

Intimate Apparel

Written by: Lynn Nottage

Directed by: Robert Moss

Copyright Notice: This packet may contain copyrighted materials that are used in compliance with U.S. Copyright law. Under that law, materials may not be saved to your computer, revised, copied, or distributed without permission. They are to be used in support of instructional activity as part of this production only and shall be limited to the duration of the production, unless otherwise specified by the production manager or owner of the material. Materials found in this actor packet may only be downloaded or printed for your personal use in this production.

For more information, see the FSU Copyright Guidelines.

Florida State University

School of Theatre

Season 2011-2012

Actor Packet Compiled by: Rebecca Ormiston

Intimate Apparel:

Selected Production History

Notable

February 2003:

Co-Produced/Co-Commissioned, World Premiere by CENTERSTAGE (Maryland, MD)

April 2003:

Co-Produced/Co-Commissioned, South Coast Repertory Theatre (Costa Mesa, CA)

March 2004:

Roundabout Theatre (New York, NY): **off-Broadway debut**

July 2004:

Mark Taper Forum (Los Angeles, CA)

January 2005:

Steppenwolf Theatre (Chicago, IL)

February 2006:

Syracuse Stage (Syracuse, NY)

Recent

October 2010:

Two River Theatre Company (NJ)

In Florida

2006:

Gable Stage Theatre (Coral Gables)

2008:

Laura Pels Theatre (Orlando)

GLOSSARY

- This glossary provides a concise definition for some of the terms you will find in *Intimate Apparel*. They are organized by page number and scene.
- N/A in the page number column means that the term is in the original script, but not in the version you have for rehearsal.
- If you would like to know more about a term, or if you would like the source of a term, or if you would like me to include a term not in this glossary, please feel free to ask!

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Pg. 2	Ragtime	<i>n.</i> A style of jazz piano music developed around 1900. Characteristics: a two-four rhythm base and a syncopated melody.	S.D. (<i>A clumsy ragtime melody bleeds in from the parlor.</i>)
2	The war	While America engaged in multiple wars during the Nineteenth century, Mrs. Dickson's biography steers us to believe that she is referencing the Civil War (1861-1865).	MRS. DICKSON: ...I know your mama since before the war.
4	Rooming House	A facility where people can rent a room for a period of weeks, months, or years. Common areas, such as the dining room, and laundry room are shared. A landlord holds full rights to the building, and who can rent.	ESTHER: And I been living in this rooming house for so long...

3	Saperstein's	A department store. Still available in some towns in NY and in other states.	MRS. DICKSON: But not every man has the good sense to shop at— ESTHER and MRS. DICKSON: Saperstein's.
5	Courtship Parties and Dances	A remnant of Victorian courtship rituals, each class held specific social functions for the purpose of securing a spouse. There was also a courtship season that began in the spring, usually from April to July.	ESTHER: But he's been coming to these parties for nearly two years...
6	Opiates/Opium	A highly addictive narcotic, known to be a popular recreational drug during the 19 th and 20 th century. Opium dens were prevalent in big cities like New York and San Francisco.	MRS. DICKSON: ...I forgave his infatuation with the opiates.
7	Panama	Please see geographic information. (maps)	

Scene 2

9	Tenderloin	Also known as the red-light district in Manhattan. Please see the supplemental material on Manhattan (maps)	VAN BUREN: I feel like a tart from the Tenderloin.
9	The Corset Debate	A debate that emerged during the late 1800s and early	ESTHER: Well, it the rage. Some ladies ain't even wearing

		1900s among women suffragettes. Please see the casebook regarding the corset debates.	the corsets in private...most gals don't like 'em, even fine ladies like yourself.
9	Suffragettes	Women who struggled for years to secure the vote for women in 1920. Suffragettes began their call for equal voting rights as early as the pre-Civil War period, but did not gain prominence until after the Civil War.	VAN BUREN: You're not one of those suffragettes, are you?
12	Divorce	Please see the casebook section about women and the stigma of divorce during the early Twentieth century.	VAN BUREN: I'd rather not be a divorcee', at my age it would prove disastrous.
14	Literacy	Please see the chart and information concerning literacy rates in America (casebook and this packet)	ESTHER: The fact is I can't read.
15	Trolley	A streetcar that operates on rails and follows a regular route.	ESTHER: ...I take the trolley downtown to Orchard Street.
15	Orchard Street	A famous street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, historically known for its tenements which housed thousands of immigrants, and the plethora of Jewish-owned garment shops.	See above line.
16	Ferdinand de	The French	GEORGE: They say a

	Lesseps	developer of the Suez Canal, he attempted to complete the Panama Canal. He was later implicated in the Panama Canal Scandal which involved bribes between Ferdinand de Lesseps and politicians and journalists.	mad Frenchmen dreamed up this Panama project,
--	---------	---	---

Scene 3

18	Orient	An old-fashioned and un-PC way of saying "Asia" or the "East." At the time, this term was completely acceptable. This location is known to provide luxurious, expensive goods.	MARKS: ...it come right off the ship from the Orient.
18	"Turn back sheets for fifty cents a day."	Become a maid, or domestic helper— a nanny. This was a common line of work for Black women coming to the North.	ESTHER: I'm afraid it was either learn to sew or turn back sheets for fifty cents a day.
19	Cirnati sausage	A type of Romanian sausage with a spicy, smoked flavor. It is thick in texture/width, tubular, and its coloring resembles salami.	MARKS: Look at the size of these hands. Like Cirnati, Romanian sausage.
20	Rabbinical Law	Please see the information about Romanian Judaism in the casebook.	MARKS: It is the rabbinical law, not mine.

Scene 4

N/A	Carpetbag	A bag or purse made of carpet material, usually from an Oriental rug. These bags were widely popular in the Nineteenth century and came in a variety of sizes.	S.D. (<i>Esther bangs on the door, then finally enters carrying a carpetbag.</i>)
21	Temperance Movement	At its strongest in the 1800s before the Civil War. The Temperance Movement was aggressive enough with its message of living a sober life and/or alcoholic consumption in moderation that this sentiment persisted into the Twentieth century.	ESTHER: ...that ignorant oil is unforgiving. Best let it lie.
21	Mother Hen	One who fusses over another in an over-protective fashion, like a hen to her chicks. First known use of this word is in 1873.	MAYME: ...stop playing mother hen.
21	Mistress	In this sense, a women who has authority over others, including slaves.	ESTHER: Anything else, mistress?
23	Onliest	Only, the only thing is...	MAYME: Onliest, I ain't got the money...
23	Satin foulard	A finely woven fabric that usually has a print, and is often used to make handkerchiefs.	ESTHER:...that satin foulard was made for the finest ladies in Paris.
27	The Great Northern	Please see	ESTHER: ...since I

	Migration	information in the packet about The Great Northern Migration.	come North.
28	Bert Williams	b. (1875-1922) A widely successful Black entertainer, comedian, recording artists, and vaudeville entertainer who also performed in Blackface.	MAYME: Only last night one of Bert Williams musicians sat up front...
28	Cambric walking suit	A lightweight, plain-weave cotton fabric suit.	ESTHER: Yes, he here in my pocket in a cambric walking suit, he has a heliotrope handkerchief...
28	Heliotrope handkerchief	A pinkish-purple colored handkerchief.	See above line.
30	"You got your mind in the gutter."	A derogatory expression which roughly translates to: "you're thinking of nasty/trashy things and you're not supposed to."	ESTHER: I'm being serious and you got your mind in the gutter.
31	"...and good men befriend the devil overnight."	A euphemism or expression for someone who is all-around good, but gives in for a sinful vice, item, or pleasure. This also denotes an exchange: one's morals for an item they shouldn't have but want nonetheless.	GEORGE: I seen months of hard work lost in an evening and good men befriend he devil overnight.

Scene 5

32	Corresponding	<i>n. of the v. correspond:</i> To communicate with, usually intimately or secretively. Fun fact: corresponding also holds a sexual connotation since the medieval period.	ESTHER: We corresponding. That's all.
32	"Don't set your clock by my habits."	Roughly translates to: "Don't assume to know how I act."	MRS. DICKSON: Esther, you're too practical a girl for this. ESTHER: Don't set your clock by my habits.
38	Max Fiedler	A notable German conductor and composer of the time.	VAN BUREN: I saw Mr. Max Fiedler of Germany conduct selections from <i>Don Juan</i> .
38	<i>Don Juan</i>	A famous story about a fictional and amorous libertine. This story has been adapted numerous times into plays and operas. In 1905, it was performed for New York audiences by the Philharmonic Society.	See above line.
38	Madison Square Garden	This is NOT the MSG we know today, but another indoor facility that served as an entertainment hub for the upper classes.	VAN BUREN: I'd rather have gone to the electric show at Madison Square Garden...
38	Bohemian	<i>n.</i> "one who either cuts himself off, or is by his habits cut off,	VAN BUREN: Maybe I'll be a bohemian, a bohemian needn't a

		from society for which he is otherwise fitted; especially an artist, literary man, or actor, who leads a free, vagabond, or irregular life, not being particular as to the society he frequents, and despising conventionalities generally." (OED)	husband, she's not bound by convention.
--	--	--	---

ACT TWO

Scene 1 and 2 (scene 1 only has "Chattel")

55	Chattel	The U.S.A and the Americas share a long and ugly history of African slave labor. Children born to slaves were also known as chattel.	GEORGE: My parents were chattel...
56	"Yellow, cotton and cane eyes."	Definition forthcoming.	ESTHER: ...Yellow, cotton and cane eyes.
57	Cicadas	A large, flying insect colloquially known as locust. They are known for their distinctive, "whirring" noise. Although she's never been to Panama, Esther would be familiar with Cicadas from North Carolina.	ESTHER: ...and listened for the song of cicadas...

58	Worsted	A firm cloth made from yarn.	ESTHER: ...I'd make you a worsted suit.
58	Chupses	A common expression of amusement or disdain in Barbados verbal communication, alternatively known as "sucking teeth."	GEORGE: S.D. (<i>Chupses again.</i>)
58	St. Lucy	The northern-most part of Barbados.	GEORGE: I ain' been this idle since a boy in St. Lucy. But that busylickum ain' 'ear nothing.
58	Busylickum	<i>n.</i> A Barbados slang for "a nosy person."	See above line.
58	Steel girders	A support beam used in construction.	GEORGE: ...steel girders as thick as tamarind trees...
58	Tamarind Trees	A tree native to Africa, but transported to the Americas during the 1600s. It's a fruit bearing tree that can grow quite large: 40-60 feet high.	See above line.

Scene 3

N/A	Snifter	A type of glass for brandy and whiskey. It is wide at the bottom, and narrow towards the top with a short stem.	S.D. (<i>Van Buren sits on the bed cradling a snifter of brandy.</i>)
67	Lenox	A town in New York.	VAN BUREN: Anyway, I'm considering a visit with friends in Lenox this summer...

Scene 4

80	Duppy	A ghost or malevolent spirit. Its origins are from Northwest Africa; the duppy is a prominent figure in Caribbean folklore.	GEORGE: You look as though you seen a duppy.
81	Mulatto	A person whose ancestry is half-Black and half-white. During the Eighteenth century, a mulatto was someone with a Black and Native American heritage, but by 1905 the term had come to mean any mixed-race person with white heritage.	GEORGE: ...An old mulatto man.
82	Heifer	Derogatory name	MAYME: Well, she

		for a heavy, slow, unintelligent or useless person. This name is usually assigned to women, comparing her to a cow.	must be a cruel heartless heifer.
--	--	---	-----------------------------------

Scene 6

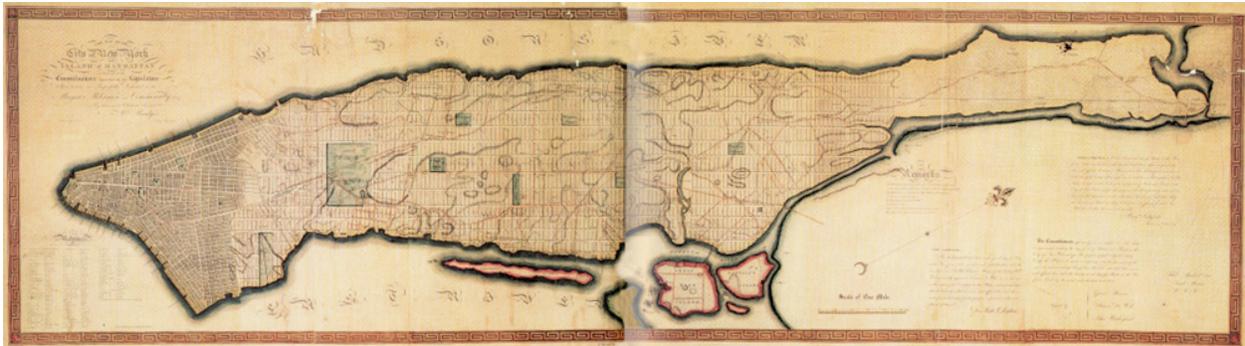
N/A	<i>Tallit Katen</i>	“The Tallit katan is a fringed garment worn either under or over one’s clothing by Orthodox Jewish...made of wool or cotton, it is a poncho-like garment with a hole for the head and special twined and knotted fringes known as tzitzit attached to its four corners.”	S.D. (<i>[MARKS]</i> removes his outer jacket, revealing the fringes of his Tallit Katen.)
-----	---------------------	--	---

Maps of Manhattan, Then and Now

Manhattan

A borough of New York City, the island of Manhattan is one of the most notable and recognizable locations in the world. When people think of the “American Dream,” or of the nation itself, they often think of New York City itself and the Statue of Liberty. Below you will find maps of the area so that you can begin to get a sense of Esther’s world. Please note that the older maps are a bit difficult to read, so I’ve included contemporary maps with clearly marked street names. Also take note that almost all of these streets existed before 1905. Please let me know if you need a source for these maps. The antique ones came from ebay. The rest were provided by Googlemaps, or by New York tourist blogs.

