

Why Is It Offensive?

History of Blackface, Modern-Day Cultural Appropriation

Handout Two: Famous Characters in the Blackface Tradition



- Certain characters cropped up over and over again in different performances. They all perpetuated racist stereotypes.
- Rice's "Jim Crow" character represented "the uneducated rural slave."
- The "Zip Coon" character perpetuated racial stereotypes about urban African Americans. This character usually dressed flamboyantly and tried unsuccessfully to speak in a sophisticated manner.
- The "Mammy" was a Black mother figure who doted on her "pickanninnies," or Black children. The Aunt Jemima figure used to brand pancakes and syrup was originally a "mammy" minstrel character.
- The character "Hannah" was a highly sexualized, mixed race woman who symbolized sexual relations between masters and slaves.

Source: [University of South Florida](#)

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