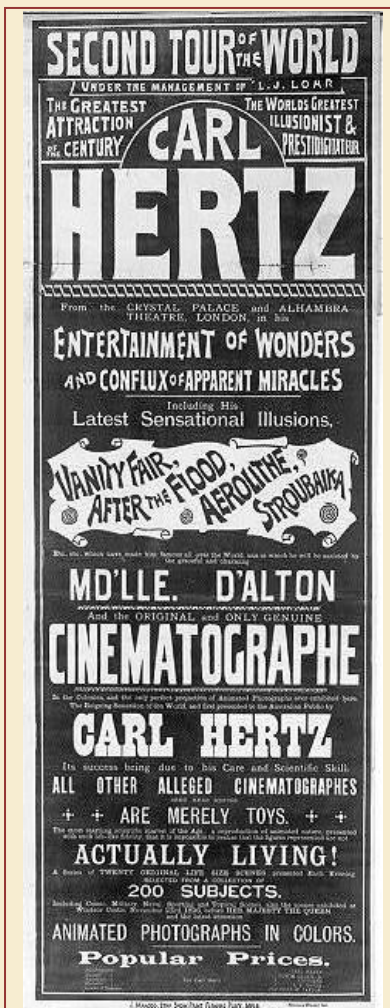


INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS: H

CARL HERTZ:

(1859-1924) American magician, card manipulator, raconteur, film exhibitor, writer [Born: Louis (or Leib) Morgenstein]

[1892, 1896-97] Carl Hertz was fascinated by conjuring from a young age and developed his skills as a magician in his home town of San Francisco. He later joined a number of touring companies, playing cities as diverse as Kansas, Philadelphia and Nashville before progressing to headline status as a vaudeville act and going on to tour the world, including Europe, Great Britain, South Africa, The Far East, and Australasia. In the late 1880s he was the first magician to introduce the "Vanishing Lady" trick. He was also known for his "Aerolithe" illusion, which involved a girl dancing on air (a court case was brought that accused him of stealing it from a German magician), the "Phoenix" illusion (in which his wife entered a furnace and emerged unscathed), the "Vanishing Bird," and for his card tricks.



Hertz first toured the Australasian region in 1892 for [George Musgrove](#), arriving in Australia in early February. He was accompanied by Mademoiselle D'Alton. The pair remained until early August, playing Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide along with major regional towns like Bendigo, Broken Hill and Newcastle. The Australian tour was also broken by a short (6 weeks) visit to New Zealand beginning early May.

Hertz returned to the region in 1896 under contract to [Harry Rickards](#). "Like David Devant, the popular conjuror of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly," writes John Barnes, "Hertz acquired one of the first Theatrograph projectors made by Robert Paul, and took it with him on his tour South Africa and the Antipodes" (n. pag.). He opened in Australia at the Melbourne Opera House on 15 August, but it was the second week of his season that became historically important, being the first the time that moving pictures were shown to the Australian public.¹ Indeed the 22 August event caused such interest that people forced their way in to the theatre, causing enormous over-crowding and creating a situation where Harry Rickards was later given three fines for failing to keep the theatre to its capacity.

Source: www.pinterest.com

Hertz played Rickards' Tivoli circuit until 13 February, finishing up at the Palace Theatre, Sydney before heading to New Zealand where he opened in Auckland the following week. His New Zealand tour also resulted in several instances of over-crowding, with the Wellington season seeing his manager/promoter, Edwin Geach, given a summons and fined for failing to abide by the

Argus (Melbourne) 22 Aug. 1896, 12.

¹ Hertz showed his Theatrograph to an invited audience at the Melbourne Opera House on 17 August 1896, but the first public performance was on the 22nd. It can be argued that the first moving pictures shown in Australia, however, were those exhibited in the Edison peepshow Kinetoscope.



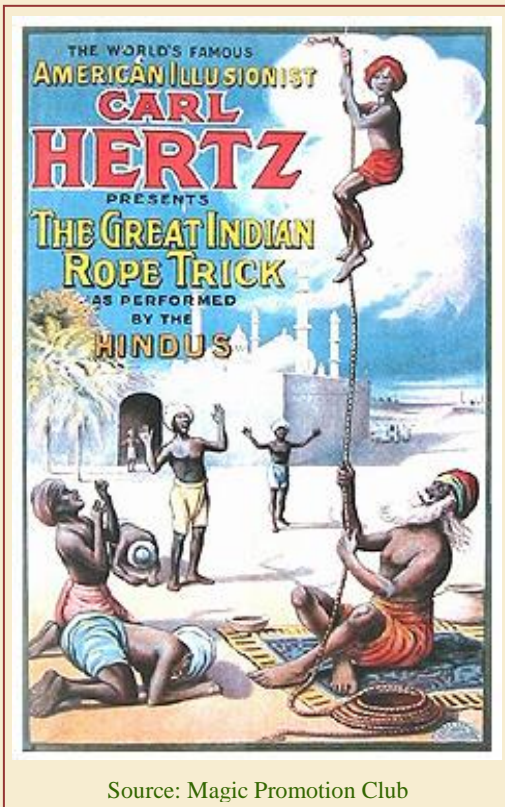
Source: *Beside the Yarra... Stories from Melbourne's History*