The FSU Strozier library has some beautiful, large maps of Manhattan in their collection. However, they are for in-library use only. Regardless, I would strongly suggest taking a trip to the library!



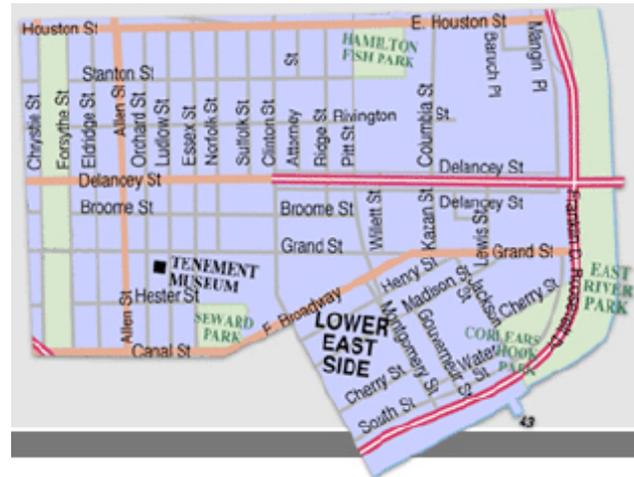
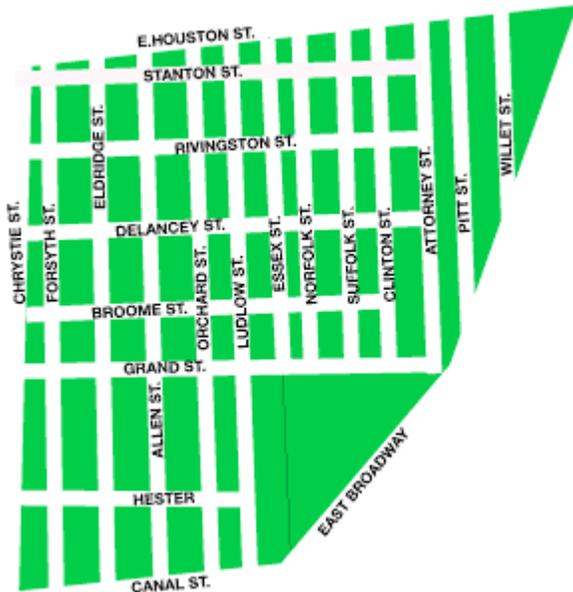
Nineteenth Century Map of Manhattan



Early Twentieth Century Map of Manhattan’s Extensive Subway System

Maps of Manhattan, Then and Now

WHERE THE CHARACTERS “LIVE”



- Mr. Marks resides in the garment district on **Orchard Street**. Mayme is farther **downtown**.
- Mrs. Van Buren lives on **Fifth Avenue** (not pictured, it's a bit of a trip uptown)

As for Mrs. Dickson and Esther...

- We need to remember that transit during this time was somewhat new and a bit slower than today's fast cars, busses, and subways.
- Time and space were perceived differently in 1905 because it simply took longer to travel to places within the city.
- **The first traffic light was not installed until 1924**, so we must imagine a very different environment in regard to traffic.

Based on the information provided in the script, Mrs. Dickson's rooming houses probably resided somewhere near the uppermost corner of Eldridge street and Stanton (see upper left map). They may also live a little bit north of East Houston street, which would take them out of the Lower East Side of Manhattan, but would still place them in Lower Manhattan, as Nottage suggests.

Maps of Manhattan, Then and Now

The Tenderloin District

- Also known as the “red-light district” of Manhattan.
- The name was coined by Police captain Andrew S. Williams who remarked that he has steak at home, but occasionally seeks “tenderloin” (hint, hint).
- While considered a low-class affair, its emergence in affluent neighborhoods suggests that the well-to-do frequented the “delights” of the Tenderloin.
- Its coordinates during the Nineteenth and Twentieth century shift, shrink, and expand significantly. This was partly due to the vice and Comstockery laws of the 1800s (Obscenity laws which cracked down on vice). Here is a map of the area of Manhattan the Tenderloin encompassed (highlighted).



- NY BLOG: “The area originally ran from 23rd Street to 42nd Street and from Fifth Avenue to Seventh Avenue, but by the turn of the century, it had expanded northward to 57th or 62nd Street and west to Eighth Avenue.”

Photos of the Period, The Turn of the Century

THE GREAT MIGRATION

Esther and George's journey to New York predates a mass exodus of African Americans from the South to the North during the early 1900s. Looking for steady work opportunities, better pay, and an attempt to escape from Jim Crow laws, African Americans moved northward, settling in big cities on each coast.

Their migration story finds some connections with the European working class, as families from parts of Europe left their homeland because of famine, depressed economies, violence, and increasing hostility towards particular groups (ex. Jewish communities). The United States of America, in all of its rapid expansion, became a symbol of possibility, hope, and progress for these immigrants. Consequently, the industrialized North signified success, employment, and wealth to African Americans. The North also served as a kind of safe haven amid the rampant violence and threats of lynch mobs that persisted in the South.

Make sure to visit the casebook for primary sources about the state of affairs for African Americans during this time.

Source for all images and content:

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/gallery> (IN MOTION, Migration Resources)

Photos of the Period, The Turn of the Century

ELLIS ISLAND

“Between 1900 and 1914, European immigrants, like those arriving at Ellis Island in New York City, came at a rate of over one million a year. But in 1915, 198,000 had arrived and a year later, only 146,000 while the total number of immigrants was under 300,000. By 1918, only 31,000 Europeans had come and almost as many had left the country.”



Levick, Edwin. *Passed and Waiting to be Taken Off Ellis Island.* (1902-1913)

LIFE IN THE SOUTH

“The migration was a watershed in the history of African America. As late as 1910, seven million African Americans resided in the South, while fewer than one million lived in all other regions of the country combined.”

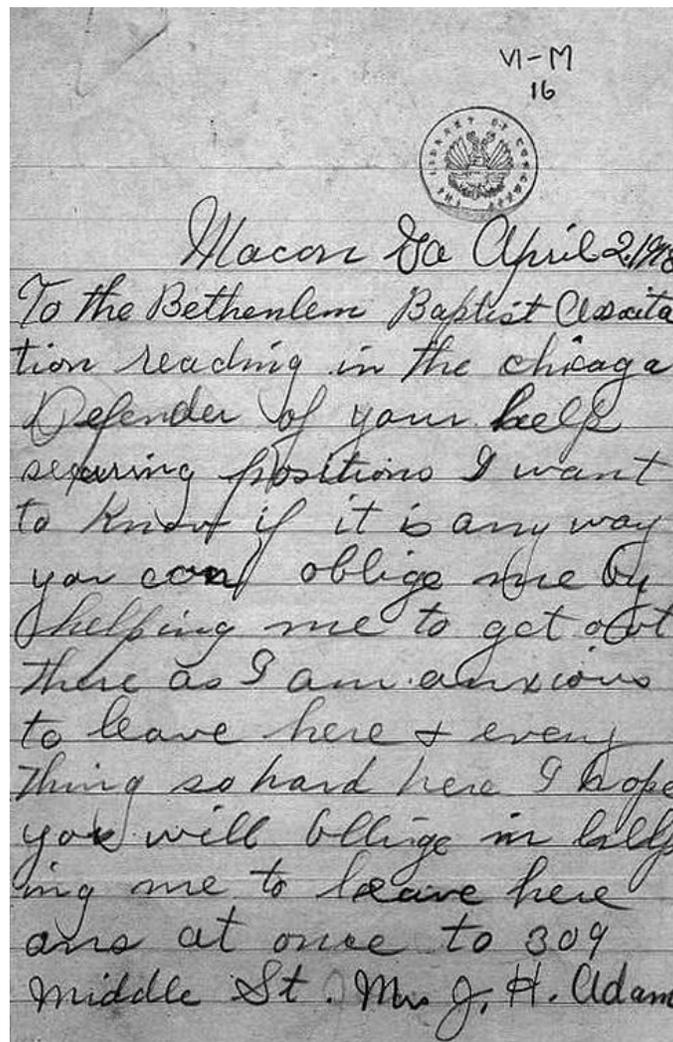


Unknown. *Typical Plantation Homes in the South of Migrants to Chicago.* (1922)

Photos of the Period, The Turn of the Century

LIFE IN THE SOUTH

"On April 2, 1918, one Mrs. J. H. Adams, from Macon, Georgia, wrote a letter to the Bethlehem Baptist Association of Chicago. She had read about the group in the *Chicago Defender* and hoped its members could help her "get out there as I am anxious to leave here and everything so hard here." Black newspapers were a lifeline for the potential migrants who not only found encouragement to leave the South and information on jobs and housing, but could also try to get assistance from the migrant and religious networks already established in the North."

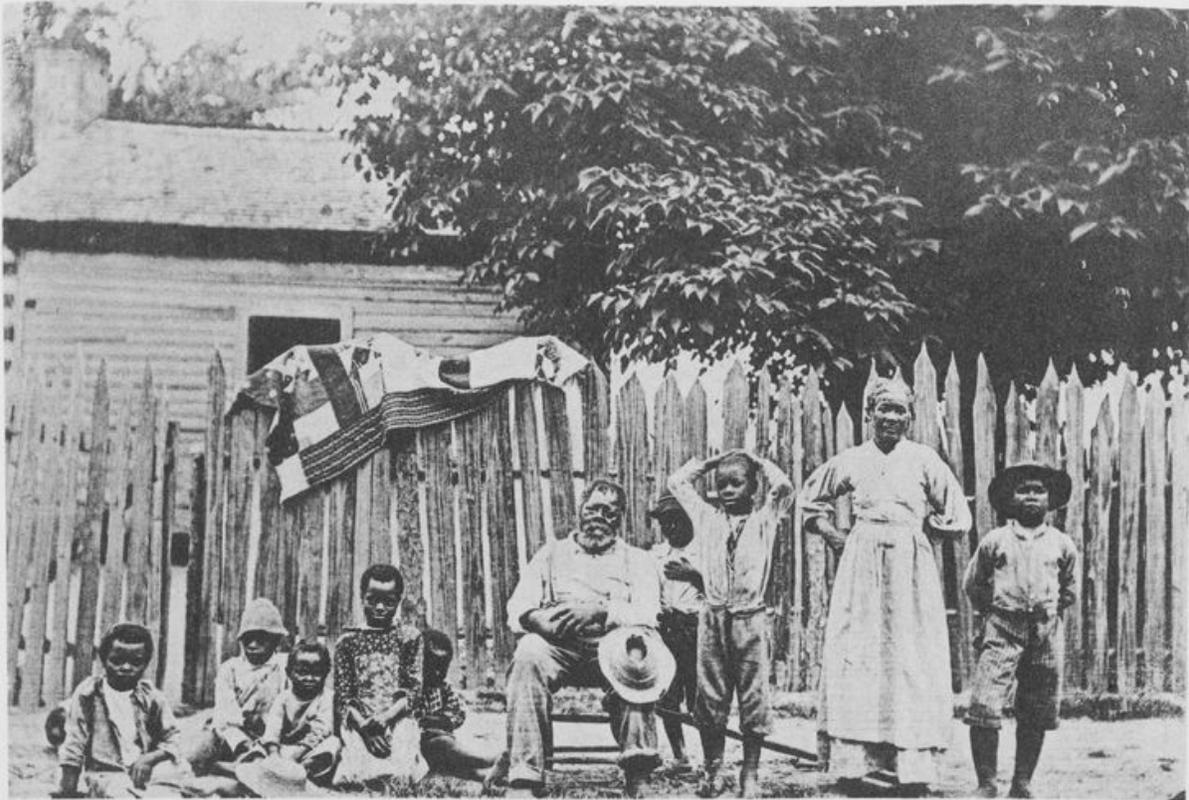


Title: Letter from Mrs. J.H. Adams, Macon, Georgia, to the Bethlehem Baptist Association in Chicago, Illinois, 1918.

