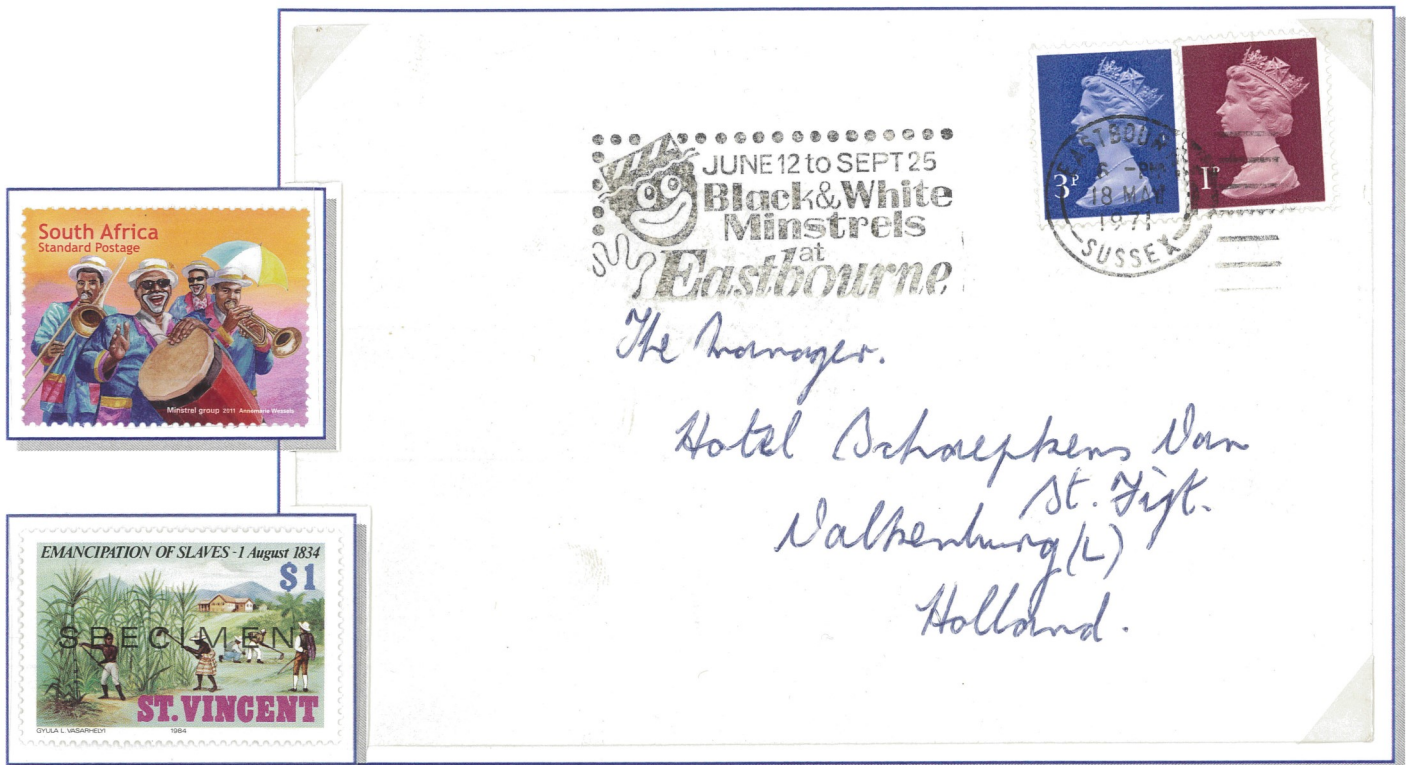


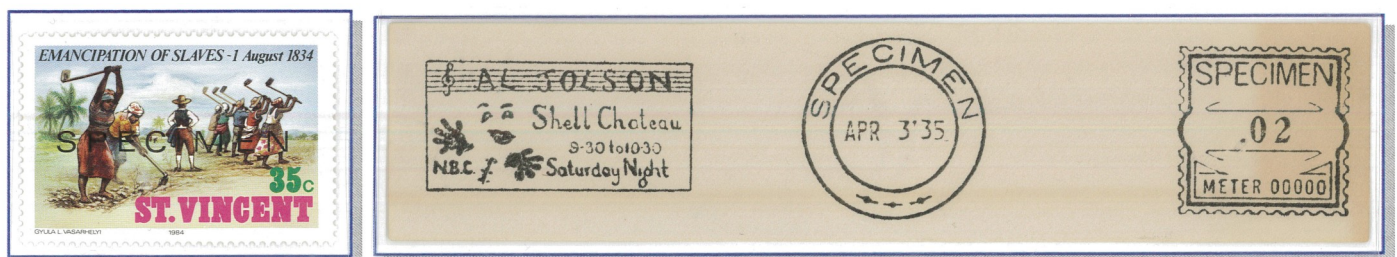
Minstrelsy

Franz Zehenter

The minstrel show, also called minstrelsy, was an American form of racist entertainment developed in the early 19th century. Each show consisted of comic skits, variety acts, dancing, and music performances that depicted people specifically of African descent.



The shows were performed by mostly white people in make-up or blackface for the purpose of playing the role of black people. Minstrel shows lampooned black people as dim-witted, lazy, buffoonish, superstitious, ...



... and happy-go-lucky. A romanticized idea of the everyday life of the slaves on the plantations is illustrated.

(Imprint "Specimen" - sample for the press).

Even the star of the first talkie, Al Jolson, also appeared in such shows (*specimen Pitney-Bowes models HT and HX*).



From the 1860s, black people were also hired by the traveling minstrels for the humiliating show. Some jazz musicians, such as Bessie Smith and Jelly Roll Morton, funded their early careers by appearing on minstrel shows.