, one being over 135 years old; from several gentlemen from Jamaica, a miniature gold crown set with rubies and pearls; a gold star from the Governor of Barbados; a necklace of gold Egyptian scarabei with a pearl pendant locket; an old gold Ivy Leaf from the American residents of Colon and many others. 1-3-6

Toward the close of her career her mother became ill and she came home to care for her until she passed. She intended to return to the stage but made one appearance at the Grand Theatre in Chicago, retiring to her nine room home at 7 Wheaton Street which she bought for her mother. She owned two houses across the street from no. 7 and two on Benefit Street around Church and Howland Streets. She lived in one of these (in the Benefit Street Restoration area) at one time when her mother remarried.

1-6

- 1- Her personal scrap book.
- 3- Baltimore Afro-American, July...1933, N. E. Edition.
- 6- Compiled with comments by Carl R. Gross, M. D., 1966

Madame Jones spent a quiet life with some of the treasures collected in her former days:- a large oil painting of the Grand Canal by C. Valette, a Corot, a Murat, and the "Old Mill" by C. Ruette, all famous artists. The top of her walnut piano was covered with autographed pictures of many artists, notably, Madame Melba, Cole and Johnson with their famous song, "Mudder Knows!" and many other pieces of sheet music. Also retained were her two fur coats, her wardrobe of some of the wonderful evening gowns loaded with sequins, some gorgeous airgrets, gloves and other finery, the three gold medals, her personal scrap book, photographs of herself and her parrot which she bought 28 years ago in Argentina. She loved flowers and when home summers spent hours in her rose garden. 3

She was very charitable, taking in motherless children, clothing and feeding them as if her own until poverty forced her to sell her jewelry, silver, her four other houses, retaining 7 Wheaton Street, going on relief she had to assign this to the State. 3

Madame Jones was very religious and while in retirement was baptized and joined Congdon Street Baptist Church here in Providence, R. I., where she sang on rare occasions during the service. 6

Mr. William P. H. Freeman, a Negro realtor and past president of the local N. A. A. C. P., during the last two years of her illness, paid her estate tax, water tax, wood and coal bills, etc. 3 I am told, he provided the grave to keep her out of "Potter's Field" where the destitute of the city are buried. 6 It was he who gave me the three medals, scrap book, photographs etc., and knowing I was interested in Negro history in Rhode Island, said, when my eyes are closed, these things might be thrown out and lost to posterity. He is still living and has told me many things about Madame Jones. 6

As a personal note about the most famous Negro singer of her time, I recall my mother visiting her mother many times. Later in 1903, my friend who roomed with her mother and I joined Jackson's Band in Pawtucket, so I was in the house quite often practicing. While she was home one summer, she introduced me to Mr. Voelckel who was there on a business trip. Once I asked her to sing for me so she picked up a piece of music, asking me to play it, this was the only time I heard that wonderful voice. 6

Matilda Sissieretta (Joynor) Jones died penniless June 24, 1933 in the Rhode Island Hospital in Providence, R. I., and was buried in Grace Church Cemetary here. 6

"This piece of history is fast passing into discard as one by one, the pioneers of the stage pass on, "Black Patti" is at the end of her line". 4 (Baltimore Afro-American, July 8, 1933)

3- Baltimore Afro-American, New England edition, July 1933

4- Baltimore Afro-American, July 8, 1933

6- Compiled with comments by Carl R. Gross, M. D., 1966

Some quotes from her personal scrap book about her voice.

The Globe, Toronto, 10-13-93; The unsurpassed songstress, Madame Jones sings in concert under the auspices of the Elder Street Presbyterian Church, the 18th... Mrs. Alberta Wilson, a most excellent pianist is the accompanist for Madame Jones.

The Empire, Toronto, 1891; I have had an offer to sing in the new opera, "Scipio Africanus" by the composer of Cavalleria Rusticana. I prefer the concert platform for the present.

Cincinnati, 3-14-93; Van Cleve's estimate of the power of her voice;.....in one of her encore songs she took the A above staff and held it for 15 seconds... both her voice and her school remind me more of Nordica than Patti.

The Washington Post, no date; A Phenominal Attraction..... the upper notes of her voice are clear and bell-like, reminding one of Parepa Rosa and her low notes are rich and sensuous with a tropical contralto quality..... In fact, the compass and quality of her registers surpass the usual limitations and seem to combine the height and depth of both soprano and contralto.

The Free Press, 2-11-93;. Her first number was the aria, Robert toi que j'aime, which would test the resources of any prima donna.

The New York Review, no date; Carnegie Music Hall presented an animated appearance Monday night, where the brilliant audience hung with breathless stillness upon the clarion notes of the most gifted singer the age has produced.... It was the first time any company of colored artists had ever occupied the hall.

The New York Echo, no date;.... the Black Patti rendered a piece by Verdi, called "Senpre Libria".... and if Madame Jones is not the equal of Patti, she at least can come nearer than anything the American public has heard.... Her notes are as clear as a mocking bird and her enunciation, perfect.

The Detroit Tribune, no date; ... Her musical voice is of extraordinary compass and even power. It is rich and full in the upper register..... Her second number was a waltz song, "La Farfalla"... her encore was the gem of the evening, "Way down upon the Swanee River and she sang it with a clearness and a feeling that was wonderful.

The Message, 5-14-92;..in Boston's Music Hall in 1887, she sang before 5,000 for the Parnell Defense Fund.....Shortly after she made a tour of New England and after that a tour of England and Scotland.....she was a source of curiosity, especially to the lower class in England..... she relates a similar experience in Spain, where the Moor is the only type of black seen commonly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1- Her personal scrap book, press releases from newspapers all over the United States and Canada, Her picture on the front cover and on the back side a clipping, no name, no date telling of her birth, parents and when they came to Providence in 1876 also her signature.
 - 2- The Closing Chapters of the life of "Black Patti", by F. C. Terry, Providence Sunday Journal, July 16, 1933.
 - 3- BLACK PATTI LEFT ONLY A SMALL ESTATE by Lydia T. Brown, The Baltimore Afro-American, New England Edition, July 1933.
 - 4- The Baltimore Afro-American, July 8, 1933, Baltimore edition.
 - 5- To Mr. William P. H. Freeman, a former president of the local N. A. A. C. P., a deep sense of gratitude for her personal scrap book, three gold medals out of seventeen which she retained,, several photographs of Madame Jones, a dodger of the Troubadours, 13th season, 1908-1909 showing pictures of the troupe and the special hotel Pullman car in which they traveled all over the United States.
- Mr. Freeman now ninety years old, feared that when his eyes closed, this material might be thrown out and knowing my interest in the History of the Negro in Rhode Island gave this to me.
- 6- Compiled with comments by Carl R. Gross, M. D., Providence, R. I., 1966

All this material is presented to the Moorland Collection on Negro History, Howard University, Washington, D. C. , 1966.