Photos of the Period, The Turn of the Century

LIFE IN THE SOUTH

“The Legacy of Slavery: The South in the 1910s was only fifty years away from slavery. Most black families counted members who had been enslaved, and many in the younger generations still lived in slavery-like conditions as sharecroppers tied down to white plantations.”



A TYPICAL PLANTATION FAMILY

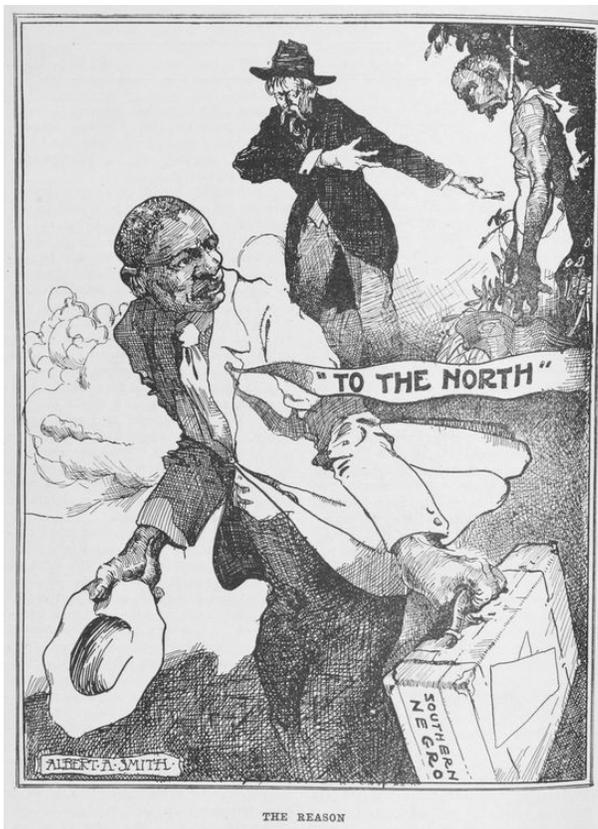
Unknown. *A Typical Plantation Family*. (1900)

Photos of the Period, The Turn of the Century

LIFE IN THE SOUTH

“Violence and the Migration: Between 1889 and 1932, over 3,700 people were lynched in the United States, more than 85 percent of them in the South. The lack of protection from mob violence was one of the reasons that pushed southerners to migrate north. The Chicago Urban League reported that after each lynching, the number of people arriving from the area where the murder had taken place increased.”

“The *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, an African-American newspaper, wrote on April 26, 1917: “[S]ome months ago Anthony Crawford, a highly respectable, honest and industrious Negro, with a good farm and holdings estimated to be worth \$300,000, was lynched in Abbeville, South Carolina. He was guilty of no crime. He would not be cheated out of his cotton. That was insolence. . . . [The mob] overpowered him and brutally lynched him. Is any one surprised that Negroes are leaving South Carolina by the thousands? The wonder is that any of them remain.”



The Reason. Source: *The Crisis*. (1920)

PROMISE IN THE NORTH

“Go North!: A champion of the migration, the newspaper posted job offers, train schedules, migrants' letters, and cartoons that urged southerners to come North. The word *Negro* was proscribed from its columns, and its articles and editorials referred to African Americans as “the Race.””

“Settling in New York: Many southern migrants pouring into the railroad stations in Detroit, Chicago, New York, or Philadelphia, had the addresses of family members or friends who had preceded them, and had settled in the black sections of the northern towns. Those who came without knowing anyone were generally steered to these areas by self-appointed helpers who roamed the stations in search of newcomers to assist in exchange for a fee.”



AN ALLEY ON THE LOWER WEST SIDE OF NEW YORK—WITHIN TWO BLOCKS OF FIFTH AVENUE
Small rear tenements flank this narrow court, which is reached by a covered passage, built probably for a wagon way.

Photos of the Period, The Turn of the Century

(Previous Page) Unknown. *An Alley on the Lower West Side of New York - Within Two Blocks of Fifth Avenue.* (1905)

Esther's Journey?: Black Women in the North

“Although their legal status was often problematic in the North, and despite often harsh working conditions there, thousands of free people of color made the decision to emigrate in order to escape certain oppression in the South. This movement from the South to the North continued well after the end of the Civil War, and reached its apogee in the twentieth century. Between 1870 and 1890, the Northern and Western states gained more than 120,000 people through migrations.”

“Black women in the North were commonly relegated to the same jobs they had held in the South as slaves or free women: laundresses, domestics, and nannies. But they often found work more readily than black men, and their contributions to the family were often quite important. Many women had migrated on their own and were heads of households. They represented 26 percent of black households in Philadelphia in 1880, 24 percent in Boston, 31 percent in Evansville, Indiana, and about a third in New

York.”

Unknown. *Eliza Benson.* Date unknown.



Leadership in the North

“Racism and sexism notwithstanding, a number of African-American women succeeded in attaining desirable positions in the North. Mrs. D. H. Williams was a prominent leader and taught kindergarten in Chicago; M. L. Davenport was the president of the Woman's Conference, also in Chicago; Anna Jones was a high school teacher in Kansas City; and W. M. Coshburn was a leader in Worcester, Massachusetts. Lilian J. B. Thomas was a stenographer in Louisville, Kentucky.”

(1902)

Visit the secondary source section of the casebook for more

information about middleclass and affluent Black life.

THE PANAMA CANAL

From The African American Migration Experience (inmotionaame.org):

“In its quest to build an interoceanic canal that linked the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the United States assisted Panama in its secession from Colombia in 1903. Two weeks later, the United States and Panama signed the *Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty*, which gave the United States the exclusive right to construct and exercise sovereignty over the Panama Canal Zone. The zone included the Panama Canal and five miles of land on either side of it. The waterway, which spans forty miles across the Isthmus of Panama, eliminated the need to travel around South America. Between 1906 and 1914, the United States imported nearly 50,000 West Indian laborers to Panama, principally from Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados, in order to build the canal. In 1977 the United States ratified the Panama Canal Neutrality Treaty, which transferred the jurisdiction of the canal zone and canal to Panama on December 31, 1999.”

- Panama was deadly for many laborers. Yellow fever, heat, construction accidents, and other conditions made the construction of the Panama Canal a hellish experience. **Make sure to visit the Panama section in the casebook for secondary sources, and first-hand accounts of the experience.**

“Conditions were especially bad on the Panama Canal, where the hardships of Jim Crow policies were augmented by malaria, yellow fever, ghastly accidents, and a high death rate. Workers endured the privations of exile because wages were higher. They sent money home to their loved ones, made frequent visits, and bought land on their native islands. In the end, however, most settled in the lands of migration.”

Images of the Panama Canal

Literacy of Black Immigrants, 1899-1932

Sources:

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/topic.cfm?migration=10&topic=4>

http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/viewer.cfm?id=10_003CT&page=1

Years	Adults Admitted	Literate	Semi-Literate	Illiterate			
		no.	% of adults	no.	% of adults	no.	% of adults
1899-1910	30,177	24,444*	81.0	n.a.	n.a.	5,733	19.0
1911-1917	42,593	35,341	83.0	145	0.3	7,107	16.7
1918-1924	46,815	46,185	98.7	68	0.1	562	1.2
1925-1932	6,284	6,250	99.5	3	-	31	0.5
1899-1932	125,869	112,220	89.1	216	0.2	13,433	10.7

*Includes semi-literates. Note: Between 1899 and 1917, adults were defined as those fourteen and older; from 1918 to 1932, sixteen and over. Literates were defined as those who could read and write; semi-literates, those who could read but not write; illiterates, those who could do neither.

Source: Immigration Reports, 1899-1933

Images of the Panama Canal

Occupational Status of Black Immigrants Entering the United States, 1899-1931

YEARS	1899-1905	1906-1912	1913-1919	1920-1926	1927-1931	1899-1931							
ADULTS	9,214	33,134	40,423	38,060	4,804	125,635							
		No.	% of adult	No.	% of adult	No.	% of adult	No.	% of adult	No.	% of adult	No.	% of adult
Adults w/out Occupation	1,383	15.0	4,010	12.1	4,646	11.5	5,334	14.0	1,393	29.0	16,766	13.3	
Adults with Occupation	7,831	85.0	29,124	87.9	35,777	88.5	32,726	86.0	3,411	71.0	108,869	86.7	
Professional	204	2.2	811	2.4	1,152	2.8	1,286	3.4	289	6.0	3,742	3.0	
Teachers	69	-	248	-	405	1.0	448	1.2	94	2.0	1,264	1.0	
Physicians	11	-	31	-	36	-	36	-	16	-	130	-	
Skilled	2,787	30.2	9,552	28.8	13,291	32.9	13,802	36.3	1,789	37.2	41,221	32.8	
Carpenters & Joiners	234	2.5	940	2.8	1,643	4.1	1,574	4.1	120	2.5	4,511	3.6	
Dressmakers & Seamstresses	298	3.2	2,773	8.4	4,493	11.1	4,645	12.2	632	13.2	12,841	10.2	
Clerks & Accountants	182	2.0	777	2.3	1,236	3.0	1,563	4.1	320	6.7	4,078	3.2	
Servants, Farm Laborers & Laborers	3,804	41.3	16,901	51.0	18,801	46.5	15,150	39.8	1,106	23.0	55,820	44.4	

Source: Immigration Reports, 1899-1931.

Images of the Panama Canal



1905- Fumigation brigades eradicating the mosquitoes in Panama City

Source: Panama Canal History Museum (.com)

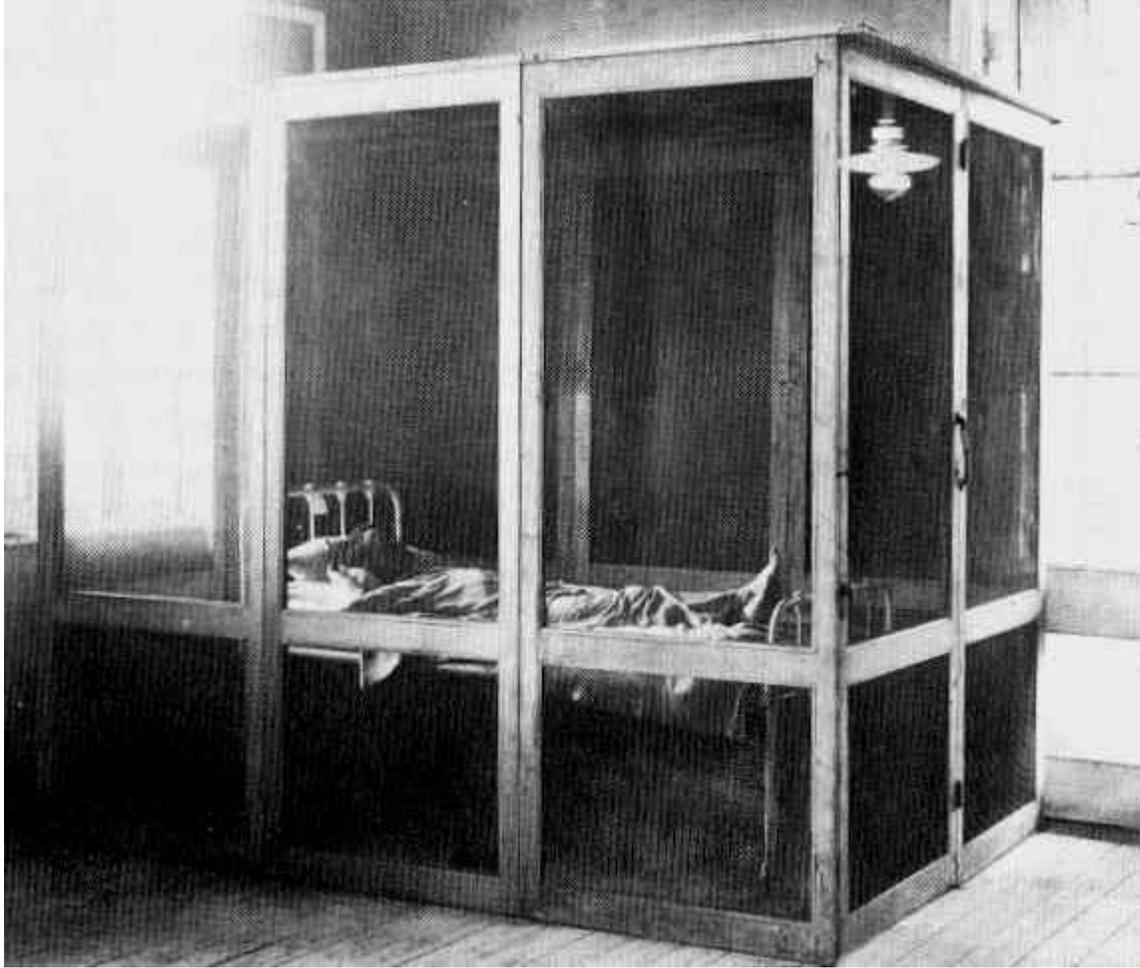
Images of the Panama Canal



Workers at the Panama Canal

Source: Panama Canal History Museum (.com)