OPERA HOUSE.
Sole Lessee and Director .. Mr. Harry Rickards
Acting Manager .. Mr. Fred. Aydon
A veritable triumph achieved by
Mr. HARRY RICKARDS'S
New Tivoli Minstrels and Specialty Company.

TO-NIGHT (SATURDAY) TO-NIGHT.
For the First Time in
THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE,
The Greatest Wonder of the
NINETEENTH CENTURY.
The
RAGE OF LONDON.
The Photo. Electric Sensation of the Day.
FIRST PRODUCTION
Of the
GREAT LONDON SENSATION,
The
PINEMATOGAPHE, The Most
Photo. Electric Sensation of the Day, Every Scene in Motion. **CINEMATOGAPHE,** Startling
CINEMATOGAPHE, Marvel
CINEMATOGAPHE, Of the Age,
CINEMATOGAPHE, The
CINEMATOGAPHE, World's
CINEMATOGAPHE, Greatest
CINEMATOGAPHE, Wonder.
A Marvellous Reproduction of
ANIMATED NATURE.
Impossible to realise that the figures are not
ACTUALLY LIVING.
First Production in Australia,
TO-NIGHT (SATURDAY) TO-NIGHT
Introduced by
CARL HERTZ The Premier Prestidigitateur
CARL HERTZ And Illusionist of the World,
CARL HERTZ In His Conflux of
CARL HERTZ Apparent Miracles,
CARL HERTZ Including the Most
CARL HERTZ Marvellous Illusion.

council's theatre regulations. The tour, which ran until late June, included the other major cities - Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin - along with smaller centres such as Invercargill, Ashburton and Timaru. He and his company then returned to Australia under Geach's management, opening in Melbourne on 19 July at the Atheneum.

The extensive return tour of Australia involved two visits to Tasmania (including Hobart, Launceston and Zeehan), Victoria (including a return Melbourne season and Bendigo), South Australia (including Adelaide and Port Adelaide), Western Australia (including Perth, Kalgoorlie, Fremantle and Albany), and Broken Hill (NSW). Hertz remained in Australia until 10 December, at which time he sailed for Bombay (India) with Edwin Geach on the first leg of an extensive and exceedingly prosperous world tour.



Although he never returned to the Australasian region, Hertz remained a popular subject of reportage in Australian newspapers up until his actual death in 1924.²

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HOGAN'S GENUINE NEGRO Co

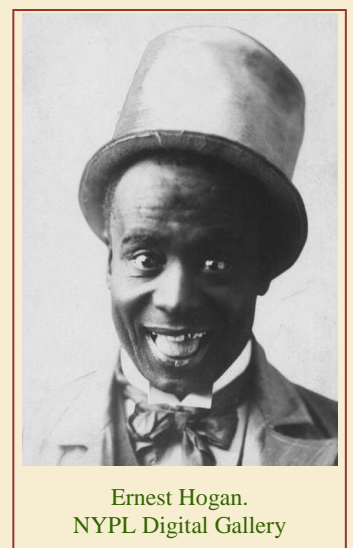
akas incl. Ernest Hogan's Genuine Georgia's and Alabama Cake Walkers / Curtis's Afro-American Minstrel Co

[1899-1900] Although ragtime and African-American Broadway pioneer, Ernest Hogan (1865-1909) only spent eight months in the Australasian region, it was nevertheless a significant event. He arrived in Australia in late June 1899 as headline act with M.B. Curtis. After a fall out with Curtis in New Zealand in late September Hogan took control of the troupe, which also featured Billy McClain, Tom and Robert Logan and Madah A. Hyer. The company's Australia engagements comprised Sydney and Brisbane (twice each) and a number of regional centres in Queensland and New South Wales. A proposed return tour (ca. 1901-02) never eventuated.

See also: [Billie C. Brown](#).

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² Hertz's death had been incorrectly announced around Australia ca. August/September 1903.

