

Fantasy Free Economics

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Defense Of Lincoln Perry

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Lincoln Perry was the actor who invented and played the Steppin' Fetchet character. For years he has been maligned by virtually everyone, black and white, for the damage his character did to the image folks have of black people. I wonder how many folks have studied how the Steppin Fetchet Character came into being. First, lets look at the mentality of the country at the time. There was no meaningful civil rights movement. There was a general attitude that nothing was in the offing that would change race relations at the time. The notion of how one individual through his behavior might have a profound impact on society as a whole was not part of life. Lincoln Perry's Steppin Fetchet character in the beginning entertained black audiences.

What type of comedy was popular in the 1930s? It was nothing like what is popular today. There was an element of cruelty and self effacement was where the money was for comedians.



Steppin Fetchet

Lets look at how Steppin Fetchit looks next to his competition. Successful Comedians new the paradigm for success at that time.

Lincoln Perry was doing exactly the same thing other popular comedians were doing at the time.

There was a difference. Lincoln Perry was a better actor than the others. The stand up comedy venue had not been that well developed. This kind of humor is what audiences demanded and received.



W C Fields

It is common knowledge that Perry was the first black actor to make one million dollars in Hollywood. He was an intellectual and a writer as well as a comedian.

Society needs scapegoats I suppose. It seems to be human nature to look at the past and believe that there was nothing different about how people thought and behaved.



Like many other celebrities, Perry's private life was not at all stellar. W.C. Fields was a hopeless alcoholic and died as a result.

That doesn't have anything to do with his act as a comedian



Three Stooges

Some questions are never asked like, during his career how many other Americans were doing all they could to present a prettier race picture than what existed at that time in history?

I think we can say that Lincoln Perry was no saint. That doesn't seem to bother anyone. There was nothing demeaning to black people that he is responsible for. He was just a comedian practicing his craft. He made people laugh and they paid to see him. That is a comedian jobs. As a comedian, Lincoln Perry was one of the best ever.