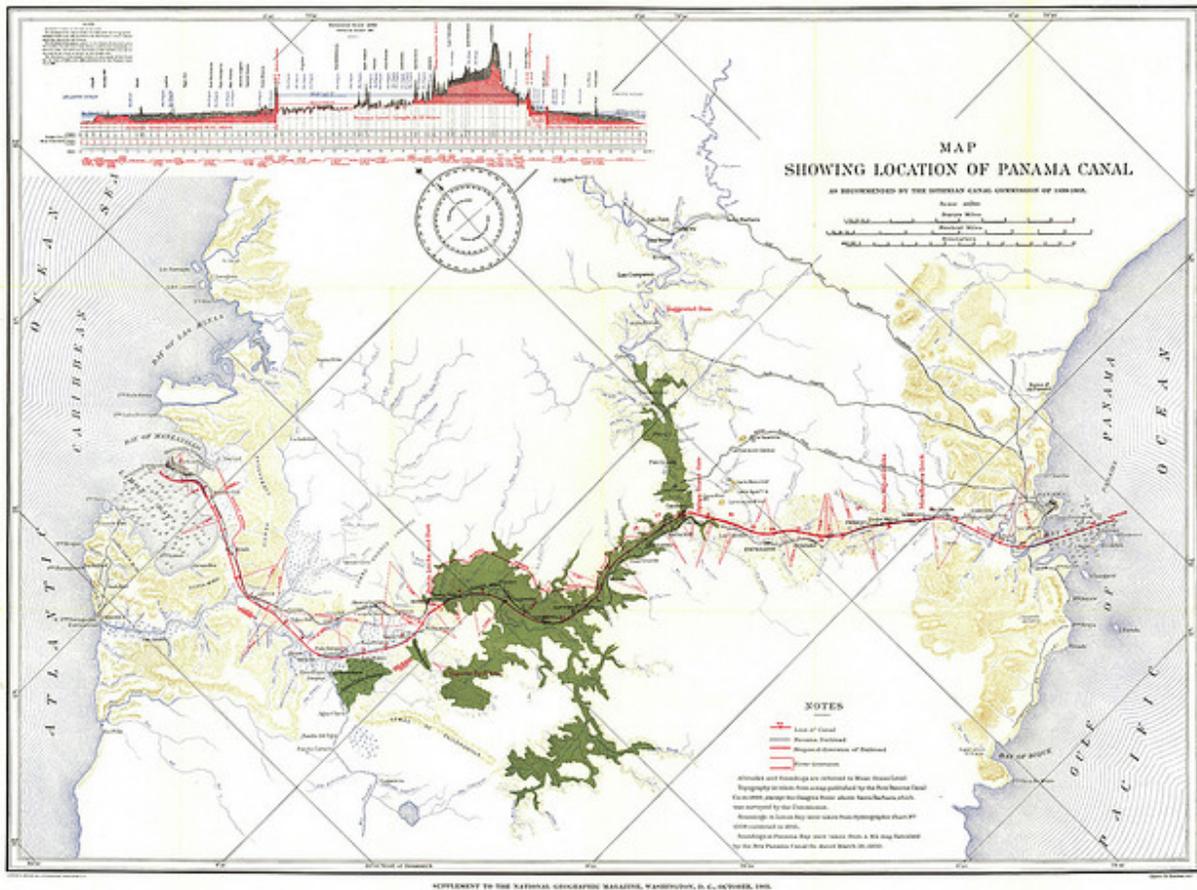
Images of the Panama Canal



Yellow Fever Quarantine Station

Source: Panama Canal History Museum (.com)

Images of the Panama Canal



Aerial Map of Panama Canal, 1905

Source: National Geographic Magazine, Washington D.C., October, 1905

Next Page:

Political Cartoons from Harper's Weekly, 1905

Source: <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/toonsbytopicpanamacanal.html>

HARPER'S WEEKLY

JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

Vol. XLIX.

New York, Saturday, November 11, 1905

No. 2521

Copyright, 1905, by HARPER & BROTHERS. All rights reserved



"THE CANAL WILL BE DUG"

The Conception of Race in Studying West Indians in Panama

by Carlos A. Broward

Alfred H. Hooper (JPH) and Laurence Johnston (LJN), two Americans, separately made the observation that with time and different educational resources, West Indian children continuously occupied American youngsters' achievement in math, spelling and second language acquisition during the American occupation of Panama's territory on the Canal Zone, the ten mile wide landstrip along the 50 mile route of the inter-oceanic Canal of the American completed by the United States in 1914. These writers' works represent the largest systematic study on West Indian education and achievement. Like other analysts, they noted material circumstances factors producing these outcomes. These included ethnic origin and family organization among varied British and French speaking West Indian migrants; school organization; religious variations within and across groups with resulting differential achievement patterns; social benefits, weak intrinsic achievement and spread mobility from bilingual mastery; the marital migration also for women into the national economy; an unusually high, shared consensus between the school, home and community. These factors accounted for much of the middle-achievement within and across groups.

Without going into details on how the long list of backward linkages of culture and social organization contributed toward schooling outcomes (that is the subject of a forthcoming work), the treatment of the causes of achievement and/or problems of race in the study of West Indians in Panama, is here used here exclusively to include the influence of Whites as an American endeavor and the national territory of the Republic.

Finally, British and French West Indians are lumped together. Consequently, the question of language differences and their use to create separate social identities merited little attention. The pivotal role of language as a vehicle of social difference and distance received little acknowledgment, although justification by linguistic associations created new demarcation lines within groups (e.g. good and bad language users) and across groups (e.g. British Empire ranked distinctions against those of a lower valued French, creolean parents). The French-speaking society, for example,

regarded Martinians, St. Lucians and Guadeloupeans into a temporary formal integration that they themselves lacked outside of Panama. This society and accompanying opinion groups among French-speaking nationals rarely recognized Americans and Barbadians, the two dominant English-speaking groups, as members of a different community and as bearers of different cultural organizations. Likewise, within English groups, national organizations subtended their own most intensely than French Blacks. When American elites took over leading posts in the schools, for instance, their minority status among English speakers received constant attention. Both internal and external stratification by language groups tended to be ignored.

Next to language, religious relations took center stage. English speakers were Protestants; the French, Catholics. For schooling, this had some distastefully different benefits. French Black Catholics could use schools in the Republic, especially since these were provided before the mid-1920s when the national government expanded popular educational opportunities. From 1904 to 1928, the French West Indians had two options for educational attainment: the American colored school offerings and the Republic Catholic school choice. This gave them a jump on bilingual and bicultural mastery ahead of most West Indians. However, British West Indians scarcely fared ahead in both, especially by the 1930s, when, as the militant labor leader Edward Gibson noted, their ability to mix well with the national culture allowed them to take during the American policy marches for them when they began labor organizing.¹

Another practical consideration explained why English migrants adapted quicker to national integration. The smaller and larger demographic shifts of British migrants created six rate imbalances. One was that women led to high, secondary employment. To get marriage rates, British West Indians had greater income contacts with national women. Although a high number of consensual unions supplemented marriage as the dominant family unit of long-term association and child bearing, greater mixed marriages or family formations between British nationals and

philadelphia**theatre**company
presents

Intimate *A*pparel



A play by Lynn Nottage

drama *CONTACT*

Student Study Guide

The world of 1905 Manhattan that Lynn Nottage creates for us in this play is very different from the one that surrounds us today. Under the women's long skirts and high-necked blouses were corsets, camisoles and stockings. Feminism was still frowned upon, and those women who dared wear pants were jeered at for such inappropriate, rude dress. Men, regardless of economic class, wore suits - trousers with some sort of sport coat. For a man not to wear a cap or hat in public was just as ill-mannered as those pants-wearing women's libbers. Levi Jeans cost a \$1.25 in 1905, but if she were alive then Paris Hilton wouldn't have been caught dead in them.

However, the clothes don't always make the woman, or the man. Beneath the outward appearance of these men and women are the same basic human struggles that we still face today. Arriving from Barbados, Memphis, North Carolina, Georgia and Romania the characters of *Intimate Apparel* have all come to Manhattan in search of their ideal life, their own personal American dream, and find those dreams compromised by the reality of survival and the social judgements of society. Each of them wish to have more than the constraints that their race, class and gender will allow them.

That is a wish we can all relate to.

As you read through this study guide, you will get to know Lynn Nottage's characters, their struggles, and the world in which they live. At the theater you will see that the scenes focus the world of the play down to the characters' bedrooms, creating the opportunity for intimate conversations that could not happen in public. Listen closely to these intimate conversations and you will discover that in between the lines, the characters reveal who they really are rather than who their clothes portray them to be.

Mindy A. Beers
PTC Teaching Artist

Maureen Sweeney
Director of Education

Brandi Jeter
PTC Teaching Artist

About the Play...

Esther has a great gift. She makes corsets so beautiful even one of the most notable women in Manhattan wants one. But making these clothes isn't Esther's dream. A single African American woman at the turn of the century, Esther wants more and doesn't know if she'll ever belong.

The things Esther needs to belong, all the other women around her seem to have—husbands, comfortable homes, popular places in society. They even have the beautiful garments she makes, while Esther remains plain and unnoticed. She knows that a socially accepted life is what she should want, but her real dream is to open a beauty parlor where women of her class and race can finally be pampered. When the opportunity to marry comes her way, she is forced to make a choice: does she remain faithful to her dream, or does she do what society expects of her so she can finally belong?

About the Time and Place...

When you read a play on the page, often the playwright tells you *who* the characters are, *where* they are and *when* they are before you even read the first line. What the playwright is doing is informing you of the given circumstances, or the facts about the world she thinks you need to know to better understand her play. Since you'll be watching instead of reading *Intimate Apparel*, here are the play's given circumstances:

Place and Time: Manhattan, 1905

Characters:

Esther, 35, African-American
Mrs. Dickson - 50s, African-American
Mrs. Van Buren - 30s, white American
Mr. Marks - 30s, Romanian Jewish immigrant
Mayme - 30s, African-American
George - 30s, Barbadian immigrant

Locations:

Esther's bedroom, in a boarding house
Mrs. Van Buren's boudoir, in an elegant upper-class home
Mr. Marks' bedroom, in a tenement
Mayme's bedroom, in the red-light district
Esther and George's bedroom, in a studio flat

The Themes

Intimate Apparel is a play that asks...

- Is it more important to do what friends, family and others expect of you, or to achieve a lifelong dream? How much should a person sacrifice for that dream?
- How much should a person sacrifice of themselves for their friends? Family? Husbands or wives?
- How does a person's race, nationality, gender and class affect how others view them?
- How can a person's clothes affect how others view him or her? How can clothes help a person gain status or respect in the eyes of others?

Miss Esther Mills

Esther is a determined, proper, skilled *corsetiere* who works around the clock and saves every penny she earns to one day open a beauty parlor. Though she's unable to read she's well-spoken, however her self-consciousness about her plain appearance and her position in society make her hesitant to be strong-willed and speak her true feelings.



ESTHER

"I don't know that I'll marry ... I been working since I was nine years old with barely a day's rest. In fact, the other evening I was at my sewing machine and I stopped work and all this time had passed, gone. Years really. And I know right there that some things ain't meant to be."

The Corset

A corset is an undergarment used by women (*and* by men in some time periods!) for support and to slim the body. They are famously known for making an hourglass figure by reducing the size of the waist by inches to accentuate the bust and hips. Corsets had vertical and horizontal *boning* sewn around the garment. This boning changed a woman's posture by applying pressure so that she stood with her bust forward and her lower back curved outward to accentuate her backside.

This significant shift in woman's posture was why many said the corset was damaging to the body. This applied especially to *tight lacers*, women who would lace the corset as tightly as possible to achieve waists of 16 or 17 inches. Such tight lacing put damaging pressure on a woman's breathing, internal organs and spine.

Most corsets lace up the back, so the wearer can't put it on themselves. Because this undergarment needs an extra set of hands, putting one on is an intimate moment, contributing to its power and sex appeal. Who a woman had to lace up her corset was a sign of social status. Upper-class women had maids lace them up, while lower class women had to rely on the help of a friend or husband.

Initially only the upper-class could afford the corset because of the cost of materials, time and labor. By the *industrial revolution*, innovations in the textile industry lessened costs so even the middle class could afford a modestly decorated corset, signaling a shift in female status during the time *Intimate Apparel* takes place.

But regardless of class, Esther realizes that the corsets she makes have a large part to play in the women's struggle to gain power in society, whether it's Mayme at the Tenderloin or Mrs. Van Buren at the Gardenia Ball. So when Esther faces her own struggle, her answer is to finally wear a corset herself.



Mr. George Armstrong

George, an ambitious laborer, left his country of Barbados for Panama to help dig the canal. The terrible living and working conditions spark dreams of coming to America. When the son of Esther's deacon gives George her address, he sends her letters confessing his dreams of being his own man, successful and respected.



