

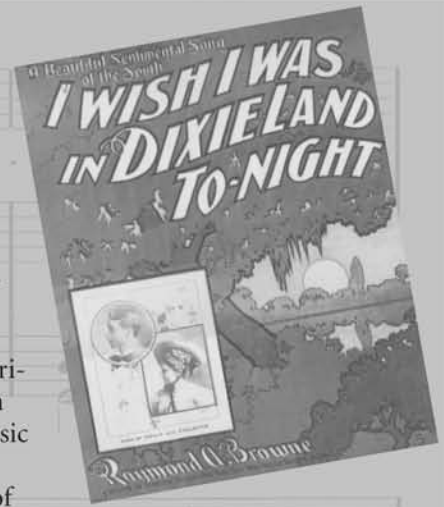
Copyright Lore

■ Frank Evina

Prior to becoming a famous New York Congressman who served from 1923 until his death in 1949, Sol Bloom made a name for himself as a successful music publisher in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Universally recognized in theatrical circles as a “great promoter,” Bloom proudly acknowledged in his autobiography that in 1899 he worked up “the best single music promotion idea” he ever had.

Around Dec. 28, 1899, a man appeared at the main entrance of the Copyright Office, then located on the ground floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, and stood there all day. Another man finally relieved him in the late afternoon, and he spent the entire night outside the main entrance to the Jefferson Building. The next day two more men joined in, and the day after the number grew to four or five. People naturally became curious and began to ask questions about the reason for this mysterious assemblage. They were all given the same answer: “Sol Bloom, the Music Man, will tell you.”

Finally on Jan. 2, 1900, Sol Bloom told all with the following advertisement that appeared in newspapers all over the country:



More Than Thirty Millions

of copyrights will be issued during the century which commenced with the present year...

In line with our usual policy of being first, we have secured

Copyright NUMBER ONE

“I Wish I was in Dixie Land Tonight!”
by Raymond A. Browne

SOL BLOOM
The Progressive Publisher

Through this feat, Bloom ensured that his application would be the first to be filed in the Copyright Office when it opened for business on the first working day of the new century, Jan. 2, 1900. The Copyright Office records indicate that he was, indeed, issued registration number one in the newly created “Class C” for musical compositions.

However, as was the case in the year 2000, a debate developed as to when the new century actually began. It was widely held that 1901, not 1900, marked the beginning of the 20th century. A further check of the copyright record books reveals that “the Music Man” took no chances. On Jan. 2, 1901, the first registration certificate for a musical composition was issued to none other than Sol Bloom for a song entitled “At the Bottom of the Hill” by Raymond A. Browne and Theo. F. Morse. Advertising moguls on Madison Avenue would no doubt be impressed by Bloom’s resourcefulness. ©

