

Collection #  
M 0333  
BV 1893-1894  
OM 0082

## **DAWSON FAMILY PAPERS, 1894–1925**

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 manuscript box, 2 bound volumes, 3 oversize manuscript folders, 4 OVB photograph folders, artifacts
COLLECTION DATES:	1895-1925
PROVENANCE:	Gift of Rush Williams, 1980
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	None
RELATED HOLDINGS:	None
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1988.0159
NOTES:	None

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

G.G. Dawson (1862-1916), also known as Harry Dawson, was a medicine show owner, manager and performer. Originally from Mayfield, Kentucky, he established himself and family in Indianapolis, Indiana, around 1905. Dawson performed as a black-face comedian and banjo player. He was accompanied on the stage by his first wife, Carrie, and his brother, C.C. "Lum" Dawson, Jr. Both died in 1897. He remarried in 1900 and began to manage his own medicine at the same time. His early jobs included working with the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Company, the Herbs of Life Medicine Company, and the Williams Vaudeville Company. He later managed the Herbs of Nature Medicine Company and the Dawson Concert Company, and was president of the Iceland Medicine Company of Indianapolis.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The papers consist of letters to Dawson from family and several performers seeking work, and orders for medicine addressed to the Iceland Medicine Company. Also included are various notes concerning performances, jokes, songs, medicine and candy recipes, as well as original songs and comedy sketches by Harry Dawson, contained in bound books and loose. There is also a pocket diary kept by Leon Dawson listing towns and monies received for the 1916 summer tour of the Dawson Concert Company. This particular tour centered on Huntington, Wells, and Grant counties in Indiana. Other tours went as far west as Texas. Printed materials concerning the Dawson family include broadsides, newspaper clippings and packaging materials for Dawson's products. Other printed materials include sheet music for banjo, songbooks, advertising for circus equipment, promotional material for various artists and maps.

A large quantity of photographic material and a photograph album has been placed in visual collections. Subjects of these photos include the Dawson family, various medicine show performers (in and out of costume) and equipment. The artifacts received with the Dawson papers have been placed in the artifact collection. They include a cowhide vest; two round containers containing collars, glasses, buttons, jewelry and three discount coins; and an engraving used for the printing of broadsides.

## CONTENTS

### CONTENTS

Correspondence, 1895-1925

Legal documents; bank notes, contracts, licenses,  
1896-1922

Notes concerning songs and jokes

Broadsides

Newspaper Clippings

Misc. items: Business Cards, packaging material,  
recipe for Kickapoo Indian Oil, Leon Dawson account  
book

Promotional material for various acts

Advertising catalogs: tents, musical equipment, candy

Sheet music and Songbooks, theatrical publications

Sheet music and Songbooks, theatrical publications

Eight broadsides announcing the Dawson Concert  
Company and the Pureblood Concert Company of  
Indianapolis.

Record book containing notes concerning various  
performances, song titles, comedy material, and candy  
recipes

Composition book containing original song lyrics by  
Dawson

Oversized Photographs

Artifacts: cowhide vest; two round containers  
containing collars, glasses, buttons, jewelry and three  
discount coins; and an engraving used for the printing  
of broadsides

### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 6

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9-16

OM 0082, Folder 2-3

OM 0082, Folder 1  
Flat File B-1

BV 1893

BV 1894

Visual Collection: OVA  
Photographs, Folders 1-4

Artifacts