GEORGE

“Tomorrow I too could be sucked into the ground without tears and ride the death train that pass through here five times a day. When I first come, a solid ox was the dream of this man ... And yet, your America sounds like a wondrous place, a man such as myself would be willing to surrender much for a taste of the modern world.”

The Panama Canal

The Panama Canal took ten years to build, from 1904 to 1914, and is still in operation today. Not as simple as it sounds, it's a waterway of man-made lakes, channels and water-filled chambers that push ships through the mountainous terrain. Before the canal, ships were forced to sail around South America to get from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, adding several days to their voyage.

In 1904, construction on the canal started with 1000 workers. By the final year, 1914, there were 33,000 people working to finish the project. While many came from the United States, laborers were hired from six different European countries and twelve different islands in the West Indies. George Armstrong is one such worker, leaving his home with a dream that the money he will earn will better his life.

In reality he found a job that put his life in danger every day. Malaria and yellow fever were a common cause of death, although medical advances eventually brought the diseases under control. Workers were also killed during dynamite explosions, and in the many landslides that slowed the completion of the project. Outside of these dangers the work itself was extremely hard labor for eight to ten hours a day. Not only were the tropical heat and rains unbearable, but workers were required to stand in water all day.

George also found a world of racism and segregation which lead to distinct class systems among the workers. Laborers from the West Indies were berated for what the contractors deemed the slowest, laziest working habits. In reality the contractors were actually observing was the effect of fatigue, malnourishment and poor living arrangements on the men. While Americans lived in private structures with screened verandas, black workers had a choice between unscreened, crowded mass barracks or the shacks of the native villages.



Mayme is a beautiful pianist and singer from Memphis who had dreams of being a performer. To make ends meet she works at a saloon in the red-light district selling her body. While she hopes to be discovered by a producer and leave her current life behind she is mostly a realist. A proud, energetic soul she is both a protective and loyal friend to Esther.

MAYME

“My daddy gave me twelve lashes with a switch for playing this piece in our parlor. One for each year I studied the piano. He was too proper to like anything colored, and a syncopated beat was about the worst crime you could commit in his household. I woke up this morning with a sudden urge to play it.”

RAGTIME MUSIC

Most agree ragtime got its name from its rhythm, first described as ‘ragged time’. Instead of most musical forms where the strong beats were on the odd numbers (ONE two THREE four), the ragged time was *syncopated*. Syncopated beats change the strong beat to the even numbers (one TWO three FOUR), just like a lot of reggae music today.

Ragtime developed near the end of the 19th century. It slowly lost the spotlight to jazz around 1910 because ragtime lacked the excitement of jazz’s improvisation and emotional blues. Ragtime’s roots are tied to plantation life, featuring lively tunes, catchy rhythms, and foot-tapping beats that many thought made fun of more ‘serious’ music. Ragtime was usually played on a solo piano, and while the first recordings of ragtime featured vocals, some of the more well-known rags like Scott Joplin’s “The Entertainer” are instrumental.

Though ragtime’s musical structure was just as strict as classical music, it was its sound that caused its controversy. Considered ‘common’ due to its popularity in saloons and honky-tonk bars, it was also largely considered amoral. Or as a ragtime naysayer said, “In Christian homes, where purity and morals are stressed, ragtime should find no resting place. Avaunt the ragtime rot! Let us purge America and the divine art of music from this polluting nuisance.”

For Mayme, ragtime represents both her dream and her nightmare. The often upbeat, always soulful quality of ragtime is kin to her true spirit. Not only does ragtime help her make her living, but it soothes the heartache she faces every day. But with dreams of playing classical music as a world-renown concert pianist, the ragtime she plays is also a reminder of how far away her dream is, and of the choices she has, and will continue to make.

Mrs. Evangeline Van Buren

Mrs. Van Buren is an upper-class socialite who, currently childless, feels pressure to start a family. Afraid she is barren, she also discovers her husband is being unfaithful. She hopes the intimate garments that Esther makes will rekindle a lost spark. While she enjoys the freedom of Esther's company during their fittings, social constraints force her to limit her fond feelings.

MRS. VAN BUREN

"I'd rather not be a divorcee, at my age it would prove disastrous ... If I were brave I'd collect my things right now and find a small clean room someplace on the other side of the park. No, further in fact."

The Cult of Domesticity

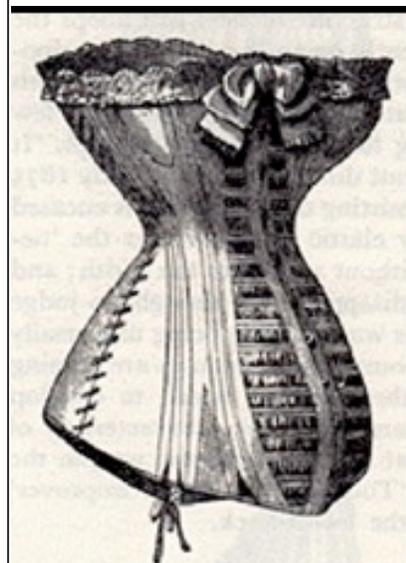
Nineteenth century women were confronted with the image of the pious, moral homemaker in magazines, newspapers and books. These taught the four female virtues: piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. It was a woman's job to make a comfortable home for their family. It was their duty to bear and raise children. Finally it was her duty to keep the moral fiber of her home, and the nation, intact.

In *Intimate Apparel*, we see women caught between the Cult of Domesticity and the growing *suffragist* movement started in the late 1840s. How the women are able to weigh social expectations against their dreams of independence and desire to enter the public sphere depends on their class and race.

High society expects Mrs. Van Buren to embody the female virtues and fulfill the social obligations of her class. Her life is attending balls, dinner parties and high culture events. There she is questioned by her peers about her lack of children and faces rumors about her unfaithful husband. If she does not have children, she will fail one of her duties as a woman. If she is unable to win back her husband's affection, her peers will assume she didn't keep a comfortable enough home and wasn't the moral foundation that he required.

Her high class also severely limits who she can be seen with in social circles. Fond of Esther's company, Mrs. Van Buren is faced with a choice. Should she rebel against social expectations to openly befriend Esther and have the life of independence she craves, or should she fulfill her expectations to keep her position of status and comfort?

**Gardenia Ball Corset
Pink Silk and Crepe de Chine**



corset circa 1904

Mr. Marks



MR. MARKS

"I wear my father's suit. It is old, I know, but this simple black fabric is my most favorite. Why? Because when I wear it, it reminds me that I live every day with a relationship to my ancestors and God."

MR. MARKS:

"My religious belief doesn't permit me to touch a woman who isn't my wife or a relative."

Mr. Marks is a textile salesman who sells his goods from his tenement apartment. He has a keen eye and a deep love for fabric. Like Esther he never wears anything as fine as he sells, wearing only a black suit out of respect for his Jewish faith. Good-natured and giving, he is fond of Esther but the barriers of his religion prevent him from acting on his feelings.

New York City Tenements

When immigrants like Mr. Marks began to arrive in New York City near the late 1800s, the city devised a plan to house all the newcomers. They erected tenements, which were dumbbell shaped brick apartment buildings four to six stories in height. Sometimes one tenement apartment would house up to 18 people in three small rooms! The rooms were small because the buildings were meant to house as many families as possible. These small apartments served as both living space and work space. Up until about 1901, most apartments lacked gas for heat and light, running water, and even indoor toilets. Later, New York City passed legislation to improve the quality of life in tenements and common toilets were installed on each floor.

Low rent made tenement apartments the only option for poor immigrants who couldn't afford the row homes or single family houses that were the standard housing option in New York City at the time. Unfortunately, many landlords began to take advantage of these struggling immigrant tenants, jacking rent prices up every month and neglecting building upkeep. Finally in 1949, President Harry Truman passed the Housing Act of 1949 making improvements to housing for the poor federal law.

But these improvements were a long way away in 1905. Because of rent inflation, it was nearly impossible for Mr. Marks and many others to move into a better home or to rent a separate space for their businesses. On one hand, Mr. Marks is fortunate that his apartment houses only himself and not a large family. On the other hand, as a seller of fine fabric, attracting affluent returning customers when he is forced to show them his goods in his bedroom is a continual challenge and hardship. He is always at risk of losing his customers, such as Esther, to competitors who offer free goods unrelated to their wares as a desperate way draw customers in.



Mrs. Dickson

Mrs. Dickson is a pragmatic, affluent African-American woman who owns the boarding house Esther lives in. The sacrifices of her lower working class mother drove her to marry for money and class over love. She is often a bossy mother hen who chides Esther, yet protects her like a daughter.



MRS. DICKSON

"I married him because I was 37 years old, I had no profession, and there wasn't a decent man in New York City that would have me."

CLASS AND RACE

The end of the 19th century marked the beginning of a great divide among classes that still exists today. Between the large incoming immigrant class and Black Americans recently freed from slavery migrating to the North, the separation between upper and lower classes widened.

The *Northern Migration* began in the 1840s. Hoping to escape the oppression of the South, Black Americans found new and familiar hardships up North. Due to racial prejudices and European skilled laborers competing for the same jobs, black men were denied skilled labor. Less than two thirds of black skilled laborers were actually working jobs which involved their trade.

This made it impossible to live on one income, forcing black women into the job market. Their domestic jobs provided work year round, while the jobs available to black men were either seasonal or short-term. Since the work involved doing washing, sewing or childcare in their homes, this allowed black mothers to care for their children during work. Both these advantages allowed black women more financial strength and power in her household than most middle and upper class women had in theirs. However, black families still had the burden of poor housing conditions and other hardships that were unseen in the middle and upper class white sector.

Mrs. Dickson's mother is an example of these hardships. A washer woman, her mother's job was steady but thankless work, the hot water and scrubbing daily chapping her hands to bleeding. Wishing for a better life for her daughter, Mrs. Dickson was urged by her mother to do whatever it took to marry up in life. The bleak reality of the black family at this time forced Mrs. Dickson's answer to the question what was more important to her – a marriage for money, or for love.



PTC Dramaturg Warren Hoffman chatted with Lynn Nottage about what it's like to have the most-produced play in America, how it feels to try on a corset, and the state of African American theater.

Warren Hoffman: One thing I loved about the play when I first saw it was the use of photos at the end of the acts. Were there actual photographs from your own family history that inspired you to write this play?

Lynn Nottage: Yes, there were. I was cleaning out my grandmother's brownstone which she had lived in for over 50 years and one of the things I discovered were photographs of my great-grandmother Ethel Armstrong, whom I had never seen before. This photograph of her was tucked into the pages of a Family Circle magazine. I found myself sort of mesmerized by the image, because I've gone through most of my life knowing very little about my family history and here it was confronting me. I wanted desperately to know who this woman was. I knew where this woman came from, but I wanted to know more about her personally. Was she quiet? Was she playful? I realized there was no one left on this earth who could answer these questions for me, and it made me think about personal history and about how so much of our personal history as African Americans has been lost because we didn't deem that history valuable enough to preserve.

WH: How much of the play is based on your family?

LN: Well, I should clarify, the play is not based upon my family, but inspired by my quest to know more about my family and that so much of our family history was lost. There are some links with me, but the characters in the play are completely fictionalized.

WH: What made you choose to write about "intimate apparel" itself in this play?

LN: I chose intimate apparel for very personal reasons. Ethel, my great-grandmother, made intimate apparel for very wealthy women and for common working women as well and I was always intrigued by that aspect of her life. One of the few things left from my mother's childhood was this very intricate slip that Ethel had made for her.

WH: How much did you know yourself about the complex world of intimate apparel?

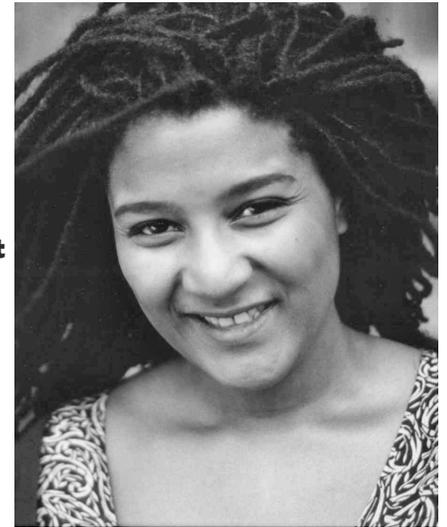
LN: These people were master craftspeople and artists and each piece they created was an individual work of art, designed specifically (if it was a corset) for the particular woman they were making it for. There was a level of intimacy involved in creating a corset for someone. I was intrigued by that aspect of the business. How there had to be fittings and close proximity between two women, between women from two different classes who would never have any social intercourse otherwise.

WH: Did you ever try on a corset to get the feel of one?

LN: Definitely. I feel like I couldn't write about the corset until I actually put one on. It changes your posture and your breath. How rigid and inflexible a corset was back then even though to the naked eye it was a work of art.

WH: Something else that I loved about the play and that surprised me when I first saw it was the diversity of the characters from all walks of life. You mentioned the class issues, but there are also inter-ethnic and racial relationships. Was that a conscious choice from the beginning?