HARRY HOUDINI

(1874-1926) American escapologist, illusionist [Born Erik Weisz in Budapest, Hungary]



Harry Houdini, 1899 promotional photo.
Source: Library of Congress (USA)

[1910] One of the most popular entertainers of the early twentieth century, Harry Houdini staged sensational escape acts from seemingly impossible predicaments that thrilled audiences around the world. Known during his early career as Harry "Handcuff" Houdini, he later expanded his repertoire to include chains, ropes slung from skyscrapers, straitjackets under water. He also made several movies and became a keen aviator, becoming one of the first people to make a controlled flight in Australia.

Born Erik Weisz in Budapest, on 24 March 1874, Houdini immigrated to America with his family four years later and initially lived in Appleton, Wisconsin³ where his father served as Rabbi of the Zion Reform Jewish Congregation. A gifted athlete he made his public debut at age nine as a trapeze artist but eventually decided to become a magician. He began this career in 1891, starting out as a card manipulator before experimenting with escape acts. His act was originally staged with one of his brothers, Theodore (aka Dash) and billed as The Brothers Houdini. In 1893, however, he met Wilhelmina Beatrice "Bess" Rahner who become his assistant. They married to following year, and Bess continued to be involved in act for the remainder of his career. Her role was so significant that the act was often billed as The Houdinis.

Harry Houdini's big break came in 1899 when he met manager Martin Beck while undertaking a small time rural tour. Still performing a repertoire of various tricks Beck advised him to concentrate on escape acts and booked him on the Orpheum vaudeville circuit. Within months, he was performing at the top vaudeville houses in the country, and in 1900 he undertook his first European tour. Over the remainder of the decade Houdini, billed as the "Handcuff King," established himself as the world's greatest escape artist through a combination of tireless touring, an increasingly sophisticated act and clever publicity.

Houdini's only Australian tour was undertaken in 1910 for [Harry Rickards](#). He arrived in Adelaide on 5 February and although indicating to the waiting press that he intended to perform in the city at some stage, his contract stipulated only appearances in Melbourne and Sydney, and these were in fact the cities he played. Houdini opened his Australian engagement at Rickards' New [Opera House](#), Melbourne on 7 February, continuing through until 18 March. During the season he presented a series of short films demonstrating some overseas performances, presented his current specialties, notably "Metamorphosis" and "The Milk Can Escape," and accepted challenges from his sceptics. He also provided great publicity by performing a stunt away from the Opera House, this being an escape from bonds while in the Yarra River. Chained and padlocked he dived off the Queen's Bridge on 17 February in surrounded by a huge crowd of spectators.

One of the main reasons for Houdini accepting Rickards' tour offer, was his desire to become the first person to make a controlled flight in Australia. For this reason he only played Melbourne and Sydney, taking an extended break between the two seasons to indulge in his passion for aviation. This had become full-blown the previous year and resulted in his purchase of a French Voisin biplane for \$5000. He also brought with him mechanic, Antonio Brassac. Houdini was initially delayed from making his attempt for several weeks due to unfavourable wind conditions. Mechanical difficulty with the controls then led to further delays. Finally, early on the morning of March