LN: It initially was a play about a very lonely seamstress who was 35 and at the point of no return. I began to think about where this woman would go and I imagined the place she would go most often, above and beyond the boudoirs she entered, would be the fabric shop. And I thought who would have been running the fabric shop and I thought it would be a recent Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe. And I began to wonder about the type of relationship that two people who love fabric would have, the kind of conversations they would have. These would be two people who would love each other and have the most in common in the play, but of course it's the turn of the century and you're going to have cultural and religious restrictions on that.



WH: Is this a sentimental play? Are we meant to pity Esther?

LN: It's not a question I can answer, but I never intended Esther to be pitied; I always imagined the ending to be triumphant. It's an uplifting journey in that she's found love for herself.

WH: Your plays span both time periods and locations. Are there particular themes that drive you to write or underlie your plays?

LN: I think that one of the threads that weaves throughout my plays is the quest for identity. Characters are struggling with who they are in a world that is very complicated and doesn't necessarily recognize the values of that individual.

WH: Insofar as *Intimate Apparel* is the most produced play in the U.S. this year (there are 17 productions including Philadelphia Theatre Company's), does this signal a change in attention for African American women playwrights?

LN: I feel that these things go in cycles. The popularity of August Wilson 15 years ago helped crack the door open for many African American playwrights because these regional theaters that have large subscription audiences suddenly became much more receptive to putting an African American play in a slot because of the success of August Wilson. I still think there's only one slot left for African American plays so I don't think that much has changed. I think what might have shifted though, is that that slot might now go to an African American woman every once in a while as opposed to an African American man. One thing that I have to say about *Intimate Apparel* is that I have noticed that it plays equally well in mainstream white theaters as it does in African American theaters. There's a kind of universality that audiences across race respond to.

WH: Is this even an African American play? Are such labels too reductive?

LN: I think *Intimate Apparel* reflects a changing sensibility in playwriting. On a panel I led about multiculturalism and theater, I once asked the question, "When are we going to write plays that are inclusive?". We have to write plays that will reflect the culture we live in. I grew up in a multicultural neighborhood. I write plays that reflect my reality and that are honest to who I am.



Bringing students and teachers in contact
with the best in new American Theater!

Philadelphia Theatre Company productions of new American plays appeal as much to high school students as they do to adults. When integrated into the classroom, our plays inspire students to examine the world around them in vital and challenging ways. And because our plays explore the rich ground of history, economics, and politics in America, teachers of history, social studies, English and drama alike find our plays relevant to their curricula.

Call today to learn more:

215-985-1400 x106

Philadelphia Theatre Company Education Department

Philadelphia Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges the following
for their underwriting support of PTC Drama Contact:

The Arronson Foundation

Blank Rome LLP

The Connelly Foundation

Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation

Hamilton Family Foundation

The Brooks Lenfest Foundation

Lincoln Financial Foundation

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Philadelphia Cultural Fund

Lawrence A. Saunders Foundation

US Department of Education,

Federal Improvements in Education Program

The Barra Foundation

Louis N. Casset Foundation

CRW Graphics

Genuardi Family Foundation

Independence Foundation

The Lida Foundation

The National Endowment for the Arts

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

PNC Bank

Wachovia

Study Guide for *Intimate Apparel*

Produced by Mindy A. Beers, Brandi Jeter and Maureen Sweeney.

No part of this study guide may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the authors and Philadelphia Theatre Company.

MARCH/APRIL 2006

playwise

ON STAGE AND OFF

PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY

What's inside:

Getting Intimate with Lynn Nottage

An interview with the playwright
of *Intimate Apparel*.

Sewing Things Together

An Interview with
Director Tim Vasen

The World of *Intimate Apparel*

A Short History of the Corset

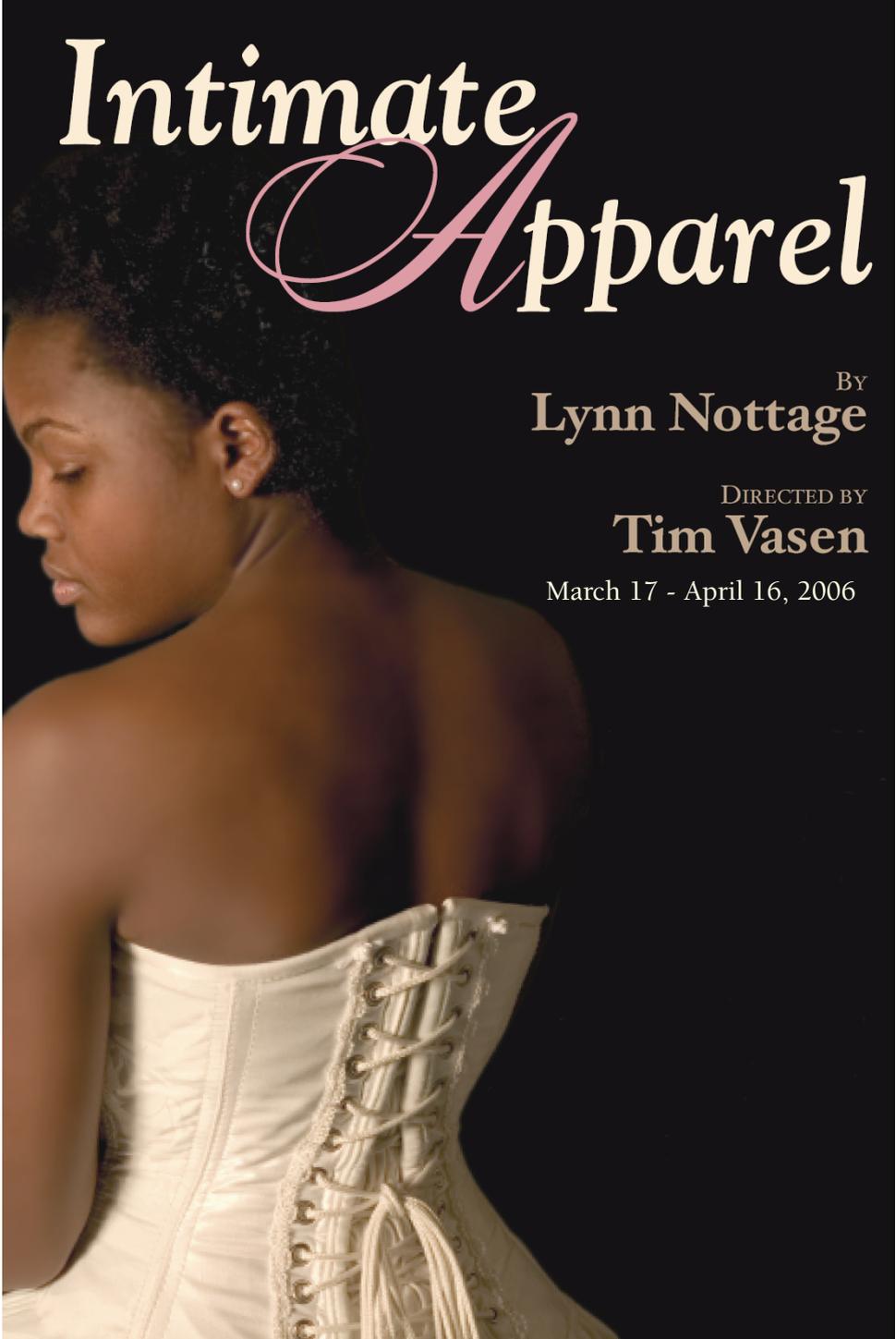
Sexy Garments in the City

***Intimate Apparel* Synopsis**

Set in 1905 Manhattan, *Intimate Apparel* is a deeply moving portrait of Esther, an African-American seamstress who creates exquisite lingerie for women of both the boudoir and the brothel alike. Painfully lonely, Esther becomes a new woman when she falls in love with a handsome Barbadian laborer who woos her through a series of romantic letters, while her friendship with a shy Jewish fabric merchant grows in unexpected ways. Filled with desire, passion, and betrayal, *Intimate Apparel*, the winner of five Best Play awards, has quickly become one of the country's most celebrated and beloved plays.

30th

anniversary season!



Intimate *Apparel*

BY
Lynn Nottage

DIRECTED BY
Tim Vasen

March 17 - April 16, 2006



The Inquirer



philly.com

PGN Philadelphia Gay News



Celebrating Our _____
30th Anniversary
 as the **Proud** Season Media Sponsor of
Philadelphia Theatre Company's
30th Anniversary Season

Visit Us Online

For our community's news & entertainment

epgn.com

215-625-8501 • Fax: 215-925-6437
 505 S. 4th St., Phila., PA 19147

Have to buy a gift for a **business** client, a **wedding**, a **birthday**, or other occasion?

Consider a
PTC Gift Certificate



Easy to give, easy to redeem!

Mailed to you or your recipient in a gift envelope.

Only \$40 for a premium, all access ticket!

All access tickets allow you into any performance date or time!

Contact the Philadelphia Theatre Company Box Office to order

phillytheatreco.com • 215.985.0420



Message from Sara Garonzik

Producing Artistic Director



“Throw in a measure of heartbreak, deception, and some wickedly sexy underwear and you have the stuff of great drama”

Dear Friends,

Each season one play emerges that seems to capture America's imagination, receiving multiple awards and productions coast-to-coast. This year it is Lynn Nottage's exquisite drama *Intimate Apparel* centered around Esther, a lonely seamstress in early 20th century New York. In a recent edition of *American Theatre Magazine*, an excerpt from a feature by Randy Gener about Nottage and her play summarizes the magic pull it exerts on audiences: *"Elaborately constructed out of a series of personal encounters, Intimate Apparel tells of the self-effacing Esther's proud pursuit of love in suggestive, novelistic strokes. The yearning to be touched and the tactile pleasures of fabric run woven as leitmotifs throughout. The reason audiences have been utterly captivated by the play, the critics have thrown a garland of major prizes at its feet, that companies across the country have been powerfully drawn to it, has to do with its satisfying density: the rare skill by which it builds tension and pathos to a conclusion that is both quiet and emotionally shattering."* I will add to that a few observations of my own: Nottage has created a tapestry of characters as richly woven as one of Esther's garments, yet placed them in an historical context where the prevailing society denies them permission to act on their passions or express their most profound longings. Their inarticulated inner lives are as present to us on stage as the words they speak. Societal boundaries fall away as everyone in Esther's world: socialites, prostitutes, Orthodox Jewish merchants and common laborers intersect in their restless search for some measure of love or satisfaction in the striving world of New York in the Gilded Age. Throw in a measure of heartbreak, deception, and some wickedly sexy underwear and you have the stuff of great drama.

We feel especially fortunate in being able to premiere *Intimate Apparel* for Philadelphia and are pleased to welcome back Tim Vasen who directed PTC's 2004 production of *Edward Albee's The Goat or, Who Is Sylvia?* Tim oversaw *Intimate Apparel's* commission when it was developed at Baltimore's CENTERSTAGE and we are grateful for his insights into Lynn Nottage's elegant and moving script.

Sara



PTC Dramaturg Warren Hoffman chatted with Lynn Nottage about what it's like to have the most-produced play in America, how it feels to try on a corset, and the state of African American theater.

Warren Hoffman: One thing I loved about the play when I first saw it was the use of photos at the end of the acts. Were there actual photographs from your own family history that inspired you to write this play?

Lynn Nottage: Yes, there were. I was cleaning out my grandmother's brownstone which she had lived in for over 50 years and one of the things I discovered were photographs of my great-grandmother Ethel Armstrong, whom I had never seen before. This photograph of her was tucked into the pages of a *Family Circle* magazine. I found myself sort of mesmerized by the image, because I've gone through most of my life knowing very little about my family history and here it was confronting me. I wanted desperately to know who this woman was. I knew where this woman came from, but I wanted to know more about her personally. Was she quiet? Was she playful? I realized there was no one left on this earth who could answer these questions for me, and it made me think about personal history and about how so much of our personal history as African Americans has been lost because we didn't deem that history valuable enough to preserve.

WH: How much of the play is based on your family?

LN: Well, I should clarify, the play is not based upon my family, but inspired by my quest to know more about my family and that so much of our family history was lost. There are some links with me, but the characters in the play are completely fictionalized.

WH: What made you choose to write about "intimate apparel" itself in this play?

LN: I chose intimate apparel for very personal reasons. Ethel, my great-grandmother, made intimate apparel for very wealthy women and for common working women as well and I was always intrigued by that aspect of her life. One of the few things left from my mother's childhood was this very intricate slip that Ethel had made for her.

WH: How much did you know yourself about the complex world of intimate apparel?

LN: These people were master craftspeople and artists and each piece they created was an individual work of art, designed specifically (if it was a corset) for the particular woman they were making it for. There was a level of intimacy involved in creating a corset for someone. I was intrigued by that aspect of the business. How there had to be fittings and close proximity between two women, between women from two different classes who would never have any social intercourse otherwise.

WH: Did you ever try on a corset to get the feel of one?

LN: Definitely. I feel like I couldn't write about the corset until I actually put one on. It changes your posture and your breath. How rigid and inflexible a corset was back then even though to the naked eye it was a work of art.



WH: Did you know much about fabric or cloth?

LN: I didn't know anything about fabrics prior. When my mother was in the process of dying, one thing that I found gave me comfort was quilt making and I began to go through her closet because I wanted to make a personal quilt, so that was my first introduction to vintage fabric textures. But when I decided to write the play, I went to some of the fabric warehouses that are ubiquitous in New York City to touch and feel and observe how people handle fabric.

WH: Something else that I loved about the play and that surprised me when I first saw it was the diversity of the characters from all walks of life. You mentioned the class issues, but there are also inter-ethnic and racial relationships. Was that a conscious choice from the beginning?

LN: It initially was a play about a very lonely seamstress who was 35 and at the point of no return. I began to think about where this woman would go and I imagined the place she would go most often, above and beyond the boudoirs she entered, would be the fabric shop. And I thought who would have been running the fabric shop and I thought it would be a recent Jewish immigrant from Eastern Europe. And I began to wonder about the type of relationship that two people who love fabric would have, the kind of conversations they would have. These would be two people who would love each other and have the most in common in the play, but of course it's the turn of the century and you're going to have cultural and religious restrictions on that.

WH: Is this a sentimental play? Are we meant to pity Esther?

LN: It's not a question I can answer, but I never intended Esther to be pitied; I always imagined the ending to be triumphant. It's an uplifting journey in that she's found love for herself.

WH: Your plays span both time periods and locations. Are there particular themes that drive you to write or underlie your plays?

LN: I think that one of the threads that weaves throughout my plays is the quest for identity. Characters are struggling with who they are in a world that is very complicated and doesn't necessarily recognize the values of that individual.

WH: Insofar as *Intimate Apparel* is the most produced play in the U.S. this year (there are 17 productions including Philadelphia Theatre Company's), does this signal a change in attention for African American women playwrights?

LN: I feel that these things go in cycles. The popularity of August Wilson 15 years ago helped crack the door open for many African American playwrights because these regional theaters that have large subscription audiences suddenly became much more receptive to putting an African American play in a slot because of the success of August Wilson. I still think there's only one slot left for African American plays so I don't think that much has changed. I think what might have shifted though, is that that slot might now go to an African American woman every once in a while as opposed to an African American man. One thing that I have to say about *Intimate Apparel* is that I have noticed that it plays equally well in mainstream white theaters as it does in African American theaters. There's a kind of universality that audiences across race respond to.

WH: Is this even an African American play? Are such labels too reductive?

LN: I think *Intimate Apparel* reflects a changing sensibility in playwriting. On a panel I led about multiculturalism and theater, I once asked the question, "When are we going to write plays that are inclusive?". We have to write plays that will reflect the culture we live in. I grew up in a multicultural neighborhood. I write plays that reflect my reality and that are honest to who I am.

©



Sewing Things Together: An Interview with Tim Vasen

Early on during the casting process for *Intimate Apparel*, PTC directing fellow Megan O'Brien chatted with director Tim Vasen about his ideas for the Philadelphia premiere of this play.

Megan O'Brien: What aspects of this play appealed to you as a director?

TV: Well, I was around for the birth of this play. I produced the very first workshop that was commissioned at CENTERSTAGE. We didn't have a script at all to begin with. Lynn [Nottage] was in the middle of writing it and she came in with the first act on the first day of rehearsal. From the first reading of the first act, I was drawn to [the play's] quietness, its intimacy, and the way in which huge events happening in these characters' lives seem to turn on a gesture or a look between them. I think that genuine intimacy is what gives the play its strength.

MO: As a man, do you approach directing a woman's story, such as Esther's in *Intimate Apparel*, differently than you do a man's story?

TV: I just try to get good actors and reveal what is there in the play. I really feel that the writer is the woman telling the woman's story. My job isn't so much to actually represent those characters, as to gather a group of artists that can bring the story to life. That's actually what I feel is so interesting about directing: putting myself in places and worlds that are not my own.

MO: During auditions, you stressed the importance of the actors not being too contemporary. Why do you feel this is so significant to this play?

TV: The heading of this play is inseparable from what happens in the play. This is a moment in time. It's the immigrant moment in New York. From the 1890s-1920s, there was a huge amount of new people coming from the former slavery south, people coming from Europe, and all over the place to participate in this incredible commercial explosion. There were jobs, there was work, and there were new lives to be had. It was a chance to start over. I think that's what is special about that moment in time. I feel that Lynn has worked hard to capture that in terms of how people speak and the precision of the language, but it's not a documentary, it isn't epic theatre. She doesn't give us big crowd scenes in terms of letting us know the place that we're in. It's a huge raucous world out there, but in this play we're in quiet rooms with two people talking to each other most of the time. So really the actors have to carry with them the place that they're in. They have to carry that whole context in how they speak, stand, and move. They have to be able to transport us back, because really, the production doesn't do that. There's not a huge amount of scenery. There's nothing in the play that visually sends you back, so it's really the actors. So when I'm looking for people, I have to be able to believe that these people are speaking to me from 1905.

MO: The character of Esther demonstrates a complex balance of strength and submission. How do you plan to help the actress playing that role achieve the proper balance?



TV: That would be one of the reasons why casting is so difficult. I think primarily that is something the actor has to come with because you can't exactly direct that combination of strength and vulnerability. After reading the script, an intelligent and talented actor will bring that to the forefront. When directing actors at this level, which is different from the teaching that I do, it's really about creating the right context in which they can discover the script. That includes the other actors. On a fundamental level, I don't think the sense of self that an actor brings to a character is directable. That's why casting is hard. Whoever Esther is going to be, she has to walk into the room and we have to be interested in her, somewhat protective of her, and our heart goes out to her. She's a very moving character.

MO: The character of Mayme knows how to play piano. How do you feel that influences her current life as a prostitute?

TV: Mayme's dabbling in the new and very cutting edge style of ragtime, which was scandalous at the time, sort of the hip-hop of the day. All of the characters, and Mayme is an emblem of this, come from something completely different than the way they are now. For some of them it is a step up, for some a step down, or even a step sideways, but I think Lynn has been quite deliberate in giving everyone a path that in some ways does not match up with their present. Some of these characters, if you had seen them as younger people, would have been very surprised to find out where they are now. I think that is central to these characters.

MO: In the script, the author puts a description of an item of intimate apparel or item of clothing at the top of each scene. Do you feel the intimate apparel has a larger significance than just clothing?

“From the first reading of the first act, I was drawn to its quietness, its intimacy, and the way in which huge events happening in these characters' lives seem to turn on a gesture or a look between them. I think that genuine intimacy is what gives the play its strength.”

TV: I don't know. That is something that my designers and I have been very interested in. Whether we project that text onto the set or whether there's some sort of visual compliment to that, I suspect that has something to do with the texture of the scene. I don't know how conscious those descriptions were on Lynn's part, or if they were just a feeling she had while working on it. Is there a particular tone to a particular piece of fabric that actually finds its way into how a scene is structured, paced, or played? That's what's interesting about rehearsal.

MO: What do you anticipate to be your biggest challenges while rehearsing this play and what do you look forward to the most?

TV: Well, the answer to both would probably be the same: getting it right! I think any play has something that it wants to be. It has its own inherent tone, pace, and way in which you move from one scene to the next to tell the story. That is always the most interesting and challenging part of my job. The hardest to quantify is to get it right - to feel at the end of the day that we've created a world that feels like the way I felt when I first read the play.

Playwise

online!

Visit the PTC website to download a PDF of *Playwise* magazine.
Or to receive a free *Playwise* subscription via postal mail, call the PTC Box Office at 215.985.0420.

www.phillytheatreco.com



playwise

Outreach Events

American Playwrights in Context Series

Sunday, April 9 after 3pm performance

Join PTC dramaturg Warren Hoffman as he interviews playwright **Lynn Nottage** about the creation and success of her play *Intimate Apparel*.

Meet the Artists Nights

Thursday, March 23 after 8pm performance

Thursday, April 6 after 8pm performance

Tuesday, April 11 after 7pm performance

Get the inside scoop on the creation of PTC's production of *Intimate Apparel*. Join members of the cast as they discuss their work and process.

Night OUT!

Thursday, March 30, 6:30pm

A pre-show LGBT friendly reception for theater lovers. Enjoy cocktails, sandwiches, sweets, and great company before the 8pm performance of *Intimate Apparel*.

Join us for all of the Night OUT! events this season by asking for Subscription or Flex Membership series 2F. Individual tickets are only \$40 each, giving you a place at both the pre-show event and the performance. For tickets to the evening's performance, contact the PTC Box Office. To RSVP for the party, E-mail NightOut@phillytheatreco.com.

College Night

Thursday, April 6, 6:45pm

College & Grad students are invited to join us for a pre-show gathering featuring a Yards Brewery beer tasting (21+), snacks, and ticket giveaways to upcoming PTC productions. Tickets are only \$15 and include the pre-show reception, tickets to the 8pm performance of *Intimate Apparel*, and a post-show Meet the Artists event!

Open Captioned Performance

Saturday, April 8, 2pm

OC

For hard of hearing and deaf audience members. Personal captioning devices are provided which scroll text of the lyrics/dialogue across the device's screen, in tandem with the lyrics/dialogue of the performance.

Audio Described Performance & Pre-Show Sensory Workshop

Saturday, April 15

Workshop: 1pm, Performance: 2pm **AD**)))

Braille

For low-vision and blind audience members. Wireless headsets are provided, through which a trained audio describer fills in the details of action on the stage, which might otherwise have been visually missed. Large print, Braille, and audio cassette programs available upon special request. Please contact Corey Masson at 215-985-1400 x119 to make a reservation for this workshop and/or performance.



Beer from Yards Brewing Company, food from Whole Foods and good company keep the atmosphere lively at a College Night gathering.



PTC proudly announces two new additions to our Board of Directors



Bryna S. Silver, Esq. is a partner at Synnestevedt & Lechner LLP and counsels in all aspects of trademark, unfair competition, copyright and Internet law. She has extensive experience in U.S. trademark practice, including enforcing and defending trademark rights and conducting opposition and cancellation proceedings before the United States Trademark Trial and Appeal Board.

Ms. Silver has initiated and supervised many international trademark programs and has negotiated and prepared technology transfer, co-existence, license, consent, assignment and confidentiality agreements on an international basis. She assists clients with regard to policing and quashing trademark infringement by cybersquatters on the Internet, transactional issues relating to e-commerce and advising on extension of copyright protection to the Internet arena.

Ms. Silver earned a degree in American studies from Smith College and her law degree from Boston University School of Law. Ms. Silver is admitted to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. She is an active member of the International Trademark Association and has been a member of its meetings committees.

Ms. Silver is a board member of the Gershman Y and a past board member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. She serves on the Corporate Committee of Womens Way, Capital Campaign Committee of Jeanne Ruddy Dance, and Steering Committee of the National Constitution Center's 1787 Society. She is a member of the Forum of Executive Women.

She resides in Center City with her mate Andrew Scott and kittens Jinkles and Buttercup.



Matthew DiDomenico, Sr. is a licensed real estate broker in Devon, PA. His firm John Matthew Inc., Realtors GMAC Real Estate is currently celebrating their 34th anniversary.

Matthew holds real estate brokerage licenses in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey. He has a comprehensive residential and commercial real estate background and extensive experience in the acquisition and development of residential and commercial real estate. He is also a consultant to lending and health care institutions. He is directly involved in the day-to-day operations of the firm, including the development, marketing, sales, leasing and management of residential, commercial and industrial properties in Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey. He is also president of Devon Financial Services, Inc., a residential and commercial mortgage brokerage firm.

In addition to his business responsibilities, Matthew serves and has served on the board of various organizations, including Chairman of the Board of Governors at Mercy Health System, Executive Vice President of the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), and the Advisory Board at First Financial Bank. Most recently he was elected to the Board of the American University of Rome and the Armenian Sisters academy. He previously served on the Board of Directors of Cabrini College, Chapel of The Four Chaplains, Constitution Bank, Berwyn-Devon Business Association and Columbus Quincentennial. He is also active in many local community organizations and has received many awards for his community service, including Citizen of the Year from the Berwyn-Devon Business Association, an exemplary citizenship citation for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Pia R. Raffaele Premio d'Eccellenza 2000 from Immaculata College. He has received community service awards for the Easttown and Radnor Township Neighborhood Watch Programs. In 1991, he received the benefactor award for his contribution to the Chapel of Four Chaplains. In 1999, Mr. DiDomenico was appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to the prestigious Judicial Conduct Board.

Matthew is a member of the National Association of Realtors, the Suburban West Realtors Association, the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors, the American Fraternity of Real Estate Appraisers, the National Association of Mortgage Brokers, and the Pennsylvania Association of Mortgage Brokers. He is a graduate of the Realtors Institute and also attended the Real Estate National Marketing Institute, receiving a Certified Residential Broker designation and a Certified Residential Specialist designation. Mr. DiDomenico attended Penn State University.