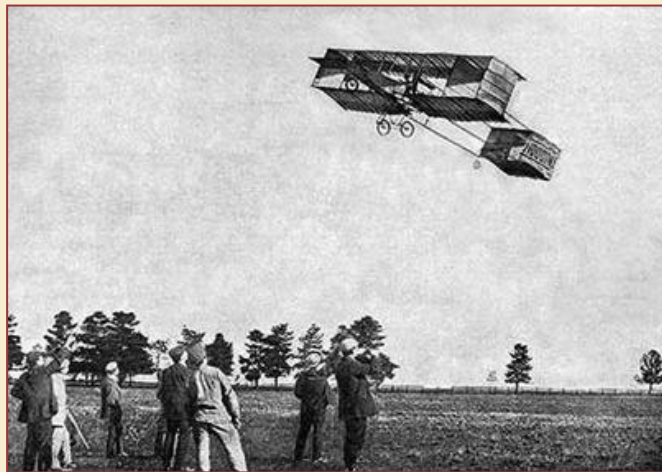
O P E R A H O U S E

Sole Proprietor and Manager—Mr. Harry Rickards.
Mr. HARRY RICKARDS'S
NEW TIVOLI VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.
ANNOUNCEMENT EXTRAORDINARY.
ANNOUNCEMENT EXTRAORDINARY.
A MAMMOTH ENGAGEMENT,
A MAMMOTH ENGAGEMENT,
Direct from London per H.M.S.S. "Malwa," this morning, under Special Engagement to Mr. Harry Rickards, making his
FIRST APPEARANCE IN AUSTRALIA
FIRST APPEARANCE IN AUSTRALIA
At the OPERA-HOUSE,
TO-NIGHT (MONDAY), TO-NIGHT,
TO-NIGHT (MONDAY), TO-NIGHT,
A
MAMMOTH
ATTRACTION.
Among the Many Sensational Engagements Mr. Rickards has made in the past, he now presents an Act that Excels all others:
It Has
BAFFLED GREAT BRITAIN,
It Has
BAFFLED AMERICA,
It Has
BAFFLED EUROPE:
Undoubtedly the Greatest and Most Sensational Act that has ever been Engaged for Australia by any Manager,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
The Great
Mysteriarch,
The Arch Mysterifer,
The Greatest and Most Sensational Act that has Ever Been Presented to an Australian Audience.
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
HOUDINI,
The Great
Mysteriarch,
The Arch Mysterifer,
The Sensation of Great Britain, America, and All Europe, Baffling all Beholders.

Argus (Melbourne) 7 Feb. 1910, 12.

³ Houdini often claimed he had been born in Appleton, and this has been erroneously replicated in many secondary sources (including, for example, Leann Richards' *Houdini's Tour of Australia* (2006).

18, 1910, he succeeded in making three flights. The last of these flights was the longest and involved him covering a distance of two miles and achieving a height of 100 feet in 3 ½ minutes. The delays meant, however, that he did not become the first official Australian aviator (being beaten by two days). But this didn't stop him from using the power of publicity to instil the idea that he had become the first.

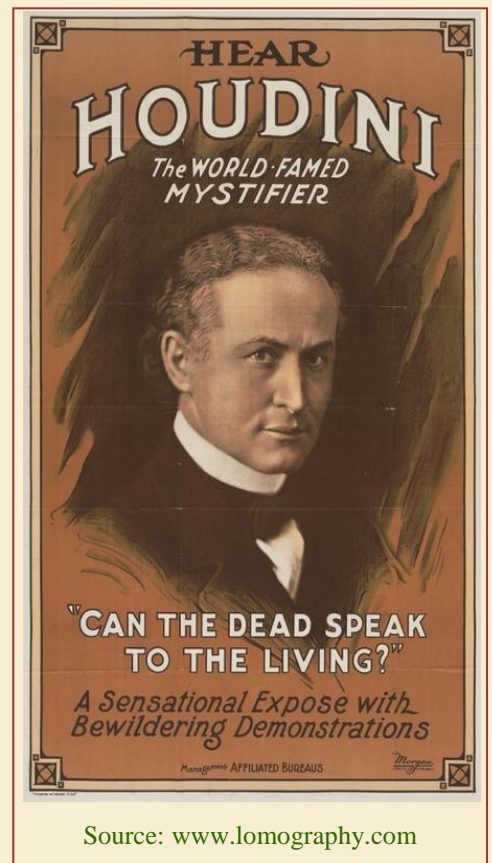


Houdini's Victorian flight, 18 March 1910.

Houdini's Sydney season had begun on 28 March and continued up until 30 April, with both his *Tivoli* season and extra-curricular activities playing out like his Melbourne. For his public escape site he chose the Domain municipal baths rather than risk the possibility of a shark attack in the harbour. And unlike the free Yarra dive, Rickards charged a one shilling entry fee - no doubt because the baths could be controlled whereas the Melbourne site was freely accessible. The much publicised event, which took place on 14 April, saw Houdini handcuffed behind his back, his elbows secured to his sides with heavy leg irons with the chain also wrapped around his neck.

Houdini's aviation feats in Sydney were similarly well-attended, and indeed the level of public interest was such that Harry Rickards sold one shilling tickets to Houdini's attempt at Rosehill Raceway on 26 April.⁴ He also used the opportunity to further advertise his star attraction, although given the excitement being generated throughout the Sydney community this was possibly unnecessary. Houdini made his last flight in Australia on Sunday 1 May and was suitably mobbed after he landed. He and his entourage left Australia for the United States on 11 May, having travelled by train to Brisbane for their departure aboard the *Manuka*.

NB: Houdini took his stage name from the name of the French magician Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin, but he later wrote *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin* (1908), a debunking study of Houdini's abilities. Before his death from peritonitis (following an injury to his stomach) Houdini published a number of other books. He also contributed an entry on conjuring to the 13th edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* and appeared in at least six films.



Source: www.lomography.com

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⁴ The Rosehill Raceway exhibition was originally scheduled for the 25th but cancelled due to inclement weather.