A Wayne Pennsylvania resident, he is married to his wife Dory and has four sons and four granddaughters.



playwise

THE WORLD OF... *Intimate Apparel*

Sexy Garments and the City

By Warren Hoffman

When the hit HBO show *Sex and the City* hit the airwaves several seasons ago, the show was lauded for its fresh, honest, and contemporary take on dating, love, and women's friendships. It also put new focus on fashion and women's bodies as Carrie (Sarah Jessica Parker) became a walking mannequin for haute couture, while the other cast members were seen in equally sharp outfits and in various states of undress. Were women being reduced to sexual objects some feminists asked? That question has yet to be answered, but one contention was that fashion was a way for women to achieve and celebrate their sexual freedom.

Such is the idea behind Lynn Nottage's *Intimate Apparel*. Separated by a period of 100 years with women from radically different socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, Nottage's work and *Sex and the City* are stylistically different, but thematic sisters. Esther, Nottage's lonely protagonist seamstress, like Carrie, is not only economically independent, self-supporting if not rich, but also single and wonders if she'll always be an old maid.

At first glance, the women in *Intimate Apparel* appear to be anything but liberated as they struggle to get into their corsets. As feminist scholars have written, corsets were uncomfortable binding garments that severely restricted a woman's breathing, altering the proper placement of the spine, and ultimately limiting how a woman moved. Though corsets can indeed produce physical discomfort, as Lynn Nottage's play accurately shows, corsets were not simply torture devices made of cloth and whalebone, but figure-enhancing garments that often imbued the women who wore them with a sense of superiority and seduction. This fact is enhanced by one of the play's saddest ironies; Esther makes extravagant and daring corsets for both upper class and common women, but never dons the garments herself and is continually separated from physical pleasure.

Meanwhile, downtown Mayme and uptown Mrs. Van Buren are quite happy being strapped into corsets as it provides them with a sense of feminine power not available to them otherwise. As corsets became mass produced at the end of the nineteenth century, they became a ubiquitous fashion item that any woman could own regardless of the rung she occupied on the social ladder. Thus, even a prostitute could aspire to a better life by wearing the same garments that high-society women were wearing. That clothing could be a site of power perhaps seems tame or even inconsequential today when "true" power is construed in terms of equal wages or voting rights, but one has to reconceive such ideas within the time period of 1905, when a woman's worth was most determined by whether or not she was married (and to whom). Then as now, the personal is political, so even the simple act of wearing a corset is more than putting on an undergarment. The corset might have been replaced by more comfortable wear, but if corsets were still in fashion today, most likely the *Sex and the City* gals would be all laced up and ready for a night on the town.

.aM a5Va f SaURO Ra playwise



By Nancy Furey, PTC Literary Intern

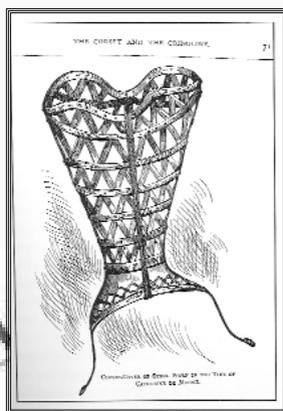
Since the Renaissance, the corset has been a mainstay of women's fashion. The garment displayed the female figure to its fullest, slimming the waist and accenting the bosom to create the famous "hourglass figure." For women in the Victorian era, the corset was their way to express their sexuality while maintaining socially acceptable behavior. Initially the corset was available only to the aristocracy who could afford the custom-made undergarments. Its makers were primarily men at first; in 17th century France, for example, women were banned from the guilds because they were deemed too weak to handle the tough materials and heavy boning. By the 18th century, women had begun to establish themselves as professional corsetiers; in the 1800s, at least half of the shops manufacturing corsets were run by women.

With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, mass production of the corset became possible. Through the 19th century, women of all classes were tight-lacing, including African-American slave women, particularly those who worked in homes. The corset, formerly a symbol of distinction in society, was now available to all. Affluent women, however, could still afford to have their corsets custom-made, which resulted in undergarments that were of considerably higher quality than the standard corset, which was less ornamental and made from more basic fabrics, such as cotton.

By the mid-20th century, the corset began to fade from the fashion scene, ironically, because of an argument originally used to support the use of a corset. In the past, those opposed to the corset had been told that it was useful in supporting a woman's back and posture. Now, with a new "thinness craze" emphasizing a naturally small waistline, the corset was beginning to be seen as an orthopedic tool only for the aging and weak-backed. Today, however, the corset is making a return, this time as fashionable outerwear.



1778



1880



1866



Late 1880s



1895



1905



1942



1990



THE PRIME RIB

“#1 STEAKHOUSE” - Zagat

\$30 - 3 Course Pre-Theatre Menu

CHOICE OF: House or Caesar Salad

CHOICE OF: Prime Rib, Flat Iron Steak, Salmon or Roast Chicken

CHOICE OF: Key Lime Pie, Chocolate Mousse Pie, Cheesecake or Ice Cream

Available 4:30pm - 6:00pm Every Night

1701 Locust Street 215.772.1701

www.theprimerib.com

In Fall 2007, Philadelphia Theatre Company will debut on the Avenue of the Arts!

PTC Subscribers and Flex Members who renew or join for our 2006/07 season by June 30, 2006 will be given priority seating in our new theater! Subscribe now so that you can be among the first to enjoy the full range of PTC's productions and superior patron amenities available in our magnificent new home.

Wider, more comfortable seats
with ample leg room

Ground floor bathrooms

Assisted listening devices

Box Office with street access

Elevator to all floors

On-site parking

Universal design in key areas

Convenient access to
public transportation

Continued Subscriber Benefits
packages including restaurant,
parking, and shopping discounts

Same great sightlines as
Plays & Players

Contact the PTC Box Office at 215.985.0420 or visit us online at phillytheatreco.com to learn more about our subscription and Flex Membership packages!

WWW.PASSIONALBOUTIQUE.COM

PASSIONAL

CORSETS. FASHION. PASSION.



Genuine corsets from around the world
Fantasy fashion for him & her XS-6XL
Costumes, footwear, accessories



PASSION 101 workshops
Bachelorette parties
Quarterly magazine
Knowledgeable staff
Private shopping available

7 Days a week Noon-10PM
704 S. 5th St. (at Bainbridge)
215-829-4986





playwise

Off Stage at Philadelphia Theatre Company!

BEN FRANKLIN: *Unplugged*

After a laugh-filled and moving evening with Josh Kornbluth in *Ben Franklin: Unplugged*, audience members at the January 17, 2006 performance donned festive party hats for a “Happy Birthday” sing-along to celebrate the anniversary of Benjamin Franklin’s actual birthday. Mr. Kornbluth led the audience in song and then blew out a 300th birthday candle atop a large kite-shaped cake. The festivities were followed by a dessert and coffee reception for the entire audience, courtesy of our lead production sponsor, Commerce Bank. *Ben Franklin: Unplugged* was an official event of the city-wide Benjamin Franklin 300 Celebration.



Photo Credit: Paula Noguens

Ben Franklin: Unplugged star Josh Kornbluth blows out birthday candles in celebration of Benjamin Franklin’s 300th birthday on January 17, 2006.



Photo Credit: Paula Noguens

Happy birthday Ben! Audience members at the January 17, 2006 performance of *Ben Franklin: Unplugged* help to celebrate Benjamin Franklin’s 300th birthday.



Philadelphia Theatre Company & Philadelphia Young Playwrights 2005 collaboration was a tremendous success!

Philadelphia
theatre company & YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS

Celebrate 13th Annual Collaboration

December 2-9, 2005, Philadelphia Theatre Company and Philadelphia Young Playwrights produced three world premiere productions of original new award-winning one-act plays by students throughout the Philadelphia region. More than 2,000 students attended the week of matinee performances of the cautionary tale, *Jealousy’s Not a Game*, group authored by students at the Harrison School; *Snow is Falling*, a dramatic story of loss and reconciliation by Gabe Bloomfield; and the comic book heroics of *Good vs. Evil*, by Frances Hunter. Professionally directed and performed by area artists and performers, this annual collaboration celebrates the talents and ingenuity of the region’s best young playwrights.

How do you fill
4 million square feet
of office, retail and living space?

For more than 80 years,
the tenets of
the Kaiserman Company
have remained the same:
we fill our buildings by fulfilling
the needs of our tenants...

1 relationship at a time.

KAISERMAN

215-546-2665

COMPANY INC.

www.kaiserman.com

Residential - The Herhouse Garage, Phila. - The Radwyn Apartments, Hgt. Maze - Meetinghouse Apartments & Townhouse
Business - Commercial - Springfield Mall - Old Spring Shopping Village, Springfield PA - Barclay Farms Shopping Center, Cherry Hill
Source Mall & 6031 - Constitution Place, Phila. - 400 Market, Phila. - ArchWorks, Phila. - Kew-Forest Office Center, Pottersauker

Excellence

It's hard work...

Drive...

Determination and skill.

It's realizing that being the best doesn't come easily.
You have to work for it.

That's the spirit that drives us at CRW Graphics in
printing *Playwise*.

We recognize and express our sincere thanks to the
Philadelphia Theatre Company for bringing to
audiences 30 years of excellence in contemporary
American theatre.



9100 Pennsylvania Highway Pennsylvania, NJ 08110
800 820 3400 www.crwgraphics.com

philadelphia theatre company

230 South 15th Street, 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Administrative Office:
Phone: 215.985.1400 FAX: 215.985.5800
Box Office:
Phone: 215.985.0420
www.phillytheatreco.com

Media Partner:



Season Print Media Sponsor:



Season Online Media Sponsor:



Season Print Media Sponsor:



Annotated Bibliography**

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Anderson, Elijah, and Douglas S. Massey. *Problem of the Century: Racial Stratification in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001. Print. *A helpful source (primary sources included) which reviews how the American government, and Anglo-Americans regarded the wave of immigrants arriving at the turn of the century.*
- Blair, Cynthia M. *I've Got to Make My Livin': Black Women's Sex Work in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010. Print. *Although this text examines women in Chicago, it provides some context for the lives of African American women who traveled to the North for work.*
- Collins, Gail. *America's Women: Four Hundred Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines*. New York: William Morrow, 2003. Print. *Specifically: Look for sections titled, "Immigrants: discovering the "woman's country" and "Turn of the century: the arrival of the new woman" and "Reforming the world: suffrage, temperance, and other causes" for a detailed look at women's progress in moving from the private to public sphere, despite numerous challenges and opposition.*
- Franklin, V P. *African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies in Convergence and Conflict*. Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 1998. Print. *Specifically: Look for the article "Drawn Together by Self-Interest," and "African Americans, Jews, and the City: Perspectives from the Industrial Era 1900-1950" for information regarding the conflicting interaction among African Americans and Jews at the turn of the century.*
- Iancu, Carol. *Jews in Romania, 1866-1919: From Exclusion to Emancipation*. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996. Print. *While I provided the introduction in this casebook as a short overview, I would suggest looking through this book for more detailed information about the social conditions in Romania during this time.*
- Kosak, Hadassa. *Cultures of Opposition: Jewish Immigrant Workers, New York City, 1881-1905*. Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 2000. Internet resource. *The section on garment workers is particularly helpful in contextualizing the Jewish labor class in New York. This is an e-book, available through the FSU library.*
- Nottage, Lynn, and Lynn Nottage. *Intimate Apparel: Fabulation or the Re-Education of Undine*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2006. Print. *In an interview, Nottage reveals that Fabulation serves as an abstract "part two" to Intimate Apparel.*
- Rooks, Noliwe M. *Ladies' Pages: African American Women's Magazines and the Culture That Made Them*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2004. Print. *Rooks discusses*

African American women's groups for business leaders (many of them beauty parlor owners) at the turn of the century. The first half of the book relates to the issues found in Intimate Apparel.

Smedley, Audrey. *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993. Print. *Another clarifying and easy to read text on the construction of race and prejudice in American from the eighteenth century to the end of World War II.*

** This is the Annotated Bibliography found in the casebook. Below are some “lighter” sources that you can explore as you continue to develop your role in the play.

OTHER SOURCES:

- The African American Migration Experience (inmotionaame.org)
 - An excellent resource with information, pictures, and video.
- New York Public Library Digital Collection (nypl.org)
 - Nottage says she scoured the New York public library for photos, video, and documents as research for this play. They keep a large and organized digital library on their website...and the best part: **it's free!**
- *The New York Times* interactive map,
(<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html>) or GOOGLE: “NY Times Interactive Map”
 - A fun resource for exploring how and why certain populations arrived in Manhattan.
 - ***The New York Times* also features an interactive map of the streets in the city, but I believe many of the features on the map have expired or are no longer working.**
- **Your dramaturge.** Yes! You can ask me anything. If you are having difficulty finding information, or are curious to know more about a document that you find in the casebook or packet, I would be more than happy to assist you.

